

October 27, 2022
Rabbi Wexler - *Noah*

Red October. Phillies fever. How awesome is this Phillies postseason run?! The World Series begins tomorrow, and the Phillies are in it! Let that sink in. Just a few short weeks ago, we were worried that they might not make the playoffs. On September 29th after being swept by the lowly Chicago Cubs, Neal Flomenberg sent me a one-line e-mail: “Rabbi, do you know any prayers we can say for the Phillies?” I responded: “I worry that they may need more than prayers at this point.” A month later, the Phillies are the hottest team in baseball and are seeking to be world champions. So much can change in a matter of weeks and even days. And so, the other day, Neal emailed me again. This time, he wrote only three words: “still beyond prayer?” Now, I know Neal’s e-mail was simply intended to underscore how well the Phillies are playing and how excited so many of us are about them, however I have been thinking a lot about his question. The Phillies truly feel like a team of destiny. I certainly hope they win. But can we pray for them to win? As I saw on the news last week (<https://6abc.com/saint-matthew-school-philadelphia-phillies-sister-john-magdalen-philly-sports/12357627/>), according to Sister John Magdalen, the principal of the Saint Matthew School in Philadelphia, “we know God is a Phillies fan, so it's okay that we pray for the Phillies.”

Well, if God is a baseball fan, I sure hope He roots for the Phillies. But personally, I don’t pray for teams to win (or lose). At the end of a day, it’s just a game. However, what the Phillies stand for, what they have brought to their fanbase, and the emotions they have provoked, those are things worth praying for. I have such fond childhood memories of cheering for the Phillies with my dad. And now, I will get to cheer on the Phillies with both my dad AND my kids, as we watch the World Series together. The Phillies journey to the World Series has brought us joy. The team has taught us about the values of perseverance, teamwork, hope, and confidence. The players have taught us that all it takes is one swing, one strike, or one rally to make a difference. Their success has brought families, friends, and even strangers together, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

So this is my prayer: May this Phillies magical season continue to inspire love and joy within each of us. As we watch the Phillies play with anticipation and excitement, may we be surrounded by the love of family and friends, and may we hold close to us those who matter most. May the memories created be enduring and sustaining. And may the next week simply be a wonderful week; a week of homeruns on the baseball diamond, but even more, in our hearts.

Shabbat Shalom and Go Phillies!