From the SOURCE with SPIRIT

Hilchot Tefilla
הלכות תפילה
מן המקורות אל הנשמה

The Tefilla Project
ABOUT HESBER and the Mercaz HaHalacha

This work is produced by HESBER, an organization committed to providing top-quality Hebrew/English Source Based Educational Resources. HESBER operates as a division of the Mercaz HaHalacha, the Halacha Education Center, and has served as the English language division of the Mercaz for the past few years.

Founded in 2008 by the well-known Rabbi/author/educator/chessed personality Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, the center produces educational materials and leads educational initiatives in four languages, servicing tens of thousands of students and adults throughout the world.

HESBER’s materials are used by more than two thousand students each year throughout the English-speaking world, in more than 30 different high schools on 5 continents.

One of HESBER's primary goals is to develop a completely integrated, homogeneous and comprehensive curricular series spanning from elementary/middle school all the way through high school. After producing three separate curricula for high schools (on the topics of Kashrut, Shabbat, and Tefilla), HESBER has begun to develop middle school curricula as well, paving the way for an integrated curriculum.

About From the Source; with Spirit- Hilchot Tefilla

From the Source; with Spirit- Hilchot Tefilla is HESBER’s third book produced for English speaking high schools. The new curriculum shares the strengths of the two previous "From the Source; with Spirit" curricula, alongside various innovations and additions whose efficacy has been borne out through conversations with students and educators.

Due to the difficulties in conveying the importance of tefilla, we have invested a great deal of effort in producing a curriculum that provides a new and unique perspective on the topic. To further the impact of the work, we have embarked on a larger "Tefilla Project" which includes summits with educators using the materials, teacher training platforms, and an interactive internet site.

ABOUT The Promotional Sample

The following sample will hopefully provide a glimpse into the nature of the Hilchot Tefilla curriculum. Similar to our previous works, the curriculum is made up of two books: a student textbook/workbook, as well as a teacher's edition textbook.

The graphics are enhanced from our previous curricula, as the icons used throughout the work, and shown on the sample page below, attest to. These icons provide additional layers of meaning for the complex challenges that studying tefilla entails.

Similar to the structure of our previous works, the book discusses all the relevant topics expected to be covered in any tefilla curriculum. The teacher's preface provided in this sample provides background on what we feel are the challenges involved in tefilla education, and how the curriculum navigates these educational obstacles.

The Prospectus includes:

- A sampling of the icons and notations used in the book.
- A listing of the chapters that will appear in the book.
- The teacher's preface.
- A flow chart presenting the layout of the student and teacher books.
- Two sample chapters

For questions and ordering information please contact:

HESBER 972-50-572-9700 | hesber.org@gmail.com
Or HESBER Director, Rav Binyamin Zimmerman, zimbiny@gmail.com
The Color Key For Identifying the Source of The Sources

In order to be able to quickly identify the nature of the various sources that appear in this work, the sources are color coded based on the time period in which they were written. This colorful codification system will hopefully help us trace the halachic process from the source in the Torah to the practical halachic rulings of contemporary Poskim.

What would you think?
Think independently about the question before seeing the sources

Straight to the Sources:
Study the sources inside in their original language.

Food for Thought:
Additional questions or thoughts to contemplate before proceeding

Important Terms
Important Halachic and Hebrew terms are noted so students can improve their vocabulary and remember primary terms

Halacha LeMa‘aseh
Important halachic sources, as well as halachic conclusions after long sources are noted with this icon

A Little Lomdus
Advanced sections for students looking for added material. The flow of the chapter can be understood without these sections.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART 1 Introductory Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student Introduction: Why Tefilla?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Mitzva of Tefilla: Obligation or Opportunity?</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What is “Tefilla”?</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 2 Hashkamat HaBoker - The Best part of Waking Up

### Part 2 Section 1 Getting Our Body (and Soul) Going

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hashkamat HaBoker: A ReJewvenating (Inner) Wakeup Call</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Netilat Yadayim: Renew, Refresh, Revitalize</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2 Section 2 The Morning Berachot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What's a Beracha, and why 100?</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Birchot HaTorah: Recognizing the Gift</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Birchot HaShachar: Appreciating Morning Rejuvenation</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2 Section 3 The Morning Avoda - The Place, the Korbanot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Makom Tefilla: Location, Location, Location</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Korbanot in Tefilla</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 3 The Siddur and Sections of Tefilla

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kavana: Made from Concentrate</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Set Daily Tefillot</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Siddur: A Standardized Text</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nusach HaTefilla: Similarities and Differences</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hachanot LeTefilla: Prepare to Meet Your Maker</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Food, Glorious Food: On Eating (and activities) Before Tefilla</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 4 Pesukei DeZimra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A Daily Dose of Pesukei DeZimra</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Minyan and Devarim Shebikdusha</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Barechu and Kaddish: Connecting to the Tzibbur</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 5 Shema and Birchot Keriat Shema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Birchot Keriat Shema: We’ve got you Surrounded</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keriat Shema: The Declaration of Our Dependence</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The Fundamental Mitzvot of Shema</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 6 The Halachot of the Amida Encounter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The Text of the Amida</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The Halachot of the Amida Experience</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Tefillot with the Times: Personalizing Tefilla</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tachanun and &quot;Unanswered Tefillot&quot;</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 7 After the Amida

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Amen, Tefilla Betzibbun and Tefillat Hatzibbun</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Making Tefilla Last: From Ashrei to Aleinu</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 8 A Day of Connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Halachic Time and Zemanei Tefilla</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tefillot Mincha</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tefillot Arvit</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 9 Tefilla For Everyone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Women and Tefilla</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction - The Challenge

Before we begin learning Hilchot Tefilla, we have to do something that might seem a little dangerous at first. However, hopefully this risky behavior will pay off in the end. For some, this initial activity might be difficult; for others, it may be a very welcome opportunity. It begins with one simple word:

FORGET.

Yes, FORGET IT!!!

At this point, you may be asking yourself what "it" is. Well, “it” is... all of it.

Yes, FORGET ALL OF IT!!!

(Although you might be tempted to immediately close this book, assuming that it was written by some psychopath, please try to work with us for a moment). Before we are ready to learn Hilchot Tefilla, we must start by forgetting all that we know, or think we know about tefilla. Why? Well, in a way, tefilla is familiar to us, and we’ve all been involved in tefilla for some time now. But while this is basically a good thing, it also means that we probably take certain ideas about tefilla for granted. However, these preconceived notions may make it difficult, or even unproductive, to study tefilla in earnest. To deal honestly with some core concepts surrounding tefilla, we must question whether we ever really learned about them.

In fact, we may have formulated a position as to how much we enjoy tefilla without appreciating what it really involves. Let's give some thought as to why many individuals who have grown up davening since they were young, often seem to appreciate tefilla less than other subjects.

The What to Teach Dilemma

Usually, younger grades in elementary schools face a dilemma. In order for young children to be acquainted with tefilla, one should teach children about tefilla when they are young; on the other hand, many of the deeper ideas of tefilla, and even the simple understandings of different terms might be beyond their grasp.

What do you think are the pros and cons of teaching young children about tefilla? (While tabling your answers, include the positive benefits you might currently feel are a result of your early tefilla education, coupled with what you might find difficult regarding tefilla, that you might feel differently about if you first learned about tefilla when you were older?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros and Benefits of Children Learning about Tefilla</th>
<th>Cons and Difficulties of Children Learning about Tefilla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 | Section 1: Introduction - Why Tefilla?
On the one hand, those of us who learned about tefilla in our youth have a lot to be grateful for; on the other hand, we might recognize that taking a fresh look at tefilla after we have matured a little, might be well worth it.

**A Case in Point?**

Consider the following story about a personal acquaintance (while reading it, give some thought as to whether this seems to describe an isolated situation, or whether it expresses a much broader phenomenon).

A non-Jewish student at Princeton University started becoming interested in Judaism. The more he learned, the more he was mesmerized; and so, he decided that he too wanted to become Jewish. He started learning about tefilla when he was 20 years old, and he began to truly understand many of the aspects of tefilla that most Jews practice by rote. His studies eventually brought him to complete the conversion process and to become a *ger tzedek* (a sincere, “righteous” convert to Judaism), whereupon he moved to Israel.

A year after his *geirut*, he celebrated what he called his "*bar mitzva*" and read a full Torah reading, which he had worked very hard to learn. At his *kiddush* afterwards, he said something which shook most of those who heard it. He said:

"Before I completed my conversion and when I was in the process of learning about Judaism, there was one question that I just couldn't fully understand. The most meaningful part of my day was "tefilla"; to experience the beauty of the *tefillot* and to have the opportunity to speak to G-d at least three times a day was a dream come true for me. I wished I had had this opportunity of tefilla since I was a child, and deep inside I cried over the lost years of tefilla. How much better a person would I have been, how much happier a person would I have been, if I had begun every day with tefilla since I was young? However, something nagged at me. Here I was, a gentile studying to be a Jew, and I could not help but to wake up in the morning and run to get dressed and to prepare myself for *davening*. I would hurry to the synagogue on campus excited about the opportunity to daven. But, almost always, I was the first one there. At times, after the ninth man had arrived, there I was, the "tenth man" who was not yet allowed to be counted for a *minyan*, and yet I had even arrived before the other nine.

Even after having completed my conversion, although I can now be counted as part of the *minyan*, I still find that more often than not, I am one of the first people at *minyan*. Why is it that as I cry over the lost opportunities, of years in which my life would have been so much better had I started my day with *davening*, and yet so many people who grew up in the system don't seem to grow to appreciate tefilla even when they are old enough to grasp and value its message?"

This righteous convert put the paradoxical reality on the table: Although we would have expected that those who have grown up with tefilla would appreciate it more than those who have not grown up with it, the sad truth is they often appreciate it less.

In a similar vein, consider the following anecdote about a local *ba'al Teshuva* and a guest in his synagogue. The local man was very irked when the guest, dressed and presenting himself as particularly religious, sat in front of him and spent the entire *davening* speaking to the person sitting beside him. What's more, whenever the guest's young son, who was sitting next to him, tried to speak, the guest responded: "SHHH!!!, it's shul, no talking."

"The reason I don't talk in shul is that I am a *ba'al Teshuva*, and I never saw my father talk in shul. If you aren't interested in your son talking in shul, teach by example rather than by shushing."

Is this consistent with your reality? Does it seem to you that those who have learned about tefilla later in life appreciate tefilla more than those who grew up with tefilla? If so, why do you think that is so, and what do you think can be done about it?

---

**Food For Thought**

What would you think?
So let's give a little more thought to some of the challenges people face regarding tefilla. What do you think are the reasons that many people seem to find tefilla difficult? Is it because they don't appreciate the concept of tefilla altogether, or is it because they feel they don't have the time or the emotional energy that proper tefilla requires?

With which parts of tefilla do you identify with most, and what is the source for this appreciation, or identification? Have you learned something very meaningful about tefilla, and how did you learn this?

Before we try to "FORGET IT", let's first put a little of what we "know" on the table, to see if it's worth forgetting at all. The following questions are for our own benefit, and we should answer them as honestly as we can.

What does the word תפילה/tefilla mean? (If you answer this question with a one word answer, please explain what that one word means.)

What would you say are the five most central themes of tefilla? What additional themes do you see represented in tefilla?

Rate your understanding of these different components of tefilla and express what you would like to learn more about regarding tefilla, or what you think could help improve your appreciation for tefilla.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your knowledge level of...</th>
<th>Your Rating (1-5)</th>
<th>How you can improve this rating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... the literal meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(translation) of most tefillot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... where different tefillot come from (in Tanach) and their significance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the different sections of tefilla and their roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... philosophical explanations of the role and purpose of tefilla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tefilla and Prayer**

If you answered that the definition of the Hebrew word תפילה is "prayer" you are in good company. Although
that is the most common translation of the term, as we will learn in the book’s early chapters, the concept of tefilla has very little to do with the conventional understanding of “prayer.” For this reason, throughout the book we have been careful to use the words "tefilla." Due to the lack of a good word for the act of being mitpallel in English (as the word "pray" is not an option), we have chosen to use the Yiddish word “daven" to express the act of tefilla. Although only a portion of students trace their lineage to European Jewish communities who carry with them the Yiddish tradition, nevertheless, common usage of the term by Jewish communities has led to its inclusion in many dictionaries and it seems like a good replacement for the commonly used term "pray" (as tefilla and "prayer," are concepts which are worlds apart.)

A Tradition of Forgetfulness

There is actually precedent for trying to forget what one knows already (even if the knowledge is true), in order to acquire a deeper level of understanding that wouldn't be possible otherwise. Learn the Gemara’s account of Rav Zeira’s startling behavior, quoted below. What does the Gemara say, and how does it relate to our investigation of tefilla?

Rabbi Zeira, upon his aliya to the land of Israel, engaged in 100 fasts to forget the Bablyonian Talmud that he had learned, so that it would not disturb him [from learning the specific teachings in Eretz Yisrael].

Following Rav Zeira's model, we'll keep in mind all the beneficial ideas related to tefilla that we have learned in the past, while at the same time approaching the subject unlimited by preconceived notions. In doing so, we ought to suspend, if there are any, any negative judgments about "prayer" that we have made in the past. It might take some time to recognize that “tefilla” might be an unfamiliar concept, but it is certainly one which deserves our learning it with an open mind.

Like with any new approach or behavior, there is definitely a chance that we might regress to our previous ways of acting and thinking. So, should we find ourselves again thinking of tefilla as “prayer” or continuing to recite words without understanding them or at least being tempted to consider their significance... come back to this page- and 

FORGET ALL OF IT!!!  Forget it not because it is all necessarily wrong, but because by doing so, we will accomplish so much more. In the end, believe it or not, we might come to appreciate tefilla in ways we never did.

Let's make it clear- we won't be so presumptuous as to say that we understand everything there is to know about tefilla and that we understand it all completely. At the same time, by studying the sources relating to tefilla, it will become clear that we can gain a great deal. There is a whole deep world of tefilla out there that many of us have never seriously considered, and therefore we couldn't take much advantage of it. The step-by-step approach of this book will hopefully open up new vistas of understanding and appreciation of this world. With that in mind, let's begin learning about "tefilla" for the first time, clear of any preconceived notions or prejudices... let's go!

The Recipe for Success

Truthfully, before we are ready to define the concept of tefilla, we must first address a much bigger issue... LIFE.
Although much of tefilla is related to the meaning and purpose of life, let's start on a more simple and practical level by identifying some ingredients necessary for success in life in general.

Did you ever wonder why no two individuals succeed equally in life, even if they have identical degrees, and the same level of training? Even though, at times, it appears that one individual gets a break by being in the right place at the right time, by "sheer coincidence", more often than not, an individual's success is a function of that person's qualities. What do you think is the single most important ingredient for success, and how do you think one can attain it?

In order to provide a list of some of the ingredients in the recipe for success in life, let's identify the aspects of two (somewhat) exaggerated archetypical personalities.

**"The Walking Zombie"**

He's the type of guy who gets up half asleep and seems to stay that way throughout the day. He takes life as it goes (or we might say, he goes as life takes him) without giving it too much thought, and he finds success rather elusive.

**"The Alert Operator"**

This is the type of energetic individual driven to success who aspires for the best life has to offer, contemplates the right actions for specific situations, and always comes prepared. Not surprisingly, he seems to enjoy a happier and more meaningful life than his counterpart, and he seems to be constantly advancing from one success to another.

Pause for a second and take a mental picture of these two individuals, and then take a look at the following list of traits. Write the letter Z for "The Walking Zombie" and O for "The Alert Operator" in the box next to each trait.

**The traits are:**

<p>| Pays attention to differences in time | Appreciates inner feelings |
| Appreciates history and knows that those who don't learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them | Appreciates history and knows that those who don't learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them |
| Draws emotional depth from reliving impactful historical moments | Sees importance in every moment |
| Wants to achieve, accomplish, and make a difference | Takes for granted where he is and how he got there |
| Sees each moment as unique and special | Waits for things to happen |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has no sense of direction and purpose</th>
<th>Doesn’t put effort into organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seizes the moment</td>
<td>Appreciates inner feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searches for deep relationships with others</td>
<td>Shifts and avoids responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pays attention to differences in time</td>
<td>Appreciates the power of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens for messages from Above</td>
<td>Recognizes the beauty of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has no sense of direction and purpose</td>
<td>Doesn’t care to act with efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draws emotional depth from reliving impactful historical moments</td>
<td>Takes for granted where he is and how he got there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waits for things to happen</td>
<td>Sees importance in every moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens for messages from Above</td>
<td>Can’t see the potential in things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands his own subconscious motives</td>
<td>Takes advantage of opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes the beauty of the world</td>
<td>Searches for deep relationships with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t put effort into organization</td>
<td>Seizes the moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees each moment as unique and special</td>
<td>Assesses priorities regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes the initiative</td>
<td>Fails to prioritize properly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates self-serving relationships with others</td>
<td>Blind to himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheepishly misses opportunities</td>
<td>Doesn’t care to act with efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is self-reflective</td>
<td>Unconcerned with the past or future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes with the flow blindly</td>
<td>Collaborates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routinely contemplates what he can get from others</td>
<td>Plans for the day ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate in how he spends his time</td>
<td>Lacks awareness of what motivates him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximizes the present</td>
<td>Chooses language carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoids working with others</td>
<td>Sees the day as monotonous and flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has an awareness of his roots</td>
<td>Sees the past as a guide for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware of the perceptions of those around him</td>
<td>Speaks without thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes the challenges and opportunities that each part of the day presents</td>
<td>Wants to achieve, accomplish, and make a difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarize the characteristics of each personality:

**The Walking Zombie**

**The Alert Operator**

Reflecting on the chart above, think about the following issues and write down your thoughts either here or in your “Tefilla” journal.
How would you define the overall difference in character between the two personalities presented above?

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

Are there certain traits of the “Alert Operator” which you feel you would like to better develop within yourself? How do you think you should go about doing this?

________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________

What do you think this whole discussion has to do with tefilla?

________________________________________________________________________________________________

To get a better sense of the connection between the above exercise and tefilla, consider the following anecdote:

A young counselor in a summer camp for students going into 12th grade agreed to take on a tough task that all other counselors passed on... giving a week’s worth of daily Torah shiurim to the “cool kids” who had convinced everyone they weren’t interested in any learning. The topic he chose was "Standing in the Presence of God," and the shiur was primarily about tefilla. Despite knowing that this group prided themselves on their lack of interest in Jewish matters, the counselor was determined to reach them. He began as follows:

I would like each of you to share something with the group. Can you describe one tefila experience which was very meaningful to you and which left a lasting impression on your life?

What do you think happened at this point?

Remember, this was a "shiur" to the self-proclaimed cool group, and therefore, at first, not one individual raised their hand to share their experiences... but it was expected. The counselor had anticipated that these students would refuse to admit to having had experienced meaningful tefilla, because it didn’t fit their self-images. The counselor was prepared for this challenge, and after about a minute of silence, he made it clear that time wasn’t going to help the campers. He told them:
I have all the time in the world. We won't be continuing until a couple of you share your thoughts. I am prepared to wait...

And wait he did. The campers looked around at each other and then looked at the floor. No one wanted to share, and certainly not first. All of them had something to say of course... but who would say it publicly?

After more than five minutes, and after the counselor repeated "I am prepared to wait" more than once, the campers stopped smirking and became restless. As most of the campers in the group wondered, "Is he for real?", one camper broke the silence:

I had one. It began the day the doctors told my grandmother that she probably had cancer, but they would only know for sure in a few days. I'm embarrassed to say this, but those days of davening were the most uplifting moments I had. I was in touch with my emotions and... go figure, the tests revealed that there was no cancer.

Once one camper had broken the ice and shared an experience, it opened the floodgates as the others seemed to be getting prepared to share their feelings as well. The counselor continued to ask the first camper about the experience:

Question: “The impetus for your tefilla then was the feeling of despair over your grandmother's medical condition; how did your tefilla make you feel?”

Response: Those tefillot were some of the most amazing moments of my life, I wish I could go back to them. I wish I could have them daily.

Here he was, one of “the coolest” of campers, sharing his tefilla experiences and speaking about them as some of the greatest and most personal moments of his life. He was followed by a girl who described her tefilla the first time her family visited the Kotel, and another after being saved from a car accident, and another after winning a ball game, etc.

Afterwards, one camper said:

If everyone is being so honest and personal, I'll share that there were moments when I actually felt something really powerful during tefilla, but I always thought it wasn't cool, so I tried to stop them. Now I realize that I am such a neb for doing so. Being deep is not just for geeks.

All these campers, who were certainly not the first ones to truly appreciate davening, spoke of tefilla as an amazing, uplifting experience that they wished they could recreate daily.

Some of the campers wondered how the counselor could take such a gamble, waiting until someone would say something... they later asked him: How did you know that we had had deep tefilla experiences and that we would ultimately share them?

Since the author of this book was the counselor, he can tell you that the counselor felt the answer was very simple: He is convinced that almost everyone in the world has had moments of powerful, genuine tefilla. Moreover, it is hard for anyone who has had a tefilla experience to restrain from sharing at least a part of it, when presented with a willing audience. The experience becomes so powerful and meaningful in the person's minds that no matter how "cool" they are, the person wants to share it with others when given the chance.
Rather than forcing your teacher to wait around until one of you is willing to be the first to share (after all, there is a whole book in front of us that we would like to learn), write about your “tefilla moment” in your journal or on a piece of paper. Discuss how the tefilla made you feel, and if it was an experience you wish you had more often. If so, why do you think that it is challenging to recreate that experience on a more consistent basis?

A powerful tefilla is often very memorable and is probably one of the most exhilarating experiences one can have. Deep inside, most people seem to have a strong connection to tefilla, at least the tefillot when they "feel it". How can we increase the frequency of these tefilla experiences?

Perhaps the first step is to appreciate that even the regular, daily siddur is designed to create powerful and meaningful tefilla experiences. And many of the basic elements of these experiences are the same ingredients that we have already identified in our recipe for a successful life. We will explore this in more detail in the next section.

The Tefilla Recipe for Success

If you look at the nature and text of our tefilla, you’ll find that it contains many of the ‘traits for success’ you identified earlier. Tefilla is nothing short of a recipe for a successful life. Beyond its spiritual core, it touches upon all the traits of success we mentioned and more.

(By the way, even when it may seem that a person reaches success without the specific habits and behaviors we have discussed, we recognize that there is no reason to credit "coincidence". On the contrary, it is much more reasonable to acknowledge that success owes a great deal to a "ת-כ-inci-dence" (an incidence/occurrence that is initiated by Hashem) operating behind the scenes. Does tefilla play a role in these CO-incidences?)

One thing is clear: Tefilla affords the opportunity to get in touch with ourselves, our surroundings, and the meaning of our lives. It is an experience rooted in adept communication, as well as deep awareness of ourselves, our nation, our history, and the world around us. Add to it the fact that we are communicating directly with אבינו, our Heavenly Father, Whose will brought us into existence and with Whom we have a personal connection; not to mention He is also our King, the Master of the world Who is capable of altering reality on a dime; and tefilla becomes an unbelievable experience. Imagine such a private meeting, with no disturbances, sitting with the attentive King, who is not looking at a cellphone and aimlessly nodding, but is simply there to listen to YOU.

Maybe you’ve heard the cynical and somewhat sad joke about how some people tend to daven:

**Question:** Why are so many Orthodox Jews so successful in business?

**Answer:** Because three times a day they put everything out of their mind and think about nothing other than how to succeed in business.

While the joke might reflect some of the challenges of davening properly on a consistent basis, the irony is that the joke correctly presumes that absolute concentration can certainly lead to success in life. Of course, it should be noted, the proper use of the time involves thinking about more important matters than just financial success.

Tefilla is an opportunity that interests us deep down. To tap into this, and to appreciate tefilla, we have to know more about it. The more we understand about tefilla and its halachot, the more we can make it a meaningful experience to be appreciated and even longed for.
Why then isn’t tefilla experienced this way on a daily basis? What are the reasons that tefilla is so challenging?

**We Want Tefilla?! Of Course We Do!**

If some of the benefits of tefilla are so clear, then why do we have so much difficulty with it?

Why do you think it is that, on the one hand, people can appreciate a good tefilla, but, on the other hand, seem to view tefilla as a challenge or even a burden?

The Approach of "From the Source; with Spirit: Hilchot Tefilla"

The goal of this book is to help us to understand tefilla by developing a real appreciation of it. By learning the halachot of tefilla and how they shape the tefilla experience, our own tefilla can be transformed from a challenge into a welcome, invigorating and enriching opportunity.

Approaching tefilla through a multi-step process might help us a great deal not only learn about tefilla but to gain the skills we need to appreciate it. That’s what this book aims to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>Learning a little bit about what tefilla is, and why it can be so powerful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2</td>
<td>Understanding how the halachot of tefilla are not meant be burdensome, but to unlock tefilla and make it a meaningful and beautiful experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3</td>
<td>Recognizing how the Siddur helps take tefilla from potentiality to actuality, turning tefilla into a ‘real’ experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 4</td>
<td>While all these steps are very logical and important, we can’t move forward without gaining the skills necessary to be able to appreciate tefilla Therefore, our studies also aim to provide us with a tool box to help develop some of these skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing a Skill Set for Appreciating Tefilla

Specifically because tefilla is so deep and covers the basic as well as the profound, it would be hard to begin without developing some of the skills one needs for dealing with a topic as vast and powerful as tefilla.

In fact, many of the tefillot themselves help us to develop these skills, while other tefillot present a perfect opportunity for uncovering how these skills can assist us. This book uses a number of icons which will help us to identify and develop the skills necessary for tefilla success and to hone in on certain parts of the siddur that help us to develop these skills.
Look at the picture of your new toolbox. It is now empty. What skills would you suggest we develop and put into our toolboxes so as to be able to appreciate tefilla as a deeply meaningful experience? (In other words, which specific abilities are necessary in order to really appreciate tefilla?)

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

At this point, let's take a look at the following four skills/icons we would like to add to our box. Under each icon, state what they mean to you, and why you think developing these skills will help with life in general and with tefilla in particular?

As we develop these skills, the language of many tefillot will prove a powerful medium for deep expression.

The Icons

To make this book user-friendly, we have developed a number of other icons as well, which will help us identify different aspects of tefilla.

One of the formidable challenges posed by tefilla is the need to confront reality itself. The first part of confronting the world around us involves recognition- הכרה/Hakara. There are three types of recognition that are bound up with tefilla, and learning to appreciate them is a gift we can cherish for our entire lives.

It all starts with הערכה עצמית/Hakarat Atzmi,- recognizing who we really are. All knowledge begins with self-knowledge. Why do certain actions make us feel better than others? What are we really looking for in our relationships? The more we know about ourselves, the more we can live life to the fullest. Even knowing why certain foods impact our bodies negatively can significantly improve our lives. The tefillot that help us become more self-aware will be represented by the following icon:

Offhand, which parts of tefilla do you think focus on hakarat atzmi, and how might understanding yourself deepen your tefilla experiences?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Besides understanding ourselves, the more we understand Hashem, the easier it will be to develop a relationship with Him. At first glance, that might seem a little weird, because strange as it is, we don't usually hear too much about “Him.” However, there might be a good reason why we need to think and learn about this in school more than was necessary in the past. Think about the following statement of Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik z"l (The Rav - R’ Aaron Rakefet, Vol. 2, pages 168-169):

What would you think?
In the past, this great experience of the tradition was not handed down from generation to generation through the medium of words. It was absorbed through osmosis; somehow, through silence. We used to observe. Today in America, however, and in the Western world, this is completely lost. The father cannot pass it on to his son. The father does not possess these emotions, because he never observed and experienced them. He cannot expect his son to receive something he himself does not possess. Therefore, it is up to the Yeshiva and the teacher to open up the emotional world of Judaism to the student… I do not believe that we can afford to be as reluctant, modest, and shy today as we were in the past about describing our relationship with the Almighty.

This is from a lecture given by Rav Soloveitchik in 1968. If it was true, then it is all the more true now. "As the world in which we live becomes more globally-oriented, more interested in international and intercultural events and phenomena, we are threatened with losing sight of our tradition and our unique selves. In the age of an ever-growing information superhighway, we come across so much information that distinguishing between fact and fiction becomes a labored task. When we lose our grasp on reality, we lose ourselves and our ability to connect to Hashem, plain and simple.

For this reason, we will use an icon to call attention to recognizing Hashem and to refer to the tefillot that help us understand Him, in the hopes of developing a relationship with Him.

The more we understand about Hashem, the more we perceive Him as a living reality, the more we can sense His presence behind all that is good in this world. This enables us to develop a sense of gratitude for the benefits of, Hakarat Hatov- expressing gratitude.

It will become clear to us that developing the skills we just mentioned are not only an important part of appreciating tefilla, but of appreciating life in general. Many tefillot express this idea.

We will also find our tefillot connect us with historical events, with our past. As we know: "Those who do not learn from the mistakes of history, are doomed to repeat them." Some tefillot will remind us of past events in order that we understand them and appreciate their lessons. These tefillot will be represented by this icon:

After all, to know ourselves, our people, and our purpose, we must know the past and understand where the future is headed.

Some tefillot will even transport us to certain moments in history, past or even future. Part of what makes our history, Jewish history, unique is that it is a living history. We do not see the history as simply something ancient and behind us, but a genuine part of our living experience, which we can actually feel. The tefillot that envelop us in our history will be represented by the following icon:

We will also make use of another icon. This icon will indicate those tefillot that are only said on certain dates and aim to illicit certain feelings (like Hallel on Festivals, and Selichot on Fast Days). The icon will appear as follows:

Though the book will make use of additional icons, the ones presented here are the most essential for understanding tefilla itself.

Review:

Review the four steps this book will use to develop the concept of tefilla. Next to each step please write what you would expect to learn as part of understanding tefilla. What issues do you hope will be discussed in each of the steps?
Introduction

In previous chapters, we identified the basis for davening three times a day and its importance. Much of the book's discussion so far has been centered on Shacharit, as it contains various different sections and components and is the tefilla that gets us going in the morning. Shacharit affords us the opportunities of understanding ourselves, expressing gratitude, and gaining a deeper appreciation of Hashem, using these aspects to uncover our ratzon and emerge at the end of tefilla far different than we began it.

Summarize some of the ways we do so during Shacharit:

1. **Hakarat Hatov**
2. **Hakarat Atzmi**
3. **Hakarat Hashem**

Putting it all together for a wonderful day:

The halachot of Tefillat Shacharit also ensure its being one's focus at the beginning of the day. What halachot have we learned that guide us in making Shacharit our morning priority to start our day off right?

Shacharit is not only the best part of waking up; if recited properly, it sets the pace for a productive and meaningful day. We are much happier once we weather its challenge. Thus, it is no surprise that Tefillat Shacharit is so significant.

But why is one tefilla a day not enough? At a minimum, there are two other tefillot, Mincha and Arvit. Does their timing (afternoon and evening, respectively) or their content have something to do with their unique purpose? In this chapter, we will focus on Tefillat Mincha and try to uncover its unique purpose and its role in our connection with Hashem as well as its overall desired impact on our daily life.

In truth, of all the tefillot, it is specifically Mincha which is most challenging. One could easily explain the need for one tefilla during the daytime and one at night, but that could be achieved with Shacharit and Arvit (after all, Keriat Shema is recited ובקומך ובكومך, once during the morning and once at night). The fact that there is an
additional tefilla during the middle of the day indicates something significant. The fact that Mincha's structure is different from that of Shacharit may allow us to uncover its essence.

The Different Tefillot

The key to Mincha's unique role is its structure. Although all three tefillot are centered on the relatively identical Amida, they are all distinguished by their unique times and structures. Their different contents point to a unique goal for each of the tefillot, a goal specifically suited to the time the tefilla is recited. Therefore, let's begin by seeing what Mincha entails.

Step 1- Examination of the Text of Mincha

Take a look in your Siddur and examine the text and structure of Mincha, identifying in the chart its similarities to Shacharit and Arvit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities between Shacharit and Mincha</th>
<th>Similarities between Mincha and Arvit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, if the entire text of Mincha appears (almost entirely) in Shacharit and Arvit, what does Mincha independently add and contribute to our daily relationship with Hashem?

What do you think Mincha uniquely contributes to one's daily tefilla? What do you think are its challenges and how might its timing and text reflect its uniqueness?

What would you think?

Mincha's Unique Significance

Although Mincha might seem like a less significant tefilla without a unique purpose, nevertheless the Gemara says something startling about it. Take a look and explain what it says (and what it might mean):

What would you think?

R. Chelbo said in the name of R. Huna: A man should always take special care about the afternoon-prayer, for Eliyahu was favorably answered only while offering his afternoon-prayer. For it is said, “And it came to pass at the time of the afternoon offering (mincha) that Eliyahu the prophet came near and said... ‘Hear me, O Lord, hear me”’ (I Melachim 18:26-27).
Why is Mincha so significant?

There are a number of explanations offered as to what makes Mincha so special. After understanding each explanation, think about the common thread that unites the various explanations.

Explanation 1- The Tur

The Tur, after quoting the Gemara above, explains why Mincha is so significant and powerful. What does he say, and how do you understand it?

טור א"י, הלכות תפלת המנחה, סימן ד'ב

וה التعاون מהאריך יומם אין יותר بكומים מבית נспектים יומם מדריך שיא א"י

but experience, and not a day by day, doesn’t come because of the day, but he who unoccupieshimself will open the day.

Explanation 2- Magen Avot

The Maggid of Turiisk (known by his work Magen Avot) offers a similar but slightly different explanation regarding the unique opportunity of Mincha. What does he say?

מגן אבות למגיד מטריסק, פרשת חיי שרה

 involced

Unoccupied

who is busy

and the sigh

groans

sighs

Pierces

Heavens

שתם זה המוטרד בעסקיו כל היום בשווקים וברחובות, וכמעט ששוכח שיש בורא עולם...וגונח ונאנח בלבו...ומתפלל מנחה...והאנחה שלו בוקעת רקיעים.

Explanation 3- Rav Soloveitchik

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein cites a similar idea from Rav Soloveitchik regarding Mincha. What does he say, and what broader perspective regarding our multifaceted life does he find in it?

شيخת הרב אהרון ליכטנשטיין, פרשת חיי שרה, תשנ"ו

Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l explains that Tefillat Mincha is different in its essence from Shacharit and Arvit. One davens Shacharit before he goes to work and davens Arvit after he returns from work. Both tefilloot are at the edges of the day, davened at home or in the shul. In contrast, one davens Mincha in the middle of the day, in the middle of work. This tefilla symbolizes the synthesis of daily occupation with the service of G-d. Service of G-d is not something cut off from daily occupation: one must not separate between work and leisure when it comes to their service of G-d. In all of one’s actions they serve G-d — they serve G-d in the field, they serve G-d in the factory, etc.
What is the common thread regarding the uniqueness of Mincha according to all three opinions (despite their differences)? Do you think the point they mention expresses the challenge of Mincha or its opportunity (or both)? Why?

Give Me a Break: The Challenge and Opportunity of Mincha

All three opinions note the fact that Mincha's unique nature is specifically highlighted through the pausing of one's endeavors during the middle of the day. But why the need for such a pause, and if one already takes a break from their busy schedule, how does Mincha enhance that time?

Let's think a little about what it means to be busy and how to look at "taking a break" from one's busy schedule. Do you think being overly busy is a sign of productivity or the expression of an inability to plan one's time? Do you feel the need to be busy? (Why?)

When was the last time you thought about... nothing? Could you imagine taking a break from your "busyness" might actually provide you with more time? What would you want out of your break in order to empower you with greater focus and increased productivity?

Putting the opinions together

A daily break from the grind is important for focus and productivity. Yet Mincha is clearly not a break aimed at doing nothing (as important as that might be); rather, it involves taking out the time to refocus on who we are, who we want to be, and to continue our activities with that drive, through initiating a conversation with Hashem and unlocking the power of tefilla.

Think about the various qualities below that are often associated with the benefits of taking a break from one's daily schedule. Identify which of these "taking a break" benefits might apply to the three different opinions we saw regarding what makes Mincha so important. In the final column, indicate how Mincha achieves that goal.
The Impact of Mincha's Source on Its Nature

To understand how Mincha serves as this spiritual-refocusing break, we need to look back at its source. We studied the Gemara's discussion of the two sources for the three tefillot we recite daily. For a quick review, what is the source for Mincha according to each of the opinions presented in the Gemara, and how might that impact its nature?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TUR</td>
<td>Increase productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magen Avot</td>
<td>Refocus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Soloveitchik</td>
<td>Remember why you are doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reenergize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear your mind of all the pressure that is holding you back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding that Mincha's original source in korbanot is significant, as it indicates the timing of Mincha (as we have learned and will understand a little better in a few moments). Additionally, understanding Yitzchak and the way the Torah presents his tefilla will enhance its uniqueness.

The connection between Yitzchak and Mincha

As we understand Mincha's unique role as the tefilla for refocusing in the middle of the day, it becomes almost natural that it is specifically Yitzchak who institutes the tefilla of Mincha. Let's take a look back at the source from the Torah from which the Gemara derives Yitzchak's initiation of Mincha, the pesukim describing the return of Avraham's servant from Charan with Rivka, the woman chosen to be Yitzchak's wife. Think about where
Yitzchak is and what he is doing as Rivka approaches. Explain the simple meaning of the pesukim as well as the significance of the detailed encounter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where is Yitzchak?</th>
<th>What is he doing? (Hebrew + translation)</th>
<th>What time is it?</th>
<th>Rivka's Reaction</th>
<th>Ultimate Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בְּרָאשִׁית פָּרָק כָּל</td>
<td>וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לָשׂוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה לִפְנוֹת עָרֶב</td>
<td>וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרֶא אֶת יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגָּמָל</td>
<td>וַיְסַפֵּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה</td>
<td>וַיְבִאֶה יִצְחָק הָאֹהֱלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶה וַיִּנָּחֵם יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing the pesukim, take another look at the Gemara’s derivation that Yitzchak instituted Mincha. What does it say and what proof does the Gemara cite?

Yitzchak instituted Tefillat Mincha, as it says, ’And Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field at eventide’ (Bereishit 24:63), and meditation refers only to tefilla, as it says, ’A tefilla of the afflicted when he faints and pours out his meditation before G-d’ (Tehillim 102:1)...

At first glance, the Gemara’s derivation is rather straightforward: 세상 denotes tefilla. However, as always, derivations of pesukim found in Torah Shebe’al Peh contain a lot of depth and meaning.

In fact, the term for tefilla used here, as well as Yitzchak’s location seem to be particularly appropriate for Yitzchak. Why do you think that might be?

It is worth noting Yitzchak is described in the Torah as the only one of the Avot who planted:
Could Yitzchak's physical activity in the field make his spiritual activity in the field more appropriate?

Additionally, think about how Yitzchak's personality is portrayed. The Torah spends significantly more time discussing Avraham's actions, yet in the short descriptions of Yitzchak, it is clear that not only does he reinforce everything that Avraham has done, but he takes Avraham's acts one step further.

Take a look at the following pesukim and explain how Yitzchak becomes active at a time when what Avraham had done in the world is being erased. How does Yitzchak do what Avraham did and go beyond, until everyone recognizes that Yitzchak's (and Avraham's) message is here to stay?

**Braviot, Merk K**

During his lifetime, Yitzchak is certainly less active than Avraham, often echoing his father’s actions, such as going to Gerar and digging wells (Bereishit 20 and 26). He is generally more passive, such as during the Akeida (ch. 22) and not actively being the one to find a wife for himself (ch. 24), etc.

If Yitzchak is the one who creates Mincha, do you think there might be any connection between Yitzchak's life, his style of serving Hashem, and the essence of Tefillat Mincha? Might there be any parallel between Mincha and its relationship to Shacharit, and Yitzchak and his relationship to Avraham?

---

**Mincha and the Afternoon Tamid: The Middle of the Day or the End of the Day?**

Chapter 29: Tefillat Mincha
Based on our discussion in this chapter, what would you expect to be the ideal time to daven *Mincha*?

We have already seen how *zemanei tefilla*, the appropriate times for the different tefillot, are rooted in the times of the corresponding *avodat hakorbanot*.

As we saw, *Tefillat Mincha* corresponds to the קרבון תמים של ביו הערבים (the daily offering brought in the Mikdash each afternoon). In earlier chapters we discussed the general significance of the *Korban Tamid*, the daily offering, (and the reason why we recite *Parashat Tamid*, as it appears in the Torah, every day near the very beginning of *tefilla*). Yet, the power of the *Korban Tamid* is not only that it expresses daily commitment, being brought every day no matter what the circumstances; it is brought twice during the day: once in the morning (*zman Shacharit*), and once in the afternoon (*zman Mincha*).

We will see how the timing of the *Tamid* sheds light on our question.

**The Proper Time for Mincha**

We discussed earlier in the chapter how the main opportunity and challenge of *Mincha* is scheduling it when time is limited. The *Mishna* summarizes the different times that the *Korban Tamid* was brought. What does it say, and what is the basis for the distinctions?

משנה, מסכת פסחים, פרק ה, משנה א

משנה, מסכת פסחים, פרק ה, משנה א

(Logically, if the time for the *Korban Tamid* was almost always 9½ hours into the day, then it should be the ideal time for davening *Mincha*. The *Erev Pesach* exception might allow one to daven *Mincha* earlier. However, *Halacha*, as we have seen, recognizes two distinct times for *Mincha*: one of *mincha gedola* and one of *mincha ketana*. What does the *Shulchan Aruch* say on this matter?)

ושלחן ארוך אורח חיים רלג:א

Although we saw in the previous chapter that not all agree that *mincha ketana* is preferable, it does seem to be logical (except maybe on *Erev Pesach*), as this is the time the *korban* was actually brought daily.

Fascinatingly, the *Gemara* records another view: to *daven Mincha* shortly before sunset. What does Rabbi Yochanan say (and how does the *pasuk* he brings remind us of *Vatikin* in the morning)? Why do the scholars of *Eretz Yisrael* disagree? What approach to *Mincha* does Rabbi Yochanan take? Does the *Shulchan Aruch* rule like
As the sun reddens, curse in the West (Eretz Yisrael), may we merit to pray during the final moments of waning light during Mincha; which tefilla allows one to daven after concluding most of their daily activities, giving them a little time not only to sum up their day, but to prepare for nightfall after Mincha. Additionally, think about which times for Mincha reflect zerizin makdimin lamitzvot, running to communicate with Hashem at the earliest available time, and which better reflect more waiting for the proper moment or trying to bridge one day to another with tefilla.

In the following chart, formulate what you feel are the benefits for each time of Mincha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mincha Gedola</th>
<th>Mincha Ketana</th>
<th>Im Dimdumei Chama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pros</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the Tefilla Expresses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Making Sure Mincha Happens**

Mincha’s uniqueness is clearly connected to its unique timing. Its challenge and great power comes from the fact that we pause our routine to converse with Hashem.

Realistically, the challenge of Mincha's timing might result in it being forgotten. What do you think are practical ways to ensure we take advantage of Mincha and don't forget it or miss it?

---

*Food For Thought*

What would you think?

9 Chapter 29: Tefillat Mincha
The Halachot of Keeping Us on Track

You probably share similar concerns with Chazal. In order to make sure that we make time for Mincha and don't forget it amidst our busy schedules, Chazal provided halachic guidelines for our activities during the time of Mincha. Examine the following sources and explain the halachot that help ensure we will take advantage of Mincha. What does the Mishna say not to do before having davened Mincha, and what do you think is the reason why?

| 비GetSize inaccessible| 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |

What principle does the Tur derive as to what type of activities should be performed after Mincha?

| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |

The Mishna Berura provides a contemporary example of an activity not included in the Mishna. What is the Mishna Berura’s example?

| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |

On the other hand, once we recognize that Chazal's goal was to ensure that we don't lose sight of Mincha, it is clear that acts that won't cause us to get lost are not an issue. For instance, the Mishna Berura adds an additional factor in his Bei’ur Halacha. What does he say and how does it compare to what he says above?

| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |
| 비GetSize inaccessible | 비GetSize inaccessible |

Chazal wanted to enable us to make the most of Mincha, while recognizing that it can take planning to make time for Mincha. Based on the above, what is Chazal’s guiding principle when it comes to undertaking pre-Mincha...
activities?

To summarize, let’s fill in the table below with the activities that appear above which shouldn't be performed prior to Mincha for fear that they will cause one to become too preoccupied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>The problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do Circumstances (like Modern Technologies) Make a Difference?

Do you think Halacha takes into account these distinctions and would permit performing activities before Mincha that are not as time-consuming as they once were?

Let’s take a look at a source regarding haircuts which will help us see how Halacha takes into account modern innovations whenever necessary. What does it say regarding getting a haircut before Mincha?

פסקי תשובה ד:לבד

וכן נהגו העולם היתר בתוספת מלחמה כלת יהא מר מטחיימין ברעפים אひとり.

Halacha also expresses its recognition of differing circumstances when discussing other reminders which might allow for performing activities before Mincha, as the halachot here are made to ensure we don't forget Mincha, not to limit our activity when there is no reason to fear such an eventuality.

Other Reminders

The Rema already mentions a means to ensure one will daven Mincha even if performing involved activities. What does he suggest and when do you think it should apply?
Modern Reminders

Today, there are more technologically advanced methods of reminding a person other than the gabbai calling people for tefilla (i.e., a shomer) that existed in earlier times.

What types of devices do you think might also serve as a shomer to remove the fear of being overly engrossed in an activity and missing Mincha? When do you think these devices might not suffice?

Take a look at the following quote from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. What does he say, and what do you think his distinction between the different cases is based on? Why do you think it is very logical?

הليسות שלמה פרק ב הלכה יב

Our Lomdei Halacha: Setting is good, Ringing is specific.

Look at the following ruling from the Aruch Hashulchan on the matter. Explain the rationale of his leniency:

The Reason for prohibited activities before mincha

When the logic doesn't apply and one can even even perform lengthy activities

Summarize the logic behind the prohibition to perform involved activities before Mincha and when those halachot wouldn't apply because one will still remember to daven Mincha:

Chapter 29: Tefillat Mincha

12
The Structure of Mincha

At the outset of the chapter, we identified the different components of Mincha, noting what is similar to or different from the other tefillot of the day. Based on what we have learned regarding these different components in their appropriate chapters, coupled with what we learned about Mincha, think about why the short-but-sweet structure of Mincha is appropriate for its goals.

Explaining the Components of Mincha

In the following chart, state why you think this particular structure is most appropriate:

| Ashrei (Sephardim add Parashat Tamid and Ketoret) |  |
| Chatzi Kaddish |  |
| Amida |  |
| Tachanun (Avinu Malkeinu on Fasts & Aseret Yemei Teshuva) |  |
| Aleinu |  |

Understanding Mincha and the nature of different tefillot can assist us in our appreciation of the Siddur.

For instance, we learned about the importance of Pesukei Dezimra preceding the Amida of Shacharit. What was that role, and why might Ashrei serve as a substitute in Tefillat Mincha, which is recited in the middle of the day, when one is unable to allocate sufficient time to recite all of Pesukei Dezimra?

Now let's see which of these ideas the Aruch Hashulchan focuses on. What does he say, and how does it resonate with what we have learned in the past?

Interestingly enough, the Rambam seems to indicate that one must sit when reciting Ashrei at Mincha, as he stresses the word יושבין.
In light of Mincha’s timing and the dual role of Ashrei, why would the Rambam require sitting?

This practice of sitting and reciting Ashrei should get us in the mood of tefilla and properly prepare us for the next section.

Based on what we have seen regarding the connection of Mincha to the Korban Tamid, think about why reciting the passage of the Tamid would seem very appropriate before Mincha. Then summarize the Aruch Hashulchan's thoughts on the matter:

With this in mind, map out how Mincha, although relatively short, contains hachana, followed by shevach, bakasha, and hoda’a, allowing for a unique tefilla experience and satisfying a strong need for communication with Hashem amidst the day’s hustle and bustle:

When Time is Short- Really Short

Mincha Ketzara

Mincha’s timing may make a full Chazarat Hashatz difficult. When Mincha takes place right in the middle of the day, it may be difficult to take a long break for the entire tefilla. On the other hand, if Mincha is davened close to shekia, there might not be enough time to finish prior. Is there any...
room for leniency in such cases to allow skipping Chazarat Hashatz?

The Rema discusses the possibility of reciting a Mincha Ketzara, often referred to as a Heicha Kedusha (a partial Chazarat Hashatz for the purpose of reciting Kedusha). When and how does he find this option feasible?

רמ”א אאורח חיים הלכות תפלה סימן קכ ח ע”ב

The Mishna Berura states that under ideal conditions, Mincha Ketzara should be performed differently. What does he say and why do you think that is?

משנה ברורה סימן קכ ח ע”ב

Rav Nebenzahl mentions an additional consideration for davening a Mincha Ketzara. What is it?

 Donetsk הקוה: ביצחק יקרא סימן קכ ח שעת...דהוא הדין...

Essentially, Heicha Kedusha unifies the tzibbur through Kedusha (which requires the first three berachot) but not through Chazarat Hashatz. This is the reason why it is only to be employed when necessary (concerning which opinions differ). Many schools and some yeshivot often daven Mincha in this manner.

Tachanun after Sunset

Another challenge that arises with late Mincha is whether one is permitted to recite Tachanun after sunset (shekia). Take a look at the Shulchan Aruch’s general ruling and the Mishna Berura’s explanation.
The authorities explain that the only time we actually recite Tachanun at night is the Tachanun of Selichot (one reason is that the most appropriate time for Selichot is immediately prior to daybreak).

Summarize your findings in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bein Hashemashot</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Can Tachanun be said?

How the structure of Mincha expresses its role:

- Unique Communication at this time of the day

When can one daven a Heicha Kedusha?

SAMPLE
Hakarat Hashem

SAMPLE

additional tefilla during the middle of the day indicates something significant. The fact that Mincha’s structure is... the time.
The chapter will also illustrate the impact of the source of Tefillat Mincha on its nature and halachot. Mincha is the tefilla initiated by Yitzchak (as he is in the field, involved in daily activities) and modelled after the afternoon Korban Tamid, which affects many of its halachot. For instance, there are two times for its recitation, mincha gedola (6½ hours into the day, a little after midday) and mincha ketana (after 9½ hours). The latter allows one to bookend their day, concluding with tefilla a period that begins with Shacharit.

The power of Mincha, turning to Hashem during the middle of the day, poses a formidable challenge. It requires putting one’s occupation aside in order to daven, and it may easily be forgotten. We will illustrate how a number of its halachot revolve around this reality; for instance, Chazal instituted a number of halachot to make sure one does not forget Mincha or miss it by being overly involved in other activities.

Furthermore, Mincha’s location in the daily routine influences its structure, which is truncated. Its power comes from the time of day it is recited, not from its length.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Different Tefillot
Step 1- Examination of the Text of Mincha
Mincha’s Unique Significance
Why is Mincha so significant?
Explanation 1- The Tur

559
additional tefilla during the middle of the day indicates something significant. The fact that Mincha’s structure is different from that of Shacharit may allow us to uncover its essence.

**The Different Tefillot**
The key to Mincha’s unique role is its structure. Although all three tefillot are centered on the relatively identical Amida, they are all distinguished by their unique times and structures. Their different contents point to a unique goal for each of the tefillot, a goal specifically suited to the time the tefilla is recited. Therefore, let’s begin by seeing what Mincha entails.

**Step 1- Examination of the Text of Mincha**
Take a look in your Siddur and examine the text and structure of Mincha, identifying in the chart its similarities to Shacharit and Arvit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities between Shacharit and Mincha</th>
<th>Similarities between Mincha and Arvit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, if the entire text of Mincha appears (almost entirely) in Shacharit and Arvit, what does Mincha independently add and contribute to our daily relationship with Hashem?

What do you think Mincha uniquely contributes to one’s daily tefilla? What do you think are its challenges and how might its timing and text reflect its uniqueness?

**Mincha’s Unique Significance**

Although Mincha might seem like a less significant tefilla without a unique purpose, nevertheless the Gemara says something startling about it. Take a look and explain what it says (and what it might mean):

תלמוד בבלי, מסכת ברכות, דף ו, עמוד ב

ואמר רבי חלבו אמר רב הונא: לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בתפלה המנחה, שהרי אליהו לא נענה אלא בתפלה המנחה, שנאמר: ויהי בעלות המנחה ויגש אליהו הנביא ויאמר וגו’ ענני ה’ ענני.

What would you think?

**Chapter 29: Tefillat Mincha**

**Explanation 2- Magen Avot**
**Explanation 3- Rav Sолoveitchik**
**Give Me a Break: The Challenge and Opportunity of Mincha**

Putting the opinions together

The Impact of Mincha’s Source on Its Nature

The connection between Yitzchak and Mincha

Mincha and the Afternoon Tamid: The Middle of the Day or the End of the Day?

The Proper Time for Mincha

Why is it called Mincha?

Making Sure Mincha Happens

The Halachot of Keeping Us on Track

Do Circumstances (like Modern Technologies) make a difference?

Other Reminders

Modern Reminders

Mincha as a Bridge to the Next Day

The Structure of Mincha

When Time is Short- Really Short

Mincha Ketzara

Tachanun after Sunset

1 We start the day off by connecting to G-d first thing in the morning, preparing ourselves for the opportunity and not eating or involving ourselves in other activities before tefilla.

2 In fact, on Shabbat, even the text of each Amida recited throughout the day is different (see From the Source with Spirit: Hilchot Shabbat for an explanation).

3 Students should note that like Shacharit, Mincha has Ashrei, Chazarat Hashatz, and Tachanun; and, like Arvit, it lacks extended praise of Hashem in Pesukei Dezimra and lacks Birchot Keriat Shema and Keriat Shema. However, the Amida appears in both, as this is the primary element of all tefillot; Aleinu, the concluding tefilla, is also present. Among the important observations that may be discussed in class is that the unified thread in Shacharit and Arvit with Keriat Shema and its berachot leading into the Amida is absent in Mincha (as Shema is recited only on Shabbat), indicating that the Amida of Mincha has a unique role.

4 This section’s main thrust is that while Mincha at first
Why is Mincha so significant?

There are a number of explanations offered as to what makes Mincha so special. After understanding each explanation, think about the common thread that unites the various explanations.

**Explanation 1: The Tur**

The Tur, after quoting the Gemara above, explains why Mincha is so significant and powerful. What does he say, and how do you understand it?

1. **Involved-Unoccupied**

   - *His work*
   - ...and the syntheses of the middle of the day.
   - ...and the syntheses of the middle of the day.
   - ...and the syntheses of the middle of the day. W...and there were many people who synthesize the middle of the day.
   - ...and there were many people who synthesize the middle of the day.

2. **Magen Avot**

   The Maggid of Turisk (known by his work Magen Avot) offers a similar but slightly different explanation regarding the unique opportunity of Mincha. What does he say?

3. **Rav Soloveitchik**

   Rav Aharon Lichtenstein cites a similar idea from Rav Soloveitchik regarding Mincha. What does he say, and what broader perspective regarding our multifaceted life does he find in it?

4. **Mincha symbolizes the unification of the physical activities of this world and the spiritual pursuits of serving G-d. We don’t split our religious life from our secular life.**

5. **The point of this question is to help the students appreciate the notion that the challenge of Mincha is also its greatest asset. The difficulty of stopping one's activities in the middle of the day to concentrate on tefilla is what makes Mincha so powerful, and, as we will see, explains its structure as well as many of its halachot.**

6. **The main goal of this thinking section is to emphasize the point that Mincha is unique because it is a break in the middle of the day. While this is challenging, this is really a much needed opportunity to “recharge.” Mincha trains us to stay in control of our time. It is fine and constructive to be busy, but it must be disciplined. The experience...**
What is the common thread regarding the uniqueness of Mincha according to all three opinions (despite their differences)? Do you think the point they mention expresses the challenge of Mincha or its opportunity (or both)? Why?

Give Me a Break: The Challenge and Opportunity of Mincha

All three opinions note the fact that Mincha’s unique nature is specifically highlighted through the pausing of one’s endeavors during the middle of the day. But why the need for such a pause, and if one already takes a break from their busy schedule, how does Mincha enhance that time?

Let’s think a little about what it means to be busy and how to look at “taking a break” from one’s busy schedule. Do you think being overly busy is a sign of productivity or the expression of an inability to plan one’s time? Do you feel the need to be busy? (Why?)

When was the last time you thought about… nothing? Could you imagine taking a break from your “busyness” might actually provide you with more time? What would you want out of your break in order to empower you with greater focus and increased productivity?

Putting the opinions together

A daily break from the grind is important for focus and productivity. Yet Mincha is clearly not a break aimed at doing nothing (as important as that might be); rather, it involves taking out the time to refocus on who we are, who we want to be, and to continue our activities with that drive, through initiating a conversation with Hashem and unlocking the power of tefilla.

Think about the various qualities below that are often associated with the benefits of taking a break from one’s daily schedule. Identify which of these “taking a break” benefits might apply to the three different opinions we saw regarding what makes Mincha so important. In the final column, indicate how Mincha achieves that goal.

Chazal understood the need to make sure we don’t get carried away with other things and forget about Mincha.

12 The specific activities seem to be examples of activities that would keep one occupied for a while.

13 Any activity that is similar, in that it will distract you and potentially cause you to forget Mincha, should be postponed until after Mincha. As the Magen Avraham (232:6) states: תשמיעו דאו הדא Loki מַלְאָכָה אֲנָחָנוּ מִשְׁמוֹר מְשָׁמָנוּ. This is very sensible, for Mincha is at the busiest time of day, and the Mishna can’t provide every possible example that would come up.

14 The Mishna Berura mentions shopping as example of an activity that might cause you to forget tefilla, so you should daven Mincha before shopping.

15 The prohibition doesn’t apply to things one easily stops when necessary. He is consistent as activities that take a long time would distract you whereas activities easily interrupted would not cause a distraction from Mincha.
Answers in student chart.

The source according to the opinion that is from Yitzchak, while the source of the Gemara is from Rabbi Soloveitchik. Our understanding of Yitzchak and his tefilla as well as the role of Afternoon Tamid might very well help us understand Mincha.

In this section we demonstrate how Yitzchak serves as a fitting initiator for Tefillat Mincha. In his own life, he serves as an example of the goal Mincha strives to achieve: through our worldly occupation, we are reminded of G-d’s centrality to our lives. Yitzchak successfully synthesizes the value of work with the divine perspective.

See chart below.

The Gemara says Yitzchak instituted Tefila Mincha, as he went to the field, על גבעה ו.newInstanceו, prior to nightfall, and it proves its assertion that what time is tefilla from Tehillim’s description of התפילה ל-resource, the tefilla of one who is in need, who wraps himself and pours out his heart in front of Hashem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where is Yitzchak?</th>
<th>What is he doing? (Hebrew + translation)</th>
<th>What time is it?</th>
<th>Rivka’s Reaction</th>
<th>Ultimate Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yitzchak is in the field (and Rivka even refers to him as the man walking in the field)</td>
<td>השם — ול-resource usually means to converse, talk, or meditate.</td>
<td>The Torah goes out of its way to mention that this was done ל-resource, before sunset.</td>
<td>Rivka wants to know who he is as she is enamored with this individual (possibly due to witnessing a very spiritual experience).</td>
<td>Rivka covers herself in modesty, and after telling the story, Yitzchak and Rivka wed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yitzchak is and what he is doing as Rivka approaches. Explain the simple meaning of the pesukim as well as the significance of the detailed encounter.

בראשית פרק כד
(סג) וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לָשׂוּחַ בַּשָּׂדֶה לִפְנוֹת עָרֶב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה גְמַלִּים בָּאִים: (סד) וַתִּשָּׂא רִבְקָה אֶת עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרֶא אֶת יִצְחָק וַתִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַגָּמָל: (סה) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעֶבֶד מִי הָאִישׁ הַלָּזֶה הַהֹלֵךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה לִקְרָאתֵנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הָוָא אֲדֹנִי וַתִּקַּח הַצָּעִיף וַתִּתְכָּס: (סו) וַיְסַפֵּר הָעֶבֶד לְיִצְחָק אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: (סז) וַיְבִאֶהָ יִצְחָק הָאֹהֱלָה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבֶהוּ וַיִּנָּחֵם יִצְחָק אַחֲרֵי אִמּוֹ:

Where is Yitzchak? What is he doing? What time is it? Rivka's Reaction Ultimate Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where is Yitzchak?</th>
<th>What is he doing? (Hebrew + translation)</th>
<th>What time is it?</th>
<th>Rivka's Reaction</th>
<th>Ultimate Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing the pesukim, take another look at the Gemara’s derivation that Yitzchak instituted Mincha. What does it say and what proof does the Gemara cite?

Yitzchak instituted Tefillat Mincha, as it says, ‘And Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field at eventide’ (Bereishit 24:63), and meditation refers only to tefilla, as it says, ‘A tefilla of the afflicted when he faints and pours out his meditation before G-d’ (Tehillim 102:1)…

At first glance, the Gemara’s derivation is rather straightforward: לשוח denotes tefilla. However, as always, derivations of pesukim found in Torah Shebe’al Peh contain a lot of depth and meaning. In fact, the term for tefilla used here, as well as Yitzchak’s location seem to be particularly appropriate for Yitzchak. Why do you think that might be?

It is worth noting Yitzchak is described in the Torah as the only one of the Avot who planted:

בראשית פרק כ ב מְבָשֵׂךְ הָאָרֶץ וַיִּמְצָאֵה בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרֲכֵהוּ ה א

Continued from page 565

right after chatzot, at 6½ hours). [As we saw in the chapter on zemanei tefilla, we want to make sure that midday has really passed, and therefore, we don’t bring it until 6½ hours into the day.]

6 The Shulchan Aruch says one can daven at 6½, although ideally one should daven at 9½. (Note that the former relates to the earliest time for slaughtering the korban, while the latter relates to the latest time it was burnt.)

Why do you think there are two separate optimal times for Mincha, one almost immediately after midday, and one during the final quarter of the day?

This question is a lead-in to recognizing the various roles that Mincha may play.

He does so in the field. The field represents a place where a person does physical labor, growing and planting — in short, worldly activities. Yitzchak demonstrates the power of a tefilla, of bringing Hashem into our place of work. This seems to express that Mincha is an experience of special, intimate closeness: talking, conversing and opening up to Hashem. It is specifically when we let Hashem into a part of our lives that is not automatically “religious” that we can achieve closeness with Hashem. Additionally, this requires taking the time out to meditate and think about Hashem during the day, when it is easiest to lose focus.

Mentioning that Yitzchak performed this in the field may indicate that in nature, one may more easily focus on G-d than inside one’s home. However, it is also possible that the field represents a place where a person performs physical labor, growing and planting, and Yitzchak is demonstrating that Mincha is connected to those activities: turning to G-d specifically during the time of work.
Could Yitzchak’s physical activity in the field make his spiritual activity in the field more appropriate?

Additionally, think about how Yitzchak’s personality is portrayed. The Torah spends significantly more time discussing Avraham’s actions, yet in the short descriptions of Yitzchak, it is clear that not only does he reinforce everything that Avraham has done, but he takes Avraham’s acts one step further.

Take a look at the following pesukim and explain how Yitzchak becomes active at a time when what Avraham had done in the world is being erased. How does Yitzchak do what Avraham did and go beyond, until everyone recognizes that Yitzchak’s (and Avraham’s) message is here to stay?

During his lifetime, Yitzchak is certainly less active than Avraham, often echoing his father’s actions, such as going to Gerar and digging wells (Bereishit 20 and 26). He is generally more passive, such as during the Akeida (ch. 22) and not actively being the one to find a wife for himself (ch. 24), etc.

If Yitzchak is the one who creates Mincha, do you think there might be any connection between Yitzchak’s life, his style of serving Hashem, and the essence of Tefillat Mincha? Might there be any parallel between Mincha and its relationship to Shachat, and Yitzchak and his relationship to Avraham?

*Mincha and the Afternoon Tamid: The Middle of the Day or the End of the Day?*  

---

1. One idea could be that while Yitzchak repeats some of Avraham’s actions, he goes beyond. While Avraham’s wells are disputed, Yitzchak finally finds peace. (26:32-33). So too, Mincha can be seen as striving to return to the same spiritual level that we had achieved in the morning and taking it one step farther.

Another idea some suggest is that although Yitzchak does not actively go and find himself a wife, the very fact that he goes out to daven, and immediately thereafter, Eliezer returns with Rivka, demonstrates that his tefillot are successful and constitute his active part in getting married. This idea highlights the effect of tefillot on the natural order of the world, as Mincha takes place right in the middle of the natural order of one’s day, reminding us at our apex of worldly occupation that Hashem is the One who is really in control.

Rav Munk (The World of Prayer, vol. 1, p. 196) suggests in the name of the Kabbalists that the emotions we experience towards the end of the day are analogous to Yitzchak’s life. He often feels cast away and forlorn during his life. For example, he thinks he is going to be killed by his father, he is chased away from Gerar, he thinks he is going to die at a much earlier age than his father, etc. This may be the same emotion that we naturally feel when the sun begins to go down and we know that it will shortly be getting dark. The same push of tefilla that was Yitzchak’s trademark gevura may be the idea of Mincha as well.

2. Rav Soloveitchik (in the piece cited above from Rav Lichtenstein) also makes this point. You might want to refer the students back to the previous section where he states that Yitzchak was a man of the field, working, planting, growing; in the middle of all this work, he stops to daven.

Rav Lichtenstein adds that Yitzchak successfully incorporates agricultural work into his avodat Hashem without becoming consumed by his work.

3. It would seem that there may be any connection between Yitzchak’s life, his style of serving Hashem, and the essence of Tefillat Mincha? Might there be any parallel between Mincha and its relationship to Shachat, and Yitzchak and his relationship to Avraham?
Based on our discussion in this chapter, what would you expect to be the ideal time to daven Mincha?

We have already seen how zemanei tefilla, the appropriate times for the different tefillot, are rooted in the times of the corresponding avodat hakorbanot.

As we saw, Tefillat Mincha corresponds to the korban tamid, the daily offering brought in the Mikdash each afternoon. In earlier chapters we discussed the general significance of the Korban Tamid, the daily offering, and the reason why we recite Parashat Tamid, as it appears in the Torah, every day near the very beginning of tefilla. Yet, the power of the Korban Tamid is not only that it expresses daily commitment, being brought every day no matter what the circumstances; it is brought twice during the day: once in the morning (zeman Shacharit) and once in the afternoon (zeman Mincha).

We will see how the timing of the Tamid sheds light on our question.

The Proper Time for Mincha

We discussed earlier in the chapter how the main opportunity and challenge of Mincha is limited. The Shulchan Aruch summarizes the different times that the Korban Tamid was brought. What does it say, and what is the basis for the distinctions?

Logically, if the time for the Korban Tamid was almost always 9½ hours into the day, then it should be the ideal time for davening Mincha. The Erev Pesach exception might allow one to daven Mincha earlier. However, Halacha, as we have seen, recognizes two distinct times for Mincha: one of mincha gedola and one of mincha ketana. What does the Shulchan Aruch say on this matter?

Although we saw in the previous chapter that not all agree that mincha ketana is preferable, it does seem to be logical (except maybe on Erev Pesach), as this is the time the korban was actually brought daily.

Fascinatingly, the Gemara records another view: to daven Mincha shortly before sunset. What does Rabbi Yochanan say (and how does the pasuk he brings remind us of Vatikin in the morning)? Why do the scholars of Eretz Yisrael disagree? What approach to Mincha does Rabbi Yochanan take? Does the Shulchan Aruch rule like

middle of the workday. In this section, we will demonstrate how the times for the afternoon korban and Tefilla Mincha express two different roles of Mincha (which seem to be reflected in its two different times). Although we have discussed the distinction between mincha gedola and mincha ketana in the chapter on zemanei tefilla, we will mention it here briefly in the context of themes of Mincha and its overall purpose.

If the purpose of Mincha is to rejuvenate us in the middle of the day, one would expect the ideal time for it to be the middle of the daylight hours, i.e., chatzot on the dot or at least the effective middle of the day.

The Tamid was usually brought as the last korban of the day at 9½ seasonal hours, except for one instance, when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, when the Korban Tamid would be brought at 6½ seasonal hours. These two times are called mincha gedola (6½ hours) and mincha ketana (9½ hours). The reason for this distinction is because usually the Tamid was offered as the last korban of the day, and therefore, it was brought in the final quarter of the day. However, one korban is brought after the Korban Tamid, and that is the Korban Pesach. Due to this distinction, one day a year we daven Mincha earlier (and if it is on Erev Shabbat, when the Pesach must also be roasted before Shabbat, it is even earlier).
Rabbi Yochanan?

Think about which period of Mincha is straight in the middle of one’s day, allowing one to turn to Hashem in the midst of all the hustle and bustle; which Mincha is at the extreme of the day (especially for one who has davened Vatikin), allowing one to daven the Amida during the first rays of light during Shacharit, and in the final moments of waning sunlight during Mincha; which tefilla allows one to daven after concluding most of their daily activities, giving them a little time not only to sum up their day, but to prepare for nightfall after Mincha. Additionally, think about which times for Mincha reflect zerizin makdimin lamitzvot, running to communicate with Hashem at the earliest available time, and which better reflect more waiting for the proper moment or trying to bridge one day to another with tefilla.

In the following chart, formulate what you feel are the benefits for each time of Mincha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mincha Gedola</th>
<th>Mincha Ketana</th>
<th>Im Dimdumei Chama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
<td><strong>What the Tefilla Expresses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zerizin, midday</td>
<td>Time of the korban generally</td>
<td>Refocusing and reenergizing at midday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time the korban rarely</td>
<td>Not actually midday, but not end of the day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might forget, miss the opportunity for davening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishing daylight hours with tefilla (especially without electricity and less to do at night)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concluding the day, taking stock, and moving into night with tefilla.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Halachot of Keeping Us on Track**

You probably share similar concerns with Chazal. In order to make sure that we make time for Mincha and don't forget it amidst our busy schedules, Chazal provided halachic guidelines for our activities during the time of Mincha. Examine the following sources and explain the halachot that help ensure we will take advantage of Mincha. What does the Mishna say not to do before having davened Mincha, and what do you think is the reason why?

What principle does the Tur derive as to what type of activities should be performed after Mincha?

The Mishna Berura provides a contemporary example of an activity not included in the Mishna. What is the Mishna Berura’s example?

On the other hand, once we recognize that Chazal’s goal was to ensure that we don’t lose sight of Mincha, it is clear that acts that won’t cause us to get lost are not an issue. For instance, the Mishna Berura adds an additional factor in his Berur Halacha. What does he say and how does it compare to what he says above?

Chazal wanted to enable us to make the most of Mincha, while recognizing that it can take planning to make time for Mincha. Based on the above, what is Chazal’s guiding principle when it comes to undertaking pre-Mincha activities?

The various options for Mincha reflect the various roles of Mincha as reenergizing ourselves midday to concluding our day with tefilla. Chazal wanted to make sure we had the opportunity to take advantage of all that Mincha could empower us, and therefore, they provided different options for what Mincha suits us best for each particular day.

In addition, this may reflect an idea that Mincha bridges the gap between one day and the next. If it is meant to be recited towards the end of the day, perhaps it already directs our focus in a certain sense towards the next day.

We will see this regarding the halacha of reciting Tachanun at Mincha the afternoon before any holiday or other day with significance on the Jewish calendar. We followed the approach through most of the chapter of those who stress the importance of Mincha in the middle of the day, as this is probably the more important message for students to take from Mincha in their lives, and especially when they daven Mincha in school. For that reason, this understanding of Mincha as the bookend of the day is only mentioned here at the end without significant elaboration.

The rest of the details with regard to the proper time for Mincha are discussed more thoroughly in the chapter on zemanei tefilla. An interesting discussion regarding the proper time for Mincha can be found at: https://hardcoremesorah.wordpress.com/2013/01/13/afternoon-prayers-mincha-gedolah-or-mincha-ketanah/

See expanded material.

See expanded material.

In this section we will present Chazal’s guidelines for keeping focused on making time to daven. While the Mishna, codified as Halacha, enumerates various examples of activities that might become drawn-out and cause one to forget to daven, some circumstances have changed. This section also deals with Halacha’s incorporation of Mincha for keepMig fonused oi makMig tMme to davei. WhMie the

Continued on page 561
1 Activities that one has the tendency to get caught up in, one should daven Mincha before beginning, whereas one may wait to daven until after activities that are easily paused or that are very quick.

2 Piskei Teshuvot (232:4) based on the Ketzot Hashulchan 26:15 points out that if one is in a situation where the activity where there is no chance he will be able to continue the activity and he will have time to daven, there would be no problem to postpone Mincha. For example, if you work in an office that closes up early enough to daven Mincha, or you are eating in a place where you are not allowed to stay long, since there is no concern these activities will continue unabated, one may push off davening Mincha.

3 Suggested answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>The problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haircut</td>
<td>Scissors might break or it will take too long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathe</td>
<td>Takes a long time, especially swimming (Piskei Teshuvot 232 note 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>Might end up drinking alcoholic beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning a court case</td>
<td>Get caught up in case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter a tannery (where animal skins are processed)</td>
<td>You might find the hides damaged and then (Rashi) be emotionally preoccupied or (Rambam) will actually start fixing them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going shopping</td>
<td>Will get preoccupied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, let’s fill in the table below with the activities that appear above which shouldn’t be performed prior to Mincha for fear that they will cause one to become too preoccupied.

4 The need for halachot ensuring we daven Mincha before becoming overly preoccupied are very necessary; yet, we might wonder that maybe in our day many activities are now more similar to sewing or the like, as one can do them more
Modern Reminders

Today, there are more technologically advanced methods of reminding a person other than the gabbai calling people for tefilla (i.e., a shomer) that existed in earlier times.

Take a look at the following quote from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. What does he say, and what do you think his distinction between the different cases is based on? Why do you think it is very logical?

Take a look at the following ruling from the Aruch Hashulchan on the matter. Explain the rationale of his leniency:

Look at the following ruling from the Aruch Hashulchan on the matter. Explain the rationale of his leniency:

The Aruch Hashulchan says that if someone always goes to a minyan at a consistent time, it is considered as if he has a shomer, and it is assumed he will not forget, since he goes every day. This is accepted as well by many other Posekim, including the Magen Avraham (232:8), Sha’ar Hatziyun (235:19), Iggerot Moshe (O.C. 4:99), and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (in Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchatah 56:note #12). It is largely based on the Shulchan Aruch (89:6) who rules similarly with regard to learning Torah before tefilla, and the Posekim apply the same idea to the other activities mentioned as well.

Haircuts have become easier and quicker, therefore, they would be permitted nowadays before Mincha as there is no concern of it being too long.

He allows appointing a shomer, someone who will remind you to daven at the right time.

He says it works for reminding a person while eating before tefilla (a type of meal that otherwise would be forbidden) that he must daven, but does not work if he is sleeping. He explains that while sleeping, he may turn off the alarm and go back to sleep, in which case it did not serve its function.

There is another approach to leniency taken by many Poskim as well based on the following: If the concern is whether a person may be too involved in what he is doing and forget to daven or lose track of time, might it be any different for someone who goes to the exact same minyan for Mincha or Arvit every day? Is there still a chance that he will forget?

Answers in student chart.

Answers in student chart.

See expanded material.

Modern haircuts (or when the logic applies, but one has a shomer).

What activities are included and what are not

What activities are included and what are not

Beginning lengthy work, taking a haircut, bathing (especially swimming), eating a meal—shouldn’t be started prior to mincha.

The Reason for prohibited activities before mincha

Have tendency to get preoccupied or the activity will take a long time and one will miss mincha.

When the logic doesn’t apply and one can even even perform lengthy activities

Modern haircuts (or when the logic applies, but one has a shomer).
The Structure of Mincha

At the outset of the chapter, we identified the different components of Mincha, noting what is similar to or different from the other tefillot of the day. Based on what we have learned regarding these different components in their appropriate chapters, coupled with what we learned about Mincha, think about why the short but sweet structure of Mincha is appropriate for its goals.

Explaining the Components of Mincha

In the following chart, state why you think this particular structure is most appropriate:

| Ashrei (Sephardim add Parashat Tamid and Ketoret) |
| Chatzi Kaddish |
| Amida |
| Tachanun (Avinu Malkainu on Fasts & Aseret Yemei Teshuva) |
| Aleinu |

Understanding Mincha and the nature of different tefillot can assist us in our appreciation of the Siddur.

For instance, we learned about the importance of Pesukei Dezimra preceding the Amida of Shacharit. What was that role, and why might Ashrei serve as a substitute in Tefillat Mincha, which is recited in the middle of the day, when one is unable to allocate sufficient time to recite all of Pesukei Dezimra?

Now let’s see which of these ideas the Aruch Hashulchan focuses on. What does he say, and how does it resonate with what we have learned in the past?

Shallot Tucker himself identifies the following order of tefillot that we recite before Mincha:

1. אֲשֶׁרָי
2. אָלֵינוּ
3. אָבֵינוּ מַלְכֵינוּ
4. בְּרוּוֹת
5. קְדֵיָּן
6. אָנָּנוּ
7. הַשָּׁם
8. יְהֹוָה
9. אֲשֶׁרָי
10. אֲשֶׁרָי

Interestingly enough, the Rambam seems to indicate that one must sit when reciting Ashrei at Mincha, as he stresses the word יושבין.

Pesukei Dezimra served a few roles, among them acting as the shevach prior to the bakashot of the Amida. (Additionally it serves as Hallel, but Hallel is not recited at Mincha, and therefore, that role of Pesukei Dezimra is not necessary here.) Additionally, we noted that Ashrei reminds us of the importance of gathering our thoughts before Tefilla, much like the Chassidim Harishonim did. Therefore, to recite shevach for Hashem in the middle of the day, when there isn’t time for elaborate praise and extended tefilla, we suffice with Ashrei. We hit the key points and two of the major roles of Pesukei Dezimra just through the recitation of Ashrei.

He says that just as we said in Shacharit, it is appropriate to first praise Hashem before making requests of Him, here too in Mincha, we praise Hashem in Ashrei, which is one of the key paragraphs of Pesukei Dezimra.

In essence, Ashrei replaces all of Pesukei Dezimra in declaring praise to Hashem before beginning the Amida and communicating our midday requests to Hashem. Additionally, Ashrei as a reminder to focus and prepare ourselves for the encounter with Hashem is particularly significant now, as the challenge and beauty of Mincha is specifically it being the tefilla we recite in the middle of our busy day. As discussed, Ashrei focuses on Hashem’s role in the world, specifically sustaining all creatures, and ensuring that we have parnasa, food, and other forms of physical necessities to survive. Specifically when we are exerting ourselves to make a parnasa it is crucial to remind ourselves of the importance of יושבין ידך.

Rav Munk, in A Call to Prayer, offers an additional reason based on psychology. He suggests that when the sun is moving down beyond the horizon and the day is becoming darker, a person loses energy and enthusiasm that might have been present beforehand. This is the ideal time to reconnect with Hashem through recognizing Hashem’s goodness. Ashrei serves that purpose.

This diiyuk is highlighted by Rabbi Efrayim Greenblatt in his Teshivot Rivovot Efrayim (8:89) as well as by Rav Soloveitchik, who also stressed that a person must sit for reciting Ashrei at Mincha due to this Rambam.
In light of Mincha’s timing and the dual role of Ashrei, why would the Rambam require sitting?

This practice of sitting and reciting Ashrei should get us in the mood of tefilla and properly prepare us for the next section.

Based on what we have seen regarding the connection of Mincha to the Korban Tamid, think about why reciting the passage of the Tamid would seem very appropriate before Mincha. Then summarize the Aruch Hashulchan’s thoughts on the matter:

With this in mind, map out how Mincha, although relatively short, contains hachana, followed by shevach, bakasha, and hoda’a, allowing for a unique tefilla experience and satisfying a strong need for communication with Hashem amidst the day’s hustle and bustle:

When Time is Short- Really Short

Mincha Ketzara

Mincha’s timing may make a full Chazarat Hashatze difficult. When Mincha takes place right in the middle of the day, it may be difficult to take a long break for the entire tefilla. On the other hand, if Mincha is davened close to shekia, there might not be enough time to finish prior. Is there any

Earlier (at the end of Halacha 1) he also points out that Ashrei should really be recited with a minyan in order to be able to recite Kaddish:

Beyond the Amida itself being shevach, bakasha, and hoda’a, the structure of Mincha also seems to express it.

| Hachana: Ashrei is additionally shevach, as pointed out by the AH. | Shevach: The bakashot of the Amida itself (encapsulated in their own shevach and hoda’a) followed by another Tanchanu recognizing that Hashem is with us and we need Him, even if He seems distant. | Bakasha: The added Aleinu states hoda’a that we were born Jews. | Hoda’a: Mincha is particularly suited for the requests of the Amida, since it is precisely now that we realize how much help we need from Hashem: we have seen how many things have gone wrong during the day and how many challenges we face in all areas of life. We should, therefore, be able to increase our kavana and ask Hashem for everything we need even more so than in Shacharit, before we are involved the day’s work. | Unique Communication: With this in mind, map out how Mincha, although relatively short, contains hachana, followed by shevach, bakasha, and hoda’a, allowing for a unique tefilla experience and satisfying a strong need for communication with Hashem amidst the day’s hustle and bustle. |
1 The Rema says that if time is lacking, it is permitted for the chazan to begin reciting Amida aloud, and the rest of the tzibbur begins reciting Amida as well, word for word with him (though he recommends having at least one person who is present not start yet so he can answer Amen). Then when they reach Kedusha, they all answer. After that everyone continues silently, including the chazan, and there is no additional Chazarat Hashatz. This practice essentially removes Chazarat Hashatz (and the first 3 berachot are recited aloud by the chazan only in order to be able to say Kedusha together).

2 The Mishna Berura (quoting Ba’er Heitav) adds that ideally if there is enough time, the tzibbur should not begin their Amida with the chazan, so that they can all answer Amen to his berachot. Rather, they should wait until after Kedusha and then begin their Amida.

The description above is the practice of the Ashkenazim. However, the Ba’er Heitav continues to describe the practice of Sephardim as always having everyone begin Amida with the chazan, regardless of whether there is enough time for them to wait until after Kedusha or not; they are not concerned with whether anyone answers Amen (since this is his Amida, not Chazarat Hashatz, he doesn’t really need anyone to answer). See the Piskei Teshuvot (232:1) who records the above practices as the standard minhag of the Ashkenazim and Sephardim today (although the Ba’er Heitav cites a Sephardic practice of the chazan to also recite the last 3 berachot out loud, which is not done today).

It should also be noted that there are alternate practices described in 232:1. The Shulchan Aruch there mentions everyone reciting the silent Amida, including the Chazan, and then only saying the first three berachot and Kedusha for Chazarat Hashatz, and then stopping entirely. The Rema there mentions the same practice as he did in ch. 124 (without the addition of the Ba’er Heitav recommending the tzibbur wait if there is time). However, the common minhag for Mincha Ketzara is according to the description above.

3 If there may not be nine others answering Amen at the right time, Mincha Ketzara is preferable.

The Mishna Berura states that under ideal conditions, Mincha Ketzara should be performed differently. What does he say and why do you think that is?

Rav Nebenzahl mentions an additional consideration for davening a Mincha Ketzara. What is it?

Essentially, Heicha Kedusha unifies the tzibbur through Kedusha (which requires the first three berachot) but not through Chazarat Hashatz. This is the reason why it is only to be employed when necessary (concerning which opinions differ). Many schools and some yeshivot often daven Mincha in this manner.

The Mishna Berura states that under ideal conditions, Mincha Ketzara should be performed differently. What does he say and why do you think that is?

Rav Nebenzahl mentions an additional consideration for davening a Mincha Ketzara. What is it?

Essentially, Heicha Kedusha unifies the tzibbur through Kedusha (which requires the first three berachot) but not through Chazarat Hashatz. This is the reason why it is only to be employed when necessary (concerning which opinions differ). Many schools and some yeshivot often daven Mincha in this manner. Another challenge that arises with late Mincha is whether one is permitted to recite Tachanun after sunset (shekiya). Take a look at the Shulchan Aruch’s general ruling and the Mishna Berura’s explanation.

It should also be noted that there are alternate practices described in 232:1. The Shulchan Aruch there mentions everyone reciting the silent Amida, including the Chazan, and then only saying the first three berachot and Kedusha for Chazarat Hashatz, and then stopping entirely. The Rema there mentions the same practice as he did in ch. 124 (without the addition of the Ba’er Heitav recommending the tzibbur wait if there is time). However, the common minhag for Mincha Ketzara is according to the description above.

If there may not be nine others answering Amen at the right time, Mincha Ketzara is preferable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficult circumstances</th>
<th>At least</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out loud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mishna Berura states that under ideal conditions, Mincha Ketzara should be performed differently. What does he say and why do you think that is?

Rav Nebenzahl mentions an additional consideration for davening a Mincha Ketzara. What is it?

Essentially, Heicha Kedusha unifies the tzibbur through Kedusha (which requires the first three berachot) but not through Chazarat Hashatz. This is the reason why it is only to be employed when necessary (concerning which opinions differ). Many schools and some yeshivot often daven Mincha in this manner. Another challenge that arises with late Mincha is whether one is permitted to recite Tachanun after sunset (shekiya). Take a look at the Shulchan Aruch’s general ruling and the Mishna Berura’s explanation.

It should also be noted that there are alternate practices described in 232:1. The Shulchan Aruch there mentions everyone reciting the silent Amida, including the Chazan, and then only saying the first three berachot and Kedusha for Chazarat Hashatz, and then stopping entirely. The Rema there mentions the same practice as he did in ch. 124 (without the addition of the Ba’er Heitav recommending the tzibbur wait if there is time). However, the common minhag for Mincha Ketzara is according to the description above.

If there may not be nine others answering Amen at the right time, Mincha Ketzara is preferable.
The authorities explain that the only time we actually recite Tachanun at night is the Tachanun of Selichot (one reason is that the most appropriate time for Selichot is immediately prior to daybreak).

Summarize your findings in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can Tachanun be said?</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bein Hashemashot</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>B permits (until 13-15 minutes after shekia)</td>
<td>No, except when saying Selichot and it is close to daybreak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Close to sunset
Time is short
Concerned won't have 9 answering

Answers in student chart.

For further analysis, see Teshuvot Radbaz and others, cited in the Piskei Teshuvot 232:2 and note #1. This is a serious issue, about which the Shulchan Aruch says (124:4) that the berachot of the chazan are nearly levatala.

See expanded material.

For Kabbalistic reasons, the Shulchan Aruch rules not to say Tachanun at night.

See also the Taz 131:8 and the Shulchan Aruch Harav 131:4, who permit Tachanun during bein hashemashot. Yalkut Yosef (Tefilla vol.2, p. 413) allows Tachanun for the duration of bein hashemashot of the Geonim, 13.5 minutes. Minhag Yerushalayim is not to say Tachanun after shekia (Tefilla Kehilchatahah in name of Rav Elyashiv p. 337 note

64.) Rav Nebenzahl writes the same in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.