

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שיר של יום

Greeting Each Day

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Today is the **first day** of the Shabbos... Today is the **second day** of the Shabbos... Today is the **third day** of the Shabbos... on which the Levites would recite in the Holy Temple.

היום יום ראשון
בשבת... יום שני
בשבת... יום שלישי
בשבת... שבו היו הלויים
אומרים בבית המקדש.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



When the Holy Temple stood, as part of the *tamid-shel-shachar*, morning sacrifice, the Levites chanted a chapter of Tehillim, the *Shir Shel Yom*, that was suited to the significance of that particular day of the week (*Tamid* 7:4). Their beautiful song was one of the most moving parts of the Temple service. Throughout the Chasam Sofer's lifetime, he composed many songs expressing his devotion

to Hashem. When asked when the songs were composed, his son, the Kesav Sofer replied that during the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, his father had been so totally overwhelmed with powerful feelings of love toward his Creator that to give expression to the feelings in his heart, he penned those songs (*Nachlei Binah*, p. 8).

Although the Holy Temple lies in ruins and we cannot hear the beauty of the Levi'im singing, we can connect to the same *Shir Shel Yom* every day to remind us of this void. (*Seder Hayom* p. 52).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Singing Every Day

Each of the Songs of the Day is connected in some way to that day of Creation, giving us a daily reminder of a different aspect of Hashem's awesome creative power.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Back to Creation

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a) explains how each day's *shir* was relevant to its respective day.

On Sunday, we recite לה' הארץ ומלואה "For G-d is the earth and its fullness," in reference to the first day of creation, on which G-d created the universe, over which He alone rules.

On Monday, we recite גדול ה' ומהלל מאד "Great is Hashem and much praised," for the second day of Creation, on which Hashem separated his creations (the heavens from the earth) and reigned over them both.

On Tuesday, we recite אלקים נצב בעדת קל "G-d stands in the Divine assembly," for the third day of Creation, on which Hashem caused the dry land to become visible and ready for habitation, thus preparing the world for His assembly.

On Wednesday, we recite קל נקמות ה' "Hashem is a G-d of vengeance," for the fourth day of Creation, on which He created the sun and the

moon. The "vengeance" is the punishment that will ultimately come to those who worshipped these heavenly bodies.

On Thursday, we recite הרנינו לאלקים עזונו "Sing joyously to the G-d of our might," for the fifth day of Creation, on which Hashem created the birds and the fish, whose tremendous variety and color inspire awe and joyful song.

On Friday, we recite ה' מלך גאות לבש "Hashem has reigned; He will have donned grandeur," for the sixth day of Creation, on which He completed his work and reigned over his creations.

On Shabbos, we recite מזמור שיר ליום השבת "A song, a hymn for the Shabbos day," referring not to the weekly Shabbos, but to the World to Come, when man will achieve the spiritual perfection we only glimpse during our Shabbos (*Rashi, Tehillim* 92).

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

A Gift a Day

The Queen gazed contentedly at a beautiful display case in her sitting room. It was a special case reserved for seven treasured items. The first was a silver vase decorated with beautiful gemstones; the second was a delicate porcelain rose; the third was an intricately painted ceramic goblet – these and four



more treasures were artfully arranged in the case. Each was a gift that her husband, the king, had given her on each of the first seven days of their marriage. Whenever she looked at her gifts, she relived the special happiness of those days and remembered how

very beloved she had been, and still was.

Like the queen, we too have seven exquisite gifts from our King, and each of them is an expression of His love and desire to provide us with a good and beautiful world in which to live our lives and serve Him. As we recite the *Shir Shel Yom*, we have the opportunity to take pleasure in each of these gifts and re-energize our love for the One who gave them to us.

Try This!

► Choose an element of one day's theme and observe its existence in your everyday world. For example, according to a renowned professor of ecology at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in Sao Paulo state, there are a total of around 13 million species (known and unknown) in the world. Out of these, roughly 1.75 million species, including micro-organisms, plants, insects, bacteria and animals, have been described. Think about this when you say Thursday's *shir*, הרנינו לאלקים עזונו, "Sing joyously to the G-d of our might" which is in reference to the fifth day of Creation, on which Hashem created the birds and the fish.

Did You Know

► Once a Day

As noted above (*Word to the Wise*), as a memorial to the Holy Temple, in Shacharis we recite the *Shir Shel Yom* that the Levites recited with the *tamid-shel-shachar*. However, the Levites recited the *Shir Shel Yom* at the afternoon sacrifice, the *tamid-shel-bein-ha'arbaim* (*Mishnah, Rosh HaShana* 4:4), which is represented by our *Mincha* prayer. Why do we not recite the *Shir Shel Yom* at *Mincha* as well?

The *Mishneh Berurah* (*Siman* 132:16) explains that although in the *Beis HaMikdash* the Levites would also say the *Shir Shel Yom* over the pouring of the wine for the daily offering of the afternoon, it is nonetheless not said at our *Minchah* prayer because there were several occasions when the kohanim were occupied during the day and did not bring the wine to be for the afternoon offering until night when the *shir* is not said. Alternatively, the *Aruch HaShulchan* (*Siman* 123:2) explains that because the *Shir Shel Yom* is merely a "remembrance" of the practices in the *Beis HaMikdash*, one daily recitation suffices. Therefore, it is the custom to recite the *Shir Shel Yom* at Shacharis only.