

Zoom 16: Prayer

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The Obligation to Pray

Exodus 23:25

(25) You shall **serve** the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will remove sickness from your midst.

שמות כ"ג:כ"ה

(כה) וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּבִרְךְ אֶת-לֶחְמֶךָ וְאֶת-מִימֵיךָ וְהִסְרֵתִי מִתְּלַח מִקִּרְבְּךָ:

Deuteronomy 11:13

(13) If, then, you observe the commandments that I command you this day, loving the LORD your God and **serving Him with all your heart** and soul,

דברים י"א:י"ג

(יג) וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעַבְדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם:

What is Avodah?

עבודה Avodah - service - work - worship

עבד Eved - servant or slave

עובד Oved - worker - employee

- So "avodah" is performing an action which demonstrates your relationship with a higher authority.
- An employee works (does avodah) for his or her employer.
- A servant does servile work for a master.
- The avodah acknowledges the subservient position of the servant to the master.
- When one worships an Idol or a God, that is called Avodah... in the context of idols it is called Avodah Zarah - "strange worship."

What is Service of the Heart?

Mishneh Torah, Prayer and the Priestly Blessing

1:1

(1) **To pray** daily is an positive "commandment", as it is said, "And ye shall **serve** the Lord, your God" (Exodus 23:25).

משנה תורה, הלכות תפילה וברכת כהנים

א'א'

(א) מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּכָל יוֹם שְׁנַאֲמַר (שמות כג)
(כה) "וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם".

The **service**, here referred to, according to the teaching of tradition, is **Prayer**, as it is said, "And to **serve Him** with all your **heart**" (Deuteronomy

מפי השמועה לָמְדוּ שְׁעֲבוּדָה זֶה הוּא תְּפִלָּה שְׁנַאֲמַר

11:13), on which the sages commented, "What may be described as **Service of the Heart? Prayer**".

(דברים יא יג) "וּלְעִבְדוֹ כָּכֵל לְבַבְכֶם" אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים
אִי זֶה הֵיא עֲבוּדָה שֶׁבִּלְבָב זֶה תְּפִלָּה.

The number of prayers is not prescribed in the Torah. No form of prayer is prescribed in the Torah. Nor does the Torah prescribe a fixed time for Prayer.

נֵאִין מְנַגֵּן הַתְּפִלוֹת מִן הַתּוֹרָה. נֵאִין מְשַׁנֵּה הַתְּפִלָּה
הַזֹּאת מִן הַתּוֹרָה. נֵאִין לְתְּפִלָּה זְמַן קָבוע מִן
הַתּוֹרָה:

תפילה - Prayer is Tefillah

What does the word Tefillah mean?

Psalms 106:30

(30) Phinehas stepped forth and **executed judgment**, and the plague ceased.

תהילים ק"ו:ל'
(ל) וַיַּעֲמֵד פִּינְחָס וַיִּפְלֵל וַתֵּעָצֵר הַמַּגֵּפָה:

Sanhedrin 44a

"Then stood up Pinehas, and executed judgment [*vayefallel*], and the plague was stayed" (Psalms 106:30),

סנהדרין מ"ד א
(תהילים קו, ל) ויעמד פנחס ויפלל ותעצר המגפה

and Rabbi Elazar says: it does not say And he prayed [*vayitpallel*]; rather it says, "and he executed judgment [*vayefallel*]",

ואמר ר' אלעזר ויתפלל לא נאמר אלא ויפלל

which teaches that he entered into a **judgment** together with his Creator. How so? He came and cast Zimri and Cozbi down before God, and said to Him: Master of the Universe, was it because of these sinners that twenty-four thousand members of the Jewish people fell? As it is written: "And those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand" (Numbers 25:9).

מלמד שעשה פלילות עם קונו בא וחבטן לפני
המקום אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם על אלו יפלו
עשרים וארבעה אלף מישראל דכתיב (במדבר
כה, ט) ויהיו המתים במגפה ארבעה ועשרים אלף

- *Lepallel - means to judge* - לפלל
- *Lehitpallel (to pray) means to judge oneself* - להתפלל
- *Tefilla - Prayer - is "the act of judging oneself!"* - תפילה

How do we Fulfill our Obligation to Pray?

Mishneh Torah, Prayer and the Priestly Blessing 1:2

The obligation in this precept is that every person should **daily**, according to his ability, offer up supplication and prayer;

משנה תורה, הלכות תפילה וברכת כהנים
א'ב'
חייב מצוה זו כָּךְ הוּא שְׂיֵהֵא אָדָם מְתַחַנֵּן וּמְתַפְּלֵל
בְּכָל יוֹם

first uttering **praises** of God, then, with humble supplication and petition **ask for all that he needs**, and finally offer praise and **thanksgiving** to the Eternal for the benefits already bestowed upon him in rich measure.

ומגיד **שבחו** של הקדוש ברוך הוא ואחר כך
שואל צרכיו שהוא צריך להם בבקשה ובתחנון
ואחר כך נותן **שבח והודיה** לה' על הטובה
שהשפיע לו כל אחד לפי כחו:

**"To pray" means to ask God to provide us with our needs at least once each day.
How is "asking God for our needs" equivalent to "judging ourselves?"**

We need material blessing to accomplish our tasks in this world

Derech Hashem, Part Four, On Prayer 1

(1) **Regarding prayer:** Since people receive bounty from God, there is a need for them to arouse themselves towards Him and seek His presence.

So the bounty comes down to them according to the arousal towards Him. But if they do not arouse themselves, it does not come down to them.

God wants that the good of His creatures be increased at all times; so He prepared this worship for them on a daily basis. For through it, bounty, success and blessing will come down to them according to their needs [and] according to their situation in this world.

דרך ה', חלק רביעי, בתפלה א'
(א) **ענין התפלה:** שלהיות הנבראים מקבלים
שפע ממנו ית' צריך שיתעוררו הם אליו ויתקרבו
לו ויבקשו פניו

וכפי התעוררותם לו כן ימשך אליהם שפע. ואם
לא יתעוררו לא ימשך להם.

והנה האדון ב"ה חפץ ורוצה שתרבה טובת
ברואיו בכל זמניהם והכין להם עבודה זו דבר יום
ביומו שעל ידה ימשך להם שפע ההצלחה
והברכה כפי מה שהם צריכים לפי מצבם זה בזה
העולם:

**God gave us an intellect so we could make our own choices in the physical world.
But that is a "double-edged sword"**

Derech Hashem, Part Four, On Prayer 2

GOD gave man the intellect to manage himself in this world with his intelligence and his understanding. So He placed the task upon him to oversee all of his [own] needs.

...the more man gets embroiled in the matters of the world, the more he will distance himself from the Supreme light and become more darkened. But God prepared a remedy for this. And that is that a man first come close, stand in front of Him, may He be blessed, request all of his needs and 'cast his burden upon' Him.

דרך ה', חלק רביעי, בתפלה ב'
(ב) ואמנם עומק יותר יש בענין והוא כי הנה
האדון ב"ה נתן לאדם דעה להיות מנהג עצמו
בעולמו בשכל ובתבונה והעמיס המשא עליו
להיות מפקח על צרכיו כלם.
... כי הנה כפי מה שירבה להסתבך בעניני העולם
כך מתרחק מן האור העליון ומתחשך יותר. והנה
הכין הבי"ת תיקון לזה והוא מה שיקדים האדם
ויתקרב ויעמוד לפניו ית' וממנו ישאל כל צרכיו
ועליו ישליך יהבו

... then - it will not happen that he will get embroiled and stuck in physicality and materialism. For he will already have begun with, and made everything dependent upon, Him, may He be blessed.

לא יקרא שיסתבך וישתקע בגופניות וחומריות
כיון שכבר הקדים ותלה הכל בו ית' ולא תהיה
ירידתו ירידה רבה אלא תסמך ע"י התיקון הזה
שקדם לה:

So what do we ask for?

What would you ask for at the Kotel?

Story of the British family visiting the Kotel

What you want tells more about yourself than what you do.

You strive for what is valuable to you... it gives insight into your "values"

Have we answered... "how is asking for my needs equal to judging myself?"

QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER

1. **My words versus someone else's words? (chinning bar)**
2. **Why keep repeating the same prayers - God heard me last time, did He forget? (learning Hebrew and Aliyah story)**
3. **Praying on my own or in a Group? (pick the right people)**



Artscroll Prayer Book
<https://amzn.to/33qPxGf>

THE STANDARD PRAYER

“My Lord, open my lips, that my mouth declare Your praise!” (Psalms 51:17).

PRAISING GOD

PATRIARCHS

Blessed are You, Lord our God and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; the great, mighty and revered God, God Most High, who does kindness and creates all, who remembers the kindness of the patriarchs and will bring a redeemer to their children's children for His name's sake, in love. King, Helper, Savior and Shield! **Blessed are You, Lord, the Shield of Abraham.**

POWER

You are eternally mighty, Lord. You give life to the dead, You have great power to save. *Winter:* You make the wind blow and the rain fall. *Summer:* You bring the dew. You sustain the living with kindness, you revive the dead with great mercy. You support the fallen, heal the sick, and set captives free, and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like You, Mighty One, and who resembles You, King who slays and gives life, and makes salvation flourish? You are faithful to revive the dead. **Blessed are You, Lord, who revives the dead.**

HOLINESS

You are holy, and Your name is holy, and holy ones praise You daily. **Blessed are You, Lord, the holy God.**

REQUESTS OF GOD - WHAT WE WANT - VALUE "casting our burdons on God"

WISDOM

You grant a person wisdom, and teach understanding to a mortal. Favor us with Your own wisdom, understanding and insight. **Blessed are You, Lord, who graciously grants wisdom.**

REPENTANCE

Bring us back, our Father, to your Instruction. Draw us near, our King, to Your service. Bring us back to You in perfect repentance. **Blessed are You, Lord, who delights in repentance.**

FORGIVENESS

Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned. Pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed. For You pardon and forgive. **Blessed are You, Lord, who is gracious and always forgives.**

REDEMPTION

Look upon our affliction and plead our cause, and redeem us speedily for Your name's sake, for You are a mighty redeemer. **Blessed are You, Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.**

HEALTH

Heal us, Lord, and we shall be healed, save us and we shall be saved, for You are our praise. Grant full recovery for all of our ailments. For You, almighty King, are a faithful and merciful healer. **Blessed are You, Lord, Healer of the sick of His people Israel.**

PROSPERITY

Bless this year for us, Lord our God, with all its varieties of produce, for our welfare. Bestow (*in winter: dew and rain for*) a blessing upon the face of the earth and satisfy us from its goodness, and bless our year like the best of years. **Blessed are You, Lord, who blesses the years.**

INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

Sound the great horn for our freedom, raise the banner to gather our exiles, and gather us from the four corners of the earth. **Blessed are You, Lord, who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.**

JUSTICE

Restore our judges as in former times, and our counselors as at the beginning, and remove from us sorrow and sighing. Reign over us, You alone Lord, with kindness and compassion, and clear us in judgment. **Blessed are You, Lord, the King who loves righteousness and justice.**

THE WICKED

For the slanderers let there be no hope, and let all wickedness perish in an instant, and may all Your enemies quickly be cut down. And the arrogant may You soon uproot, crush, cast down and humble, soon in our day! **Blessed are You, Lord, who smashes enemies and humbles the arrogant.**

THE RIGHTEOUS

May your compassion be stirred, Lord our God, towards the righteous, the pious, the elders of your people the house of Israel, the remnant of their scholars, the righteous proselytes, and also towards us. Grant a good reward to all who truly trust in Your name. Grant our portion with them forever so that we may never be put to shame, for in You we trust. **Blessed are You, Lord, the support and trust of the righteous.**

JERUSALEM

Return in mercy to Jerusalem Your city, and dwell in it as You promised. Rebuild it soon in our day as an eternal structure, and quickly set up in it the throne of David. **Blessed are You, Lord, builder of Jerusalem.**

HOUSE OF DAVID

Speedily cause the offspring of Your servant David to flourish, and let his stature be exalted by Your saving power, for we wait all day for Your salvation. **Blessed are You, Lord, who causes salvation to flourish.**

ACCEPTANCE OF PRAYER

Hear our voice, Lord our God, spare us and have pity on us; accept our prayer in mercy and with favor. For You are a God who hears prayers and supplications, so do not turn us away from You empty-handed, our King. For You hear the prayers of Your people Israel with compassion. **Blessed are You, Lord, who hears prayer.**

SERVICE OF GOD

Be pleased, Lord our God, with Your people Israel and with their prayers. Restore the service to the inner sanctuary of Your Temple, and the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers may You lovingly receive with pleasure. May the service of Your people Israel always be acceptable to You. And let our eyes behold Your merciful return to Zion. **Blessed are You, Lord, who restores His Presence to Zion.**

THANKING GOD

THANKSGIVING

We give thanks to You, for You are the Lord our God and the God of our fathers forever and ever. Through every generation You have been the rock of our lives, the shield of our salvation. We will thank You and declare Your praise, for our lives that are in Your hands, for our souls that are entrusted to You, for Your miracles that are daily with us, and for Your wonders and Your favors that are with us at all times, evening, morning and noon. Beneficent One, Your mercies never fail. Merciful One, Your kindnesses never cease. We have always placed our hope in You. For all these acts may Your name be blessed and exalted continually, our King, forever and ever. Let every living thing give thanks to You and praise Your name in truth, God, our salvation and our help. **Blessed are You, Lord, whose Name is the Beneficent One, and to whom it is fitting to give thanks.**

PEACE

Grant peace, goodness and blessing, grace and kindness and mercy, to us and to all Israel Your people. Bless us, our Father, one and all, with the light of Your face. For by the light of Your face you have given us, Lord our God, a Torah of life and love of kindness, charity, blessing, mercy, life and peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel at all times and in every hour with Your peace. **Blessed are You, Lord, who blesses His people Israel with peace.**

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart find favor before You, Lord, my Stronghold and my Redeemer” (Psalms 19:15).

National unity demands a common value system and national goals

1. An external enemy or threat can create unity without a common value system or national identity.
2. Holocaust, War, Poverty/Survival
3. How do you guarantee unity when the external threats are gone?
4. The Jews have done it primarily through the prayer book... and universal study of the Torah. With assimilation, we have lost the universal values and purpose.
5. The same thing has happened in America and to a lesser extent, Europe.

GALILEE



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