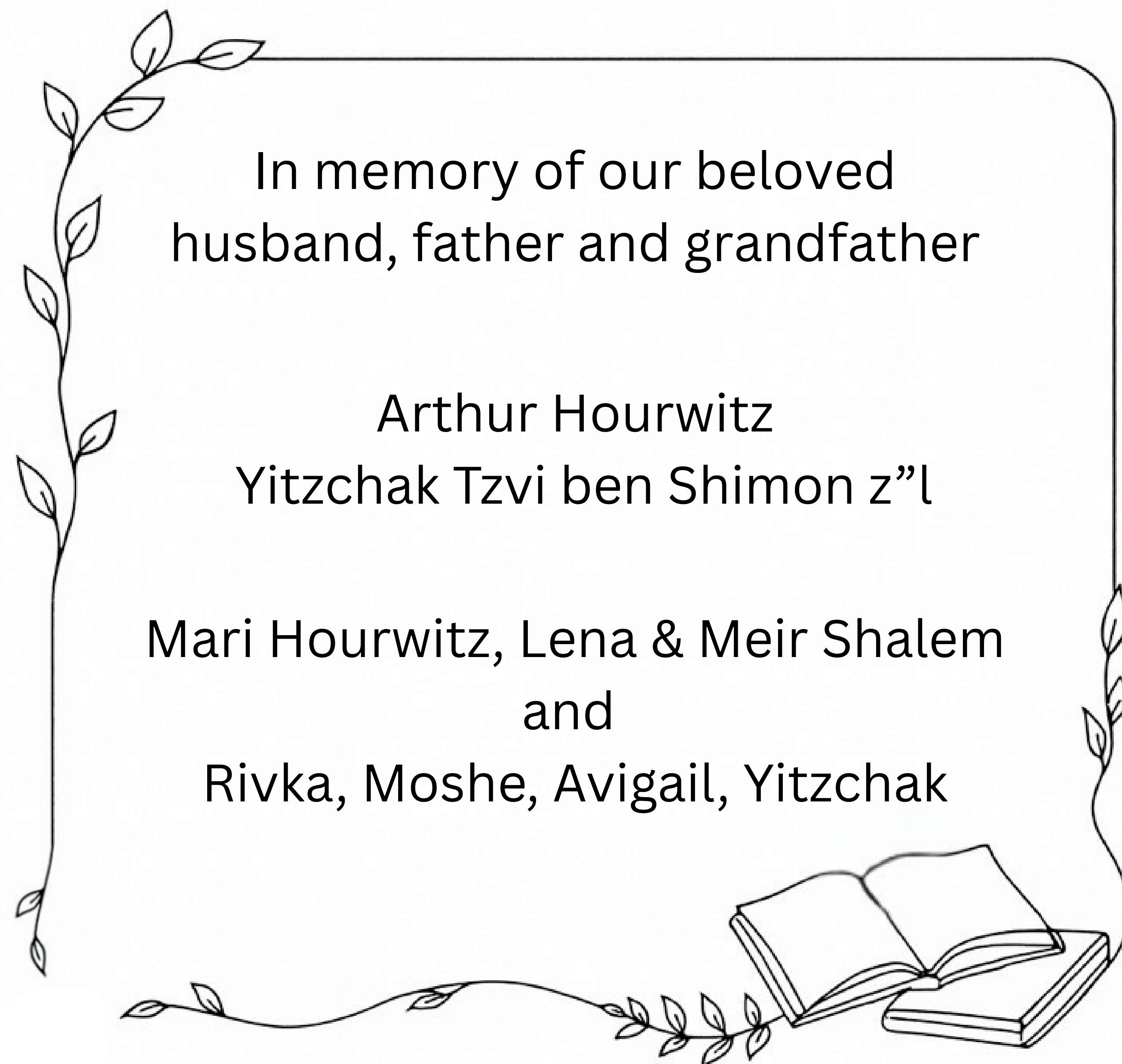


No Space to Pray

Level 4



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No Space to Pray



A story about the Baal Shem Tov

By Gaila Cohen Morrison and Batya Mirsky
Art by Batya Mirsky • AI-assisted illustrations

1

The Baal Shem Tov came to a town with his students.
It was time to pray Maariv, the evening prayer.

They looked for a good place to pray.
They looked for a synagogue.

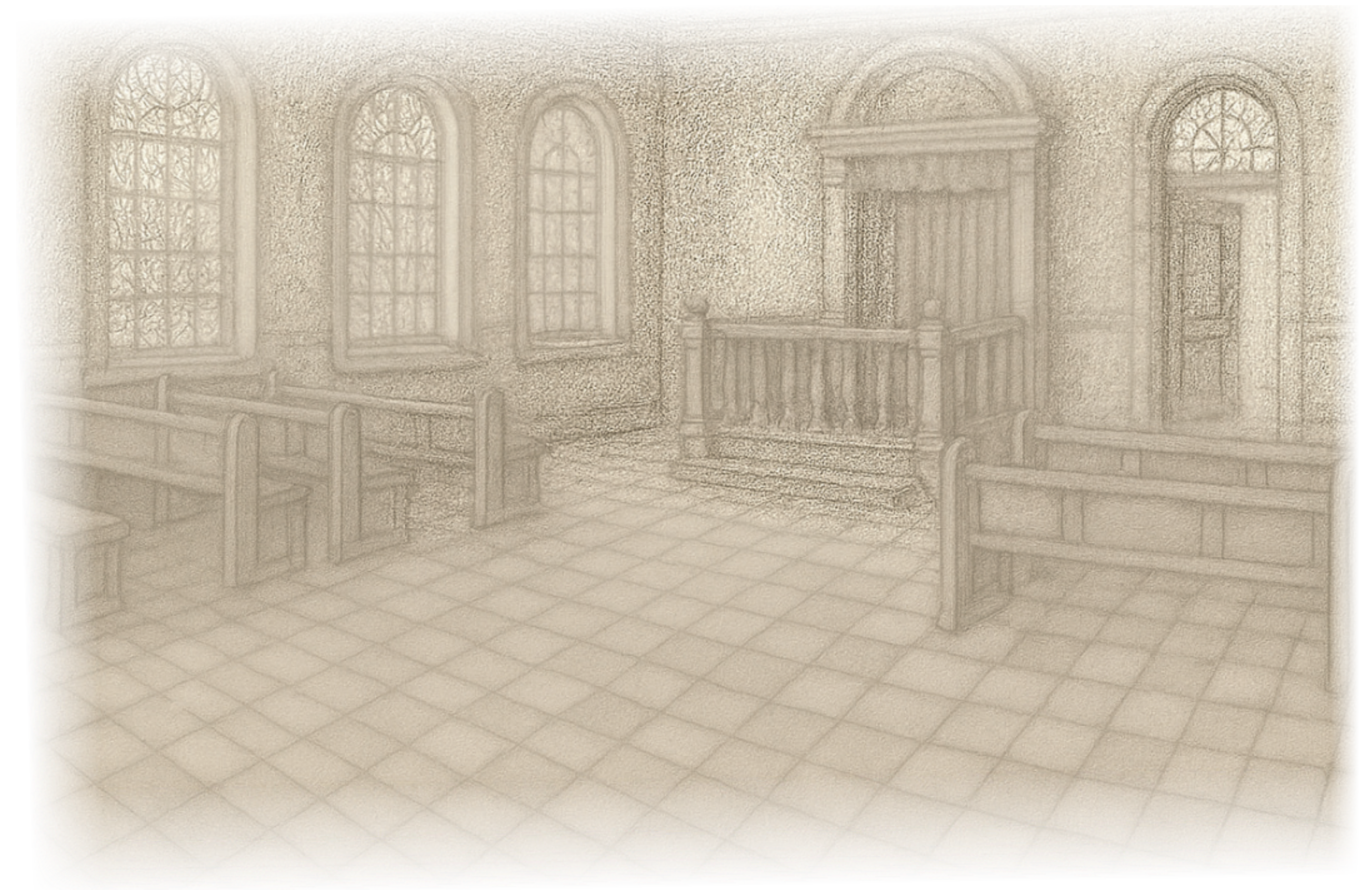


pray - להתפלל **prayer** - תפילה
synagogue - בית כנסת

2

They saw a big, beautiful synagogue in the town. They came to the synagogue.

The Baal Shem Tov stopped at the door.



beautiful - יפהפה **synagogue** - בית כנסת

The Baal Shem Tov said, “We cannot stay here.”

“Let’s go,” he said.

“But Rebbe,” said the students, “this is the big **synagogue** in this town!

Why not stay here? Why not **pray** here?”

“There is no **space** inside for us,” he said.

“Space? But...but, there is no one inside!”
they said.



“True,” said the Baal Shem Tov.

“This **synagogue** is **empty** of people.
But this synagogue is full of something.
It’s full of words.
Words that are not real **prayers**.”

“Prayers from the heart are real.
The prayers in *this* synagogue are not real.”

“The prayers in *this* synagogue are not from
the heart. They do not fly up to G-d.
They fill the synagogue and leave no **space**
for true, real prayer.”

synagogue - בית כנסת **empty** - ריקן
prayers - תפילות **space** - מקום

He took them to a small, **simple synagogue**.
A few people were there, **praying** with their
hearts.



simple - פשוט **synagogue** - בית כנסת
only - רק **praying** - מתפללים



7

The Baal Shem Tov and his students **joined** them. The **synagogue** felt warm and **bright**. This synagogue felt right.

The **prayers** in this synagogue had **wings**.
The prayers flew up to G-d.



“See,” said the Baal Shem Tov,
“**Empty** words stay in the synagogue,
but true prayers go up to G-d.”

joined - הצטרפו **synagogue** - בית כנסת
bright - מואר **prayers** - תפילות **wings** - כנפיים
empty - ריק

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pray	להתפלל	synagogue	בית כנסת
prayer	תפילה	wings	כנפיים

Why did we write G-d this way?

Some people don't like to write the whole name for “השם” in English. They feel it is very holy. They don't want to throw it in the trash or erase it by mistake.

They write G-d with a little line. They do it to be extra careful.