

Halachot of Tefilla

- Halacha: Meaning of tefilla:
 1. For your soul to connect with God
 2. To feel humility towards Hashem
 3. To recognize the greatness of Hashem
 4. To praise and thank Hashem
 5. To ask for things from Hashem (and realize only He can give you what you need).
- Prayer has to come from your lips, heart, AND mind. A person does not fulfill his obligation with a prayer recited without any thought. However, it is not regarded as a prayer in vain.
- If you don't understand Hebrew then you must learn the translation so you can truly fulfill the tefilla obligations.
- If one cannot read Hebrew, he/she may temporarily pray using an English translation but must learn and eventually pray in Hebrew.
- A short prayer should include praise, request, and thanksgiving.
- According to the Rambam, women have to pray once a day using a short prayer in any language.
- According to Ramban (yesterday was Rambam), women are obligated to pray three times a day because prayer is a request for mercy and women need mercy as much as men do.
- Although most opinions agree with the Ramban, women have children and a family that come first so they are not obligated to pray three times a day. However, they should at least say a short prayer once a day.
- Children should be trained to pray shacharit and mincha from the age of six or seven.
- Boys should go to shul with their father but should be trained to sit respectfully and answer amen, not wander!
- The best place to pray is facing a wall without anything in between (furniture doesn't count since it is permanent).
- It is a mitzvah and it enhances one's prayers to pray in the same spot all the time.
- Men are obligated to make every effort to pray with a minyan even if they can concentrate better when praying alone.
- It is forbidden to pray facing a mirror since it would appear that one is praying to oneself.
- One is forbidden to pray in the presence of an improperly dressed person or in the presence of waste substance/foul material.

- It is forbidden to pray, discuss Torah or even say a bracha in front of a male or female whose genitals are exposed
- It is forbidden for a man but permitted for a woman to pray, learn, or say a bracha in front of a woman whose genitals are covered but she is not dressed according to halacha.
- If someone prayed in front of someone whose genitals were showing, he/she MUST pray again.
- If a child is wearing a soiled diaper, it is forbidden to pray unless one is four amos (about 6.5ft) away from the odor.
- It is forbidden to pray in a room with a bad odor (trash, body odor, etc.).
- When praying, one should dress as if they are prepared to meet Hashem (Amos 4:12). One must dress as if they are appearing before a king.
- One must wear socks AND shoes while praying; slippers are not dignified in front of a king.
- It is forbidden to greet others, work, eat, study Torah or travel before praying shacharit.
- According to the Sages, whoever greets another before praying is considered as if he did avodah zara. You should greet Hashem before anyone else.
- Everyone should start their day with modeh ani. It is better to pause between the words bechemla and rabba.
- It is forbidden to pray if one needs to use the bathroom, even if it is a slight need.
- It is preferred to pray all the morning prayers while standing.
- Women are exempt from reading shema because it is a time-bound mitzvah. However, she must read the first two lines.
- Shema Israel states that: Hashem exists, there is no other God, Hashem is eternal and powerful, Hashem created everything and will be acknowledged by all mankind, and that Hashem watches over the Jewish people.
- While reading Shema, one must be thinking about all the concepts incorporated in it.
- If one does not concentrate on the words of Shema, he/she must recite it again.

