

Prepare My Prayer

Recipes to Awaken the Soul



Makor Chaim Institutions
Gush Etzion



MAGGID

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אבוא ביתך

Let Me Enter Your House

Let my prayer rise before You
Like the incense and perfect sacrifices
Offered by those who are whole and perfect.
Master of the world,
Open Your mouth to a mute like me
And allow me to fix my prayer, my supplication,
and my request before You
As is fitting in every moment
So that I may be able to elucidate what I have to
say before You always
And everything that is in my heart I shall say
With truth, with pleas, with mercy,
In a way that will awaken Your mercy on me
And You will answer my request with mercy
always.

Likutei Tefillot, part 1, prayer 14



Handwritten text in cursive script, possibly a signature or name, written in dark ink on a white background. The text is oriented vertically and appears to be a name, possibly "S. J. [unclear]".



Then my soul will say with all of my being:
Come greet the bride, dear beloved alight.

If my soul drowns in my tears
Is this not the sign that my destiny nears?

From the day I emerged from my mother's
womb
I set Your face ever before me,

For I have nothing other than Your hope in the
world,
For You are my honor, You are my glory,

You like an ember burn on my lips,
And on my pure heart sit like a pearl.

Pinhas Sadeh

פתיחה: נבואה שעריך

Opening: Let Us Enter Your Gates

וְאֲנִי בְּרֹב חַסְדֶּךָ אָבֹא בֵיתְךָ אֲשֶׁתְּחֹה אֶל הַיְכָל קִדְשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ.

תהלים ה, ח

But I, through Your abundant love, enter Your house; I bow down in awe at Your holy Temple.

Psalms 5:8

[One] should not stand up to pray unless he is in a serious frame of mind. The original pious ones used to wait one hour and then pray, in order to direct their heart toward the Omnipresent.

Mishna Berakhot 5:1

What is meant by [proper] intention? One should clear his mind from all thoughts and envision himself as standing before the Divine Presence. Therefore, one must sit a short while before praying in order to focus his attention and then pray in a pleasant and supplicatory fashion. One should not pray as one carrying a burden who throws it off and walks away. Therefore, one must sit a short while after praying, and then withdraw.

Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 4:16

In our prayer we come to the House of God
Stand before the Sovereign
Turn to the One full of mercy,
Give ourselves over to the love of our Beloved.
Prayer is devotion
The devoted pause, preparing the heart before their prayer
Like a musician tuning an instrument before beginning to play,
Hoping for a clear, bright voice.

In the race that is life
In which we run from task to task
Prayer can easily become yet another task.
The secret is in the pause – to arrive early, to sit for a bit.
To move from doing to being,
To quiet the motor
That pushes me constantly
Forward, higher.
To intensify my presence, and that of the world around me,
To calm my mind
To awaken the inner desire concealed deep within
To stand before God
To enter God's gates.



Opening the Senses

For every part of creation has an inner point that was clarified by God's honor... And this is the meaning of Perek Shira – that each part of creation has its own song and praise for the Blessed God. And “then Israel sang... this song” (Num. 21:17), meaning: the known song that arises from all created things.

Rebbe Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter of Gur, *Sefat Emet, Beshallah* 5631

All of existence yearns for the source of its life, every plant and every blade of grass, every speck of sand and clump of earth. Everything that reveals life and everything that hides within it life, the small parts of creation and the big, the heavens above and fiery angels, all the details of all being, and the wholeness of it – everything aspires, yearns, longs for the desired wholeness of its supreme, living, holy, pure, powerful source.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook, *Olat Re'iya, Inyenei Tefilla* 7

The walk to the synagogue

Is the beginning of prayer

It is an invitation to be present


To step inside

To stand before God.

In our day to day we are often a bit fuzzy and imprecise.

The path to prayer is the beginning of the path

To presence, to clarity, to precision.



- Stepping outside, to a field, to a garden, or to any quiet place, we close our eyes, breathe deeply, and listen. We try to gather in the many surrounding sounds, discerning among them: the call of the rooster, the rustle of the wind, the din of cars on the road. Sounds close and far, sounds strong and weak. Smelling the air, the ground, the tree, we allow their scents to enter inside us, and penetrate deeply.

- Opening our eyes, we look about. Trying to notice details that until now have remained hidden, we look out into the expanse, to the sky, to the green trees, to the flowers. We notice the taste in our mouth. We feel the tree, brush the ground, sense the touch of the body.

- We allow the sounds, the smells, the sights, the tastes, and the touch to saturate us, to penetrate deeply, inward.

We become one with the surrounding existence,
A part of the universe where prayer is the language,
the wellspring,
The heartbeat of life and its pulse.

- Now our presence is raised immeasurably
And thus we arrive to the synagogue
With a wide-open heart.
A soft step.
Present.
Open.

לרוץ לתפילה

Running to Prayer

דָּרֹךְ־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲרוּץ כִּי תִרְחִיב לִבִּי.

תהלים קיט, לב

[In] the way of Your commandments I shall run, for You will broaden my heart.

Psalms 119:32


It is a mitzva to run when going to the synagogue, just as it is a mitzva to hurry to do any mitzvot, but it should be done in a way that does not arouse ridicule from those who see. Rather one should go as one goes quickly to their work. And our rabbis of blessed memory said about the verse “A king is bound in the tresses” that the Divine Presence is tied to the Jewish people in their exile because of two times that Abraham, our holy father, ran for a mitzva. For it is written: “And Abraham went quickly to the tent, to Sarah,” “And Abraham ran to the cattle.” And it is also said in the holy Zohar that when Israel runs to do a mitzva, the angels of defense run opposite them, and go early to tell of their merit. However, one should only run until the entrance of the synagogue, but in the synagogue itself it is forbidden to run. Rather one should walk with awe and fear, for it is the shrine of the King of Glory.

Rabbi Yosef Hayim of Baghdad, *Ben Ish Hai, Hilkhoh Shana Rishona, Parashat Miketz, 2*

Morning

The sun rises

The alarm rings



It's hard to get up
Arousing ourselves
We open our eyes
We give thanks
What awaits us today?
All of the day's pressure and burdens rest upon our shoulders
Sometimes, on a day of grace
We can suddenly feel our soul yearning for its Creator

We want to breathe deeply
To make the day last
The feet, without prompting, begin to run
Quickly
To the House of Prayer
To stand before the Master of All
To do God's will
To run.

- Choose one day of the week, wake up early and get ready quickly. Head to the synagogue, as quickly as possible, if you can – running.
- Upon arrival, stop, steady your breath, fill yourself with awe of the space.
- Recite the verse: “And I, through Your abundant kindness, will enter Your house; I will prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You” (Ps. 5:8). Enter inside, begin to pray.