PRAYER
תפלה
Learning Prayer

Why do we pray? What does our tradition have to say about how we pray, and are there different ways of praying to God? How do we balance fixed words and free thought, praying as an individual and a community? Does God need our prayers, answer our prayers, understand our prayers, or is prayer not the business of God? How do we pray to the right God, and are there more than one? Does prayer make a difference? Does prayer heal? Does prayer even exist? What is the function and power of prayer? These are questions, and many more, that the Limmud Chavruta Project invites you to explore, in more than 70 unique sessions at Limmud. Limmud is an incredibly diverse project, with teams working hard for the past year to cut it down to a manageable size. The aim of the project is to present Jewish perspectives on a topic that will capture the imagination of all Jews. We hope that the theme of Prayer will both inspire and enthuse participants to explore the space and energy for discussions that are truly l’shem shamayim (for the sake of heaven), but also give people the tools to consider and reflect upon their own relationship with prayer.

In addition to the team members listed above, we would like to thank Lindsey Taylor-Guthertz for proofreading the English text; Yuval Keren for setting and proofreading the Hebrew text; Robin Moss for detailed feedback; and Uri Benkovitz of Maven Design for the graphic design of this book. Last but not least, we would like to thank all of the wonderful people who agreed to facilitate Chavruta sessions at Limmud Conference 2013, as well as all of you who came along to learn. Limmud exists because of all you amazing participants and volunteers! The real power of Chavruta is that participants can not only take their learning home, but also use the resources and learning model in their own lives. The project is again an international effort, with teams working across the globe. We have been lucky this year to have collaborated with four incredible teams, all of whom are affiliated to their local Limmud. All of them, but particularly the Team Chairs, are worthy of praise for producing this book. You will notice that each section has its own particular style and its own distinctive message, as designed by each team. We are proud that this project is truly international, and hope that everyone studying it will benefit from this cosmopolitan authorship.

Section One, ‘Thanks and Praise’, led from Limmud in the Netherlands by Albert Ringer, with Mirjam van Emden, Ira Goldberg and Emma Sevitt, explores the value and purpose of prayer.

Section Two, ‘Request and Repentance’, led from Limmud in the UK by Adam Frankenberg with Daniel Mackintosh, Yisrae Malkiel and Arthur Weiss, investigates the function and power of prayer.

Section Three, ‘Words and Rituals’, led from Limmud Galil by David Biton with Merav Arbel, Havouzh Hertzl, Tirtsa Posklinski-Shlejoy, Karen Radkovsky and Tamar Shamir, reflects upon the role of structure and creativity in prayer.

Section Four, ‘Individual and Community’, led from Limmud in the US by EJ Cohen with Benjamin Barer, Ellen Flax, Marcus Freed, Jeri Nagler Robins and Basyah (Bat-Ami) Weinreb, considers the nature of personal and collective prayer.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has had a part in bringing the international Limmud Chavruta Project 2013 together.

What is Limmud?

Based in the UK and founded over 30 years ago, Limmud (the Hebrew word for ‘learning’) is a global leader in innovative, inclusive Jewish education. The widely acclaimed winter Limmud Conference is one of the largest international gatherings of Jewish people. Over two and a half thousand people take part in over a thousand sessions over five intense, fun-filled, intellectually-challenging and unforgettable days. As at every Limmud event, presenters give their time and share their knowledge freely.

Limmud events and programmes also include Regional day Limmuds across the UK, a summer festival Limmud Fest, emails, podcasts, a Shabbat book and the Chavruta Project.

Limmud International

Limmud is now very much an international movement with volunteer teams planning and running events in over 70 communities around the world. Limmud set up Limmud International as the body to develop and provide training, mentoring and support for groups around the world. Its vision is that every Jew, wherever they are, will be taken one step further on their Jewish journey.

With shared principles and values, Limmud International encourages and creates common spaces between the different Limmud groups around the world. We are proud that this year’s Chavruta Project is again an international collaboration by volunteers from so many Limmud communities. It shows what we can all achieve by working together.

www.limmudinternational.org

Chavruta at Limmud Conference in the UK

The starting point for many learners is the morning Chavruta sessions on Limmud Conference. In 2012, two additional study modes were added to cater for participants who wanted more or less structured learning. There are therefore three study modes available:

• Guided: a hands-on facilitator guides participants through a selection of sources by means of group discussion punctuated by opportunities to explore a new text with your chavruta partner;

• Independent: an open space for unstructured learning with facilitators available to help out as needed;

• Traditional: the original Limmud Chavruta experience – beginning and concluding with a facilitated group discussion and plenty of time in between to learn with your partner, creating your own journey through the texts.

For the full text of Limmud’s mission, values and principles, visit: limmud.org/home/mission