

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

עלינו

When Hashem Is Revealed

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Then all humanity will call upon Your Name, to turn all the earth's wicked toward You. All the world's inhabitants will recognize and know that to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear...and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage...

וכל בני בשד יקראו
בשמך, להפנות אליך כל
רשעי ארץ. יכירו וידעו
כל יושבי תבל, כי לך
תכרע כל ברך, תשבע
כל לשון... ולכבוד
שמך יקר יתנו...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



In *Aleinu* we state, כי לך תכרע כל ברך, תשבע כל לשון, "to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear." The simple meaning is that in the future, all the nations of the world will accept Hashem as the one and only G-d. According to the Gemara (*Niddah 30b*) תכרע כל ברך refers to the day of death—when all the souls come 'face to face' with the Divine Presence. Recognizing G-d's sovereignty, they 'kneel' in awe and 'bow' before Him (*Rashi, Tehillim 22:30*).

"every tongue should swear," refers to the day of birth; it teaches that each soul takes an oath before G-d as he is about to emerge into the world, promising that he will develop into a righteous person over the course of his life. Further, the soul is forewarned that it is pure, imposing upon it the obligation to guard that purity throughout its sojourn on earth. The message is that in the course of the choices a person makes in life, he must constantly strive to go in the direction of perfection (*Niddah 30b*).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Sanctifying G-d's Name

The Jewish people's task is to sanctify G-d's name throughout the world until, in the times of Mashiach, everyone will recognize His sovereignty.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Revealing G-d

In the future, all the world's inhabitants will recognize and know that ... ולכבוד שמך יקר... יתנו "and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage," for they will recognize that the purpose of creation is to bring glory to G-d. The Netziv (*Haamek Davar on Bamidbar 14:20*) explains that before the spies sinned in the desert and slandered *Eretz Yisroel*, the Jewish people would have been able to reveal G-d and sanctify His name for the world, simply by entering and inhabiting *Eretz Yisroel*, living according to the Torah and cleaving to G-d. Instead, G-d had to reveal His Name by scattering His people throughout the world (*Michtav MeEliyahu, Vol. 2, p. 255*).

As Jews, we know that even though G-d created a physical world, it was not meant to be merely dirt and stone, vegetation, animals and humanity, living and dying and returning to the earth. The physical world was to be imbued with the spirit of G-dliness. But how could holiness be channeled into life on Planet Earth—it would be like trying to teach a stone to appreciate music? G-d gave us the Torah and mitzvos as the means to infuse His light into the material world. When Jews follow the Torah's teachings with sincerity, consistency and sacrifice, the rest of the world will come to perceive the priceless value of our Divine mitzvos, thereby making G-d praiseworthy in their eyes.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The King's Men

There once was a vast kingdom. The king lived in a palace high on a mountain, from whence he dispatched his agents throughout his realm. The agents followed the king's directions precisely and brought tremendous benefits to the subjects. Roads, hospitals, farms, building supplies – whatever the provinces needed to live and thrive, the king's



agents provided. The subjects never laid eyes on the king, and yet, through the actions of his agents, they grew to love and revere him. Then one day, the announcement came – the king was coming down from his palace and traveling throughout the kingdom.

Everywhere he went, he was greeted with an outpouring of love. The people swore their allegiance to their sovereign and lived blissfully under his benevolent rule.

As Hashem's agents in this world, the Jewish people have the task of enacting Hashem's will and thereby bringing the rest of the world to love and revere Him. In this way, we prepare the world for the day when Hashem will reveal Himself as the unequivocal source of all.

Try This!

► Bowing is an action that has the power to inject a feeling of reverence directly into a person's heart. Think of the act of bowing to the floor when one says *Aleinu* on the *Yomim Noraim*. It is perhaps one of the most moving moments of the *davening*, for it jolts us from our emotionally removed, disconnected feelings into a stark, humbling sense of G-d's presence. Now imagine the entire world – everyone from Iceland to Australia, from China to America – bowing before Hashem, recognizing Him as the One and Only G-d, and think of this image when you say יתנו שמך יקר יתנו.

Did You Know

► **Learning During Aleinu**

If one is learning Torah and hears the congregation recite *Aleinu*, he need not recite *Aleinu* with them. Rather, he should stand and bow slightly when the congregation bows (*K'tzos HaShulchan, Siman 24:11*). However, if doing so will cause an interruption from his learning, he need not do so.