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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Handwritten Hebrew text arranged in a circular pattern around the central image.



**Camp GHUSY
Camp Kadima
2004**

Introduction

PRAYER

There is little that matches the power and beauty of Jews gathered together in worship. Just think about a prayer experience that has impacted you. Perhaps you were at an International USY Convention praying with over 1000 other teenagers. Maybe you were in Israel praying at the *Kotel* while touching the ancient stones of the Western Wall. Perhaps it was at your *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* when you lead the congregation in worship and read from the Torah. Maybe you were in a camp setting or outdoors and the beauty of the surroundings enhanced your prayers. These prayer experiences unite us in so many ways. While we can pray individually, structured Jewish worship is a driving force that can bring a community together.

We come together knowing that throughout the world other Jews also gather to share the worship experience. Prayer also links us not only to Jewish communities in present time, but also to generations past and future. When we recite prayers such as the *Shema*, *Amidah*, or *Kaddish*, we merge with Jews in other places and at other times who have recited the same words.

Prayer connects us with other Jews, but most importantly prayer connects us to God. Prayer is a means of serving God and a way of relating to and understanding God. It is through prayer that we express our innermost thoughts and feelings. We express our appreciation and our frustrations. We may appeal to God on our behalf or on the behalf of others. There might also be times where our prayer is an expression of questioning or even complaint. Prayer can also have no clear or definite form of address, but simply a kind of conversation or outpouring of the heart before God.

Prayer is not easy. Learning about the order of the service, the history of specific prayers, and the "mechanics" (when and how to bow, or when to stand, sit, etc.) is rather straightforward, yet when we combine the "mechanics" with what our hearts hold and our minds know, it can become quite complex. Our relationship with God and our understanding of prayer is an ongoing, lifelong process.

Prayer.... What does it mean to YOU? During our encampment we will begin to explore why we pray, how we pray, the history of prayer, the values we derive from prayer, and how we can deepen our connection and understanding of prayer.

May we, together, deepen our love, appreciation, and understanding of prayer and may our love, appreciation and understanding strengthen our bond to the people of Israel, to the words and teaching of Torah, and ultimately to God.

Lisa Alter Krule
Camp CHUSY & Camp KADIMA 2004

Why We Pray

Before we can begin looking at the prayers in our tradition and the meaning behind them, we must ask fundamental questions – Why do we pray? What is the purpose of prayer in the first place? Why does it play a central role in Judaism? Is prayer an important part of our own lives? Why or why not?

Today's Date is: _____

My favorite prayers are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A Child's Prayer by S.Y. Agnon

A certain villager used to pray on the Days of Awe in the House of Prayer of the Baal Shem Tov. He had a boy whose wit was dull and who could not even read the letters in the prayer book, much less recite a holy word. His father never brought him along to the city, because the boy was completely ignorant. But when the boy became Bar Mitzvah, his father took him with him to the city on Yom Kippur, so as to be able to watch him and keep him from eating from simple ignorance on the holy fast day.

Now the boy had a little flute on which he used to play all the time when he sat in the field tending his flock. He took the flute with him from home and put it in his coat, and his father did not know about it. The boy sat in the House of Prayer all Yom Kippur without praying, because he did not know how. During the Musaf, the Additional Prayer, he said to his father: "Father, I want to play my flute." His father became terrified, and spoke sharply to the boy. The boy had to restrain himself.

During Mincha, Afternoon Prayer, the boy repeated again: "Father, let me play on my flute." Again the father spoke sharply to his son, and warned him not to dare do any such thing. But he could not take the flute away from his son, because of the prohibition against unnecessary handling on Yom Kippur.

After the Afternoon Prayer, the boy said again: "Please let me play on my flute." Seeing that the boy wanted badly to play on his flute, his father said to him: "Where is the flute?" The child pointed to the pocket of his coat. The father took the child's pocket and held it to his hand, to keep the boy from taking out the flute and playing on it. Holding the pocket with the flute in this way, the man stood and prayed the N'eliah, Closing Prayer. In the middle of the prayer, the boy forced the flute out of his pocket and blew a blast so loud that all who heard it were taken aback. When the Baal Shem Tov (who was the Chazzan) heard the sound, he shortened his prayer.

After the prayer, the Baal Shem Tov said: "With the sound of his flute this child lifted up all the prayers and eased my burden. For this child does not know anything, but, by dint

of his seeing and hearing the prayer of Israel all of this holy day, the prayer's holy spark kindled an actual fire in him, and the flame of his longing burned higher and higher until his soul nearly expired. Because of the strength of his longing he played the note of his heart truly, without any distraction, for the sole sake of the Name of God. Now, the clean breath of his lips was very acceptable to Him, and by this means all the prayers were lifted up.

[Kehla Hasidim be-Hadash] quoted in Days of Awe, S.Y. Agnon, pps. 268-270.

Questions for discussion:

1. *Were you surprised by the Ba'al Shem Tov's reaction? What would you have expected him to say?*
2. *What can we learn from the fact that the whole congregation's prayers were lifted up to God because of the one boy?*
3. *What does this story tell us about how we can achieve meaningful prayer?*
4. *For you, what is the easiest and most comfortable form of prayer?*

The Lesson

One year on Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev told the following story:

Once he came to an inn where many Jews were lodging because it was a market day. The famous rabbi joined these businessmen for an early *minyan*. However, he was shocked at how fast they rushed through their prayers and how badly they mispronounced so many of the words.

At the end of the service, he marched up to them and began uttering nonsense syllables such as "Ba...sha...boo..." The merchants were so astonished they could not speak. Finally, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak explained to them.. "The way I spoke to you is the way you just spoke to God!"

At first, they all stood there very ashamed. Then one of the men answered the rabbi: "When a baby utters syllables that have no meaning to anyone else, the mother and father seem to know what the infant needs. Even if you, Rabbi, didn't understand our prayers, we feel confident that God knows our true thoughts and feelings."

"This merchant was right." Rabbi Levi Yitzhak declared. "He showed more faith in God than I did. He taught me something that I now want to teach you: On this holy day, even the prayers of those who are unable to say them properly will be heard if they come from the heart...."

Why Do We Pray? Why Don't We Pray?

The questions of why one should pray, or why one should pray regularly, or why one should pray Jewishly are key questions to ask ourselves. Hopefully by the end of this week, you will have a better idea of why prayer is important to Jews, and how it can become important for you personally. There are various reasons why different people pray, many of them personal, and some of them communal. In the list below, check off in the "yes" or "no" column reason that seem valid for you personally and in your own life. This should be done personally and filled out below in the sourcebook without discussing with others.

REASONS FOR PRAYING

Yes	No	
_____	_____	1. <i>Need to express innermost feelings</i> : People need to show gratitude, humility, excitement, wonder, awe, amazement, appreciation, and thankfulness for being alive
_____	_____	2. <i>Fulfillment of Desires</i> : People have needs and desires and often turn to God through prayer to help them achieve those desires or help them in times of trouble.
_____	_____	3. <i>Relationship with God</i> : Through prayer, people can establish a personal and intimate relationship with the Power behind the universe. Prayer can enable an individual to feel a partnership with God in completing the work of creation.
_____	_____	4. <i>Fear</i> : People have basic fears, problems, and guilt feelings and turn to prayer to enunciate and clarify them.
_____	_____	5. <i>Identification with the Jewish People</i> : Prayer can enable a Jew to identify with all past, present, and future members of the Jewish people. It can also help Jews who are praying in a large group identify with each other and form a sense of community. It is part of "being Jewish."
_____	_____	6. <i>Ethical Responsibility</i> : Prayer gives people the opportunity to evaluate themselves and their society by assessing the needs of others and evaluate their own values in relationship to the values expressed in the prayers.
_____	_____	7. <i>Study</i> : The act of Torah study itself is considered a form of Jewish worship and is included within prescribed prayer rituals.
_____	_____	8. <i>To Shape Experience</i> : The act of prayer can significantly change a given event. Saying a blessing at the appropriate time raises the experience to a higher and more spiritual level. Both the experience and the individual are enriched by a prayerful act.
_____	_____	9. <i>Self-discipline</i> : Regulating one's life around prayerful activity makes one sensitive, on a daily basis, to the wonders, mysteries, and challenges of living.
_____	_____	10. <i>Joy of language and melody</i> : Many people enjoy the beauty and power of well-written poetry, and the comfort of hearing familiar melody. Prayer is written, for the most part, in the language of poetry. The songs and melodies included in our services enhance this beautiful poetry.
_____	_____	11. <i>Mitzvah</i> - People engage in traditional prayer because they feel commanded by God to do so.

REASONS FOR NOT PRAYING

Yes	No	
_____	_____	1. God doesn't really listen (or his answers to my prayers are always "no").
_____	_____	2. I'm happy the way I am – why do I need to pray?
_____	_____	3. It is too time-consuming
_____	_____	4. I don't understand the Hebrew language well enough.
_____	_____	5. I don't believe in God (or at least I'm not sure I do).
_____	_____	6. It's boring.
_____	_____	7: I'm angry at the way God has messed up the world.
_____	_____	8. Why should God listen to me when God has everyone else to worry about?
_____	_____	9. I don't like my synagogue (or its Rabbi or Cantor).
_____	_____	10. It's just not what I'm interested in.
_____	_____	11. I don't know enough about prayer to be comfortable.
_____	_____	12. None of my friends are interested in synagogue or prayer.
_____	_____	13. It's old fashioned.
_____	_____	14. I like to be spontaneous, not told what to say.
_____	_____	15. I was turned off by Hebrew School.
_____	_____	16. The prayers don't seem to meet my needs.
_____	_____	17. I'm afraid of what it might do to me, like make me more religious or observant.

Sharing Together: Why Don't We Pray?

- Prayer is too time-consuming.
- I don't understand Hebrew well enough
- Prayer is really boring
- I don't feel connected to the words of the prayers
- I either don't believe in God, or don't think that God listens to my prayers, anyway.

Sharing Together: Why Do We Pray?

- **Fulfillment of desires/needs** – People have needs and desires, and they may turn to God through prayer to help them achieve their goals or help them in times of distress and trouble.
- **Identification with the Jewish People** – Prayer can enable a Jew to identify with all past, present, and future members of the Jewish People. It can also help Jews who are praying in a large group identify with each other and form a sense of community. It is part of "being Jewish".
- **Need to express innermost feelings** – People need to show gratitude, humility, excitement, wonder, awe, amazement, appreciation, and thankfulness for being alive.
- **Mitzvah** – People engage in traditional prayer because they feel commanded by God to do so.
- **Relationship with God** – Through prayer, people can establish a personal and intimate relationship with the Power behind the universe. Prayer can enable an individual to feel a partnership with God in completing the work of creation.

Some might have expressed earlier that they feel that God does not listen to their prayers. Some might argue that there is no God for if there was a God bad things would certainly not happen to good people. Confused? What do you think about prayer now?

Who Has Not Made Me a Slave

Question: We Jews of the ghetto of Kovno in Lithuania were enslaved by the Germans; were worked to the bone night and day without rest; were starved and were paid nothing. The German enemy decreed our total annihilation. We were completely dispensable. Most would die.

One morning during prayer, Reb Avraham Yosef, who was leading the congregation in the morning service, reached the blessing, "Who has not made me a slave," and shouted bitterly to the Master of all masters, "How can I recite the blessing of a free man? How can a hungry slave, constantly abused and demeaned, praise his Creator by uttering 'Who has not made me a slave?'"

Every morning as he led the prayers, he let out the same cry! And many of those who joined him in prayer felt the same way. I was then asked for the Torah ruling on this question: Should the blessing be omitted because it seemed to be a travesty- in which case it would be forbidden to recite it- or was it forbidden to alter or skip any part of the prayer text established by our sages?

Response: One of the earliest commentators on the prayers points out that this blessing was not formulated in order to praise God for our physical liberty but rather for our spiritual liberty. I therefore ruled that we might not skip or alter this blessing under any circumstances. On the contrary, despite our physical captivity, we were more obligated than ever to recite the blessing to show our enemies that as a people we were spiritually free.

Other responses:

- o We may say this *b'racha* to challenge God. If we pray that God is one who does not make us slaves, and yet we are, then we are challenging Him to live up to the God that we expect.
- o We say *b'rachot* in appreciation of our body, even if one may be physically handicapped. We are thankful and appreciative of what we do have, not what we don't.
- o We say *b'rachot* that keep us connected to the community and to generations and generations – *l'dor vador*.

Conclusion:

This Rav from the ghetto expresses an incredibly important point. People at different times may be able to manipulate our actions, but no one in the world can ever tell us what to think. It is upon us to pass on the idea that from generation to generation, we the Jewish People have an eternal covenant with God. It is upon us to sanctify every daily act- from eating a piece of bread to going to the bathroom to being thankful for a Day of Rest. No one can prevent us from thinking and believing in a God who challenges us every day, often placing obstacles in our path.

At the same time, when things happen to us in life that are not to our liking, we can not stop praying- we can not stop living as a Jew. In fact, that is the time when we must call out to God, calling God by all of the descriptions that we wish that He would live up to.

How We Pray

In the previous section, we looked at different reasons that motivate people to engage in prayer. The question remains – how does this prayer actually take place? What are some of the ways that we can translate our need and desire for prayer into action? How do we pray?

Think about the different ways in which you have prayed.

- Do you say personal prayers when you feel a certain need to reach God?
- Do you enjoy participating in communal prayers at your synagogue?
- Do you prefer the words of the siddur, or the own words that come from your heart?

There are many different ways in which meaningful prayer can take place – both personal and communal, both fixed and spontaneous. In this section, we will examine the various types of prayer within our tradition, and how they can become useful in our daily lives. We will look at the value found in different prayer methods, and how each of us can best find fulfillment in some form of prayer.

Brachot: The Building Blocks of Prayer

In Judaism, the most basic structure of prayer is the *bracha* – the blessing. Take a minute to think about all of the blessings in your own life. For what are you grateful? For what are you most appreciative? What do you love about your life? On the lines below, write down some of your own personal blessings (in any format that you wish):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Within the Jewish tradition, we also have many blessings for different aspects of our lives. Each of our three daily services is made up of a series of *brachot*. Additionally, there are other important *brachot* that we recite at times other than our fixed services, which are referred to as *Birchot HaNehehnin* - blessings we say for things we enjoy on various occasions. These include but are not limited to blessings over food and blessings that praise different aspects of God's creation in nature.

The following is a list of many common *brachot* that fall into this category of *Birchot HaNehehnin*. Learning these *brachot* and incorporating them into your daily life is a great way to make prayer a more all-encompassing experience. They help make prayer not just something that takes place at three fixed times during the day, but rather an experience that can be integrated into all aspects of our lives. Through saying these *brachot* at the appropriate times, we can remind ourselves of God's greatness, and become more grateful for that which we are given in our lives.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא מיני מזונות.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates various types of foods.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the tree.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the earth.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שהכל ניהי בדברו.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe by whose word all things exist.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא מיני בשמים.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates various spices.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא עצי בשמים.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates fragrant trees.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא עשבי בשמים.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates fragrant plants.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, הנותן ריח טוב בפרות.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who gives a pleasant fragrance to fruits.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, בורא שמן ערב.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe who creates fragrant oil.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, עשה מעשה בראשית.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, Source of Creation.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שכחו וגבורתו מלא עלום.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, whose power and might fill the whole world.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, זוכר הברית ונאמן בבריתו וקים במאמרו.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who remembers His covenant, is faithful to it, and keeps His promise.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שלא חסר בעולמו דבר, וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובים להנות בהם בני אדם.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has withheld nothing from His world and who has created beautiful creatures and beautiful tree for mortals to enjoy.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שעשה את-הים הגדול.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has made the great sea.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שככה לו בעולמו.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has such beauty in His world.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has shared of His wisdom with those who revere Him.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שנתן מחכמתו לבשר ודם.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שנתן מכבודו לבשר ודם.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has given of His glory to flesh and blood.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, הטוב והמטיב.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who is good and beneficent.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, דין האמת.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, the true Judge.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שעשה לי נס במקום הזה.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who granted me a miracle in this place.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקבוע מזוזה.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, whose mitzvot add holiness to our lives and who gave us the mitzvah to attach mezuzot.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שהחינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, for granting us life, for sustaining us, and for helping us to reach this day.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, משנה הבריות..

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who makes people different.

ברוך אתה הי אלה'נו מלך העולם, שנתן מחכמתו לבשר ודם.

Praised are You, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has given of His wisdom to mortals.

Daily Service Structure

On most days of the year, our prayer routine contains 3 services. Although it may seem surprising to you, all of the morning services for different occasions during the year have the same basic structure. The same is true for all afternoon and evening services. On certain days there may be additions or modifications to the structure, but the organization of each daily service remains the same no matter what the occasion.

Here is the general structure of the fixed prayer services:

Ma'ariv/Arvit (The Evening Service):

SHEMA and its blessings + (Half Kaddish) + AMIDAH + (Full Kaddish) + (Aleinu)

Shacharit (The Morning Service):

(Morning blessings) + (Passages of Praise) + (Half Kaddish) + SHEMA and its blessings + AMIDAH* + (Full Kaddish) + (Aleinu)

*Additions as appropriate: (Petition Prayers) + (Half Kaddish) + (Hallel) + (Torah Reading) + (Half Kaddish) + (Kdushah D'sidra)

Mincha (The Afternoon Service):

(Half Kaddish) + AMIDAH + (Full Kaddish) + (Aleinu)

*This format also applies to the Musaf (Additional Service) and Neilah (Yom Kippur concluding service)

Body Language: The “Choreography” of our Services

“Actions speak louder than words” – a phrase you have probably heard many times. In our daily lives, we send out many messages not only by the words that we speak, but also by the way we carry ourselves, the facial expressions we make, and the body movements that we use. In the same way that body language plays an integral role in our interactions with other people, so too does it play a role in our interaction with God.

While traditional Jewish prayer consists mainly of verbal expression, body language also plays a central role in our prayer experience. Often times, our “body language” customs remind us of the deeper meaning of the words we say, and help us attain a greater level of *kavanah* while we pray. These customs translate the words of our prayers into action, enabling us to express our emotions and thoughts in a physical manner.

On the following pages you will find a concise explanation and guide to the different body movements that play a central role in our services. As you read through these explanations, we hope that you can see which particular body language customs are already a part of your personal prayer experience, and which customs you might want to incorporate into your *tefillot* in the future.

A. Garments ~

Our desire to involve ourselves in *t'filah* both spiritually and physically is reflected in the three main articles that accompany our prayer experience – *talit*, *t'fillin*, and *kippah*. The *tallit* and *t'fillin* are worn during the morning service, with the exception of Shabbat, when the *t'fillin* are not worn. When putting on the *tallit*, we recite the blessing "to wrap oneself up in the *tzitzit* (fringes)." Some people even put the *tallit* over their heads while reciting the blessing in an attempt to concentrate better and fully envelop themselves in the act of putting on the *tallit*.

The mitzvot of *tallit* and *t'fillin* are mentioned in the Shema, so we also have special body language during this prayer related to these articles. When people close their eyes while reciting the first line of the Shema (in order to block out any distractions), some people cover their eyes with a corner of the *tallit*. Later, during the third paragraph of the Shema, it is customary to kiss the *tzitzit* (fringes) every time we recite the word "*tzitzit*". Since we are verbally making mention of the mitzvah of *tzitzit* during this prayer, it is logical that we simultaneously use our body language to emphasize the importance of the mitzvah.

The third garment worn during prayer (and by many people, all of the time) is the *kippah*. Unlike the mitzvot of *tallit* and *t'fillin*, which come directly from the Torah, the *kippah* is of more uncertain origin. One explanation is that Jews wear the *kippah* out of humility, so as to have a constant reminder that God is above us. Also, the use of the *kippah* may have developed from a desire for Jews to be different. As Christians began to take off hats in churches, Jews began to keep them on, as a sign of respect for God.

B. Sitting/Standing ~

You may have noticed that most of our services contain a great deal of moving between sitting and standing. Outside of the realm of prayer, standing generally serves as a sign of respect or of calling importance to our actions. Likewise, during prayer, there are many times when we stand to honor God or to call attention to passages in the service that are of particular importance. For example, there is one prayer that is called the *Amidah* (which literally means "standing"), because it is a prayer of particular importance and reverence. In fact, it is so important to stand up straight with heels together during the *Amidah* that one is not allowed to move his feet even the slightest amount during this prayer.

While standing during prayer, the direction we face is also important:

We face towards the Temple: how? If one is outside of Israel, one prays facing towards Israel; in Israel, one faces Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, one faces toward the Temple (site). If one is in the Temple, he faces toward the Holy of Holies. A person who is blind, or one who cannot determine the proper direction, or one who is on a ship, directs his intention toward God's presence and prays. – Rambam, *Hilchot T'fillot*, 5:3

The following is a listing of places in the morning service (*Shacharit*) when we stand, and some of the underlying reasons. (Note that customs of standing often vary among congregations.)

- We rise for *Birchot Hashachar*, the morning blessings. (It is also customary in some communities to remain standing for the selections about sacrifices which follow.)
- Mourners and those observing *Yahrzeit* rise if *Kaddish D'rabbanan* is recited at the end of the *Birchot Hashachar* section
- We rise again for *Baruch She'amar*, which begins the section of our service called *Psukay D'zimrah*.
- It is the custom to rise for the recitation of *Hodu* – Psalm 136, recited on Shabbat and festivals.
- We rise for the introduction to the Song of Moses (*Shirat Hayam*) which begins *vay'varech David*. The congregation is then seated at the end of the Song of Moses (*Shirat Hayam*).
- We rise for the *Barchu*, the point in the service where we join together to praise God. Many congregations also rise beforehand at *Yishtabach shimcha*, a prayer at the end of *Psukay D'zimra* which precedes the *Barchu*, and continue standing through *Barchu*.
- After the *Barchu*, the congregation remains seated until the preparation for the Amidah. We generally rise for the paragraph *Tzur Yisrael*, which comes immediately before the *Amidah*. Then we remain standing for the entire *Amidah*.
- When Hallel is recited (holidays and Rosh Chodesh), we rise for it.
- We rise for the Torah service as the ark is opened, and remain standing until the Torah is placed onto the *Amud* (table). After the Torah reading, we rise again as the Torah is lifted, and remain standing until the Torah is placed back in the *Aron Kodesh* (ark).
- At the end of the weekday morning service, some congregations rise for the Full Kaddish. Then, all congregations rise for the *Aleinu*.

In summary, there are certain times in all service when the congregation generally rises. These include parts of the service requiring a *minyan*, times when the ark is open or the Torah is being carried, and the *Amidah*. In addition, we place emphasis on other various prayers in our services by rising for them. By standing during these prayers, we are able to call attention to important parts of the service.

C. Bowing ~

Bowing is another important part of our body language for prayer. If you have been to *t'fillot* in any Synagogue, you have probably seen a great deal of bowing throughout the service. But why do we bow so often? What does bowing mean, anyway?

The act of bowing during *t'fillot* signifies humility and respect for God. When we bend our knees and bow, we are visibly showing our reverence for something greater than ourselves. The act of lowering ourselves and bowing shows God that we understand our own place in the world, and that we are thankful for God's greatness. At one time, Jews used to bow down all the way to the ground in order to show great respect. However, when this custom later became prevalent in the non-Jewish world, Jews gave it up, with the exception of certain parts of the High Holiday service, when the *hazzan* (or the entire congregation) bows all the way down.

There is often a great deal of confusion about when and how to bow during prayer. The following is a brief guide to bowing, which should hopefully give you a better idea of the bowing procedures. In general, an important principle to remember is that one should always be standing up straight when reciting Adonai, God's name. Now, we will go through the motions of bowing prayer by prayer:

- *Barechu* – The hazzan bows only at the waist (without bending the knee) while reciting the word *barechu*. During the word *et*, the hazzan should rise so that he is standing up fully straight when reciting *Adonai*, God's name. Then, the congregation follows a similar procedure, bowing for the word *baruch*, and standing straight for God's name.
- *Amidah* -
 - There is a standard procedure for bowing when we come to the words "*Baruch Atah Adonai*" in the *Amidah*. At the word *baruch* we bend the knees. At the word *atah* we bend the waist, straightening the knees. At the word *Adonai* we stand up straight. Note that this happens three times during the *Amidah*:
 1. At the first bracha beginning the Avot passage
 2. At the end of that same passage (Magen Avraham)
 3. At the end of the *Modim anachnu lach* bracha, where we say "*Baruch Atah Adonai...Hatov Shimcha...*"
 - There is another point in the *Amidah* where we bow, at the beginning of the *Modim anachnu lach* bracha. When saying these first three words, we bow only at the waist.
 - At the end of the *Amidah*, when we come to the final phrase beginning with *oseh shalom*, we take three steps backwards and bow from the waist, and then come three steps forward. It is as though we are gracefully leaving our intimate prayer with God.
- *Aleinu* – We bow during the section beginning *va'anachnu kor'im*, which literally speaks of bending the knee, bowing, and giving thanks. During the word *ve'anachnu* we are standing up straight. At the word *kor'im* we bend the knees. As we say the word *u'mishtachavim* we bow deeply from the waist, remaining that way through the word *u'modim*. Then, we rise up straight and tall at the end of the word.

Prayer: Fixed or Spontaneous?

Throughout Jewish history, one of the most widely debated topics has been about whether, and to what degree, prayer should be structured or spontaneous. Given the previously explained daily service structure, with three fixed services each day, it is clear that fixed prayer plays an integral role in Judaism. However, is there also room for spontaneous prayer? To what role do both of these types of prayer play a role in shaping our prayer experiences?

Many people today struggle with prayer due to the difficulty of reciting words written in a foreign language, and by people who lived hundreds and thousands of years ago. It is often difficult, though important, to find meaning and personal connection in words written by others. For this very reason, the Rabbis have debated the subject of fixed and spontaneous prayer for centuries. When our liturgy was first being organized, the Rabbis debated whether prayer should be required and structured or personal and spontaneous. Clearly, it was decided that a structured prayer system was necessary. However, the Rabbis have also left us great room within that structure for the addition of personal and spontaneous prayers.

Franz Rosenzweig provides an interesting summary of the relationship between these two types of prayer:

The difference between prescribed prayer and spontaneous prayer is that the latter is born out of the needs of the moment, while the former teaches him who prays to seek a need he might otherwise not feel.

Questions for Discussion:

1. *According to this quote – what is important about spontaneous prayer?*
2. *What is important about fixed, prescribed prayer?*
3. *What does Rosenzweig mean when he says that prescribed prayer teaches a person to “seek a need he might otherwise not feel”? Can you name some examples of these types of needs? (He brings up a very interesting idea, that fixed prayer has the power to help us realize and seek out needs that we might not think of on our own, but that should be important to us as people and Jews. Some of these needs may be community, a sense of obligation to God, responsibility to the whole of the Jewish people, etc. In our own spontaneous and personal prayers we may tend to address only our personal needs and forget about these other important needs for our people.)*
4. *What types of needs do YOU usually address in your personal prayers? What types of needs do we address in our fixed prayers? How are they similar, and how do they differ?*

The following selection from the Baal Shem Tov provides another perspective on the nature of fixed and spontaneous prayer:

“If a person does not know the meaning of the prayers, but worships God, be blessed, because he commanded that he should be worshiped, though he does not know even the meaning of the words, his prayer ascends and pierces the heavens, for the sacred words of the Torah and prayer contain a superior sanctity, and when they issue from the heart of a person who is praying for the sake of heaven, they bring about great amendments in the superior worlds.” [Or Yesharim, quoting the Baal Shem Tov] quoted in Days of Awe, S.Y. Agnon, p. 37.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1. What ideas can we learn or understand about the form of prayer from this selection?*
- 2. How did the Baal Shem Tov try to explain this phenomenon?*
- 3. Do you agree with this perspective? Should a person be blessed for praying even if he does not understand the words?*
- 4. What value lies in reciting the words of fixed prayer, even if the person reciting them does not understand the words? What value lies in creating and reciting one's own personal prayer?*
- 5. Can you recall a time when you felt the need to pray, but couldn't find the words or the format? Can you share with us about that experience?*

In addition to our fixed daily services, there are many times in our lives when we might feel a particular need for spontaneous prayer. Particularly during times of great happiness or great distress, we may feel the need to call out to God with requests or praise. The following story about personal spontaneous prayer was written by a young company commander in the Israel Defense Forces during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, who went on to become a Colonel and Chief Education Officer in the IDF.

"I Wanted To Pray but I Didn't Know How" (A True Story)

It took place during the War of Independence when I was a company commander.

One day I was preparing my company to face the mighty Egyptian Army which had made its way to Ashdod. Our company was disheveled and disenchanted. The only weapons at our disposal were a few Sten machine guns and some hand grenades. We set up our position in an orchard near Beit Oved.

It was a little ridiculous to think that we could stop the Egyptian tanks, positioned clearly right in front of us and not very far away.

At the time I didn't feel afraid nor did I really think about being afraid; I was too busy. How should we dig the trenches? How should I organize scouting patrols to discover any infiltrations?

By the time the sun had set, all was in order and ready for the inevitable. We expected the attack that was certain to come at sunrise. I laid down in one of the trenches alongside the orchard to rest and began to imagine what the next few hours would bring. At sunrise, I was struck with a terrible fear. I am usually not afraid, but this time I felt a trembling fear, a deep terrible fear.

...And then, at that moment, I felt this great need to pray, but I didn't know how for there was no prayer that I knew or could remember. But I nevertheless prayed. I prayed in a simple language, according to the way I understood prayer. All I can remember is my strong desire to pray the prayer of Jews throughout all generations - but I didn't know any.

Mordecai Bar-On, "P'tachim".

Questions for Discussion:

1. *What is special about prayer during a time of stress or danger?*
2. *How do you think a Jew who never learned to pray deals when he/ she has a need for prayer?*
3. *What can we learn from this testimony?*
4. *Think about times when you have recited a particularly meaningful personal prayer. Were they during times of happiness or great stress?*
5. *What motivated you to pray during these moments in your life?*

Communal Prayer: Why pray in a *minyan*?

Think about your all-time most meaningful prayer experience.

- Did this experience take place alone or in a group setting?
- What made this particular experience so meaningful for you?
- Did it make a difference whether you were alone or with a group? How so?

At various points in our lives, we have different types of prayer experiences. As discussed in the previous section, sometimes we pray with a fixed structure, and other times we recite our own spontaneous personal prayers. Sometimes we sing the prayers out loud, and other times we recite them silently to ourselves.

There is another important factor in shaping our prayer experiences – whether we are in a group setting or praying alone. In Judaism, the concept of communal prayer is particularly important. In many instances, a quorum of 10 people is needed to create a *minyan*, and certain prayers may only be said when a *minyan* is present. These prayers include the *Barchu*, the *Kedusha*, and the Mourners Kaddish.

- So why do you think that praying in a communal setting is so important in our tradition?
- Do you think that praying in a communal setting is important?
- Maybe it is better to pray individually and directly from the heart?

Arguments for Communal Prayer	Arguments for Individual Prayer
1. When I pray with a <i>minyan</i> , I have other people to inspire and motivate me for a meaningful prayer experience.	1. When I pray by myself, I do not have the pressure of keeping to a certain pace. I can say the prayers at my own speed so I feel comfortable.
2. When I pray with my community, I feel as though I am part of the greater Jewish People. I am not only praying to God, but also as part of the Jewish experience.	2. When I pray alone, nobody is judging me. It doesn't matter how much knowledge I have, or how I say the prayers, because nobody is watching.
3. When I am obligated to pray with a <i>minyan</i> , it keeps me focused and on track because I know that others are relying on my presence, and I also rely on them for prayer.	3. When I am alone, I can best connect to God in a personal and individual way. It is my alone time with God, and it feels more personal when others are not around.
4. Communal prayer is more engaging than individual prayer because of the power of song. When we sing the prayers out loud together, they hold more meaning for me.	4. Praying alone allows me to pray how I want to and when I want to. I can pray when I feel the need to, instead of being confined to certain service times.
5. Particularly during times of great difficulty or great happiness, it is comforting to be surrounded by a community.	5. I feel unable to truly express my inner feelings when in a community setting, particularly during times of great difficulty or great happiness.

So, where does the concept of a *minyan* come from? Why are we obligated to pray with a community, and how did we decide upon ten as the number required for a *minyan*? While this concept was developed and set in stone by the Rabbis, there are sources in the Torah that provide us with reasons for the decision upon this special number of ten.

- Text #1: Genesis, Chapter 18, verses 20 - 33

כַּוַיֹּאמֶר ה' זַעֲקַת סֹדֹם וְגִמְרוֹרָה כִּי־רַבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבֵדָה מְאֹד:
 כִּי אֲבִידָהָנָא וְאַרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקוֹתֶיהָ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עֲשֵׂנוּ | כְּלֵה וְאִם־לֹא אֲדַעָה:
 כִּב וַיִּפְנֵו מִשֵּׁם הַחַיִּלִּים וַיִּלְכְּו סֹדֹמָה וְגִמְרוֹרָה עֹדְנֵו עִמָּד לִפְנֵי ה':
 כִּג וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵף תִּסְפָּה צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע: כִּד אֵוִלִי יֵשׁ חַמְשִׁים
 צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר הַאֵף תִּסְפָּה וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא לְמָקוֹם לְמַעַן חַמְשִׁים
 הַצְדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּה: כֵּה חִלְלָה לָךְ מַעֲשֵׂת | כְּדָבַר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית צְדִיק
 עִם־רָשָׁע וְהִזֵּה כְּצְדִיק כְּרָשָׁע חִלְלָה לָךְ הַשֹּׁפֵט כְּלֵה־הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה
 מִשְׁפָּט: כִּו וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אִם־אֶמְצָא בְּסֹדֹם חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר
 וְנִשְׂאֵתִי לְכָל־הַמָּקוֹם בְּעִבּוֹרָם: כִּז וַיַּעַן אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא הוֹאֵלְתִּי
 לְדָבַר אֶל־אֲדֹנָי וְאַנְכִי עֹפֵר וְנֹאפֵר: כִּח אֵוִלִי יַחֲסִיֹּן חַמְשִׁים הַצְדִּיקִים
 חַמְשָׁה הַתְּשֻׁתִית בְּחַמְשָׁה אֶת־כָּל־הָעִיר וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשֻׁחִית אִם־אֶמְצָא
 שָׁם אַרְבָּעִים וְחַמְשָׁה: כִּט וַיִּסָּף עוֹד לְדָבַר אֱלֹו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵוִלִי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם
 אַרְבָּעִים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה בְּעִבּוֹר הָאֲרָבָעִים: ל וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא יַחַר לְאֲדֹנָי
 וְאֲדִבָּרָה אֵוִלִי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם שְׁלֹשִׁים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה אִם־אֶמְצָא שָׁם
 שְׁלֹשִׁים: לֵא וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא הוֹאֵלְתִּי לְדָבַר אֶל־אֲדֹנָי אֵוִלִי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם
 עֶשְׂרִים וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשֻׁחִית בְּעִבּוֹר הָעֶשְׂרִים: לֵב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא יַחַר לְאֲדֹנָי
 וְאֲדִבָּרָה אֶת־הַפֶּעַם אֵוִלִי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם עֶשְׂרֵה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשֻׁחִית בְּעִבּוֹר
 הָעֶשְׂרֵה: לֵג וַיִּלְךְ ה' כְּאֲשֶׁר כְּלֵה לְדָבַר אֶל־אַבְרָהָם וְאַבְרָהָם שָׁב לְמִקְמוֹ:

And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry, which has come to me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham still stood before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, Will you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Perhaps there are only fifty righteous inside the city; will you also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Be it far from you to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, be it far from you; Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous inside the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes;. Perhaps there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty five, I will not destroy it. And he spoke to him yet again, and said, Perhaps there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said to him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak; Perhaps there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord; Perhaps there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once; Possibly ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left talking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

What does this mean and how might it give us insight into why 10 are required for a minyan?

Summary: When God wants to destroy the city of Sodom for its people's evildoing, Abraham questions God, asking whether God will destroy the innocent along with the guilty. He begs God to save the city, bargaining about the number of righteous people required for the city to be saved. In this story, God decided that ten good people were enough to spare an entire city. Thus, this episode is used as an explanation of why ten people are needed for a *minyan*. If ten good people are enough for God to spare an entire city, then ten people's combined prayers should be strong enough for the prayers to be lifted up to God.

- Text #2: Numbers Chapter 13, verses 1 - 15

[פרשת שלח] אַוִּדְבָר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: בְּשַׁלַּח־לְךָ אַנְשִׁים וַיִּתְרוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר־אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְמִטֵּה אֲבוֹתָיו תִּשְׁלָחוּ כָּל־נְשִׂיא בְהֵם: ג וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַּר פָּאָרָן עַל־פִּי ה' כָּלֶם אַנְשִׁים רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵמָּה: ד וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹתֵם לְמִטֵּה רְאוּבֵן שְׁמוּעַ בֶּן־זִכְוִי: ה לְמִטֵּה שְׁמֵעוֹן שִׁפְט בֶּן־חֹרִי: ו לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֵה: ז לְמִטֵּה יִשְׂשָׁכָר יִגָּאֵל בֶּן־יוֹסֵף: ח לְמִטֵּה אֶפְרַיִם הוֹשֶׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן: ט לְמִטֵּה בִּנְיָמִן פִּלְטִי בֶן־רַפּוּא: י לְמִטֵּה זְבוּלֹן גַּדִּיאֵל בֶּן־סוּדִי: יא לְמִטֵּה יוֹסֵף לְמִטֵּה מְנַשֶּׁה גַּדִּי בֶן־סוּסִי: יב לְמִטֵּה דָן עַמִּיאֵל בֶּן־גַּמְלִי: יג לְמִטֵּה אֲשֶׁר סֹתוּר בֶּן־מִיכָאֵל: יד לְמִטֵּה נַפְתָּלִי נַחֲבִי בֶן־נֹפְסִי: טו לְמִטֵּה גָד גְּאוּאֵל בֶּן־מַכִּי:

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Send men, that they may spy the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall you send a man, every one a leader among them. And Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them from the wilderness of Paran; all those men were chiefs of the people of Israel. And these were their names; from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. From the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. From the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. From the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. From the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. From the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. From the tribe of Zebulun, Gadiel the son of Sodi. From the tribe of Joseph, that is, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gadi the son of Susi. From the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. From the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. From the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. From the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

- Numbers, Chapter 14, verses 25 - 33

כה וַיָּשׁבוּ מִתַּוֵּר הָאָרֶץ מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם: כו וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־כָּל־עֵדוּת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מִדְבַּר פָּאָרָן קַדְשָׁה וַיִּשְׁיבוּ אֹתָם דְּבַר וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּרְאוּם אֶת־פְּרִי הָאָרֶץ: כז וַיִּסְפְּרוּ־לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ בָּאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתֶּנּוּ וְגַם זִבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ הִוא וְזֶה־פְרִיָּהּ: כח אַפְס כִּי־עָזוּ הָעַם הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ וְהָעָרִים בְּצֻרֹת גְּדֹלֹת מְאֹד וְגַם־יְלָדֵי הָעֵינֶק רָאִינוּ שָׁם: כט עַמְלֹק יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב וְחִתִּי וְהִבּוּסִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּהָר וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב עַל־הַיַּם וְעַל גַּד הַיַּרְדֵּן: לו וַיִּהְיֶה כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעַם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלֵה נַעֲלֵה וַיִּרְשָׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי־יָכוֹל נוֹכַל לָהּ: לא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוֹכַל לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָעַם כִּי־חָזַק הִוא מִמֶּנּוּ: לב וַיֹּאֲבִיאוּ דְבַר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּרוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בָּהּ לְתוֹר אֹתָהּ אֶרֶץ אַכְלֹת יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ הִוא וְכָל־הָעַם אֲשֶׁר־רָאִינוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ אַנְשֵׁי מַדּוֹת: לג וְשָׁם רָאִינוּ אֶת־הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עַנְק מְרֵה־נַפְלִים וַנְּתִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחַגְבִּים וְכַן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם:

And they returned from searching the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the people of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word to them, and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, we came to the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey; and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people, who live in the land, are strong, and the cities are walled, and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the land of the Negev; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, live in the mountains; and the Canaanites live by the sea, and by the side of the Jordan. And Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men who went up with him said, we are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied to the people of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy, is a land that eats up its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the Nefilim, the sons of Anak, who come from the Nefilim; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were we in their sight.

- Numbers, Chapter 14, verses 36 - 38

וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיָּשׁוּבוּ וַיְגִידוּ [וַיְגִידוּ] עָלָיו
 אֶת־כָּל־הַעֲוֹנוֹת הַלְוָיָהּ לְהוֹצִיא דָבָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וַיָּמְתוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מִצִּצַּי דְּבַת־הָאָרֶץ
 רָעָה בַּמִּגֶּפֶה לִפְנֵי ה': וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נּוּן וְכָלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֵה חֵיו מִן־הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם
 הַחֹלְקִים לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

And the men, which Moses sent to spy the land, who returned, and caused all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Those men that brought up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were of the men who went to spy the land, lived still.

What does this mean and how might it give us insight into why 10 are required for a minyan?

Summary: When 12 spies are sent to scout out the Land of Canaan (Israel), they return with mixed reviews. Ten of the spies mention the positives about the land but explain that it will be too hard for them to conquer, and that the people living there are strong and mighty. Although two of the spies provide more encouraging reports, the people choose to listen to the majority (the ten spies), believing that conquering the land would be an impossible feat. In this episode, the negative reports of ten spies were sufficient to convince the entire people of the impossibility of conquering the land. Thus, this story is used as an explanation of why ten people are needed for a *minyan*. If ten people have the strength to convince an entire people of their argument, then ten people's combined prayers should be strong enough for the prayers to be lifted up to God.

As we move from the stories of the Torah toward modern day Judaism, there are many other sources and stories that help explain the idea of communal prayer and *minyan*.

- ❖ From the Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, commonly known as Maimonides):

"Congregational prayer is always heeded, and even there are sinners, the Holy One, blessed is he, does not reject the prayer of the group. Therefore, one should join a congregation, and not pray alone if he can pray with a minyan."- Maimonides, Hilchot T'fillah, Chapter 8:1.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Can you explain the importance of Rambam's view on prayer in a minyan?
2. What do you see as the main advantage of prayer in the minyan setting?

Mourners are required to recite the Mourners' Kaddish with a minyan, basically forcing them into a community atmosphere at a time when they would be likely to seclude themselves.

1. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
2. Why do you think it was decided that a minyan is required for Mourners' Kaddish?
3. What positive effects can a community prayer setting have on a mourner?
4. Do these positive effects apply to others who are having difficulty in their life as well?

- ❖ Rabbi Reuven Hammer (Conservative Rabbi in Jerusalem, master of *t'fillah*, writer/editor of *Or Chadash*, a commentary on the Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals) writes:

"Individual prayer may be mainly a way of communicating with God and expressing our feelings, reaction, and needs. When reflected through the prism of Jewish worship, however, prayer is much more than that. It is an integral part of the complete religious life of a Jew – and essential part, but nevertheless only a part."

(Entering Jewish Prayer, page 3)

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Hammer, what is the difference between individual and communal prayer?
2. Does he make a value judgment on these two types of prayer?
3. According to Hammer, in what way does communal prayer elevate the prayer experience?

- ❖ "To Be One of a Minyan" by Abba Kovner

During my first week in Israel, I stood by the Western Wall. My mother, of blessed memory, had not made this request of me. I stood a foot away from the Wall, from the stones.

I felt distant, like I did not belong. I felt connected to another kind of experience and hesitated to take another step. But someone tugged my coat sleeve and asked me to join a minyan. I joined the minyan, I recited the Mincha service and got to the prayer "Bless us our Father, all of us as one..." That was unique; the most unique in Judaism, to be one of a minyan, to know that the ninth needs the tenth, and one needs the other nine. It is possible that this is the most significant thing about Judaism and there is nothing more unique and more Jewish.

My prayer is to always be one of all. It is my prayer that my good words will connect with that which is uttered by the congregation, those close to the front of the synagogue, close to the leader. I ask for nothing else. There is nothing more significant in life.

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to this selection, what is the importance of prayer in the context of the minyan?
2. What has your experience been participating in a minyan as opposed to an individual prayer experience?
3. Can you think of any particularly powerful experiences you have had with communal prayer? What made these experiences special?

Prayer Through History

“Prayer is probably as old as people. But early worship all over the world, certainly formal worship, consisted chiefly of sacrifices...”

The mainstream practice within Judaism has not always been prayer, as it is today. For many thousands of years, the Israelite people sought to communicate with God through sacrifice. Much of the Torah, especially *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, is filled with instructions relating to sacrifices. However, towards the end of the Biblical era and the beginning of the Temple period (7th Century B.C.E.), Judaism began to see an evolution in Jewish practice, witnessing prayer serve as an integral role along with sacrifices.

“The evidence seems clear that even in the days of the First Temple, prayers as well as sacrifices were part of the regular Temple service. The most famous prayer of all, the *Shema Yisrael*, and the Ten Commandments were also recited daily.” (*Higher and Higher*, p. 71)

We see this in very instances in the Bible, including a story of Daniel.

“The enemies of Daniel came to the king to tell him of all the evil which Daniel had done. When the king asked Daniel to answer, the time for the evening prayers had come. So Daniel slipped to his knees (it was his favorite way of praying), and began to recite the *Shema*.

‘What shall be done with one who is guilty and will not answer his king?’ asked the enemies. In this way, Daniel fell to the hands of his enemies. They took him to a den full of lions and threw him to the growling beasts.

It came to pass in the morning, when the enemies returned, Daniel was still alive. All night long he had prayed, and the lions had not eaten him. Then Daniel’s enemies said, ‘The lions were not hungry.’ And the king said, ‘Let us test and see if they were hungry or not.’ With that, the king threw all Daniel’s enemies into the lions’ den. So it was that Daniel’s enemies were destroyed by hungry beasts, while Daniel was saved through prayer.”

- a legend of Daniel (*When a Jew Prays*)

- What does this story tell us about the importance of reciting the *Shema* at this time period (that he knelt before the King to praise **God**, not the King)?
- How does this story describe the outcome of prayer?
- Could we depend on being saved from lions by praying (metaphor- if you have a test tomorrow, will prayer help you?) Think about the other sessions. Why do we pray?

- In the Bible, do we see many examples of prayer?
- If so, what are some that you can think of?
- What types of prayer are mentioned or alluded to?
- Are there any stories that you are aware of in which someone prays?

There are not many instances in the *Tanach* where we find moments of prayer. That is because in those times, most people would sanctify God through sacrifices. However, there are many critical moments where we do learn how petitioning and praising God was an integral part of Jewish life at the time.

# UTTERED BY	OBJECT OF PRAYER	OUTCOME OF PRAYER	SOURCE
Abraham	That God forgive the sin of Sodom.	God agrees to forgive Sodom if ten righteous persons can be found in the city.	Genesis 18.23-33
Abraham	That Abimelech's wives no longer be barren.	The house of Abimelech is healed.	Genesis 20.17-18
Abraham's servant	That he succeed in his mission.	He meets Rebekah.	Genesis 24.12-14
Isaac	That Rebekah bear children.	Jacob and Esau are born.	Genesis 25.21
Jacob	That he be protected from Esau.	The brothers make peace with each other.	Genesis 32.9-12
Moses	That Israel be forgiven for the sin of the golden calf.	God forgives the people.	Exodus 32.31-35
Moses	That God continue to show grace to His people.	God continues to be gracious to Israel.	Exodus 33.12-18
Moses	That Miriam be cured of her leprosy.	Miriam is cured after seven days.	Numbers 12.18
Moses	That the people be forgiven for having believed the spies sent into Canaan.	God forgives the people.	Numbers 14.12-19
Moses	That he be permitted to enter the Promised Land.	God shows Moses the Promised Land before his death.	Deuteronomy 3.23-25
Samson	That he be avenged upon his enemies.	With his death he avenges himself.	Judges 16.28
Hannah	That she be given a son.	Samuel is born.	1 Samuel 1.11
David	That God cause His Presence to dwell in the Temple.	That Davidic line continues as the reigning dynasty.	2 Samuel 7.18-29
Solomon	That God cause His Presence to dwell in the Temple.	God causes His Presence to dwell in the Temple.	1 Kings 8.36-37
Elijah	That the Lord vanquish Baal.	Fire descends from heaven and consumes Elijah's offering.	1 Kings 18.36-37
Hezekiah	That Israel be saved from Sennacherib.	An angel smites the Assyrian camp.	2 Kings 19.15-20
Asa	That God help his army defeat the Ethiopians.	God smites the Ethiopians.	2 Chronicles 14.11
Jehoshaphat	That God defend His people against the armies of Moab and Ammon.	God grants Jehoshaphat the victory.	2 Chronicles 20.6-12
Hezekiah	That God forgive the people for not having sanctified themselves before eating the paschal lamb.	God forgives the people.	2 Chronicles 30.18-19
Nehemiah	That God aid His captive people	God promises that He will rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.	Nehemiah 1.5-11
Daniel	That God rebuild Jerusalem.	Jerusalem will be rebuilt in 70 weeks.	Daniel 9.4-19
Jonah	That he be taken out of the whale.	The whale casts Jonah out upon dry land.	Jonah 2.2-9

This chart is from Pinchas Wollman-Tsamir, *The Graphic History of the Jewish Heritage* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1963), 211:

- According to the Tanach, does prayer work?
- What is the outcome of most prayers in the Tanach?
- What is the outcome of most prayers in the Tanach?
- Do you think that this is the usual outcome of prayer today?
- What do any of these prayers have in common with our prayers today?
- Is prayer timeless?
- Are the prayers from thousands of years ago the same as what we pray for today?
- Does God respond to our prayers?

How was the Shema recited during Temple times?
What happened soon afterward?

Proclaiming the *Shema*

"At one time, the practice was to have the leader of the service proclaim the first line (*Shema Yisrael...*) aloud, imitating, as it were, Moses when he first said this to the people of Israel. The leader may have held up a scroll with this written on it for all to see. The people would then respond with the words used in the Temple whenever God's Name was uttered, *Baruch... va'ed*, Blessed be His Glorious Majesty's Name for all eternity." [Or Chadash (page xxi)]

שְׁמַע | יִשְׂרָאֵל, ה' | אֱלֹהֵינוּ, ה' | אֶחָד:
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Exert from *Or Chadash* - "When this practice ceased, possibly as a result of the Roman interdiction of the recitation of the *Shema*, this response seemed out of place. There was no need for a response to something one said to oneself. Furthermore, it seemed inappropriate to interrupt the biblical text."

- Since the line "*baruch shem kavod...*" is not from the section of the Torah where we find the *Shema* text, why should we continue to say it in our prayer service in this point, since we no longer yell back and forth these two lines?
- What do you think the Rabbis said to this?
- Did they attempt to figure out a way to accommodate this line in the *Shema*, even though it did not necessarily fit?

Difficult question: How did Rabbis of the time find a way to make a new practice common?

The *Midrash Rabbah* is a series of stories that fill in the Torah in places that seem complicated, or need to be more complete with a story. They are similar to what we now refer to as sermons of the Rabbis from the 3rd Century C.E. The Rabbis would attempt to convey a specific message to their congregants. By emphasizing a certain message, they would then use these stories as proof for customs or traditions.

One of their legends explains that: "when Moses went up on high, he heard the angels singing *Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed* - he brought it down to the Israelites. So, why don't we recite it out loud? A parable- A man stole a precious jewel, gave it to his wife, and told her, 'you may wear it at home, but never in public'. However, on *Yom Kippur*, when every Jew is pure as an angel, then we proudly proclaim, aloud, *Baruch... va'ed.*"

(Rabbi Israel Silverman)

- What would be the purpose of this story?
- Why would the Rabbis want to convey this message to their congregation?

Another *midrash* explaining explanation why we recite this line:

"In his final hour, Jacob (whose other name is Israel) gathers his children to his deathbed, anxious about whether any have strayed from belief. He asks them whether in their hearts they harbour doubts about the One who spoke and brought-the world into being. They respond: 'Here Israel, our father, just as there is no dispute in your heart, so there is none in our heart. God is our God, God is One.' Prostrate on his bed at the moment his soul is departing, Jacob responds: 'Blessed be the Name of the Glory of God's sovereignty now and forever'. Hearing this exchange, God affirms to Jacob that his name will be immortalized in the twice-daily recitation of the *Shema*..." Sifri Deuteronomy 31, 31, 5-7. (Pray Tell, p. 59)

- What would be the purpose of this story?
- Why would the Rabbis want to convey this message to their congregation?
 - This *midrash* renders the *Shema* a mutual test of faith across the generations
 - It teaches that we have to teach our children about Judaism, about prayer, which is a theme throughout the *Shema*

So, from this section we see that in the Temple and immediate post-Temple period, public prayer and the *Shema* were important aspects of Jewish life.

What Would You Do?

Jewish life drastically changed upon the destruction of the Temple. The *Beit Hamikdash* was central for the financial, political, and ritual life of the Jewish People. Upon its destruction, the Jews required an infrastructure- or else the religion would have disintegrated very quickly, between conversion, persecution, and most devastating, lack of faith. "The need for more definitive rulings [regarding the order of prayer service] became acute after the Destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E."

Jewish Leadership

Picture yourself as a Jewish leader approximately 2,000 years ago. After living for some time with the Second Temple, you then witness its destruction. The whole backbone of Jewish practice lies in its infrastructure, and it is gone. Now what?

However, over the past few years, study and prayer have evolved into another important aspect of Jewish life.

What do you do to keep the Jewish people?

What method of practice can now become the centre of communal Jewish life?

Now fast forward 200 years... it's 2204

Should the Temple be rebuilt? Who would be the priests?

Who would decide to do this? Would all Jews be able to participate in this institution?

Many people believe that the only reason that the dispersed Jewish People have survived for thousands of years is due to the synagogue - to prayer. Because we have set times for congregating, and because we come together as a community to pray, our existence has not been dependent on a homeland - rather on our devotion to living close to each other, for the central purpose of prayer and study.

"This national tragedy generated an enormous spiritual upheaval, demanding not only new definitions of the place and status of prayer, but changes in their very formulation. When the Sanhedrin, the highest religious authority for the Jewish people, sat in the town of *Yavneh* following the Destruction of the Temple, it laid down many regulations... these were fixed according to the School of Hillel, thereby resolving many disputes; indeed, the very existence of a single central authority led to a general uniformity of the prayer formulation." (Steinsaltz, 51)

"Many people are under the mistaken impression that Jewish prayer developed mainly as a substitute for the sacrificial system of worship used in the Temple. This is not exactly the case, however... When the First Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.E. and the Jews were exiled to Babylonia, lacking the central place of worship they were used to, they began to assemble regularly to talk, pray, and study. Thus, according to one theory, the synagogue was born... Therefore, when the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. - and again a centralized worship system was no longer available—the institutions of prayer and the synagogue were able to take over. By the first centuries of the Common Era, the synagogue and the 'House of Study' were guiding forces of Judaism." (Higher and Higher, p. 75)

However, prayer was not meant to take the place of sacrifices. They were meant to have a similar structure, so that the people would already be familiar with some of the customs.

EXTRA, EXTRA – READ ALL ABOUT IT
Here's the scoop!

When you were in elementary school and your teacher told you about journalism, what did your teacher tell you about the qualities of a good reporter?

What is every reporter supposed to answer in every article?

The 5 W's... and an H - WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW?

Who initiated what we know as *tefillah*?

Answer: The Rabbis of Yavneh.

What did they create?

Answer: A fixed order of prayer, including the *Shemoneh Esreh*, the times of prayer, various customs, etc...

When did they create it?

Answer: Immediately after the destruction of the Second Temple.

Where were people supposed to fulfill the idea of prayer?

Answer: In places where the community would gather together- the whole purpose of fixed prayer is that we come together, and recite the fixed order.

How did they do it? How did they make it an integral part of everyone's lives?

Answer: By making the prayer services parallel to those sacrifices in the Temple, they also developed a legal system where at its core lay the regulations behind times, guidelines, and customs regarding *Tefillah*.

BIG QUESTION –

Why was it necessary to create a fixed prayer service?

Values in Prayer

A Close-up Look at the Amidah

Often times, we tend to go through the motions of our prayers without closely examining the texts and the meaning behind them. What are we praying for? And more importantly, what are the underlying values behind the text of our liturgy? How closely do our own personal values match with those of the traditional texts of our daily prayer services?

The *Amidah* (literally, “Standing”) is the central prayer that we recite during each of the three daily services. Also commonly known as the *Shmoneh Esreh* (literally, “Eighteen”), the *Amidah* contains nineteen blessings that give us enormous insight into the values behind our liturgy. (Note: The *Amidah* originally included only eighteen blessings, and the “*Velamalshinim*” blessing was added later on.) We learn in the Talmud Megillah 17b that the Rabbis wrote the blessings of the *Amidah*. The blessings within this one prayer touch on numerous subjects and express a wide variety of values and ideals that are of greatest importance in Judaism.

As an overview, the *Amidah* is divided into three major sections. In the Talmud, Brachot 34a, we find this explanation. Rabbi Haninah says:

- While saying the first three *b'rachot* one resembles a servant who praises his master.
- During the middle *b'rachot* one resembles a servant requesting gifts from her master.
- During the last three *b'rachot* one resembles a servant who has received his gifts and takes his leave.

Using this metaphor as a way of thinking about the *Amidah*, we can then divide the *Amidah* into three parts:

- **PRAISE:** During the first three *brachot* of the *Amidah*, we approach God by first praising all that is wonderful about God and what God does.
- **PETITION:** Once we have praised God, we use the thirteen middle *brachot* of the *Amidah* to recite prayers that ask God to do things for us. The first six of these are considered to be personal requests, and the latter seven are seen as national requests for the Jewish People.
- **THANKSGIVING:** After making our requests from God, we take the last three *brachot* of the *Amidah* to thank God in advance for blessings that will come to be.

In this session, we will examine some of the core values that are found in the *brachot* of the *Amidah*. Through this, we will be able to evaluate our own personal values and how they match up with those of our traditional prayers.

- What values are important to you?
- Do you have Jewish values?
- What are they?

“May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before You”

Prayer... What does it mean to you NOW?

One of the basic goals of Jewish worship is to force us on a regular, daily basis to confront ourselves honestly – asking ourselves who we are, what is important to us, how we relate to others, and what are our goals in life. Let’s take a close look as to where we are now in terms of prayer.

Below you will find questions and an assessment line where you can indicate where you think you are at on certain issues dealing with personal prayer.

1. How often do you feel you should spend time in prayer?

Never	3 times a week	every day
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2. Approximately how long a period should each of your prayer experiences last?

1 minute	20 minutes	1 hour
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3. How much of a given service so you think you should recite?

As little as I like	minimum amount	every prayer
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4. What percentage of the *t'filot* should you recite in Hebrew?

0%	50%	100%
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5. How willing are you to discipline yourself to some regular daily prayer?

Unwilling	somewhat willing	extremely willing
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6. Are you a person of habit or whim?

whim: I do things when I feel like it	can get used to something if I make an effort	creature of habit: easily get into routines
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7. What percentage of your waking hours do you spend doing things you like to do?

0%	50%	100%
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8. What percentage of your waking hours do you spend doing things you must do?

0%	50%	100%
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9. How much more effort are you willing to put into making daily/Shabbat prayer more a part of your life?

Very little effort	moderate amount	a great deal of effort
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<p>Exodus Rabbah Parashah 21 When Israel prays, they do not all pray at once. Rather every congregation prays by itself, first one then another. After all the congregations finish all the prayers, the angel that oversees prayer takes all the prayers that were said in all the synagogues, and makes them into a crown, and places them on the head of the Holy One Blessed be He.</p>	<p>שמות רבה פרשה כה בשעה שישראל מתפללין אין אתה שכולן מתפללין כאחד אלא כל כנסיה וכנסיה מתפללת בפני עצמה, הכנסת הזו תחלה ואח"כ הכנסת האחרת, ומאחר שכל הכנסיות גומרות כל התפלות המלאך הממונה על התפלות נוטל כל התפלות שהתפללו בכל הכנסיות כולן ועושה אותן עטרות ונותן בראשו של הקב"ה...</p>
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- According to this *midrash*, what is the function of prayer?
- Were there moments this week when you felt God was hearing your prayer? When?
- Did you feel like you were relating to God during *t'filot*? How? Why?
- What was your favorite *t'filah* moment this week? Least favorite?
- What service did you find most meaningful? Least meaningful?
- Is there a particular prayer that stands out for you from this week?
- What is that prayer and why does it stand out to you?
- Do you view prayer any differently than before this week? If yes, how so?
- What were your favorite prayers at the beginning of encampment? Would you like to add any prayers to this list now?
- How do you feel about the "prayer opportunities" that you have at home in your community? What do you enjoy about these opportunities and what do you not enjoy about it?
- How can you make prayer a positive experience?

Last thoughts...

In modern times many Jews have felt the need to create new prayers which respond to our particular time and place. For instance, since 1948 prayers have been written for the State of Israel. If you could write a prayer about something, what would your prayer be? You will now have the opportunity to write your own prayer.

May you continue learn and enrich your life through your prayers and the prayers that have been a part of our tradition for thousands and thousand and thousands of years.