

# TEFILLAH TIPS

## TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

Tzur Yisroel

I am writing this Tefillah Tip from the holy city of Jerusalem, the city of prayer and the historic and eventual location of the *Beit Hamikdash*, The Holy Temple. On the plane ride to Israel last week, I was inspired when I considered that I was travelling in the same direction as the millions of prayers recited by Jews around the world who direct their prayers to Jerusalem every day and night.

At the conclusion of *Ezrat Avoteinu* we beseech G-d, *Tzur Yisrael, Kumah Bezrat Yisrael, Ufidey..... Baruch Atoh... Ga'al Yisrael* – Rock of Israel, Rise in support of Israel, Redeem us oh Holy One of Israel, Blessed Are You *Hashem*, the Redeemer of Israel.

As mentioned in an earlier Tefillah Tip, the Talmud *Brachot* instructs us to juxtapose the blessing *Ga'al Yisrael* with our *Amidah*-Silent Meditative Prayer without any interruption. The Talmud also teaches - Great is the reward for juxtaposing our prayers for redemption unto our *Amidah* in this world and the next. The question is why?

The *Maharal*- Rav Yehudah Loewe of Prague explains that there is a great difference between praying to G-d while subservient to other kings and nations, and praying to G-d while in a state of freedom. He writes that when one prays while under the dominion of a foreign power, there is no demonstration of the reality of G-d's absolute power, authority and providence because it appears that one is praying to G-d, the superpower, to save us from another power. However, when one is in a state of freedom with no reliance and responsibility to any other power on the planet, and he then beseeches G-d for his needs, this is a demonstration of belief that G-d is the ONLY force of the universe – *Eyn Od Milvado* – there is nothing else but G-d. It is this act of subservience to G-d amidst apparent freedom from other forces that deserves reward in this world and the next.

Therefore, as we reflect during *Ezrat Avoteinu* on the miraculous exodus from Egypt together with the crossing of the Reed Sea and the drowning of our previous masters, it is specifically THEN that we supplicate in front of G-d and demonstrate that our freedom from Egypt and any other power on Earth allows us to serve our true King and Master – *Hashem Echad* – The One and Only G-d.

Take Home Tip – There have been so many times in our history that we were not able to worship G-d openly and freely. A recent example from this past generation was the Soviet Empire where it was prohibited for Jews to worship freely. Nowadays, in so many countries, we are blessed to be able to worship G-d openly and freely. In addition to shuls and office *minyanim*, you can even find a Mincha on the Route 17 rest stop on the way up to the Catskills. Let us not take these freedoms for granted, rather let's take full advantage of the opportunities we have been afforded and launch our spirited *Tefilloth* to the King of Kings and keep in mind the *Maharal* above that states, He is the One and Only creative and powerful Divine force that exists. May all of our *Tefilloth* be answered.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein

Congregation Sons of Israel

Cherry Hill New Jersey