

The Millie Arbesfeld
Midreshet Yom Rishon

Sunday Morning Learning Program for Women

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Avoda
Shebalev:
The Ideals of
Prayer

Commemorating the first Yahrzeit of Dr. Albert Hornblass

אברהם בן משה הורנבלס זצ"ל

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Dr. Shira Weiss

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1 רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק א הלכה א

מצות עשה להתפלל בכל יום שנאמר ועבדתם את ה' אלהיכם, מפי השמועה למדו שעבודה זו היא תפלה שנאמר ולעבדו בכל לבבכם אמרו חכמים אי זו היא עבודה שבלב זו תפלה,

2 רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק א הלכה ב

חיוב מצוה זו כך הוא שיהא אדם מתחנן ומתפלל בכל יום ומגיד שבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ואחר כך שואל צרכיו שהוא צריך להם בבקשה ובתחנה ואחר כך נותן שבח והודיה לה' על הטובה שהשפיע לו כל אחד לפי כחו.

3 רמב"ם הלכות ברכות פרק א הלכה ג

וברכות רבות תקנו חכמים דרך שבח והודיה ודרך בקשה כדי לזכור את הבורא תמיד אע"פ שלא נהנה ולא עשה מצוה.

4 רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ב הלכה ב

והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו, בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאוה תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול א כמו שאמר דוד צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי, וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן מיד הוא נרתע לאחוריו ויפחד ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה שפלה אפלה עומדת בדעת קלה מעוטה לפני תמים דעות, כמו שאמר דוד כי אראה שמיד מעשה אצבעותיך מה אנוש כי תזכרנו, ולפי הדברים האלו אני מבאר כללים גדולים ממעשה רבון העולמים כדי שיהיו פתח למבין לאהוב את השם, כמו שאמרו חכמים בענין אהבה שמתוך כך אתה מכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם.

5. Guide of the Perplexed I:54, Maimonides

Know that Moses made two requests and received an answer to both of them. One request consisted in asking Him, may He be exalted, to let him know His essence and true reality. The second request, which he put first, was that He should let him know His attributes. The answer to the two requests that he, may He be exalted, gave him consisted in His promising him to let him know all His attributes, making it known to him that they are His actions, and teaching him that His essence cannot be grasped as it really is... His request regarding the knowledge of God's attributes is conveyed in his saying: *Show me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee.*

6. Guide of the Perplexed III:54, Maimonides

- a) The first and the most defective, but with a view to which the people of the earth spend their lives, is the perfection of possessions- that is, of what belongs to the individual in the manner of money, garments, tools, slaves, land and other things of this kind. Between this perfection and the individual himself there is no union whatever; there is only a certain relation, and most of the pleasure taken in the relation is purely imaginary... He will find that all this is outside his self and that each of these possessions subsists as it is by itself... and have no permanence.
- b) The second species has a greater connection than the first with the individual's self, being the perfection of the bodily constitution and shape. Neither should this species be taken as an end, for it is a corporeal perfection and does not belong to man qua man, but qua animal; for man has this in common with the lowest animals. Moreover even if the strength of a human individual reached its greatest maximum, it would not attain the strength of a strong mule... Utility for the soul is absent from this species of perfection.
- c) The third species is a perfection that to a greater extent than the second species subsists in the individual's self. This is the perfection of the moral virtues. But this species of perfection is likewise a preparation for something else and not an end in itself. For all moral habits are concerned with what occurs between a human individual and someone else; consequently it is an instrument for someone else. For if you suppose a human individual is alone, acting on no one,

you will find that all his moral virtues are in vain and without employment and unneeded, and that they do not perfect the individual in anything.

d) The fourth species is the true human perfection, it consists in the acquisition of the rational virtues- the conception of intelligibles, which teach true opinions concerning divine things. This is in true reality the ultimate end; this is what gives the individual true perfection, a perfection belonging to him alone; and it gives him permanent perdurance; through it man is man.

7. Guide of the Perplexed III:51, Maimonides

If, however, you have apprehended God and His acts in accordance with what is required by the intellect, you should afterwards engage in totally devoting yourself to Him, and strengthen the bond between you and Him- that is, the intellect... The Torah has made it clear that this last worship to which we have drawn attention in this chapter can only be engaged in after apprehension has been achieved; it says: To love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. Now we have made it clear several times that love is proportionate to apprehension. After love comes this worship to which attention has been drawn by (the Sages), who said: This is the worship of the heart- *avodah shebalev*. In my opinion it consists in setting thought to work on the first intelligible and in devoting oneself exclusively to this as far as this is within one's capacity.

8. Guide of the Perplexed III:17, Maimonides

According to me, as I consider the matter, divine providence is consequent upon the divine overflow... Providence watches over everyone endowed with intellect proportionately to the measure of his intellect. Thus providence always watches over an individual endowed with perfect apprehension, whose intellect never ceases from being occupied with God. On the other hand, an individual endowed with perfect apprehension, whose thought sometimes for a certain time is emptied of God, is watched over by providence only during the time when he thinks of God; providence withdraws from him during the time when he is occupied with something else.

9. Guide of the Perplexed III:51, Maimonides

Those who have come up to the habitation and walk around it are the jurists who believe true opinions on the basis of traditional authority and study the law concerning the practices of divine service, but do not engage in speculation concerning the fundamental principles of religion and make no inquiry whatever regarding the rectification of belief... If, however, you have achieved perfection in the natural sciences and have understood divine science, you have entered into the ruler's place into the inner court and are with him in one habitation.

10 רמב"ם הלכות תפילין ומזוזה וספר תורה פרק ה הלכה ד

שאלו הטפשים לא די להם שבטלו המצוה אלא שעשו מצוה גדולה שהיא יחוד השם של הקב"ה ואהבתו ועבודתו כאילו הוא קמיע של הניית עצמן כמו שעלה על לבם הסכל שזהו דבר המהנה בהבלי העולם.

11 רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק ד הלכה טו

כוונת הלב כיצד כל תפלה שאינה בכוונה אינה תפלה

12 רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק ד הלכה טז

כיצד היא הכוונה שיפנה את לבו מכל המחשבות ויראה עצמו כאלו הוא עומד לפני השכינה

13. Guide of the Perplexed III:54, Maimonides

It is clear that the perfection of man that may truly be glorified in is the one acquired by him who has achieved, in a measure corresponding to his capacity, apprehension of Him, may He be exalted, and who knows His providence extending over His creatures as manifested in the act of bringing them into being and their governance as it is. The way of life of such an individual, after he has achieved this apprehension, will always have in view loving-kindness, righteousness and judgment, through assimilation to His actions, may He be exalted.

14. Guide of the Perplexed I:54, Maimonides

For the utmost virtue of man is to become like unto Him, may He be exalted, as far as he is able; which means that we should make our actions like unto His.

15. Duties of the Heart, Bahya Ibn Paquda

The science of the Torah falls into two parts: The first aims at the knowledge of practical duties and is the science of external conduct. The second deals with the duties of the heart, namely, its sentiments and thoughts, and is the science of the inward life...A careful examination by the light of Reason, Scripture and Tradition, of the question whether the Duties of the Heart are obligatory or not, convinced me that they indeed form the foundation of all the Precepts, and that if there is any shortcoming in their observance, no external duties whatever can be properly fulfilled.

16. Worship of the Heart, Joseph B Soloveitchik

What then is prayer? It is the expression of the soul that yearns for God via the medium of the word, through which the human being gives expression to the storminess of his soul and spirit. The act (*maaseh*) or prayer is formal, the recitation of a known, set text; but the fulfillment of prayer (its *kiyyum*), is subjective: it is the service of the heart. The intention (*kavvanah*) required for prayer is not like the *kavvanah* required for other mitzvot... With prayer, *kavvanah* is the essence and substance: prayer without intention is nothing.

17. The Lonely Man of Faith, Joseph B Soloveitchik

Prayer is basically an awareness of man finding himself in the presence of and addressing himself to his Maker, and to pray has one connotation only: to stand before God. To be sure, this awareness has been objectified and crystallized in standardized, definitive texts whose recitation is obligatory. The total faith commitment tends always to transcend the frontiers of fleeting, amorphous subjectivity and to venture into the outside world of the well-formed, objective gesture.