



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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Davening Tips

Taking a break from our usual routine, I wanted to focus in on something I read as I was researching Pesukei dZimra. The **Sefer Chasidim** writes as follows -

חקור לך אחר ניגונים וכשתתפלל אמור אותן באותו ניגון
שמתוק ונעים בעיניך...וימשוך לך אחר מוצא פיך

Find for yourself tunes (niggunim) and when you daven, say the words with whichever niggun is sweet and pleasant in your eyes, so that your heart will be pulled after the words of your mouth.

I wanted to focus in on this idea because I think it's so relevant to today's times specifically. During the corona crisis, many of us have found our davening routine disrupted. Those who usually daven with a minyan, find themselves often davening alone at home. Mothers, who were already davening at home, now find themselves surrounded by the cacophony and distraction of all their children at home. Others find themselves with more time on their hands so that they have the ability to daven without the usual morning routine rush.

These changes implore us to take a deeper look at our davening. How can we use

these circumstances to give our davening a boost? It's time to take a fresh look at our davening, not only by analyzing the deeper meaning of the words, but also in adopting new practices of **how** we daven.

How can we take the beautiful words of the davening (Pesukei dZimra and beyond) and really feel them and internalize them? Perhaps the approach of the Sefer Chasidim is the key. Let's try choosing a few words here and there within the Tefilla and attach a niggun to them. This could help pull us out of our daydreaming and bring us back to our Tefilla. It will help anchor us and will enable us to feel the Tefilla in our hearts, to internalize it, and to truly connect to the words we are saying. This is because words are good but they are finite. Music is what goes beyond the boundaries of words. The Avoda in the Beit Hamikdash was always accompanied by the singing of the Leviim, as this was the ultimate expression of our Avodat Hashem.

I know those words might sound foreign to some of us. Who sings when they daven? That's not for me!! Many of us have grown up in an intellectual society that doesn't give room for our neshamot to breathe. Now is the chance to get rid of some of our inhibitions – we are at home, by ourselves, with lots of time on our hands. Why not give it a try? Additionally, because we

might be lacking that minyan that gives us structure and inspiration and because we might be distracted by the noise around us at home or at our street minyan, this gives us a way to re-focus and re-inspire ourselves in a different way.

We need to view our Tefilla not as a chore to complete... but rather as the highlight of our morning

Personally, I remember my first truly inspiring davening experience. I was 18 years old and I was studying in Israel for the year. Rosh Hashana arrived and a minyan was imported so that the whole seminary could daven together. My Rosh Hashana experience until then usually consisted of me counting down the pages until the end of davening. I davened, but it wasn't very inspirational, and I certainly did not sing!! Who sings in shul? Suddenly, as I was davening at the minyan in my seminary, I noticed that one of my best friends, who I considered to be a pretty normal person, was singing! At first I just thought it was

really strange. But after a while, I decided to give it a try. And it changed my entire davening experience!

Beyond this idea of singing, another helpful davening tip is found in the **Mishna Berura 51:20**. He writes that a person should read the words of Tefilla the way that one counts coins. Read the words slowly - imagine that you are giving a speech and you want each word to come out clearly and with emphasis. This too will help us to focus on what are we saying and to make it all the more meaningful. We need to view our Tefilla not as a chore to complete before moving on to breakfast and brushing teeth, but rather as the highlight of our morning and a unique opportunity to connect with Hashem before jumping into the hecticness of the day.

These tips are easy to say, a lot harder to implement. We are all so used to our rote davening routines that it's hard to break out of years of habit. But let's at least give it a try. We might succeed one day and fail the next, and that's okay, it's all part of our life-long Avoda. As long as we're trying, we're pushing in the right direction, and Hashem will help us get there **להבא לטוהר מסעיין לו** ■

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