



# Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME ISSUE NO. 7

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: **ADON OLAM** *Secure With G-d*

**אדון עולם אשר מלך...  
והוא קלי וחי גואלי...**

### Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

*Master of the universe ...He is my G-d, my living Redeemer...*

### Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

*Hashem, the sole force in the universe, is also our personal G-d.*

### Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

**אדון עולם** consists of ten lines: the first six express the Jewish concept of G-d – His power, His oneness and His eternity. In these lines, we forge our connection to the image of a Master, in whose “hands” every aspect of Creation rests. He is an unfathomable Master unlike anything our minds can comprehend, existing outside time and physical description.

The last four lines, beginning with **והוא קלי וחי גואלי** teach us that this mighty and eternal Master is our own personal Master as well, who cares for

us, especially in times of trouble and answers us when we call, as the last line of the hymn, taken from Tehillim, states, “Hashem is with me, I shall not fear.”

***"The master knows his servant very well, and takes responsibility for meeting his needs."***

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch clarifies the subtle difference between G-d’s identity as a “Master” and that of a “King.” The relationship between a King and his subject is a very distant one, in which

the King may be completely unaware of the subject’s identity or his needs. The relationship between a master and his servant is a personal one. The master knows his servant very well, and takes responsibility for meeting his needs. This personalized care is all the more beneficent because of the incalculable love that our Master has for the Jewish people.

### Origin:

The source of the prayer

**אדון עולם** was composed in the 11th century as a poetic hymn by Rabbi (cont. P. 2)

### Word to the Wise: Meaning within the meaning

The first person to refer to Hashem as “Adon” - “Master” - was Avrohom Avinu. By using the term “Adon” at the outset of our morning prayers, we acknowledge Avrohom Avinu who established the Tefillah of Shacharis - and that we are following in his footsteps. We additionally arouse our zechus avos (the merit of the Patriarchs), for no one in the first 1,700 years of the world’s existence referred to Hashem as Adon until our forefather did.



### Inside This Issue: Focus on Adon Olam

- Visualize .....2
- Halacha.....2
- Take It With You .....2
- Timely Tidbits.....2
- Your Personal Tefillah Trainer.....3

(ORIGIN cont.)

Shlomo ibn Gabirol (1021-1058), the great *paytan*, liturgical poet who lived in Spain. Some opine that it was written by the *Geonim*.

We attribute each of the three daily prayers to a different one of the Patriarchs. Avraham instituted *Shachris*, the morning prayer. Therefore *Shachris* begins with אדון עולם to recall the merit of Avraham Aveinu, who was the first one to address G-d with this title.

## Halacha:

One should be careful to have kavannah while reciting אדון עולם. The *Mateh Moshe* states that *Rebbe Yehudah HaChasid* and *Rav Hai Gaon* “guarantee” that when one has kavannah while reciting the beginning of Adon Olam, the prosecuting angel is unable to prevent his prayers from being heard.

## Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

At 11 o'clock at night, a baby wakes up in her cradle and begins crying for attention. Her seven-year-old sister, with whom she shares a room, is the first to respond to the increasingly frantic cries. The little girl gets out of bed, reaches into the cradle and manages to rescue the baby from her misery. However, the baby senses

the room, he sees his well-meaning daughter hanging onto the baby as the baby's chubby little legs kick and her arms flail about. In moments, the baby is quiet, held snugly in her father's strong arms, secure against his broad shoulder.

Our Master's all-pervasive might, his mastery of the universe, is our greatest – and only – security. Like the child snug in her father's arms, we recognize Hashem as our strength and our protection.

**"In moments... is quiet... secure against his broad shoulder."**

the tenuousness of her sister's grasp. She squirms and cries still more.

Meanwhile, in the dining room, the children's father is finishing some Torah learning. He hears the baby's cries and goes upstairs to tend to her. On entering

## Take It With You:

Your personal connection to the prayer

Overpowering might is frightening. If you were to encounter a large, angry grizzly bear on a walk through the woods, you would no doubt be gripped by terror and your instinct would be to run as far and fast as you could.

Our image of G-d as the all-powerful (cont. P. 3)

## ענייני דיומא: *Timely Tidbits:* A timely insight for the week ahead.

## Inspiration for Chanukah

As we light our menorahs during Chanukah next week, we remember King Antiochus's decrees outlawing the Jewish people's observance of the Torah. His goal was to force the Jews to forsake the Torah in favor of Greek culture, which glorified the physical and celebrated indulgence in life's pleasures. The *Bach* writes that this decree was Divine retribution for the laxity the Jews displayed in their mitzvah observance.

By contrast, the great miracle of Chanukah was brought about through the Chashmonaim's *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) to preserve Torah life and restore the service to the Bais

HaMikdash. **This spark of *mesiras nefesh* continues into modern times,** as the following story vividly shows:

*Chanukah arrived for the Bluzheve Rebbe and the masses of unfortunate Jews trapped in the Bergen Belsen concentration camp during World War II. The Jews found an old shoe, filled it with oil made from shoe polish, and fashioned a wick from the threads of a garment. This would be their Chanuka light. The Bluzheve Rebbe kindled the light while reciting the first two blessings. Then he hesitated for a moment, and made the third blessing, "She'hechyanu" ("... Who has kept us alive and sustained us and*

*brought us to this occasion").*

*A Jew who witnessed this scene later came to the Rebbe and said bitterly, "In such a terrible place as this, how can you thank G-d for keeping us alive and bringing us to this time?" The Rebbe answered, "You know, I had the same problem. But then I looked around and saw how these Jews, in these worst of circumstances, surrounded by death and destruction, got together and insisted on fulfilling the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles. I said to myself, for this alone one can and should make the blessing 'she'hechyanu v'kiyamanu v'higeeyanu lazman hazeh."*



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ADON OLAM Secure With G-d

(TAKE IT WITH YOU cont.)

Master of the Universe inspires fear as well. However, when that all-powerful force is on your side, loving you and fighting your battles for you, suddenly His might is no longer a threat, but rather, the very source of your own security.

These are the two aspects of G-d that Adon Olam weaves together for us as we begin each day. The combination imparts the utmost optimism, reminding us that the world, as well as our individual lives, is in G-d's mighty "hands."

## Your Personal Tefillah Trainer:

Exercising mind, memory and imagination to carry kavannah into your davening

Think of someone in your present or past who made you feel secure and protected. Imagine a fearful situation in which that person arrives on the scene and takes matters in hand. Pay attention to the sense of relief and trust you feel, and this week, when saying the word "Adon," in "Adon Olam," bring this image and feeling to mind.

### Try This!

To track your progress, give yourself a check for each day you have Kavannah in Adon Olam

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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