

Good Shabbos Everyone. We read in this week's parsha Chayei-Sorah, how "Yitzchok went out to supplicate in the field towards evening..." (Bereishis 24:63) The Sages derive from this verse that Yitzchok Avinu instituted mincha – the afternoon prayers.(Brachos 26b). The Sage R' Chelbo said in the name of Rav Huna, a person should always be careful about davening mincha. Because, it was at mincha time that the prayers of Eliyahu Hanavi were answered. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 69:1)

The reason why mincha is so important is the following: The time for the morning prayers is known, i.e., in the morning, before we go to work. Similarly, the time for the evening prayers is known, i.e., when we come home from work at night. However, the time for mincha is during the work day when a person is preoccupied with his business. It can therefore be a big challenge to break away from business to daven mincha, especially with a minyan. Therefore, when a Jew takes his mind off business during the height of activity during the day and instead puts his mind towards Hashem during the mincha prayers, his reward is great. (Ibid.)

The best time to daven mincha is from nine and one half hours into the day, onward. If it is difficult to daven at this time, one may daven earlier in the day, but no earlier than six and one half hours into the day. One should always endeavor to daven mincha in its proper time. However, in the case of an emergency, one may daven mincha until Tzeis Hakochavim.(Kitzur, 69:2) There is a bit of disagreement among deciders of Jewish Law, as to when the night begins. Therefore everyone should follow the way of the community to which he belongs.

It was dusk one weekday when the Satmar Rebbe, Reb Yoel Teitlebaum, of blessed memory, met Reb Yakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, on the street in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York. The Satmar Rebbe asked Reb Yakov in Yiddish, "Have you already davened the afternoon prayers?" The response Reb Yakov gave was classic: "Today..., not yet." Reb Yakov held that according to halacha, the day was over. Therefore, he understood that the Satmar Rebbe was asking him if he had davened the mincha of the new day; while for the Satmar Rebbe, although it was well after sunset, the day was not yet over.

Reb Moshe of Sambor used to earn his livelihood as a peddler, making his way on foot from village to village, and selling his wares to the peasants who lived in various parts of the Ukrainian countryside. One day Reb Moshe asked his brother and teacher, Reb Zvi of Zhidachov: "Why is it that when I come in from the fields and the villages to daven mincha, my every limb is filled with a powerful and wondrous light? From where could I have attained such a light? Perhaps I am mistaken, and [the light] really derives from the unholy forces in the universe; and in that case, G-d forbid, my service of my Maker is all based on a mistake."

"Why are you so surprised?" replied Reb Zvi. "For when you walk about among the fields and the Ukrainian villages thinking holy thoughts, all the sparks of kedusha that lie dormant -in the realm of the inanimate, and in the plant, animal and human kingdoms -having no other place to cling to, cleave to you; and you separate [the sparks of kedusha] from their "klipahs" (impure husks) and elevate them. These liberated sparks of kedusha then draw down upon you a taste of divine light, the likes of which you have never tasted before."(A Treasury of Chassidic Tales, p.92 R.S.Y. Zevin, U.Kaploun, trans. Artscroll Publications) Thus, we see how powerful mincha is. Because, it is a prayer which is generally prayed during the work day. It is therefore a time to elevate the mundane into holy.

If we think holy thoughts throughout the work day, then mincha will be that much more meaningful. Also, by davening mincha with kavonah (intent), we unite our souls with the soul of Yitzchok Avinu. Because, koyach ha-poel b'nifal - who initiates a mitzvah, is forever connected with that mitzvah. For example, one who helps build a shul, is forever connected spiritually with all the learning and davening which is done in that place. Consequently, Yitzchok Avinu's soul is forever bound to the spiritual power of mincha. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda

"Anyone who brings merit to the masses, no wrongdoing will come into his hands." Avos 5:21

To sponsor a drasha: M. Wolfberg 150 Clinton Lane, Spring Valley, New York 10977 (845) 362-3234

THIS PAPER CONTAINS HOLY WRITING AND SHOULD NOT BE DISPOSED OF IN THE GARBAGE