**Tefillah Focus Of The Week:** 

### **PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU**

The Gift of Mercy

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

He, the Merciful One, is forgiving of iniquity and does not destroy; frequently, He withdraws His anger, not arousing His entire rage.... Remember Your mercies, Hashem, and Your kindnesses...

והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית, והרבה להשיב אפו,

ולא יעיר כל חמתו.... זכר רחמיך ה' וחסדיך...



WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

C trict justice demands that the wrongdoing be severely punished. In what way, then, does Hashem express His Attribute of Mercy? While He must punish iniquity for which we have not repented, ילא ישחית -- He will not destroy us.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

### **Indestructible**

Hashem keeps His promise not to destroy the Jewish nation.

#### Deeper meanings of the theme Justice With Mercy

**INSIGHT:** 

Ihroughout our long and illustrious only son raised his ire, leaving his father with a history, Klal Yisroel has experienced great hardship and many bitter disappointments. Almost one hundred years after the destruction

of the Bais Hamikdash, Bar Kochba led the Jews into battle against the mighty Roman Empire. After meeting with initial success – leading even Rabbi Akiva to believe that Bar Kochba was Moshiach - Bar Kochba was ultimately killed, and our current golus continued. Indeed, there have been times in our history when the final geulah seemed imminent, leaving us frustrated and crushed yet again. Yet it is the extended and continual nature of this difficult golus that makes it unparalleled in Jewish history. Nonetheless, it has not broken us; as a people,

him must be punished by having an immense rock thrown at his head. One day, the king's

A king once ruled that any subject who angered

dilemma. Meting out the promised punishment would be a death sentence, and he would lose his child. However, if he did not follow through, he would be viewed as a weak ruler who did not keep his promises. The King solved his dilemma by smashing the

large rock into many small pebbles and ordered them thrown at his son one at a time. Thus, his son remained alive, yet the king's promised punishment was carried out. (Midrash Shocher Tov, as cited in Tehillim Treasury, Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, ArtScroll page 41.) It is undoubtedly true that our golus has been

long and exceedingly difficult, but we must be comforted by the fact that Hashem, the King of Kings and our loving Father in Heaven, has smashed the huge, deadly rock into smaller rocks. Though the rocks may seem heavy, they haven't destroyed the Jewish people; we have survived.

## Images that bring the prayer to life

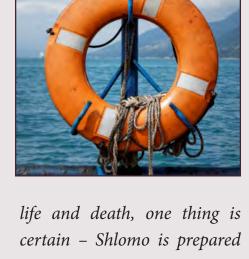
**VISUALIZE:** 

we have endured.

Ready for the Challenge

# The summer is about to

**▲** begin, and Shlomo has just gotten a job as a lifeguard for a summer camp. It's a big responsibility, he knows. Children's lives will literally depend upon his alertness and skill. Is he strong enough to swim rapidly to the rescue of a struggling swimmer? Does he have the right techniques to pull someone out of danger? Has he learned well enough how to resuscitate a victim if need be? With all these essential skills standing between a child's



for his job before the first day of camp begins. This is no place for on-the-job training. Like Shlomo, each of us has a job with life-anddeath repercussions.

us. We cannot wait for the difficulties and challenges to arise before we begin our

spiritual lives depend on

being prepared to face the

challenges Hashem

with the strength and skills we will need to avoid being swept away on a rip-tide of troubles. Rav Simcha Zisel (Cited in Michtav M'Eliyahu, Volume 3, page

training. We must be ready

237) advises us: "When a person is demoralized by his afflictions, it is difficult him to contemplate thoughts of correcting his ways, since all his attention is on his pain. It is specifically before the suffering that it is the appropriate time to contemplate matters and [attempt to] improve himself."



Hashem in order to nudge you into a different direction. Imagine your life as a maze, so the roadblocks you encounter force you to pursue the path that will ultimately lead to your true goal. Reliable Power

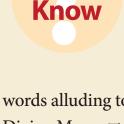
והוא רחום is one of the most powerful prayers for Hashem's mercy. The

Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah, Chapter 78) states that the והוא רחום prayer is also

The next time something does not go your way, rather than allowing

frustration to take root, imagine the obstacle has been put there by

gives



**Did You** 

selected to begin the weekday Maariv prayer because of all the verses which express Hashem's abundant mercy. והוא רחום contains thirteen words alluding to the powerful prayer for Hashem's compassion, the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy (The World of Prayer, Rabbi Elie Munk, Page 273). The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 17b) states that after Klal Yisroel sinned with the Golden Calf,

Moshe Rabbeinu attempted to learn the prayer which would assure us that Hashem will have mercy upon us. Hashem wrapped Himself in a talis as a shaliach tzibbur, a messenger of the congregation, and passed before Moshe as He recited His Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Hashem told Moshe to instruct Klal Yisroel that when they sin, they should recite the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy in the order He recited them, and He would then forgive them. Hashem promised that Klal Yisrael's prayers for mercy will never be rejected when they recite the Thirteen Attributes.

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

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