

Teaching Tefillah/Siddur

MTEI Cohort 7
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When we talk about
“teaching Tefillah/Siddur”
what do we mean?

Any Ideas?

What if We Think About Two Different Aspects of the Subject?

The Book

The Experience

Siddur as a text to be *studied*

vs.

Siddur as a text to be *prayed*

"Its words become our words"

Teaching the Book

I. Orientations to Teaching the Prayers of the Prayerbook

Orientation	Scholarly Resource
1. Historical/Philological (mostly about individual prayers)	Elbogen, L. Hoffman, Milgrom
2. Structural (mostly about prayerbook as a whole)	Heineman, Fleisher, Donin, Mintz, Hammer
3. Literary Criticism (mostly about individual prayers)	BS Jacobsen, Kimmelman
4. Prayerbook as Source book of Jewish Theology, Religious Thought	Kadushin
5. Anthropological/sociological	L. Hoffman, N. Gillman

The Educational Problem:

There are secondary resources and curricular materials that can help us with teaching the choreography and structure of the liturgy; the history of the liturgy; and the meaning of individual prayers and the liturgy as a whole.

We can use these resources to work with teachers and to design and adapt appropriate materials.

But we know much less about the phenomenology of prayer: That is, what is the experience of praying.

We know even less about how to help teachers and children work on this aspect of prayer.

Teaching The Experience

- A. Studying the “Mechanics” of Praying
- B. Studying “Meta-issues” about prayer
- C. Educating for the Inner Experience of Praying

II. Orientations to Teaching Praying

A. The “Mechanics” of Praying

1. Halakha/Minhag

Donin, I. Klein

2. Nusah and Music

Various tapes, Internet resources. (e.g. <http://www.virtualcantor.com/>)

3. Choreography

Donin, Klein, Art Scroll Siddur

B. Meta-Issues re Praying

For example:

1. Keva and Kavanah

Various theologians, etc.

2. Does God answer prayer?

C. The Inner Experience of Praying (“davenning”?)

C. The Inner Experience of Praying

Two Examples:

1. "Associative Reverie"

"The imaginative projection of our consciousness into the meaning of the words" (Heschel, *Quest for God*)

2. "Beyond the Words"

Music

Meditation

Now: Think about the goals for teaching prayer/tefillah in your setting:

Are they in the area of “the book” or “the experience” or a mixture of both?

How might thinking about the issue of teaching prayer/tefillah be helped by an awareness of these orientations?

The Usefulness of a Tefillah Orientations Map

1. Framing goals and purposes
2. Choosing and adapting curriculum materials
3. Working with teachers
4. Other ideas?