



PROJECT I.G.N.I.T.E.

Ignite • Grow • eNergize • Inspire • Tefillah • Excel

CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO HAVE TRUE KAVANNAH IN TEFILLAH

What better way to improve the power of your prayer than to try a **Kavannah Challenge**!

• **TO BEGIN:** Start with **Challenge 1** on the next panel. When you feel you've mastered that challenge, then add another challenge.

• **THE GOAL:** Master all 7 **Kavannah Challenges** in this pamphlet!

For strategies to improve your kavannah in Tefillah, see **"Praying With Fire"** Chapter 6: "13 Practical Strategies to Achieve True Kavannah" (pp. 160-219).



1616 East 29th Street | Brooklyn, NY 11229
(201) 837-0354 | prayingwithfire@yeshivanet.com (e-mail only)

KEEP THIS PAMPHLET IN YOUR
"PRAYING WITH FIRE" BOOK.

Challenge 1



Before Shacharis - Accept upon
yourself the mitzvah ואהבת לרעך כמוך

challenge

1 In Hashem's view, *Klal Yisrael* is more than a collection of individuals - it is one integrated whole. All Jews are connected to each other; every *simcha* is a happy occasion for *Klal Yisrael*, and every difficulty and sorrow, too, affects all of us.

This unbreakable bond is expressed in the plural phrasing of the *Shemoneh Esrei*. Each *bracha* is said not only for our individual benefit, but with every other Jew's benefit in mind as well. Therefore, to truly pray as we should, *Ahavas Yisrael* - love of one's fellow Jew, is essential.

The *Arizal* states that before beginning to pray in the morning, a person should accept upon himself to fulfill, "ואהבת לרעך כמוך" - "Love your fellow Jew as you love yourself." (Cited by Magen Avraham, Beginning of Siman 46)

Challenge 2



Have kavannah for the meaning
of "פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון" - אשרי

challenge

2 Sincere prayer starts by recognizing to Whom one is praying - the Master of the Universe, Creator and Provider of all. This concept is encapsulated in the words of Psalm 145, "Ashrei": "פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון" - "You [Hashem] open Your hand, and You satisfy the desire of every living creature". This verse must be recited with kavannah as to its meaning (Siman 51:7).

If a person does not concentrate on this verse, he is required to repeat from "פותח את ידך" until the end of אשרי, even if he does not realize the lapse until he has finished *Shemoneh Esrei* (Mishneh Berurah, Siman 51:16).

Challenge 3



Accept the עול מלכות שמים - ברוך שם כבוד and שמע
and have kavannah for the meaning of the words

challenge

3 'קריאת שמע' expresses the central tenet of a Jew's faith, establishing his status as the devoted subject of the One, All-Powerful King. The שמע includes two distinct declarations. The first is embodied in the words "ה' אלקינו" - "Hashem, our G-d," which constitutes "קבלת עול מלכות שמים" - our acceptance of the yoke of Divine Kingship. The second declaration, "ה' אחד" - "Hashem is One," affirms our belief that there is no other power or Creator other than G-d.

Accordingly, one's intention when saying the words of the שמע should be: "Hear, Israel: We accept G-d (Who Was, Is, and Will be and is Master of all) as our King, and there is none other like G-d." (Siman 60:5; Mishneh Berurah, Ibid:11) The verse "...ברוך שם כבוד..." must also be recited with kavannah as to its meaning (Mishneh Berurah, 63:11).

A person who does not concentrate during the first verse of שמע must recite it again with concentration (either in a low voice or after a brief pause) (Ibid, 61:22;63:12,14).

Challenge 4



Shemoneh Esrei ברכת אבות -
Concentrate on the meaning of the words

challenge

4 Coming before Hashem to recite *Shemoneh Esrei* is meant to be a heartfelt experience of an empty-handed subject coming before his All-Powerful, beneficent King. To the extent that a person recognizes that without Hashem's kindness, he has nothing — that he must beseech the King anew each day for the gifts that keep him and the world alive — he has captured the kavannah demanded by this *tefillah*. This is the posture and attitude one must maintain throughout his daily audiences with Hashem.

One is required to be aware of the meaning of the words as he recites **ברכת אבות**, in which he calls upon Hashem as one of the children of His beloved servants, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Even if a person fails to keep in mind the meaning of the words in the rest of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, he is required at least to have kavannah for the meaning of the words of **ברכת אבות** (*Siman* 101, *Seif* 1). See '**Praying with Fire**' pp. 110-117 for the word by word meaning of this vital brachah.

Challenge 5



Have kavannah
for Hashem's mercy on Yerushalayim
ולירושלים עירך

challenge

5 Every prayer in our hearts, every supplication of *Shemoneh Esrei*, has at its root one common answer — the complete revelation of Hashem's glory in the world. The venue of this revelation is Yerushalayim, the seat of holiness. The "Yerushalayim" for which we have mourned for thousands of years does not refer to the city alone, but rather, to the world-wide recognition of G-d that the rebuilt Yerushalayim of the **גאולה** will provide. (With Hearts Full Of Faith, Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, ArtScroll, page 190).

When the Jewish people were led into exile after the destruction of the First **בית המקדש**, they wept by the rivers of Babylon and made an oath to remember Yerushalayim (*Psalms* 137:5-6). With their longing, and the longing of every generation since, we turn our hearts to our beloved city and pray that Hashem, too, will turn to it with mercy.

Challenge 6



Have in mind
that Hashem should bring Moshiach
את צמח דוד

challenge

6 The Gemara teaches that when a person arrives in the World to Come, he is asked, "צפית לישועה" — "Did you hope for the Messianic salvation?" *Shemoneh Esrei* affords us the opportunity to fulfill this requirement. According to the *Arizal* (see *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Orach Chaim*, *Siman* 118), this opportunity is in the bracha **את צמח דוד** when we say **כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוִינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם** — "for we hope for Your salvation all the day." Upon saying those words, a person should open his heart to the promise of the **גאולה**, to sincerely yearn for the Messianic salvation to come in our day, and thereby fulfill the mitzvah of **צפית לישועה**.

Challenge 7



Have in mind gratitude for
everything Hashem gives us
מוֹדִים

challenge

7 Every person alive in this world knows in his heart that he is the recipient of goodness from Heaven that far, far outweighs any possible merit one could earn. Just as a child has no way to repay his parents for giving him life and sustaining him in his helplessness, there is nothing man can do for G-d that would begin to measure up to His kindness to us. Therefore, we begin uttering our thanks in a bowed position, in complete humility, for we receive so much more than we can possibly deserve.

The *Mishneh Berurah* (*Siman* 101, *Seif Katan* 3) comments that, according to some authorities, **מוֹדִים** is similar to **ברכת אבות** in that at a minimum, one must understand the meaning of the words. *Sefer Chasidim* (*Siman* 158) and the *Roke'ach* state that if one did not have kavannah during **ברכת אבות**, he can satisfy the minimum requirement of kavannah during **מוֹדִים**.

BOOKMARK FOR SIDDUR

בס"ד



For strategies to improve
your Kavannah, see Chapter 6
of *"Praying with Fire."*

1



Before Shacharis – Accept upon
yourself the mitzvah of ואהבת לרעך כמוך

2



– Have kavannah for the meaning
of "פותח את ידך ומשבע לכל חי רצון" אשרי

3



– Accept the
ברוך שם כבוד and שמע
עול and have kavannah
for the meaning of the words

BOOKMARK FOR SIDDUR

4



אבות of Shemoneh Esrei -
Concentrate on the meaning of the words

5

ירושלים



ולירושלים עירך - Have kavannah
for Hashem's mercy on Yerushalayim

6



את צמח דוד - Have in mind
that Hashem should bring Moshiach

7



מודים - Have in mind gratitude
for everything Hashem gives us

1616 East 29th Street | Brooklyn, NY 11229

(201) 837-0354

prayingwithfire@yeshivanet.com (e-mail only)