



Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME ISSUE NO. 94

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: **ברכת קריאת שמע** *Recognizing Greatness*

מה רבו מעשיך ה', כלם
בחכמה עשית, מלאה הארץ
קנינך...

Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

How great are Your works, Hashem, You make them all with wisdom, the world is full of Your possessions...

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Perfect Genius

Every feature of Hashem's Creation is an expression of His perfect wisdom.

Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Arriving at Awe

Akeidas Yitzchak explains that מה רבו מעשיך ה', "How great are Your works, Hashem" highlights the fact that the world was created with Divine design and not through chance and happenstance. Indeed the Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim 3:25) writes, "The particulars of natural phenomena are all designed with wisdom. They are organized and dependent on each other... There is not one iota among them that is a futility, or a failed effort. Rather, they are works of surpassing wisdom, as it says, מה רבו

מעשיך ה', כלם בחכמה עשית Your works, Hashem, You make them all with wisdom."

Certainly, anyone with eyes, a mind, and a heart can occasionally arrive at a sense of awe – yiras Shamayim -- by observing the majesty of G-d's Creation. A stunning sunset can bring tears to your eyes. A newborn baby can fill your heart with wonder. The night sky can

overwhelm your senses with its vastness. Yet, yiras Shamayim is not meant to be a momentary revelation; it is one of the six mitzvos in which a Jew is commanded to constantly engage. We are commanded to have *yirah*, which incorporates not only fear of G-d, but also, constant awareness that He is the Creator of all we see (Beur Halacha, Siman 1, s.v. Hu klal baTorah).

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Word to the Wise: Meaning within the word

Eitz Yosef explains that the words מה רבו means "how great" or "how many". This demonstrates the importance of all of G-d's creations. All of G-d's magnificent creations have a purpose in His world.

Rav Schwab relates that the first time he flew in a jet aircraft, he was greatly impressed by the fact that the plane flew above the clouds. During the time he davened Shacharis, as he gazed down at the clouds and out at the vastness of the clear, sun-drenched sky, he was greatly moved as he said 'מה רבו מעשיך ה', כלם בחכמה עשית. When he returned, he told Rav Breuer that he never had such kavannah and hisorerus (inspiration) while saying 'מה רבו מעשיך ה' as he did on that flight. Rav Breuer listened quietly to Rav Schwab's enthusiastic report, and responded with a smile, "I have the same feeling when I look at a simple daisy." Viewing the growth and structure of a simple flower that emanated from a tiny seed tells us just as clearly 'מה רבו מעשיך ה' (Rav Schwab on Prayer, ArtScroll, Page 265).

Tomer Devorah (end of Chapter 2) writes that a person should respect all creatures, recognizing in them the greatness of the Creator, Whose wisdom is contained in them. Belittling any creation detracts from the honor of its Creator.



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ברכת קריאת שמע Recognizing Greatness

(INSIGHT cont.)

Building this awareness is the purpose of the blessings we say throughout the day.

As the Rambam states:

Just as one must recite a blessing when deriving pleasure, he must also recite a blessing before doing any mitzvah ... The Sages also established many blessings of praise and thanksgiving and in supplication ... All blessings can be divided into three categories: blessings of pleasure; blessings of mitzvos; and blessings of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication; so that one will be ever cognizant of his Creator and be in awe of Him.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Just Perfect

Sarah bought herself an aquarium. She purchased some pretty colored gravel, some sea plants, a little ceramic sunken treasure chest, an assortment of chemicals to ensure the water's correct balance, and a small population of tropical fish to live

in this mini-world. Although she followed the pet store's directions faithfully, within two weeks, half of her fish had died. The water had somehow become too acidic. She readjusted the water and bought some more fish. Unfortunately, they ate the old fish. Within a month, the filter seemed to have clogged up and the water was becoming murky. In a desperate effort to clean things up quickly, Sarah drew off some dirty water and poured in some fresh tap water. The next day, the fish had all perished from the shock of the new water. Sarah soon sold her aquarium and took up guitar lessons instead.

The balance of life is so very delicate that even an effort to create a world containing 15 gallons of water and a dozen fish requires careful planning and oversight. Yet in Hashem's vast world, each creation has its proper place, its necessary atmosphere and nutrients and the right climate. The unfathomable variables necessary to sustain creation are created, day in and day out, by the Creator.

Try This!

- ▶ Think of one aspect of creation that particularly impresses you. It could be something massive, such as the sun, something miniscule, such as an atom, something personal, such as a child, or perhaps something found in nature. Find out about the structure and workings of that creation, and how it fulfills its functions to perfection. Think of this as you say 'מה רבו מעשיך ה'.

Did You Know

▶ No Amen

One does not answer "Amen" after *הכל שלום ובורא את השך*, *עשה שלום ובורא את השך*, since it is in the middle of a beracha (Lechem Hapanim to Kitzur Shulchan Aruch).