

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

Kindness Loud and Clear

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

May Your kindness, Hashem, be upon us... **Show us Your kindness, Hashem, and grant us Your salvation...**

יהי חסדך ה' עלינו...
הראנו ה' חסדך.
וישעך תתן לנו...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Hashem's kindness is **pure**. *Sforno* (Vayikra 19:9) explains the words, "I am Hashem, your G-d" to mean that because Hashem is *chesed* (kindness) and *emes* (truth), a Jew who accepts Hashem as his G-d should behave in a similar manner. Therefore, a person who does pure *chesed* in a context in which he receives **no personal benefit**, merits **eternal existence**. Since the individual who performs this mitzvah emulates the quality of Hashem's *chesed*, which is pure, he merits having a special relationship with Him.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Kindness Here and Now

There is a special grace in being able to see Hashem's kindness clearly in our lives.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Seeking G-d's Kindness

A woman once sought Rabbi Yissocher Frand's advice about prayer. She told him that she had always found prayer an exhilarating experience in which she truly felt that she was communicating with Hashem. However, she had lost the feeling and her prayers had become empty words. What should she do?

As Rabbi Frand discussed the problem with this woman, he discovered that modes of prayer were not her problem. She was angry at Hashem. Her husband had suffered a long period of illness. Her father had passed away years before without ever having seen his grandchildren. She was disappointed with life. So how could she pray if she was angry? How could she open up to Him? ('Listen to Your Messages,' ArtScroll, Rabbi Yissocher Frand, page 150.)

Human beings have human needs, and when they are not met, **the void can interfere with**

one's connection to Hashem. If Hashem wanted only to connect with a person's intellect, He would have created mankind without a physical body. However, Rav Yechezkiel Levenstein (Cited in *Sefer Matnas Chaim, Yomim Noraim*, page 83) explains that this is not the relationship Hashem desired. The angels already fill that role. Thus, we are destined to face the challenge this woman described, feeling a void in our lives and struggling to reconcile our lack with our concept of a loving G-d.

That is why we exclaim in the *Hodu* section of Shacharis (Tehillim 85:8) ה' הראנו ה' חסדך, "Show us, [O L-rd] Your kindness and grant us Your salvation." Although we believe that all that occurs is with compassion and mercy, we ask Hashem to *show us*— **to enable us to see** with clarity and to feel in our hearts that Hashem does everything with kindness and benevolence.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Love That Shows

Chaim's father, Avraham, was the old-fashioned type who kept his emotions in check. Although Chaim tried to please his father, he was never quite sure he had succeeded. From Avraham's point of view however, his love of and pride in his son seemed obvious. After all, he had sacrificed for many years to give Chaim and his siblings a comfortable home and a good education. He had even helped Chaim start a business. There was no denying that he had been



a generous father, but Chaim never felt sure of his love.

One day, Chaim was visiting with his wife and children. Avraham's little grandson began a squabble by stealing a toy from his sister. "Shloimie!" Avraham scolded. "How could you do that to your sister? How could a boy whose father is such a tzaddik as your Daddy start a fight with anyone? Do you know that your father never ever made another child cry?"

At the age of 36, Chaim had finally heard the words of praise he had always longed to hear. Avraham had showed his hand – he did admire his son. He did approve of him. Chaim threw an arm around his father's shoulder, for at last, he felt his love was safe to share.

We know Hashem loves us. He provides for our every need. But when He expressly shows us His love and approval, new wellsprings of love arise in our hearts, **making our connection stronger and easier to maintain when the going gets difficult.**

Try This!

► For those who look closely, Hashem shows His kindness every day. Think of one particularly moving aspect of Hashem's kindness to you, and recall it when you say the words ה' הראנו ה' חסדך.

Did You Know

► **Choosing Wisely**

In Newsletter 37, we noted that there are two customs (Sefard and Ashkenaz) regarding when in Shacharis one should recite Hodu. We concluded that many authorities rule that an individual should follow his personal custom, even when praying in a minyan that follows a different custom. Despite that accommodation, however, the question remains as to whether a person is permitted to choose at the outset to daven in the minyan that follows a different custom. Rav Chaim Kanievski (She'ailos Rav, Page 187, question 47) rules that if one prays with more kavannah in the minyan that follows a different custom, he may choose that minyan in the first place.