

Checklist for Creative Prayer Composition

(Taken from Page 21 of "Higher and Higher: Making Jewish Prayer Part of Us")

When you write a new Tefilah, or compose a song, dance, story, or prayer interpretation, see how many of the following questions can be answered positively.

- Does your prayer creation contain Jewish values?
- Does your prayer go beyond self-centered needs and include others?
- Is your language appropriate for confronting concerns and questions of ultimate importance?
- Does your creation go beyond "human-centeredness" to something greater? To God?
- Would it be meaningful to anyone else besides you?
- Does it reflect an ethical approach to life?
- Does it refer directly or indirectly to any Jewish sources (e.g., quotes from the Talmud, the Bible, Codes of Law, other prayers)?
- Is it well written (grammar, syntax, language)?
- Do the poetic images stand up to the overall theme of the prayer upon close inspection?
- Did you make a conscious choice to use rhyme or meter?
- Would your prayer creation be meaningful to someone living in a different time or place?
- Would it be meaningful 1,000 years from now?
- Can you honestly say you will be able to read (perform, sing, see) it over and over again?

Obviously, not every prayer creation has to meet *all* of these evaluative criteria and there may be criteria to be added if you do want something you develop to be valuable to yourself and to others. However, over a period of time, it will have to meet many of these standards.