

TISHREI

HACHANA

עבודת התפילה

19 Elul

When the Alter Rebbe was approaching his twentieth birthday, he decided - with the consent of his wife, Rebbetzin Sterna - to travel away from home in order to grow in Torah and avoda. At that time, Vilna and Mezritch were the great Jewish capitals of Eastern Europe. Vilna was where the Gaon of Vilna lived, and Mezritch was the hometown of the Maggid, leader of Chassidus. "I was debating where to go," he related, "and couldn't decide. My brother, the Maharil, is a man of common sense, and he advised me to go to Mezrich. "I knew that in Vilna I could learn how to learn, and in Mezrich I could learn how to daven. I already knew how to learn, but about davening I knew very little, so I went to Mezrich." the Cheder Sheini עבודה שבילב - זו תפילה Interestingly, the Alter Rebbe had already been learning the Chassidus of the Baal Shem Tov with his teacher Reb Yissachar Ber for a number of years before he went to Mezrich. In addition, he was fluent in the siddur Shaar Hashamayim of the Shal"ta and knew all the kavanos of the mekubalim. Yet he still insisted that he knew almost nothing about davening. For that he had to go to Mezrich and study by the Maggid himself. "Hashem blessed me with making the right choice. I became a devoted disciple of our Rebbeim and, upon my return to Vitebsk, I guided my students in the teachings of chassidus, which were well received by them."

Sefer Hasichos 5705, p. 132; Sefer Hasichos 5708 p. 197

20 Elul

The avodah of davening brings the things that we learn into the feelings of our heart. It also brings our learning and our feelings together so that we are able to perform practical avodah. We are performing mitzvos with Yiras Shamayim and acquiring middos tovos.

Hayom Yom 21 Cheshvan

TISHREI

H A C H A N A

עבודת התפילה

21 Elul

So important is Avodas Hatefillah, that the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote in a letter, "The beginning of one's decline, may Hashem prevent it from happening, is the lack of avodah in davening. Everything becomes dry and cold. Even a mitzvah performed by habit becomes a bother. Everything is rushed. One loses the sense of pleasure in Torah study. The atmosphere becomes "grob" (insensitive to kedushah). Needless to say, one is totally incapable of influencing others." The Rebbe included this letter in Hayom Yom.

Hayom Yom 23 Iyar

22 Elul

he famous chossid, R' Peretz Chein, would explain how davening is the basis for all other avodos with the following mashal: "The chefs in the Czar's royal kitchen once prepared a lavish banquet for a visiting prince. The highlight was to be a dish of kishke (the intestines of an animal with a delicious stuffing). Their efforts were so successful that the prince asked for the recipe so that his own cooks at home would be able to serve him this extraordinary delicacy. The Czar ordered the head chef to write a detailed list of ingredients and instructions, and the prince left Russia a happy man. "As soon as he arrived home he handed the recipe to his chef, but when the kitchen doors opened and the carefully prepared dish was served to the eagerly waiting prince, he cried out, "What a disgusting odor!" the Cheder Sheini תפילה - זו עבודה שבלב - and the platter was quickly removed from the table. Bitterly disappointed, he wrote to the Czar demanding to know why his chefs couldn't produce the same delicacy even though they had carefully followed the recipe. "The Czar asked his chef to offer an explanation. The chef thought for a moment and then burst out laughing: "What?! His chefs didn't work it out themselves?! There was one step so obvious that I didn't even include it in my instructions: Before the kishke is stuffed and spiced, it must first be turned inside out and washed thoroughly..." Davening with proper avodah is like washing out any bad impurities from the kishke. That comes before all other avodos.

(My Zayde R' Yehudah Chitrik - Reshimas Devorim)

TISHREI

HACHANA

עבודת התפילה

24 Elul

Chabad shuls have a small room called the "Chabadnitze," off to the side of the main shul that was for the "ovdim," the "workers." In this small, quiet room, chassidim would spend hours and hours working on themselves by davening. It once happened that in a small shtetl near Lubavitch, a shul was built without a "Chabadnitze." The Mittlerer Rebbe found out about this and instructed his chassidim not to daven there! Relating this story, the Frierdiker Rebbe said "Regardless of whether or not people actually daven b'arichus, there must be a Chabadnitze."

(Sefer Hasichos 5701, p. 42)

25 Elul

There are many descriptions of the Rebbeim, their chassidim, and their davening. The Tzemach Tzedek describes how when the Alter Rebbe would daven, he would get so caught up with his tefillos, he would roll on the floor saying how he wished to see Hashem Himself.

Shoresch Mitzvas Hatefilah Ch. 40

26 Elul

The famed chossid R' Yekusiel Lepler would daven for so long that there were times when he would go straight from Shacharis to Minchah (and he woke up early!), and from Minchah to Maariv, in a way that he spent his entire day davening!

Hayom Yom 1 Kislev

27 Elul

Reb Shmuel Ber Borisover once asked the Rebbe Maharash, "What is a chossid?" The Rebbe Maharash replied that he should go to the Rebbe Rashab, who was a young man at the time, to find out. R' Shmuel Ber wondered why the Rebbe would send him to a young man when he himself was an elder chossid. The Rebbe Maharash explained with the following story: "Once, very early in the morning, I sent someone to see what my son was doing. He returned and reported that the Rebbe Rashab was sitting with a siddur, an אבודרהם (a sefer that explains davening) and a נ"ך, and was reviewing the pirush hamilos of davening." "This is a chossid!" the Rebbe Maharash exclaimed. "Someone who, even though he has tremendous knowledge and deep understanding, still focuses on the meaning of the words."

Sefer Hasichos 5699 p. 305

TISHREI

H A C H A N A

עבודת התפילה

28 Elul

The Alter Rebbe once approached the Mittlerer Rebbe after davening and asked him: “With what did you daven today?” The Mittlerer Rebbe responded “With the idea of “Vechol Komah lefonecho tishtachave” that koma refers to ‘komah of AK’ – machshava hakedumah de’AK”. [Once when the Rebbe told over the story, he was telling about how the Frierdige Rebbe related this story to a mekurav. The Rebbe paused and explained: the mekurav would not have been able to comprehend the terms ‘komah of AK’ – machshava hakedumah de’AK”, and the FR therefore used simpler terms when relating it to him]. The Mittlerer Rebbe then asked the Alter Rebbe: “And with what did you daven today?” To which the Alter Rebbe responded “With the shtender!”, meaning that he davened by contemplating on the fact that even the shtender is being constantly renewed and recreated by the dvar Hashem.

29 Elul

In the shul of The Baal Shem Tov in Europe, a boy entered the synagogue on Rosh HaShanah and, being ignorant of the prayers, just kept saying the Alef-Beis at the front of the Siddur. He was observed crying and laughing and from time to time clapping much to the consternation of the serious congregation. After Rosh HaShanah concluded, the Rebbe announced that the Jewish world in Russia that year was saved because of this boy. The boy had told Hashem that he did not know how to daven, that he did not know how to learn, but that he knew the Alef-Beis. He resolved to spend all day saying the letters and asked Hashem to rearrange them. His davening was accepted as the best davening for the whole of Jewry Rosh HaShanah that year. This is the level of sincerity every Jew can achieve. Every Jew