



Prayer Movement

KEVA

"Set prayer."



According to Maimonides, the purpose of set prayers is to guide people to pray in an elegant and grammatically faultless language worthy of the One they address, as well as to teach them how to voice their heart's desires and the needs of the community in reasonable fashion and logical sequence.

Mishneh Torah, Book 2, Hilchot Tefillah 1:4

KAVANAH

"Spontaneous prayer." Also, "intention" - the way one approaches prayer.



Prayer without *kavanah* is like a body without a soul.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Rabbi Shimon said: "Be careful in the recitation of the *Shema* and in the *Tefillah*; and, when you pray, do not make your *Tefillah* a matter of *keva*, but an entreaty for mercy and grace before the *Kadosh Baruch Hu*."

There are two kinds of movements...KEVA [set ones] and KAVANAH [spontaneous ones].

KEVA movements are primarily standing and sitting and the bows at various times during the service. The KAVANAH movements are ways we move to enhance or focus our prayers also called in yiddish, *shuckling*.

Why you might move your body....

- ◆ Connect our whole being into the moment
- ◆ Moving your body can focus mind and free the soul
- ◆ Stay awake!

Why you might not move your body in prayer....

- ◆ We already do – every time we stand or sit down.
- ◆ Anything more feels funny, not natural
- ◆ I feel self-conscious when others are not doing it around me.
- ◆ I don't know if I'm doing it the right way.

Some reflections on movement in prayer:

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi was asked why there are eighteen benedictions in the Amidah, he answered that these correspond to the eighteen vertebrae in the spinal column.

- *Talmud Berachot 28b*

WORKMEN MAY RECITE [THE SHEMA'] ON THE TOP OF A TREE OR THE TOP OF A SCAFFOLDING, A THING THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DO IN THE CASE OF THE TEFILLAH ["the" Prayer also called "Amida" meaning "Standing" prayer.]

- Talmud Berachot 16a

Rabbi Judah taught: Such was the custom of Rabbi Akiba: When he prayed with the community, he would cut his prayers short and get up out because of the bother [it would be to] the community. But when he prayed on his own, one could leave him in one corner [of the room] and [return] to find him in another corner. And why was this? Because of his kneelings and prostrations.

- Sefer Aggadah, Akiba 161.

Just as with motion – stillness, or the absence of motion is a powerful and meaningful expression. It is said that the Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk would stand completely immobile during prayer, and only the flushed face and burning eyes could indicate that he was truly praying. Rabbi Baer would pray for up to three hours in stillness, and afterwards his shirt and hat would be soaked in perspiration.

- Rabbi Rick Jacobs, Westchester Reform Temple, NY; former dancer with Merce Cunningham

In Japan for an international conference on religion, an American delegate spoke with a Shinto priest, "We've been now to a good many ceremonies and have seen quite a few of your shrines. But I don't get your ideology. I don't get your theology." The priest paused as though deep in thought and then slowly shook his head. "I think we don't have ideology," he said, "We don't have theology. We dance."

The Chatimah

The Stamp

Chatimah literally means "stamp." In the context of liturgy, a *chatimah* serves as a kind of stamp or seal at the end of a prayer or blessing. The *chatimah* encapsulates the essence of the prayer with a one line summary that begins with "*Baruch ata Adonai*." For example, for *Ma'ariv Aravim*, the evening prayer that focuses on creation [p. 50], the *chatimah* is the last line of the prayer: "*Baruch atah Adonai, hama'ariv aravim*," "We praise You, O God, whose word makes evening fall."

Traditionally, *chatimot* [plural of *chatimah*] are chanted by the *shaliach tzibur*, the prayer leader, as a way of punctuating individual prayer.

At the end of a prayer, the *shaliach tzibur* begins to chant the *chatimah*: "*Baruch atah Adonai*,"

Then the **congregation interrupts/responds [with words that are not in the prayerbook], "*Baruch hu u-va-ruch sh'-mo*"** (Blessed be the One whose Name is blessed.) The *shaliach tzibur* finishes the *chatimah* and the **congregation prays together, "Amen."**

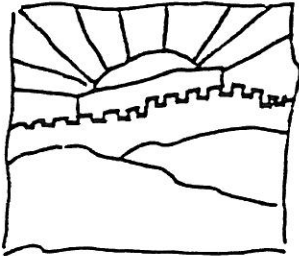
The *chatimot* are chanted according to the appropriate *nusach*, or musical scales and patterns, for a given service. For Shabbat evening, the *nusach* is based on a minor scale.

Please listen for *chatimot* in our Shabbat evening worship, and try to join in with the appropriate response as explained.

AMIDAH How To Dance the עמידה

In many ways, the עמידה AMIDAH is like a dance. It has certain rules, certain steps, and certain movements.

The עמידה is said*:



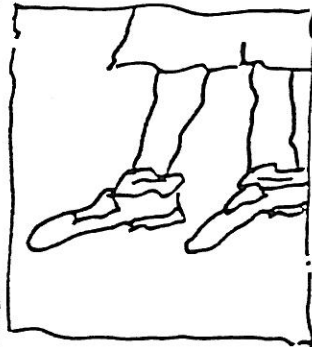
Facing towards the location of the Temple in Jerusalem



Silently



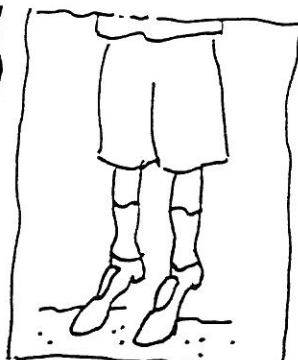
With one's feet together



One begins by taking three small steps forward.



One bows at the beginning and end of the אבות. AVOT



One rises up on one's toes three times during the קדושה KEDUSHAH



One beats one's breast during the שְׁלַח לָנוּ SLACH LANU



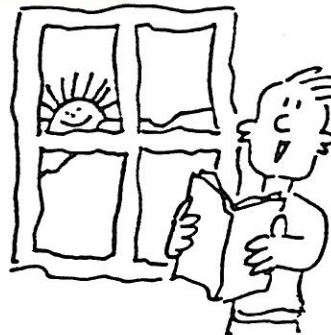
One bows at the beginning and the end of the מוֹדִים MODIM



One bows three times at the end of the עמידה (left, right, and forward).



The saying of the עמידה cannot be interrupted. If one stops or talks, one is supposed to start over again.



In the morning and the afternoon, the עמידה is repeated out loud after it is said silently. This repetition is called חזרת הש"ץ. It is not repeated in the evening.

CHAZARAT HASHATZ

* This is the practice in "Traditional" services. Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist congregations may have their own variations.