

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

הללי נפשי

Help in a Time of Need

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Hashem protects **strangers; the orphan and the widow**
He encourages; but the way of the wicked He contorts.
Hashem shall reign forever, your G-d, O Zion, from generation to generation, Hallelu-yah!

ה' שמר את גרים,
יתום ואלמנה יעודד;
ודרך רשעים יעות. ימלך
ה' לעולם, אלקיך ציון,
לדר ודר, הללוי-ה.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



The name of Hashem is mentioned in all the previous categories of this tefillah: ה' שמר את גרים, ה' אהב צדיקים, ה' זוקף כפופים, ה' פקח עורים, ה' מתיר אסורים, ה' פקח עורים, ה' זוקף כפופים, ה' אהב צדיקים, ה' שמר את גרים. However, in reference to the Hashem's name is not mentioned. *She'lah Hakadosh* explains that Hashem's name is hinted at in the words יתום ואלמנה since the numerical equivalent of the first letters of יעודד ואלמנה equals 26 (י = 10, ו = 6, י = 10 which adds up to 26). The numerical equivalent of the name of Hashem יהוה-י-ה-ו-ה is 26. Hashem is also associated with the יתום ואלמנה in the Torah (Devarim 10:17-18), "For Hashem, your G-d—He is the G-d of the powers and the L-rd of the lords, the great, mighty, and awesome G-d..." This is followed by "He carries out the judgment of orphan and widow..."

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Hashem the Advocate

Hashem takes up the cause of those who have no one to stand up for them.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Hashem's Help for a Bereft Generation

Rav Schwab explains that גר is a metaphor for the *baal teshuvah*, as a Jew becomes a new person after he performs teshuvah. יתום, stranger, refers to *tinokos shenishbu*, (children who were captured and raised among non-Jews), one who never had a father, or anyone else, to teach him Torah and mitzvos. He has been "orphaned" from Judaism and is completely innocent. אלמנה is a symbol of the generation that is bereft of leadership as its leaders have died out.

In our generation, the generation before the final redemption, we will be a nation composed of גר יתום ואלמנה, *baalei teshuvah*, *tinokos shenishbu* and people without leaders (Rav Schwab on Prayer, Page 190).

Yet, in such a society, from where will the redemption spring forth? A verse in Shir HaShirim (2:8) states, "The voice of My Beloved! Behold, it came suddenly to redeem me, as if leaping over mountains, skipping over hills." When the time comes for redemption, there are no obstacles.

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Shir HaShirim, Remez 986)

explains that when Moshe told the Jewish people that they would be redeemed from Egypt, they replied, "How can we be redeemed? We do not have good deeds... Egypt is full of our idols." Moshe responded, "Because Hashem desires to redeem you, He does not look as much at your bad deeds. To whom does Hashem look? To the righteous ones among you."

One of Rav Yisrael Salanter's students heard from his Rebbi, "In these [later] generations, each person has greater Heavenly help than existed in the generation of the Tannaim (the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah), because in a licentious generation, one who exerts effort with all his might in Torah and service of Hashem is more worthy to receive Heavenly help" (Shevivei Lev, found in back of Sefer Lev Eliyahu, Vol. 1, p. 326). The fact that it is so much more difficult to achieve spiritual perfection lends that much more merit to our slightest virtues, as "One thing in distress is better than a hundred in ease." Thus, even our generation of "strangers, orphans and widows" has within it the potential to merit redemption.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Alone But Not Abandoned

Leah's car breaks down on the highway. Her first call is to her husband. In moments, he sets out to find her and help her through the ordeal of getting the car towed and getting herself home. She doesn't have to rely on strangers; help is just a phone call away.

Naomi breaks down on the highway. Her first call is to AAA, which promises a tow truck to arrive within approximately an hour and



a half. As the cars speed by, perilously close to her spot on the shoulder of the road, she feels utterly alone. If only her husband were still alive – if only there were someone she could rely upon to protect her. Every few minutes, a stranger pulls over to offer help, making her feel vulnerable to every potential troublemaker on the road.

In *golus* (exile), we are comparable to the "widow." We wait for redemption that will eventually come, meanwhile attempting to do what needs to be done to survive the present dangers and maintain ourselves on the right road. But Hashem does not abandon us; He recognizes our struggle and encourages us to persevere. He heaps merit upon us for our valiant efforts to hold onto Torah and mitzvos in a hostile world, and magnifies the value of the righteousness that manages to sprout from this rocky soil.

Try This!

Everyone has had times when he or she has felt alone and vulnerable. Imagine the intense relief and sense of security one would feel if someone were to reach out a helping hand and encourage the person through this difficult juncture. Think of this emotion when speaking about the encouragement Hashem shows toward יתום ואלמנה גרים.

Did You Know

More Priority — Pesukei D'Zimrah

In Newsletter 69, we learned which sections of *Pesukei d'Zimrah* one should prioritize if, due to his late arrival to shul, he must skip some sections in order to pray *Shemoneh Esrei* with a minyan (Mishneh Berurah 52:1). This issue continues the order of priority:

- For those who recite הודו after שאמר ברוך, say everything from הודו until the words והוא רחום found in the middle of הודו (Siman 52:1).
- For those who recite הודו before שאמר ברוך, everything after ברוך שאמר has priority over הודו (Kaf HaChaim, Siman 52:3).
- The rest of *Pesukei D'Zimrah*.