

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

הללוי-ה כי טוב זמרה

Controlling the Rain

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Who covers the heavens with clouds, **Who prepares rain for the earth**, Who makes mountains sprout with grass. He gives to an animal its food, to young ravens that cry out...

המכסה שמים בעבים,
המכין לארץ מטר,
המצמיח הרים חציר. נותן
לבהמה לחמה, לבני ערב
אשר יקראו...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Why are ravens singled out among the many species whose young cry out for food? What do ravens, specifically, have to teach us about Hashem's compassion for the lost and forlorn? The Gemara (Eruvin 22a) explains that ravens are typified as cruel to their young. That is because, as hatchlings, ravens are pale in color and their parents do not recognize and care for them

as one of their own. Therefore, the young cry out for sustenance and G-d provides for them directly, by causing insects to fly into their mouths (Rashi, Tehillim 147:9). As a raven matures, its coloring changes to black, and then the parents reunite with it and provide it with all the care and affection an animal shows its young. The fact that G-d Himself must feed the young ravens because the parents will not, shows that those who have no one to help them can count on Hashem.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

In the Right Measure

Hashem's greatness is expressed in His ability to constantly provide rain in just the right measure to cause the world to flourish.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Hashem in Control

One of the awesome ways G-d manages His world is through rain. המכסה שמים בעבים, המכין לארץ מטר, המצמיח הרים חציר "Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes mountains sprout with grass." Water, which comes to us through rain, is essential to life. It satisfies our thirst, irrigates our crops and washes the world clean. Even with the most advanced agricultural techniques, the farmer is powerless without rain.

No wonder the addition of the words "mashiv haruach u'morid hageshem" (Hashem makes the wind blow and the rain fall) in the Shemoneh Esrei is termed by our Sages as "gevurahs hageshamim," the power of the rain. Tosafos (Taanis 2a) explain that our Sages chose the word "gevurah" to describe Hashem's control of the rain because "gevurah" is more than raw power. It is strength tempered with greatness.

Thus, we comprehend Hashem's "gevurah" not by pondering His ability to create tornadoes and hurricanes, but rather by His ability to cause rain to fall in the right amount, in the right place, at the right time.

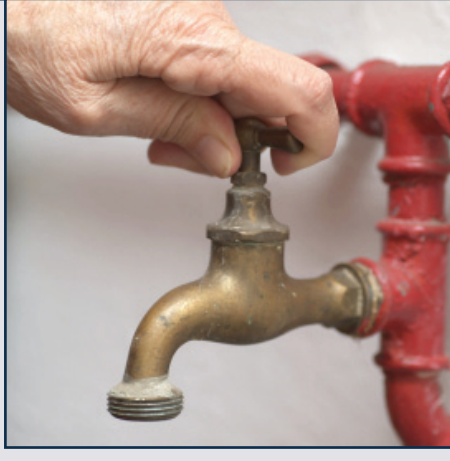
The Torah (Vayikra 26:4) considers rain in its right time a blessing, "I will give you your rains in their proper time." Rain is mainly a blessing because it falls in drops that don't flood the fields. The Gemara (Bava Basra 16a) explains how Hashem develops rain in the clouds enabling the earth to yield produce. The "gevurah" of Hashem is not only that it rains, but that He brings rain that nourishes our crops and fills our reservoirs—beneficial rain that comes at the right times. So vast is the creative power of rain that, "a day of rain is as great as the day on which heaven and earth were created" (Taanis 7b). As the Midrash (Bereshis Rabbah, 13:3) reminds us, "Without rain, earth could not endure."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Spigot

Imagine what would happen if an evil man somehow managed to gain control of the region's water supply. With a twist of the handle in one direction, he could let loose flood waters that would destroy people, crops and homes. Twisting it in the



opposite direction, he could stop up supplies and leave people to die of thirst and crops to wither on their stalks. He would not need guns, bombs or any other weapon to gain

and maintain his dominance. The one who controls the water could control the world.

Indeed, Hashem does control the water, and does control the world. However, His management of this prime resource is measured with unfathomable precision, and for the good of all creation. Each drop of rain has its destination, where it fulfills Hashem's plan for the world.

Try This!

▶ Have you ever seen a satellite view of the world's weather patterns? Imagine those huge swaths of cloud formations blanketing the entire globe, constantly moving, changing in form and size, sweeping across the atmosphere moment by moment. Now take a moment to comprehend that Hashem is in constant control of this powerful, pervasive world force, and think of this power when you say המכין לארץ מטר.

Did You Know

▶ **Answering Amen**

In Siman 189:5, *Mishneh Berurah* rules that one should answer "amen" after the requests beginning with the word 'Harachaman' in *Bircas Hamazon* (found after the fourth blessing). One should likewise do so after every supplication or request, even though it does not contain Hashem's name. However, one may not answer 'amen' if he is in middle of reciting *Pesukei D'Zimrah*. (She'ailas Rav (HaRav Chaim Kanievski), Volume 2, Chapter 3, Page 162.)