

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

BARUCH SHE'AMAR

Reward Awaits

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

...Blessed is He Who gives **goodly reward to those who fear Him; blessed is He Who lives forever and endures to eternity; blessed is He Who redeems and rescues, blessed is His Name...**

ברוך משלם שכר
טוב ליראיו. ברוך
חי לעד וקים
לנצח. ברוך פודה
ומציל. ברוך שמו....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Isn't all reward received from Hashem good? Why do we distinguish this reward as "good?" The Gemara (Kiddushin 39b) explains that the reward for fulfilling a mitzvah is not given in this world. Rather, the reward received in the World to Come is the ultimate reward and is indeed "good" (Iyun Tefillah). In light of the Gemara's assertion, the Maharsha (*ibid*) explains that the Torah's passages which explicitly promise reward in olam hazeh, this world, for the observance of mitzvos, apply to the general community. For individuals, however, the reward for fulfilling a mitzvah is given in the next world.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Clearing the Path for Reward

Troubles in this world arise in order to cleanse and purify a person, thereby removing the barriers for the ultimate "goodly reward" -- an eternal bond with Hashem.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Saving Up for Eternity

Many people ask, if G-d "משלם שכר טוב" "gives goodly reward to those who fear Him," **why do the righteous sometimes suffer?** One answer is ברך חי לעד וקים לנצח, "Blessed is He Who lives forever and endures to eternity." Because Hashem endures for eternity, He can withhold the reward until the World to Come, where it will stand forever (Eitz Yosef).

When a tzaddik suffers afflictions in this world, his troubles atone for his sins so that he can receive his undiminished reward—the "goodly reward" -- in the World to Come. It is not, as some may think, evidence that the sufferer is rejected and unloved by G-d. To the contrary, leaving the barriers of sin in place would be the real sign of rejection.

The following allegory by the Tanna R' Elazar ben R' Tzaddok sheds light on this point: A verse in *Devarim* (20:19) compares the righteous to a

tree. Imagine a tree whose trunk stands entirely in a pure place, but some of the branches reach out over a contaminated area. If those branches were to be cut off, the entire tree would be in a pure place. Similarly, Hashem brings suffering upon the righteous in this world so that they may be purged of their impure parts—their sins. This enables them to inherit the World to Come (The Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Michael L. Munk, ArtScroll, Page 192).

For the righteous person, who possesses the highest level of spiritual sensitivity, a small sin is like a grain of sand that prevents an adhesive from adhering to a smooth surface. The *tzadik* does not wish for Hashem to leave it there, forever marring his quest to cleave completely to Hashem. The suffering that erases it is Hashem's gift to the righteous person, clearing the way for an eternal, perfect bond.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Truly Generous Gift

Your very generous Uncle Yossi gives your children a birthday gift every year – a \$100 savings bond and a lollipop. Your similarly generous Uncle Avi also gives them a gift each year; the latest toy on the market – the very thing all the kids are longing for. No doubt, Uncle Avi will



be the more popular uncle throughout their childhood years. However, when they get older and all the toys have been lost, broken or outgrown, the true value of Uncle Yossi's gift will reveal itself.

In the same way, Hashem's

"goodly reward" does not reveal itself readily in our lifetimes. However, as adults, we can understand the concept of long-term benefit, and this is the ultimate example of that concept. Each mitzvah we perform earns a "bond" that will mature at a time when we can no longer "work" for Hashem by doing mitzvos. In this way, our loving Father ensures that we will be supported grandly for eternity.

Try This!

▶ As you say the words "socher tov" in *Boruch She'amar*, imagine a deposit being placed in your Heavenly bank account.

Did You Know

▶ *Fixing an Omission*

If you forget to recite ברך שאמר at the beginning of Pesukei D'Zimrah, you should recite it as soon as you remember, provided you have not yet finished Pesukei D'Zimrah. Once you have finished Pesukei D'Zimrah you may not recite ברך שאמר. However, you may still recite ישתבח (Beur Halacha, Siman 53:2, s.v. Amar).