

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ברכת קריאת שמע: לא-ל ברוך...
Constant Kindness

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

In His goodness He renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation. As it is said: "[Give thanks] to Him Who makes the great luminaries, for His kindness endures forever."...

המחדש בטובו בכל יום
תמיד מעשה בראשית.
כאמור: לעשה אורים גדלים,
כי לעולם חסדו....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



In His goodness, Hashem renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation. Nefesh HaChaim (Shaar 1) teaches that each moment that the world continues to exist is a moment of *chessed* from Hashem. That is why the prayer states in the present tense, כאמור: לעשה אורים גדלים, "As it is said, '[Give thanks] to Him Who makes the great luminaries.'"

Chazal teach that we must totally rely on Hashem's mercy to succeed in every aspect of

our lives. The Gemara (*Sotah 2a*) states that "it is as difficult for the Omnipresent to match a man and woman for marriage as it was to accomplish the splitting of the Reed Sea." Similarly, "providing man's sustenance is as difficult as the splitting of the Reed Sea. Thus, one must pray for his sustenance, and not take it for granted." (*Pesachim, 118a*). Chazal also teach that certain aspects of maintaining one's health are as difficult as the splitting of the Reed Sea. Every moment in life is on account of Hashem's perpetual kindness.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

No Limit, No End

Hashem sustains the world and everything in it with a constant, unlimited flow of *chessed*.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Greatness of Empathy

'כי לעולם חסדו', Hashem's kindness endures forever. *Chessed* is the central principle around which all other principles of Creation are predicated, as the verse (*Tehillim 89:3*) teaches, 'Olam chesed yibaneh' – "The world will be built upon *chessed*." All elements of *chessed* contribute to the well-being of the world; all forms of cruelty give rise to its destruction.

We are instructed to imitate Hashem's *middos*, as fulfillment of the verse, "You shall walk in His ways" (*Devarim 28:9*). We can perform acts of *chessed* with our property and ourselves, even by feeling another's pain. *Pirkei Avos (6:6)* teaches the concept of 'nosei bohl im chaveiro' – "sharing one's fellow's burden." Judaism expects a complete stranger to always have compassion for his fellow Jew. The mere knowledge that someone is suffering should arouse a Jew's heart, even if the sufferer has not specifically requested one's help. Therefore, it comes as no great surprise,

that 'nosei bohl im chaveiro' is a trademark of many *Gedolim*.

In 1895, a fire devastated the city of Brisk, and many people were left homeless. During this time, Rav Chaim Soleveitchik, the Rav of Brisk, slept on a bench for many nights. His house had not burned down. He had a bed. And his family begged him to sleep on it. Otherwise, they said that his health would suffer. But he refused. As long as some of the townspeople were homeless, forced to sleep on benches, he felt that he could not sleep in a bed. He had to share in their distress. He had to feel what they were feeling. It had to be real to him.

In the same way, during the World War 1, when so many people were dislocated, the Chofetz Chaim's Rebbetzin once found him sleeping on the floor in middle of the night. When asked for the reason, the Chofetz Chaim said that he had to share the burden of his fellow Jews.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Suffering Amidst Joy

In 1970, two planes full of Jewish people were hijacked by Palestinian terrorists and brought to an airfield in Jordan. Rav Yitzchak Hutner, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Chaim Berlin, was on one of those planes with his family and some *talmidim*. While the plane sat on the runway in Jordan, Jews all over the world prayed for his safe return.



Although six hostages remained, Rav Hutner and his family were released unharmed. When they finally arrived home in New York, an enormous welcoming event was arranged in the airport terminal. Thousands of people danced and sang to the music played by a band that was

hired for the occasion.

Rav Moshe Feinstein was among those who came to greet Rav Hutner. As Rav Moshe entered the terminal, his face clouded. He walked over to the band and asked them to stop playing. Everyone was stunned. When asked why he asked that the music stop, Rav Moshe explained, "as long as the fate of 6 of the hostages is not yet determined, how can music be played? If 6 people are still in danger, how can the rest of us not be sick with worry?"

Try This!

▶ G-d is continuously creating and sustaining the universe. Just as a shining light is in constant need of electricity, nothing can exist without His constant will generating it. Cut the current, and the light immediately ceases (*Lev Eliyahu, Vol. 2, p. 62, s.v. Y'sod Ha'Briah*). Think of this image as you say the words כי לעולם חסדו.

Did You Know

▶ *Correct Times for Reciting Shema*

In order of halachic preference, there are several times when *Shema* may be recited:

- *Vasikin*, which is several minutes before sunrise. This is the preferred time to recite *Shema* and its blessings according to the majority of halachic opinions (*Mishnah Berurah 58:6*).
- *M'sheyakir*, which begins thirty-five minutes before sunrise (*Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:6*). During this time one may *l'chatchilah* recite *Shema* according to most halachic authorities (*Shulchan Aruch 58:1*).
- From after sunrise until a quarter of the day has passed. Most people recite *Shema l'chatchilah* during this time. (See *Shulchan Aruch 58:1*. However, see *Mishnah Berurah 58:3-4*, and *Avnei Yashfei, Tefillah, pg. 103*)