

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ברנת קריאת שמע

Praising Hashem Like the Angels

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Then the Ophanim and the holy Chayos, with great noise raise themselves towards the Seraphim. Facing them they give praise saying: "Blessed is the glory of Hashem from His place."

והאופנים וחיות הקדש
ברעש גדול מתנשאים
לעמת שרפים. לעמתם
משבחים ואומרים:
ברוך כבוד ה'
ממקומו.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



What are the Ophanim and the holy Chayos, and, positioned opposite them, the Seraphim? Rambam (*Yesodei HaTorah* 2:7) states that there are ten levels of angels, which include the Chayos, Ofanim, and the Seraphim. The Serafim say, "Kadosh" as Yeshayahu (6:2) recounts: "The Serafim stood above him... And they called to each other, 'Holy!'" The second pair of angels, which stand opposite the Seraphim, are the Ophanim and Chayos, as the Talmud (*Chullin* 91a) states, "Which ones say 'Blessed?' The Ophanim."

The Men of the Great Assembly established this *Kedusha*, which is a part of the blessings before *Krias Shema*, in accordance with the way each of the angels recites its praises; which is in turn based upon that particular angel's origin and root in the spiritual worlds. Zohar (*Parashas Balak*, 190b) explains that the angels cannot open their mouths in praise until the Jewish people gather below to say "Kadosh." Thus, if the Jewish people throughout the world did not say *Kedusha*, the angels, too, would be forced to refrain from saying it.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Together With Hashem

Hashem is a real and vivid presence Who hears our prayers and praises.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Place of the World

At the end of this prayer, we say ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו, "Blessed is the glory of Hashem from His place." There are several other references to Hashem as *HaMakom*, 'the Place,' including during the Seder on Pesach evening ("Baruch HaMakom Baruch Hu") and when leaving mourners sitting *shivah* ("*HaMakom ye'nachem eschem*"). What is this quality of "place" for a G-d Who is infinite and omnipresent? Rashi (*Shemos* 33:21) cites the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah*, 68:9) that we call Hashem 'Makom,' 'the Place,' because "He is the place of the world, and His world is not His place." Rav Soloveitchik explains that G-d is perceived as the *M'komo shel olam*, the repository of the universe:

"This implies that [although G-d is indeed separated and unique,] He is not unapproachable. Rather, He is our immediate Companion. Man

does not arrive at G-d through philosophical speculation or metaphysical inference. Rather, he meets G-d through experience and intuition. Just as one experiences his home, so does the Jew perceive G-d and experience Him in His full immediacy." (Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Sacred and Profane: *Kodesh* and *Chol* in World Perspectives," in *Shiurei HaRav* (Ktav, 1994), p. 13.)

This is surely true in our prayer experience. In "Worship of the Heart" (page xi), Rav Soloveitchik writes:

"It is impossible to imagine prayer without, at the time, feeling the nearness and greatness of the Creator... We cling to him as a living G-d, not as an idea, as an abstract Being. We are in his company and are certain of his sympathy. There is, in prayer, an experience of emotions which can only be produced by direct contact with G-d."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Right Address

Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus once advised a young man struggling to overcome obstacles in his Torah learning:

"...It appears to me that you are someone who has struggled mightily in your endeavor to grow in Torah and yiras Shamayim... You are realizing that you can't succeed on your own... Therefore, I'd like to recommend a name and address of someone that you can turn to for assistance.



His name is "Hashem Yisborach"... I write this, because many people associate this opportunity—to talk to Hashem—with "formal" prayer and spiritual loftiness. Though this is important, it is not what defines our relationship with Him.

At the very core of our relationship with Hashem is the appreciation that he is

not Something, but Someone: to be totally aware of the simple reality that Hashem is there, real and true; that it is easy to form a personal, sincere connection with Him, and to discuss with Him the most basic and mundane of your needs; that those that do so are never let down.... Go directly to the only One who can truly help you, grasp Him and do not let go—Allow Him no rest until you've attained all that your heart desires." ("A Response to a Letter," by Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus, *The Jewish Observer*, October, 2004, page 44.)

Try This!

► The next time you are saying these words of praise, imagine them ascending to Heaven in an envelope, where the angelic beings receive them and, in their angelic voices, sing to Hashem the praises.

Did You Know

► Interruptions During Brochos of Krias Shema (cont'd)

If a person enters a shul after he already read *Krias Shema*, and finds the congregation reading *Krias Shema*, he is obliged to read the first verse together with them. This is required so that it should not appear as if he were unwilling to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven upon himself. This ruling also applies when a latecomer must catch up to the congregation's *tefillah* and has not yet reached *Krias Shema* at the point at which others are saying it. If he is at a stage at which he is allowed to make an interruption, he should do so and recite the Shema (*Orach Chaim*, *Siman* 65:2). If, however, he is engaged in saying the blessings of *Krias Shema* or, likewise, if he is in between the sections, he should not make any interruption at all, but should say the words that he is saying, in the tune that the congregation uses to say *Krias Shema*, so that it appears as if he is reading it together with them (*Mishneh Berurah* 65:11).

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