

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ובא לציון

For All Who Call

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

...He, the Merciful One, is forgiving of iniquity and does not destroy For You, my L-rd, are good and forgiving, and abundantly kind to all who call upon You.

...והוא רחום יכפר
עון ולא ישחית...
כי אתה אדני טוב
וסלח, ורב חסד
לכל קראיך.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

The Torah (*Devarim*, 4:1) promises, "U'mi goi gadol asher lo krovim eilav, ka'Hashem Elokeinu b'chal kareinu eilav — For which is a great nation that has a G-d Who is close to it, as is Hashem, our G-d, whenever we call to Him?" Does this promise apply to all Jews who call to Hashem in prayer?

Deah, Vol. 4, *Siman* 51) assures us that no matter how unimportant a person may consider himself to be, his prayer is important to Hashem. "Prayers and blessings of all people are worthy to be accepted, even from those who may feel unworthy."

Each one of us possesses within the depths of our souls a fundamental spiritual potential that can connect us with G-d. Therefore, nothing prevents a person from establishing a strong bond with the Almighty through prayer.

Make no mistake about it; every single prayer of every person is powerful. And if we believe this with all our being when we pray, it will be more powerful still.

Tefillah, as this verse indicates, is the very definition of the close bond between Hashem and the Jewish people. Prayer is the key to all that an individual wants and needs in his life, and all that the Jewish people yearn to achieve as a nation. Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe*, *Yorah*

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

An Answer for Every Prayer

Every Jew has the ability to connect to Hashem through prayer, and every prayer is answered for the person's benefit.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Happy Endings

As stated in "Word to the Wise," the prayers of every person is powerful. When a specific prayer goes unanswered, it may indicate that, despite the difficult circumstances, Hashem has determined that the requested help is not what the person needs. *The Gemara (Berachos 60b) relates that Rebbe Akiva was once traveling to a city. He was refused lodging in the city and was forced to spend the night in a field. He had brought with him a rooster to awaken him in the morning, a donkey upon which to travel, and a candle to provide light. As he settled himself for the night, a strong wind extinguished the candle. A cat appeared and ate the rooster. Finally, a lion emerged and demolished the donkey. Nevertheless, Rebbe Akiva cried out: "Gam zu l'tovah" — This too is for good.*

That night an armed band of robbers invaded the city. Upon hearing this, Rebbe Akiva stated: "Did I not tell you that all that Hashem does is for the good?" Rashi (ibid.) explains had the candle remained lit, the rooster crowed or the donkey brayed, Rebbe Akiva would have been captured along with the people of the city.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz (*Sichos Mussar, Shaarei Chaim, Ma'amar* 13, page 53) explains that by applying the words "Gam zu—this too" to events that clearly appeared, at the moment, to be troublesome, Rebbe Akiva declared that everything that happened belonged within Hashem's script of goodness for His world. Although man does not always have the ability to perceive this script from its beginning to the end, if he knows the nature of the Author, he knows that all that happens in the script is good.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Worth the Wait

Rabbi Friedman looked at the caller ID as the phone rang. It was Mr. Rosenthal again, no doubt calling to find out if his son had been accepted into the yeshiva. Yaakov Rosenthal's performance on his entrance exam and interview had been weak. He was clearly nervous, but his mistakes seemed to go deeper than that. The Rosh Yeshiva had decided that the yeshiva would not be right for this particular boy, even though his brothers had all been students there. "No" was the only answer Rabbi Friedman, the yeshiva's



mashgiach, would be able to give Mr. Rosenthal at that moment.

But Rabbi Friedman had gotten a different impression of Yaakov. He saw a seriousness and desire to learn that he was sure would soon rise up to overcome any obstacles. "I'm not answering the phone yet," Rabbi Friedman decided. "I'm going to talk to the Rosh Yeshiva again and see if I can get this boy in." Meanwhile, Mr. Rosenthal got the *mashgiach's* voice mail.

"Why doesn't anyone answer?" he said out loud to himself. "All I'm asking for is an answer, yes or no!"

The next day, it was Mr. Rosenthal's phone that rang. He snapped it up quickly when he noticed the yeshiva's name on the caller ID. "Mr. Rosenthal," said Rabbi Friedman, "I'm happy to tell you that Yaakov has been accepted. You'll be getting a letter shortly."

At times we feel that Hashem isn't listening to our prayers. Yet, like Rabbi Friedman in the story, He certainly hears us and knows what we want. Our emunah enables us to recognize that when the time is right and the situation is right, we will get our answer.

Try This!

▶ When we "call upon" people, it is because we believe they can help us. We call upon their kindness, their strength, their expertise or whatever it is that we need from them, hoping to arouse their desire to help. If we summon that same faith in Hashem's ability and desire to help us when we say the words ורב חסד לכל קראיך (and abundantly kind to all who call upon You), we will be expressing the precise *kavannah* that turns words into effective prayer.

Did You Know

▶ **Skip Ahead**

If the *minyan* has started saying ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל before one has said *Ashrei* and the beginning of the prayer ורב חסד לכל קראיך, he should nevertheless recite ואתה קדוש with them. Subsequently, he should say the verses of *Ashrei* and the psalm למנצח, and also the two verses of the prayer ורב חסד לכל קראיך which precede the words ואתה קדוש (i.e., the verses ורב חסד לכל קראיך and ... ואני זאת בריתי (Mishneh Berurah 132:3).