

# TEFILLAH TIPS



## **Shabbat – A Rest Stop**

The next *tefillah* of *Shabbat Minchah* is *Elokeynu Veelokay Avoteinu* **Retzey** *Bimenuchateinu*, which means: G-d, the G-d of our fathers, be pleased with our rest (on Shabbat).

This *Tefillah* is the one recurring prayer in the three Shabbat Tefillot; however the word **Retzey** appears often in our prayers. In every single *Amidah* we recite all week long, the final section of **Gratitude** begins with **Retzey**...*Beamcha Yisrael Uvetefillatam*...Hashem, be pleased with the people of Israel and their prayers and return us to the Holy Temple wherein we will offer sacrifices...

I can easily understand how and why we beseech G-d at the end of our daily supplications in the *Amidah* to accept and be pleased with our prayers, because they are a ritual service that we perform; and we hope that it is pleasing unto G-d. However, it perplexes me as to why on *Shabbat* we ask *Hashem* to be pleased with our **rest**; what kind of service is our rest?! We also say a *Retzey* in *Bentching* on Shabbat – *Retzey Vehachlitzaynu* – *Hashem* be pleased and provide us with rest.....again implying that *Hashem* should be pleased with our rest. What is so special about our rest on *Shabbat*? Isn't it simple - we work six days and on *Shabbat* we cease from Tabernacle-styled behavior and thereby rest. What is so holy about this rest that we are asking G-d to be pleased with it?

To answer this question we must consider the nature of the rest in which we are required to engage and enjoy. Rav Pincus zt"l explains that resting on *Shabbat* is not simply the earthly absence of labor and some time off from the office and daily carpool. Rather, *Shabbat* is the time of a global paradigm shift (whether we realize it or not), when the whole world transforms into G-d's palace. Therefore, our resting is not merely a pursuit of physical relaxation with delicious food, late wake up, and a *Shabbat* nap too; rather it is meant to be a spiritual experience that our souls can soar with prayer, *zemirot*-Melodic Hymns, and the study of *Torah*, uninterrupted by the distractions of the world that we deal with all week.

That is why the *Tefillah* reads – *Elokeynu Veelokay Avotein* **Retzey** *Beminuchateinu* – G-d, be pleased with our rest. Just as we want *Hashem* to be pleased with our prayer services, so too, do we ask Him to be pleased and accept our spiritual rest as a service and a Mitzvah we have fulfilled.

**Take Home Tip:** Although we aim to find personal meaning and joy in *Shabbat* and all of the *Mitzvot* we perform, we must remember that the fulfillment of a *Mitzvah* is not merely ABOUT OUR personal enjoyment; rather it is about completing a service unto G-d. Shabbat is really about experiencing a divine reality on earth, which is the definition of a spiritual rest.

Shabbat Shalom,

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