

THE PROTOCOL OF ROYALTY

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

One of the Chief Rabbis of England was once granted an audience with Queen Elizabeth. Before their meeting, he had been advised exactly what he was supposed to say at every stage of their conversation. He was told not to deviate from this, for speaking improperly to the monarch is considered a serious transgression.

When reciting Shemoneh Esrei, we are literally standing in Hashem's Presence. During this time, we must take special care to adhere to the protocol of His royalty and not add onto His praise. Deviation from this rule is considered a slight to His honor.

Limiting one's praises of Hashem applies primarily to Shemoneh Esrei, where we are forbidden to change the wording laid down by our Sages who established it. When it comes to personal requests that come from the heart, however, it is permitted to mention other praises of Hashem. Nonetheless, in order to avoid the above issues, it is preferable to limit one's praises to reciting verses from Tehillim or other sections of Tanach (Shulchan Aruch 113,9).

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