

Tefillah Thoughts

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Promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening

Pirush Ha'Milos:

“שירו לה' כל הארץ בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו”
“Sing to the L-rd, all the earth; proclaim His deliverance from day to day.”

On the words “day to day,” the Radak comments, “each and every day people will talk to each other about the great redemption. Even though they already know this information, it will be so treasured and cherished to them, that each and every day, it will be like something new. Usually when good things happen, at first, people are excited, and this is reflected in the amount of time they speak about it and in the excitement in their voices, but then the thrill and excitement begins to fade. However, with the final redemption the incredible feelings that one will feel initially, will last and last.”

“ספרו בגוים את כבודו בכל העמים נפלאותיו”
“Recount His glory among the nations, His wonders among all the peoples.”

“כי גדול ה' ומהלל מאד ונורא הוא על כל אלהים”
“For the L-rd is great and highly praised; He is awesome above all gods.”

“כי כל אלהי העמים אלילים | וה' שמים עשה”
“For all the gods of the nation are naught, but the L-rd made the heavens.”

POINTS OF INTEREST:

Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, before entering the shul to daven, would say: “Know where you are entering, what you will do there, Who is in this house, Whose house it is, and Who empowered you to enter this house.”

Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

Regarding Kavanah ha'tefillah, while it is true that there is no one set solution that is affective all the time, nevertheless, there are some general pointers that apply at all times. They include: giving Tzedakah before davening, immersing oneself in a mikvah, and to have an open Siddur in front of you during davening. Even at times when ones involvement in davening causes him to have his eyes closed, it is still important to have a Siddur open to the place in davening where you are holding.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 18 pg. 121)



Laws and customs:

There is a source that teaches that throughout the year, when one arrives at the words in Shemoneh Esray “ואת כל מיני תבואתה לטובה” one should bear in mind a request for the successful growth of wheat for matzos and esrogim for Sukkos. (Elsewhere, wine for Kiddush is also mentioned) Then, as a matter of course, all harvests will prosper.

(Hayom Yom Tishrei 19)

When saying עושה שלום in the individual's silent Shemoneh Esray one inclines and bows the head as follows: (a) to the left as one says עושה שלום ; (b) straight ahead as one says הוא ; (c) to the right as one says יעשה שלום עלינו ; and (d) again straight ahead as one says ועל כל ישראל ואמרו אמן

(Sefer Ha'Minhagim)

A Story:

In the winter of 1906 the Rebbe Rashab was in Moscow. He was also there for the Alter Rebbe's Yahrzeit, the 24th of Teves. The Rebbe Rashab would say Kaddish for him. A minyan was needed for Mincha. It was a bitterly cold day and no minyan was in sight.

The Rebbe Rashab was always particular about davening before the appropriate time, in this case, before sunset. He had davened Mincha individually; however he needed to say Kaddish so he waited for a minyan. He said, "If we only knew the power of an "Amen" response to Kaddish - it helps one's Nefesh, ruach, neshoma, physically and spiritually, with matters of children, life, and sustenance, for all generations - there would be many minyonim."



Biur Tefillah: "Pokeiach Ivrim"

This Bracha reflects the process of our changing from the state of sleeping to that of wakefulness. When we sleep our eyes do not function. Even if we sleep with our eyes open, we do not see. During our sleep we are like blind, sightless people. Therefore, when we wake and see again, we thank Hashem for restoring the power of sight.

There is a deeper meaning in the words "who opens the eyes of the blind." Hashem has given us the gift of seeing more than "meets the eye." We "see" not only with our eyes of flesh, but also with our "eyes" of reason: We "see" the truth; we "see" the hand of Hashem in everything around us. There are people who have perfectly good eyesight, yet they are "blind" to spiritual matters; they cannot "see" the benevolent Hashgacha Protis that guides the destinies of everything and everyone; they are like sightless people groping in the dark.

We have a commandment in the Torah, "you should not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but you should fear your Hashem." When we are warned against tripping up a sightless man, we must not merely guard against causing physical injury to a physically blind man, but also against "tripping up" the spiritually blind man, by leading him astray, or by showing a bad example to children and the like. We are reminded that though the blind man does not see the stumbling block which we place in his path; Hashem does hear and see everything. We must fear Hashem and beware of doing anything so wicked.

In a similar manner, when we wake up in the morning, and thank Hashem "who opens the eyes of the blind," we thank Him not only for giving us *physical* eyesight, but also spiritual *insight*. We thank Hashem for enabling us to understand something of His greatness and His mercy, and in doing so we must resolve to emulate His ways.

(My Prayer)

Your comments and feedback are welcome: tefillahthoughts@monseychabad.com