

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ובא לעיון


Reward for the Righteous

**MEANING:** The simple translation of the prayer

Your righteousness **remains righteous forever**, and Your Torah is truth. Grant truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham, as You swore to our forefathers from ancient times...

צדקתך צדק לעולם,  
ותורתך אמת. תתן אמת  
ליעקב, חסד לאברהם,  
אשר נשבעת לאבותינו  
מימי קדם...

**WORD TO THE WISE:** Meaning within the word



People sometimes question the ways of G-d because they do not see the righteous rewarded and the wicked punished. On closer examination, however, one can see that this question is a product of shortsightedness. The reward G-d grants to the righteous is not limited by time; it lasts forever. The few short decades of our lives on earth represent a miniscule delay in proportion to the eternal duration of our heavenly reward (*Siach Yitzchok* cited in *The Complete ArtScroll Siddur*, page 160).

*A young prince lived in a small cottage near the king's castle. One day, bandits came and destroyed his home. Crying bitterly, the prince*

*begged his father to rebuild his cottage, but the king took no action, despite his son's pleas.*

*Disappointed, the prince asked his father why he refused to help him. The king answered, "On the contrary, I wish to help you and I will indeed do so. I have not rebuilt your cottage because I want to build you a palace in its place"* (Cited in *Keser Shem Tov*, page 20).

In the same way, Hashem in His infinite wisdom chooses not to immediately fulfill a specific request. If that request comes to Him in a sincere prayer, however, it ultimately will be answered, perhaps by something much better than what one has imagined. The answer may become apparent in this world, or it may await a person in the World to Come.

**THEME:**

An essential concept of the prayer

**Never Wasted**

Although the reward may not be apparent in one's lifetime, the heartfelt prayers of the righteous are always rewarded.

**INSIGHT:**

Deeper meanings of the theme

**Saving Up Prayers**

Two seemingly unconnected verses in *Parshas Vayeira* (*Bereishis*, 18:17 - 18) illustrate the way in which Hashem stores "unanswered" prayers as a merit for the future: *And Hashem said, Shall I conceal from Avraham what I do (in Sodom)? And Avraham will surely be a great and mighty nation.*

What is the connection between these two verses? The Dubna Maggid (cited in *Sheurim B'Tefillah*, page 143) explains that Hashem was deciding whether there was any purpose in informing Avraham of Sodom's impending destruction, for even if Avraham were to pray on Sodom's behalf, Hashem knew that it must ultimately be destroyed.

Nevertheless, because "Avraham will surely be a great and mighty nation," Hashem decided

to tell him that Sodom would be destroyed. As a result, Avraham prayed for Sodom; these prayers became a tremendous benefit to Avraham's descendants many generations later.

Illustrating the same concept, the Dubna Magid (*Ohel Yaakov, Parshas Lech Lcha*, 12:20) explains the oft-quoted Gemara, "Why were our Patriarchs infertile? Because Hashem desires the prayers of the righteous." Hashem, the All-Merciful, brought great suffering to the forefathers, which caused them to pray, because He knew that when crisis would strike future generations of the Jewish people, they would desperately need the benefit of those heartfelt cries. Today, in a very real way, the Jewish people gain immensely from the prayers and tears of the forefathers.

**VISUALIZE:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

**Tears at Work**

The Steipler Gaon sometimes reflected on the phenomenon of a return to Judaism among Jews whose parents and grandparents could not even read Hebrew.



He felt that this resurgence was due to the enormous merit of previous generations—the great-grandmothers who prayed

and cried that their children would remain upstanding religious Jews. Although these supplications did not benefit their immediate offspring, Hashem kept the prayers and "used" them to the advantage of their descendants today.

**Try This!**

► Most of life's pleasures are fleeting and perishable. Money is spent, enjoyable experiences come to an end, food is consumed and the novelty of new possessions wears off. Our prayers, however, are like gold in a heavenly vault. They do not decay, disappear or drain away, but remain stored for us with their full weight and value eternally credited to our account. Imagine such a vault filled with your "golden" heartfelt prayers when you say the words צדקתך צדק לעולם.

**Did You Know**

► **Not to Be Missed**

It is forbidden for a person to leave the *shul* before saying קדוש קדוש קדוש of לעיון, ובא לעיון, known as *Kedushah De'Sidra* (*Siman 132:2*). Mishneh Berurah (*ibid*:5) explains since the world continues to exist because of the saying of this *Kedushah*, one must avoid being irreverent towards it. Since the Mishneh Berurah (*ibid*:3) rules that a person should be scrupulous about saying the *Kedushah* with a *minyan*, it follows that, unless there is a pressing need, people must avoid leaving before it has been said, even if they plan to say it alone.