

SHEMONEH ESREI: AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING

The spiritual apex of a person's journey through daily life is his opportunity, three times a day, to have an audience with the King of kings. A person's every word and deed has the potential to strengthen his relationship with Hashem – a relationship that reaches its maximum intensity when he stands before Him to pray. No other prayer or blessing is defined, as is the Shemoneh Esrei, as a direct, "personal" one-on-one encounter with the King of kings.

This personal encounter provides each and every individual, regardless of his station in life, with the precious asset of a private meeting with his King.

Both in business and in personal life, people are well aware of the increased impact of an in-person meeting with the boss. By preparing himself and contemplating the words he is about to say, and approaching his Creator with awe and respect – he will draw closer to Hashem and maximize the effectiveness of his *Tefillah* or Prayer.

Every step a person takes toward preparing for prayer is a message to himself: "I am about to stand before the King of kings." A person who takes the care and effort to truly instill this awareness in himself can rise up to pray filled with reverence and anticipation: "This is my opportunity to speak 'personally' to my God!" This, in itself, is a miracle that can inspire a person anew every day.

POINTS TO PONDER

A person's attitude and actions are influenced by his clothing and surroundings.

Shemoneh Esrei is considered a "face-to-face" meeting with Hashem.

Preparing prospering and dressing for prayer impart the reality of meeting the King – "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

Amos 4:12 "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" ¹³ For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth-- the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name! (ESV)