

תְּפִילַת יִצְחָק *Tefillat Yitzchak -- Rabbi Jon's commentary on words of prayer*

The worshipper must direct his heart to each and every word. He is like a man who walks in a garden collecting roses and rare flowers, plucking them one by one, in order to weave a garland.... Every word seizes hold of him... entreats him not to abandon it, not to break their bond, saying: *Consider my light, my grace, my splendor. Am I not the word 'Baruch'? Hearken to me when you pronounce me. Consider me when you utter me.*"

--Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, quoted in Rabbi A. J. Heschel, "Quest for God", p. 34

As you are learning the prayers, one goal is to find a word or a phrase here and there that is meaningful and that you can add to your "repertoire". If you find a phrase meaningful, stop and even try to say it to yourself in Hebrew, whether you are reading the Hebrew or the transliteration. Say it slowly, or more than once, or in a quiet chant that your ears can just hear. Let whatever meaning or feeling sink in, and don't rush to move on with the congregation.

Siddur Sim Shalom, p. 117 and p. 159

רְצֵה בְּמִנוּחֵינוּ *R'tzay vim'noo-cha-taynu* Accept/want our rest

Like many of the rich phrases in our prayer, this one has more than one possible meaning. The words are usually translated the first way: "Accept our rest." Acknowledge it; take note that we are here, at rest, taking a break from the activities of the our week. When we translate it this way, we are also pausing to remind ourselves that we are indeed in a Shabbat state of mind. We say it once in the early part of the service, which is quiet; and we say it again in the concluding part of the service, when we have hopefully not just rest but serenity through our Shabbat celebration.

Another way to understand the words is as a goad to ourselves. "Want our rest." Sometimes it is hard to put ourselves at rest -- to quiet the swirl of thoughts in our heads, to resist thinking about matters left over from the week or waiting for us at work or in the world. So we need this reminder: