



Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME **ISSUE NO. 8**

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: **YIGDAL** *13 Principles Of Faith*

**יגדל אלקים חי וישתבח,
נמצא ואין עת אל מציאותו...**

Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

Exalted be **the Living G-d** and praised;
He exists—unbounded by time is His existence...

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

“יגדל” comprises the basic principles of Jewish faith as formulated by the Rambam. They describe our concept of G-d and how He interacts with the Jewish people and all of Creation. The framework for all of these principles is that our G-d is a “living G-d,” the active, primal and constant source of all that occurs.

Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Ever wonder why when there is no pressing problem or hovering fear in our lives, we often times pray as though it were an act of little consequence? The answer lies in the fact that on a normal basis, we do not perceive that G-d determines our success. When we are able to cure so many illnesses, develop such advanced technology and access

so much information, we can more easily blind ourselves to G-d’s constant management of every aspect of life.

The recognition of Hashem’s involvement even in the daily “small stuff” of life is, according to Rav Chaim Friedlander, a higher level of *emunah*, belief in Hashem: “Turning to Hashem for success in the simplest things is the main [path of] ascent in the work of *bitachon* because for complicated matters, even people

with weak *emunah* pray to Hashem.”

While prayer and *emunah* may be seen as two separate concepts, the fact is that prayer is one of the ultimate expressions of *emunah*. In fact, Rabbeinu Yonah states that if a person does not recognize God’s presence and power, he has no reason to pray.

Cognizance of the One to Whom one is praying — which requires a vibrant (cont. P. 2)

Word to the Wise: Meaning within the meaning

In Yigdal, we say, “Exalted be the Living G-d and **praised.**” The Rambam writes (Berachos 10:26), “This is the general principle: A person should always cry out [in prayer] regarding what the future will bring, and plead for mercy, and he should express his gratitude over what has passed; he should thank and praise to the best of his ability. And whoever is profuse in thanking Hashem and praising him consistently is considered praiseworthy.” This language is reminiscent of the final lines in the Avadim Hayinu of the Haggadah recited on Pesach, “And whoever is profuse in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt is considered praiseworthy (*meshubach*).” Rav Mattisyahu Salomon says he learned from his Rebbe, Rav Eliahu Lopian, that the word *meshubach* does not just mean that one deserves to be praised for doing a good thing. Rather, Rav Lopian connects the word to *yayin meshubach*, fine wine, wine that is improved. By speaking at length about the exodus, he says, a person becomes improved. Here too, we can say, that **by thanking and praising Hashem profusely, we become meshubach, we become improved**, we become better, higher, holier, worthier people. This, concludes Rav Lopian, in itself is an additional factor in making our prayers more effective.



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(INSIGHT cont.)

belief in His presence — is the “operating system” that energizes all prayer. As the Chazon Ish wrote, “An exalted aspect of *tefillah* is the vivid picturing of how Hashem hears our lips’ utterances and takes heed of our heart’s meditations.”

Origin:

The source of the prayer

יגדל is based on and summarizes the 13 Principles of Faith formulated by the Rambam in his commentary on Mishnah (Sanhedrin, Chapter 10) and stated succinctly in the *Ani Maamin* prayer. These are:

1 יגדל אלקים חי וישתבח, נמצא ואין עת אל מציאותו

The existence of G-d

2 אחד ואין יחיד כיחודו...

G-d’s unity

3 אין לו דמות הגוף ואינו גוף...

G-d’s spirituality and incorporeal nature

4 קדמון לכל דבר אשר נברא...

G-d’s eternity

5 הנו אדון עולם לכל נוצר, יורה גדלתו ומלכותו

G-d alone should be the object of worship

6 שפע נבואתו נתנו

Revelation through G-d’s prophets

7 לא קם בישראל כמשה עוד...

The pre-eminence of Moses among the prophets

8 תורת אמת נתן לעמו קל...

G-d’s law given on Mount Sinai

9 לא יחליף הקל ולא ימיר דתו...

The immutability of the Torah as G-d’s Law

10 יודע ויודע סתרנו, מביט לסוף דבר בקדמותו

G-d’s foreknowledge of human actions

11 גומל לאיש חסד כמפעלו, נותן לרשע רע כרשעתו

Reward of good and retribution of evil

12 ישלח לקץ הימין משיחנו...

The coming of the Jewish Messiah

13 מתים יחיה קל ברב חסדו...

The resurrection of the dead

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

A child wakes up in the morning in his bed, warm beneath his blankets, his head buried in a soft down pillow. He believes that it is his bed, his blanket and his pillow. He dresses and goes to the kitchen to eat breakfast. In his view, the clothes are his clothes, the toast and eggs on his plate are his food, and the cup of orange juice next to his place, which has its name on it, is his cup.

What the child does not see is that all of “his” belongings are in fact purchased and prepared for him by his mother. He does not perceive her active participation in every facet of his day; he has a bed and fresh linen because she purchased them and launders the linen; he has his very own juice cup because she bought it and painted his name on it; he has a plate of food because she purchased the ingredients, cooked the food and served it to him. Yet he perceives none of this. His mother is an “invisible

(cont. P. 3)

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

Inspiration for Chanukah PART 2

We recite *Hallel* and *Al Hanissim* on Chanukah, and we praise Hashem in our daily davening. But what is the purpose of our praises? We know that Hashem does not crave recognition the way people do. Obviously, our praises are not meant to benefit Hashem. He requires that we thank and praise Him for our own sake, so that we can grow ever closer to Him.

By way of analogy: Picture a champion baseball player, *l’havdil*, who has a large following of avid fans who love to recount every aspect of their hero’s great moments in the game. As

they extol him, they are identifying with him. They start to emulate him, copying his mannerisms, his favorite expressions, his batting stance and his swing. When we praise Hashem, we identify with the details of His greatness, and in doing so, embark on the road to emulating Him.

Divrei Hayamim 16:35 states, “... *Vekabtzeinu vehatzileinu min hagoyim lehodos lesheimkadshecha ulehishtabeiach bishilasecha.*” “... Gather us in and rescue us from the nations, so that we may give thanks to Your holy Name and glory in

Your praises.” Rav Mattisyahu Salomon cites the Mabit in *Sefer Beis Elokim*, noting that in the midst of exile, it is natural for us to plead for Hashem’s mercy and thank Him for it. But what happens when we are redeemed, and no longer suffering from the ills of exile? This verse expresses the hope that our bond with Hashem will not be diminished, but rather, it will become stronger than ever, for it will be clear to us that “*ki sehilaseinu Atah,*” Hashem is our praise and that praising Him is the essence of our being.

YIGDAL 13 Principles of Faith

(VISUALIZE cont.)

hand” guiding his life along, unseen and yet essential to every aspect of his day.

Like this child, who lives a life invisibly orchestrated by his mother, we conduct our lives using the props and scenery placed before us by the Creator. G-d has written the script, created the characters and has even written the ending of the story - the coming of *Moshiach*.

Take It With You:

Your personal connection to the prayer

As you go through your daily routine, it often seems that there’s life, and then there’s G-d. Life is the real-time, practical aspects of your day, whether pleasant or difficult, productive or futile. G-d, it would seem, is confined to the praying, learning, blessings before and after food, mitzvos and acts of chessed.

But Israel’s G-d doesn’t dwell in one compartment. He is *Elokim chai* -- the “living G-d.” Who is the essence of every event, object, achievement and emotion you encounter in your day. He is a constant, active force, the main character in the life’s story of every human being and of the Jewish nation.

Your Personal Tefillah Trainer:

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

Think of a moment in your life in which you felt clearly that G-d’s hand was at work. Relive that moment and how it felt. Choose one image, like a snapshot, that portrays that moment for you, and this week, visualize that image when you say the words “Elokim chai” in Yigdal.

Try This!

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

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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