

THE MORNING SERVICE

On entering the synagogue, say:

MAH TOVU

מה טובו אוהליך יעקב
In Jacob's tents,

Serenity.

In Israel's homes,

Tranquillity.

In synagogue,

Spirituality.

Before the Lord,

Humility.

ואני ברוב חסדך

I enter Your Temple

In awe and love;

May You respond

From above.

ואני אשתחווה

Before the Ark

I bow my head,

With prayers

That ancestors have said

For centuries with lips so pure,

Petitioning You to reassure

Them that Your grace

Would be displayed,

And salvation

Readily relayed.

* * *

MEDITATION ON PUTTING ON THE TALLIT

להתעטף בציצית

God issued to Moses

His prescription,

That on cornered robes

Of any description

There be *tzitzit*-fringes

To proclaim

A faith that burns

Like a flame.

הנני מתעטף

So a tallit robe

I now drape

Around my body

As I shape

Words of prayer,

Praise and petition,

Expressing love,

Pride,

And contrition.

וכשם שאני מתכסה בטלית

And, though, on earth,

Men struggle and fight,

I, for my part,

In my tallit delight.

So, in the hereafter,

Where peace reigns supreme,

Let my soul wear its tallit -

And of You

Let me dream.

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Meditation on putting on the Tefillin

מצות תפילין

'Bind them on your arm

As an outward sign,

And on your head

At the hair line' -

Thus said the Creator

To His nation,

That His words

Be treasured

By each generation.

והם ארבע פרשיות אלו

So four sacred chapters

To my body I bind,

Of words that elevate

Heart and mind.

On my arm they recall

God's protective embrace,

When my people in Egypt

Were forced to face

The impending doom

Of its entire race.

ועל הראש נגד המוח

And on my head,

They bid me bend

My will to His service

That He might send

His divine aura

To guide my mind

To higher endeavours

Wherein I might find

Myself enchanted

By thoughts so pure

That sensual enticements

Lose their allure.

* * *

ADON OLAM

אדון עולם

Master of the universe,

Who alone was king,

Before His decision

To make anything.

The prayer of man,

Though lowly in station,

Became the crown

For His coronation.

ואחרי ככלות הכל

And after the world
Has run its course,
And the souls of men
Return to their source,
His majestic glory
Will still remain,
Undiminished by the loss
Of man's acclaim.

והוא אחד

Being one,
Beyond compare,
Our pale perceptions
Just lay bare
The frustration that we feel
That His essence
He won't reveal.

והוא אלי

Yet this I know:
He is my God,
Although to many
It may seem odd,
That an unseen Being
Can be my Rock,
And lift my spirits
While others mock,

Redeeming me

From adversity,

Answering my prayer

With alacrity.

בִּידוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי

Into His hand

I commit my soul,

During sleep

And waking hours.

Fearlessly, I live my life,

Confident

In His great powers.

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