

## Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

# קדיש יתום

## The Merit of Kaddish

### MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified... swiftly and soon. Now respond: Amen. Amen, May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.

### יתגדל ויתקדש

שמה רבא... בעגלא ובזמן קריב, ואמרו אמן. יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא.

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

**K**addish, the prayer said for those who have passed on, begins with "May His [Hashem's] great Name grow exalted and sanctified." The prayer makes absolutely no mention of death, loss or mourning or of the person who died. So why is *Kaddish* said for a deceased parent for 11 months, and for a deceased spouse, sibling or child for 30 days?

*Kaddish*, which is an affirmation of belief in G-d, His greatness and His unlimited power, is precisely what the soul of the deceased needs during his time of Heavenly judgment. Because the deceased is the cause of the mourners and the congregation proclaiming this awesome level of faith and commitment, the deceased receives a large portion of this great merit, which helps him achieve favorable judgment.

### THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

### The Merit of Kaddish

Proclaiming faith in Hashem and belief in His rulership over the universe creates a powerful merit for the deceased person for whom the Mourner's Kaddish is being recited.

### INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

### Good for the Soul

One cold wintry day, the Rosh Yeshivah of Telz, Cleveland, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, traveled with a group of eight students to New York for the wedding of a close student. But, due to a fierce blizzard in New York, the plane was diverted to Washington National Airport. When it was time for Ma'ariv, the group came across an airport cleaner mopping the floor who directed them to a storage room where they could *daven* undisturbed. Instead of leaving, the cleaner stood silently at the door, watching them intently. After they had finished, they were astonished to hear him ask, "Why don't you say Kaddish?" "We need a *minyan* of ten men for Kaddish," one of the boys explained, "and we're missing the tenth man."

To their complete surprise, the cleaner responded, "I'm Jewish. I'll be your tenth man. Please," he begged, "let me say the Kaddish." Haltingly, he began reciting Kaddish, stumbling

over the unfamiliar Aramaic words.

After he had finished, the worker said softly, "I wasn't brought up as a practicing Jew, and I barely know anything about Judaism. I had a terrible fight with my father about ten years before his passing. I did not even attend his funeral.

"Last night he came to me in a dream and said, 'I know you're angry at me—you didn't even come to my funeral—but still, you are my only son. You must say Kaddish for my soul!' I asked him, 'How can I say Kaddish? I barely know the words! And how will I find a *minyan*?' He told me, 'I will arrange it for you,' and then I woke up.

"Now here you are, exactly nine of you," continued the worker, his voice full of wonder. "Heaven-sent—literally—so that I can say Kaddish for my father's departed soul!" (Adapted from "Airport Encounter," by Esther Stern, Torah.org.)

### VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

### Spreading a Good Name

Yaakov Schwartz was in shul one morning when he noticed a new face in the crowd. After davening, he found himself next to the new person as they each retrieved their coats from the crowded coat room. "Where are you from?" Yaakov asked the newcomer. "Cleveland," the man replied. "I'm here for my grandson's bris."

"Cleveland, really!" Yaakov exclaimed. "My son-in-law is from Cleveland."

"What's his name?" the man asked. "Maybe I know his family."



"Shmuel Lerner is my son-in-law," Yaakov answered.

"Oh! Then you must be the famous Yaakov Schwartz!" the newcomer exclaimed. "I've been hearing about you for years. Shmuel's father is a good friend of mine and he often tells me what a warm, generous family his son is married into."

Naturally, this encounter can only endear Yaakov Schwartz's son-in-law to him even more.

Knowing that Shmuel Lerner

praises his father-in-law to others and spreads Yaakov's good name, Yaakov's love and regard for Shmuel can only increase, even enough to override any resentments that might have been brewing under the surface.

Likewise, when the deceased person causes Hashem's praises to be proclaimed, the deceased is credited with spreading Hashem's glory and good name. Whatever sins he may have on his account are mitigated by the overriding mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying G-d's name, which is every Jew's chief purpose in this world.

## Try This!

► Try to ascertain the identity of the person or people for whom the Mourner's Kaddish is being said in your shul. Imagine your words filling up that person's heavenly "bank account" with spiritual merit – the only kind of currency accepted in the next world.

## Did You Know

### ► Pillars of Emunah

The main response by the congregants to the *Kaddish* is יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא. This phrase contains seven words and 28 letters. The very first verse of the Torah (Bereishis 1:1), בראשית ברא אלקים, ("In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth"), also contains seven words and 28 letters. In addition, the introductory line to the Ten Commandments (Shemos 20:1), וידבר אלקים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר, ("And G-d spoke all these words saying"), also contains seven words and 28 letters. Reciting *Kaddish* is a way of linking these monumental concepts of *emunah* (The World of Prayer, p.186-7).