

HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #1



DAVENING FIRST THING

As soon as it is time for *davening*, starting from *Alos Hashachar*, we are not allowed to do anything that is not part of preparing for *davening* or *davening* itself.

In *Shulchan Aruch*, there are a few examples given: You are not allowed to go to your friend's house to greet him, because you are giving *kavod* to someone else before you show *kavod* to Hashem! You can't take care of any personal needs so that you won't get busy with anything aside for *davening*. You aren't allowed to eat and drink unless you need it for health or to have *kavana* in *davening*.

Starting from the morning, the very first thing we do is to get ready for *davening*, and then *daven* right away!

(See *Shulchan Aruch siman 89*)



KVIUS MAKOM LETEFILLAH #1

There is a *mitzvah* from the Torah (*Mitzvas Asei #5*) to *daven* to Hashem.

The *Chachomim* taught us to *daven* three *tefillos* each day (more on Shabbos and *Yom Tov*). They decided this based on two sources:

1) The *Avos*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov each started a *tefillah* — Avraham started *Shacharis*, Yitzchak started *Mincha*, and Yaakov started *Maariv*.

2) After the *Churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, our *Tefillah* takes the place of *korbanos*. *Shacharis* takes the place of the *Korban Tomid* brought in the morning, *Mincha* takes the place of the *Korban Tomid* brought in the afternoon, and *Maariv* takes the place of the parts of *korbanos* burned at night.

Both the *tefillos* of the *Avos*, and the *korbanos*, had a set place. Because of that, it is brought in *halacha* that we should have a set place for *davening*.

Avraham *davened* for the people of Sedom, and after Sedom was destroyed, it says (in *Parshas Vayeira*) “*Vayashkem Avraham Baboker El Hamakom Asher Amad Sham.*” “Avraham woke up in the morning (to *daven Shacharis*) in the place he had *davened* before.” We see from here that he had a set place to *daven*.

By *korbanos* we also see that there is a specific place where each of the *korbanos* need to be brought. In the *Mishnayos* of “*Eizehu Mekoman*” that we say at the beginning of *davening*, we see where each *korban* had to be *shechted* and where the blood needed to be sprinkled.

So for both of these reasons, our *davening* also has to be in a set place.

(See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *siman 90*, *se'if 18* and *siman 98*, *se'if 4* and in *footnotes*.)



KVIUS MAKOM LETEFILLAH #2

That means that if we *daven* in *shul*, we should have a set *shul*, and in that *shul*, we should *daven* in the same spot (within *Daled Amos*).

If we are *davening* at home, we should also make sure to set a place where we *daven* every day. It should be a place where we won't be disturbed by other people at home while we are *davening*. (So if everyone runs around in the living room, that's probably not a good place to set for *davening*.)

We should try to always *daven* in this set place, unless there is an important reason why we aren't able to.

The *Gemara* says, “*Kol Hakoveia Makom LeTefillaso, Elokei Avraham Be'ezro*” — “someone who sets a place for *davening*, the same *Aibishter* that helped Avraham Avinu will also be there to help him.”

(See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *siman 90*, *se'if 18* and *siman 98*, *se'if 4* and in footnotes.)



KAVANA IN DAVENING

We should try to have *kavana* during the whole *davening*, but there are some parts of *davening* where we need to be extra careful to have *kavana*:

- The first line of *Shema*
- The very first *bracha* in *Shmoneh Esrei*

It used to be that people would have to say *Shmoneh Esrei* AGAIN if they didn't say it with *kavana*, but nowadays we don't, because we might not have the right *kavana* then either...

We should get used to having *kavana* at least in the end of each paragraph of *Shmoneh Esrei* (like "*Baruch Ata Hashem Shomeia Tefillah*"). There are 113 words in all of those *brachos*, and when Chana *davened* to Hashem to have a baby, she said 113 words! Also, the word "*Leiv*" (heart) is said 113 times in the Torah — reminding us to *daven* with our heart!

What *kavana* should we have? We should try to think of what the words mean. If we can't think about the meaning of the words, we should at least think about things that make us feel humble and focused on how we are *davening* to the *Aibishter*.

(From *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Tefillah, siman 98 and 101*)



CONCENTRATION IN DAVENING

When we *daven*, we shouldn't be holding other things. If we hold something important, like *Tefillin*, a *sefer*, or *lehavdil* a camera or money, we will need to think about it and make sure it doesn't fall down. That will distract us from thinking just about our *davening*.

According to *halacha*, it is fine to hold something that won't get ruined if it falls. But it is better not to hold anything except for a *siddur* which is there to HELP us concentrate in *davening*!

If we see that a *sefer* fell on the floor, and it makes it hard for us to have *kavana* in our *davening*, we can stop at the end of a *bracha* to pick it up.

These *halachos* are also true when we *bentch*!

When we *bentch*, we shouldn't do any kind of work, even something easy that we don't need to concentrate for, like clearing off our plates or sweeping off crumbs. Doing that makes it look like we don't care so much about the *bracha*. Of course, we shouldn't do something that we DO need to think about, even something holy, like listening to a *shiur* or a *Dvar Torah*! That will definitely keep us from having *kavana*.

The Alter Rebbe tells us that *lechatchila*, we shouldn't do any distracting kinds of things when we say ANY *bracha*, like *brachos* before we eat or *Asher Yatzar*.

(See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman* 96, and *siman* 183 *se'if yud-daled*)



DAVENING STARTS RIGHT AWAY

As soon as we wake up in the morning, the *halacha* is that we need to think about how Hashem is right there! Hashem just gave back our *neshama*, and now we have a responsibility to get out of bed and go serve Him.

So right away, we say *Modeh Ani*. That helps us remember that Hashem is everywhere, and right there with us. Then we wash *Negel Vasser*, making our hands *tahor* so we can start our *avodah*. (The *kohanim* also washed their hands in the *kiyor* before starting their *avodah* in the *Mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash*.)

With *tahor* hands, we say *brachos*, thanking Hashem for the basic things He gives us, like being able to see and having clothes. We also say *Birchas HaTorah*, starting the *mitzvah* of learning Torah which we do during the day.

The *Chachomim* suggested many special pieces to add here as a preparation for *davening*. Some people say the *Aseres Hadibros*, a paragraph about the *kiyor*, or the *Parshas HaMohn*, which talks about how Hashem gave the *Mohn* to the Yidden and reminds us that our *parnasa* comes only from Hashem.

The *nusach* the Alter Rebbe set up doesn't have these paragraphs, but the Alter Rebbe chose other ones. We can understand from here that every single paragraph in *davening* is important, and has something else to help us *daven* properly to Hashem!

(*Shulchan Aruch, siman alef*)



SHEMA

When we say *Shema*, we say the first *posuk* LOUD because it helps us have more *kavana*. We also cover our eyes when we say the first *posuk* so we won't be looking at anything that might make us think about other things!

We should only be thinking about what we're saying in *Shema*: That there is ONE *Aibishter*, and that everything we see when we open our eyes is really from Hashem!

(Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Krias Shema 61:5)

