



Children at Pray

Inspiring Children to Daven

Source Materials
Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
reg@brsonline.org

REASONS FOR NOT PRAYING
OR
WHY ISN'T MY PRAYER SO MEANINGFUL

1. God really doesn't listen (or maybe His answers are always "No").
For each reason that you agree with, ask yourself the following questions.
 1. Is this a real reason for not praying or a convenient excuse ?
 2. Do I really believe this is a problem, or am I just afraid that if I give prayer a real chance it might become important to me ?
 3. Do I truly believe this or is it what most of my friends seem to believe ?
 4. What could I do to change this particular negative feeling ?
2. I'm quite happy the way I am.
 1. I don't understand the Hebrew language.
 2. I don't believe in God (or at least I'm not sure I do).
It's boring.
 3. I'm angry with the way God has messed up: my life, the world, etc.
 4. Why should he listen to me with everybody else to worry about?
 5. I don't like my synagogue (or its rabbi, cantor).
 6. I don't know enough about prayer to feel comfortable.
 7. I'm just not interested.
 8. I'm afraid of what it might do to me (ie. make me more religious, perhaps).
 9. None of my friends are into it.
 10. It's old fashioned.
 11. I like to be spontaneous, not told what to do or say.
 12. I was turned off by Hebrew school.
 13. The prayers don't seem to meet my needs.
3. It takes too much time.
4. I don't understand the Hebrew language.
5. I don't believe in God (or at least I'm not sure I do).
It's boring.
6. I'm angry with the way God has messed up: my life, the world, etc.
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17. The prayers don't seem to meet my needs.

① ETHICS OF OUR FATHERS (1:2)

[ב] שמעון הצדיק היה משיחי בnestה הגדולה. הוא היה אומר: על שלשה דברים העולם עומד: על התורה, ועל העבודה, ועל גמילות חסדים.

- [2] *Shimon the Righteous was among the survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: The world depends on three things – on Torah study, on the service [of God], and on kind deeds.*

② TALMUD (TA'ANIS 2a)

The Gemara gives the source for the inclusion of the mention of rain in the Shemoneh Esrei:

וּמְאָא לַרְבָּתֶלֶת – And from where do we know that rain must be mentioned in the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer? – רְתָמָנָא – For it was taught in a Baraisa: „לְאַהֲבָה אֹתָהּ אֱלֹהִיכֶם וְלַעֲבֹדוּ“ – Scripture states: *TO LOVE HASHEM YOUR GOD AND TO SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART.*^[22] אַיُוֹ הִיא עֲבוֹדָה שַׁהְיָא בְּלֵב – Now WHICH SERVICE of God IS performed IN THE HEART? – הַזֶּה – YOU MUST SAY that THIS IS a reference to PRAYER.^[23] – AND immediately AFTER [THAT VERSE] IT IS WRITTEN: – ..וַיֹּתְהִי מַטְרָא רָצְבָם בְּעֵתָו יוֹרָה וּמְלֻקָּשׁ – *AND I WILL PROVIDE RAIN FOR YOUR LAND IN ITS PROPER TIME – THE EARLY AND THE LATE RAINS.* By the juxtaposition of one to the other, rain is associated with prayer.^[24]

③ TALMUD (RUSH HASHANAH 16b)

שלשה דברים מקובירים – ואמר רבי יצחק: Three things cause a person's sins to be recalled by the Heavenly court.^[10] – קורעתי – These are: קוּרְעֵת – expecting one's passing beneath a leaning wall,^[11] – ונזון תפלה – and submitting prayer to be fulfilled^[12] – זומסך דין על חבירו – judgment of one's fellow to Heaven.^[13] – רצבר רבי (אביין) [אַבִּין] – For R' Chanan said: Whoever submits judgment of his fellow to Heaven, – he is punished for his own sins first, שָׂעָמָר ..וַתַּאֲכִיר שְׂרֵי אֶלְ-אַבְרָם חַטָּאתִי .. – as it is stated:^[14] *And Sarai said to Abram, "My injustice is upon you!... Let Hashem judge between me and you."* – כתיב: בְּלֹא אַבְרָם לְקַפֵּר לְשָׁרָה וּלְבָתָה – And it is written afterwards: *And Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her.*^[15]

④ PSALMS (145)

קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל קֹדֶשׁ, לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא הָוּ בָּאָמֶת.

¶ HASHEM is close to all who call upon Him –
to all who call upon Him sincerely.

⑤ TAANIS (TAANIS 15c)

When they stand to pray^[10] in the town square, – מוריין לפניהם התיבה – they send down before the Ark^[11] to lead the prayers, וַיֵּשׁ לוּ בָנִים^[12] – an elder, well versed in prayer, – אֵלֹן וּרְגִיל – who has children, וביתו – קָדוֹשָׁה אֶלְיוֹן שְׁלָמָם בְּתַפְלָה – so that his heart should be completely devoted in prayer.^[13]

⑥ PSALMS (130)

שיר המעלות, ממעמקים קראתיך יהוה. אָדָני שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹלִי,
תְּהִיאֵנָה אָזְנוֹנִיךְ קְשֻׁבוֹת, לְכָל פְּחֻנוֹנִי. אָם עֲנוּנוֹת
תִּשְׁמַר־יָה, אָדָני מֵיְעַמְּדָר. בַּי עָפָךְ הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תַּנְרָא. קָוִיתִי יהוה
קָוָתָה נֶפֶשִׁי, וְלִדְבָּרוֹ הַזְּהָלָתִי. נֶפֶשִׁי לְאָדָני, מְשֻׁמְרִים לְבָקָר, שְׁקָרִים
לְבָקָר. יְתַלֵּן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יהוה, בַּי עַם יהוה הַחֲסָר, וְהַרְבָּה עַמוֹּדָות.
וְהוּא יִפְרַה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּלָעָנוֹתָיו.

שיר המעלות A song of ascents: From the depths I called You, HASHEM.

My Lord, hear my voice, may Your ears be attentive to the sound of my pleas. If You preserve iniquities, O God, my Lord, who could survive? For with You is forgiveness, that You may be feared. I put confidence in HASHEM, my soul put confidence, and I hoped for His word. I yearn for my Lord, among those longing for the dawn, those longing for the dawn. Let Israel hope for HASHEM, for with HASHEM is kindness, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

SHEMONEH ESREI — AMIDAH }
} 3

Moses advanced through three levels of holiness when he went up to Sinai. Therefore we take three steps forward as we 'approach' God in the Shemoneh Esrei prayer.

Remain standing with the feet together while reciting Shemoneh Esrei. Recite it with quiet devotion and without any interruption, verbal or otherwise. Although it should not be audible to others, one must pray loudly enough to hear himself. See Laws 561-90 for a brief summary of its laws, including how to rectify the omission of phrases or paragraphs that are added at particular times of the year.

My Lord, open my lips,* that my mouth may declare Your praise!¹

PATRIARCHS

Bend the knees at 'blessed', bow at 'You'; straighten up at 'HASHEM'.

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You,* HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,* God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob;
the great, mighty, and awesome God, the supreme God,* Who bestows
beneficial kindnesses and creates everything.* Who recalls the
kindnesses of the Patriarchs and brings a Redeemer* to their children's
children, for His Name's sake with long

Bend the knees at 'Blessed'; bow at 'You'; straighten up at 'HASHEM'.

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur add the following.
Remember us for life, O King Who desires life,
and inscribe us in the Book of Life — for Your sake, O Liu
[If forgotten, do not repeat Shemoneh Esrei. See Laws §61]
Bend the knees at 'Blessed'; bow at 'You'; straighten up at 'Ha'
O King, Helper, Savior, and Shield.* Blessed are
Shield of Abramam.**

dead

וְהַצְרָאֵת שֶׁזֶה אֵין כְּבוֹד לְעֵינֵינוּ וְאֵין כְּבוֹד לְעֵינֵי כָּל הָעוֹלָם – Our God and the God of our forefathers. First we call Him *our God* because we are obligated to serve Him and know him to the limit of *our* capacity. But there is much about His ways that we cannot understand. In response to such doubts we proclaim that He is the *God of our forefathers*, and we have faith in the tradition they transmitted (*Dover Shalom*)

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וְיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כֹּלֶבֶת וְיִמְלָא כָּלָתָה – *And creates everything*. The translation is based on the consensus of commentators, both here and to *Genesis 14:19* who translate the Owner of everything. Either way, the sense of the phrase is that God is Master of all creation.

ମେଲିଲାଙ୍କଣ — ରାଜୁ

steps forward as we "approach" God in the *Shemoneh Eser* prayer. Remain standing with the feet together while reciting *Shemoneh Eser*. Recite it with quiet devotion and without any interruption, verbal or otherwise. Although it should not be audible to others, one must pray loudly enough to hear himself. See laws 561-90 for a brief summary of its laws, including how to recite the omission of phrases or paragraphs that are added at particular times of the year. My Lord, open my lips,* that my mouth may declare Your praise!¹

ברך Bend the knees at 'Blessed'; bow at 'you'; straighten up at 'HASHEM'.
Blessed are You,* HASHEM, our God and the God of our
forefathers,* God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob;
the great, mighty, and awesome God, the supreme God,* Who bestows
beneficial kindnesses and creates everything.* Who recalls the
kindnesses of the Patriarchs and brings a Redeemer* to their children's
children, for His Name's sake with love.

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur add the following.
*Remember us for life, * O King Who desires life,*
and inscribe us in the book of life.

[If forgotten, do not repeat Shemoneh Esrei. See Laws §61.]

**I am strengthened by your promises.*

אָתָּה You are eternally mighty, my Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead, the Sustainer of the world.

see you; undoubtedly able to

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Map - Shield of Abraham

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וְנִתְחַנֵּן / God's Might
בָּרוּךְ הוּא יְהוָה
— The Resuscitator of the dead. The concept that God restores life is found three times in this section, i.e., in the first, second and third chapters.