## **Tefillah Focus Of The Week:**

# שמנה עשרה

The Gift of Pure Kindness

**MEANING:** The simple translation of the prayer

We gratefully thank You... for Your miracles that are with us every day; and for Your wonders and favors in every season—evening, morning and afternoon. The Beneficent One, for Your compassions were never exhausted, and the Compassionate One, for Your kindnesses never ended we have always put our hope in You.

מודים אנחנו לך... ועל נסיך שבכל יום עמנו, ועל נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל עת, ערב ובקר וצהרים. הטוב כי לא כלו רחמיך, והמרחם כי לא תמו חסדיך, מעולם קוינו לך.



### WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

**T**n *Modim*, we thank ■ נסיך Hashem for נסיך, Your miracles, and for נפלאותיך, Your wonders. What is the difference between the two?

are occurrences whose miraculous nature is obvious to us, whereas נפלאותיך are G-d's "hidden miracles" in which we do not see G-d's involvement. (Malbim, Tehillim, 9:2; Eitz Yosef).

All of nature is, in reality, the work of Hashem, who performs many "hidden miracles" daily, giving us the capability to breathe, see, hear, walk, talk, use our hands to create and accomplish, and much more. In addition, He equips the world with food for every creature, a perfect atmosphere for breathing and the precise level of sunlight to warm the world; all are miracles. It is no coincidence that the gematria, (numerical equivalence) of *Elokim*—86—is the same as that of hateva, nature (Sefer Pri Tzadik, on Chanukah, Ose 14, page 82). It all comes from G-d.

Because Hashem's wonders are all around us every day, we have constant access to a great source of spiritual inspiration. We need only focus for a moment on the amazing complexity and precision of just one gift we enjoy in order to experience wonder and gratitude for Hashem's kindness. The more often we engage in these moments of recognition, the more we feel ourselves as the fortunate recipients of Hashem's love and care. (Adapted from "My Father My King" (ArtScroll) by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin).

## THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

## It's All Compassion

Hashem provides constant kindness and compassion to us.

#### INSIGHT: Deeper meanings of the theme

**Constant Goodness** 

Tn this segment we say הטוב כי לא כלו רחמיך, אוהמרחם, כי לא תמו חסדיך, there is no end to G-d's compassion and G-d extends Himself to us in limitless ways. The Mishnah (Berachos 54a) states, "A person must bless Hashem for the bad just as (ke'sheim) he blesses Him for the good." What does ke'sheim, just as, mean?

There are two types of goodness. There is the goodness that we can all easily comprehend, such as good health or wealth, and the goodness that we faithfully accept from Hashem, even though it is painful, such as illness or disappointment. Sorrowful situations are a test of our faith, and we have to internalize this truth so firmly that we can recite the blessing for the difficult times with the same enthusiasm (ke'sheim) we apply to the blessing for good times. (With Hearts Full Of Faith, (Rabbi Mattisyahu Saloman, ArtScroll, page 46).

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah, 3b) explains that after the resurrection of the dead, Hashem will take the sun out of its casing and allow it to blaze into the world at full strength. The wicked will be judged by its force while the righteous will be healed by it. The Maharsha (ibid) explains that the sun shines evenly, yet the reaction to its intense heat varies according to the recipient. The same sun which bleaches flax and turns it white can turn skin dark. Our challenge is to remember that everything

that happens to us—pleasant or unpleasant, easy or difficult—comes from the same Source, like the heat from the sun. We are challenged to have faith and confidence that everything is good and that the difference is in the recipient, not in the Source (Klai Yakar, R'aih, 11; 26).

# Images that bring the prayer to life

**VISUALIZE:** 

Room Service

## euven booked a room

Hotel Hefker for his business trip. He found the service to be absolutely terrible. Everything a guest might need had to be ordered specially and paid for. If he wanted fresh air to breathe in his room, he had to make sure each morning to order his 24 hours of ventilation. If he wanted a clean room, he had to pay each day for maid service. If he wanted to lie



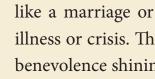
night of his stay. On his next trip, he booked a room at Hotel Ha'Olam. There, every amenity was laid out before him for his pleasure and enjoyment. With fresh air, a comfortable bed, delicious food and clean, pleasant surroundings provided, he was able to spend his time tending to business.

Hefker, however, he would never have realized what kind and gracious service Hotel Ha'Olam provided. Hashem accommodates our

every need. He sets the world

Had he never stayed at Hotel

out for us like a gracious host, seeing to our comfort, and our health, decorating our "room" with stunning sunsets, majestic mountains and millions of small tableaus of quiet beauty. When we think about it, we are really pampered guests in beautiful world.



like a marriage or the birth of a child, or perhaps the positive outcome of a difficult illness or crisis. Think of how your heart swelled with happiness, how you felt Hashem's

Think of a few moments in your life in which you were truly

overwhelmed with gratitude. It could be a time when you achieved

a success for which you had worked hard, or some milestone event

benevolence shining directly upon you, and capture that feeling when you say the words הטוב כי לא כלו רחמיך, והמרחם, כי לא תמו חסידך.

# Know

▶ Too Great To Bear **Did You** One of the most serious impacts of talking during prayer arises from conversing during the chazan's repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei,

known as chazaras hashatz. During this segment of prayer, talking is strictly forbidden. The Shulchan Aruch (Siman 124:4) rules: "When the Shliach Tzibur repeats Shemoneh Esrei, the congregants are required to be silent

and apply their minds to the blessings made by the chazzan and respond amen to them." Speaking during chazaras hashatz is condemned by the Shulchan Aruch (Siman 124:7) using

the harshest language seen in any discussion of transgression. "One should refrain from speaking profane words during the time the *chazan* repeats Shemoneh Esrei. And if one spoke, it is a sin, and the sin is too great to bear."

Praying With Passion is a free weekly e-mail newsletter by the author of Praying With Fire (Vols 1 & 2), Yearning With Fire and The Power of Teshuvah.