

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

Seek Hashem With Joy

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Glory in His holy Name, be glad of heart, you who seek Hashem. Search out Hashem and His might...

ה' דרשו ה' ועזו...
ישמח לב מבקשי
התהללו בשם קדשו.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the meaning



“Be glad of heart, **you who seek Hashem.**” In the working world, if someone doesn't complete the job, the effort he expended is irrelevant. For example, if a caterer was supposed to deliver food in time for a wedding, but did not, because he got delayed in traffic and had other difficulties, his effort would not be sufficient for payment. In Hashem's world, however, the one who seeks to fulfill a mitzvah or to come closer to Hashem and was unavoidably prevented from doing so, is credited as if he had fulfilled it (Berachos 6a). That is because each person is presumed to be righteous. Therefore, if not for the unavoidable circumstances, it is as though he had fulfilled the mitzvah.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Connecting Through Joy

Seek Hashem in prayer through feelings of joy.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Wellsprings of Happiness

What is the source of joy from which a person is supposed to draw when he comes to pray? What if his circumstances are difficult and draining?

The joy, even when a person is in dire straits, comes from the knowledge that he is praying to the One and only One Who can, and will, help him. If he consciously connects to that truth, he will be overwhelmed with joy at having been handed the opportunity to express his needs to the One Who can answer them. In the words of Rav Pincus:

“So it is, when a person speaks to his Creator, and mentions His Name, if he only would think for a moment about the meaning of Hashem's Name,¹ at that moment an enormous happiness would shine inside...Specifically, the One he 'meets' in shul ..., the One to Whom he is now speaking, He has the ability to help the person who is about to daven And He (Hashem)

assists all who sincerely ask Him for help.”

The feelings of joy are even greater when one realizes that **his connection to Hashem is personal.** As the prayer *Adon Olam* proclaims, “*V'Hu Ei-lee* — He is my God.”

To be able to say that Hashem is “my God” is a profound statement of personal connection: “Yes, He created and rules the universe, but He and I are very close.” Imagine the great joy when one realizes that “Not only is Hashem my personal G-d, but also, He promises me that ‘My door is always open’—I can speak with Him on any matter whenever I want [through prayer].”

Our quest is to see Hashem's Presence, hear His message and feel His loving guidance in every aspect of our lives. When we develop this perspective, we infuse ourselves, our lives and our prayers with the indispensable ingredient of joy.

1. Hashem - Master of All, Who Always Was, Is, And Will Be. When one mentions the Divine Name, he should have in mind the meaning of the Name as it is read referring to His Mastery and that He is the Master of all creation.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

What a relief!

Shmuel's business was in big trouble. He had many debts to pay, little credit remaining, he was short on inventory just as the peak season was getting underway and for once in his life, he did not know what to do. When his friend Daniel called, he knew instantly that something was very wrong.



He did not have to wait long before Shmuel poured out his whole sad story.

“Don't worry,” Daniel said. “I'm coming over there and taking care of everything. I'll get you out of this whole

mess. I've handled dozens of situations much worse than yours. Relax.”

For the first time in months, Shmuel felt his mind quiet down. His entire being was infused with a sudden sense of elation. It was all under control. Someone else was taking charge, **someone who knew what to do.** All at once, his worries were gone.

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The sweet relief felt by Shmuel in the above story is a true picture of reality. Everything is under control – under Hashem's control, and He *does* take care of everything. This week, imagine the relief and happiness you would feel if someone came along and offered to solve your biggest problem, and recall that feeling when saying the words “ישמח לב.”

Did You Know

▶ Late Arrivals

Last week we cited the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Mishneh Berurah* who caution us to initially arrive at shul early, so that one will not have to skip part of the Pesukei D'Zimrah. However, there are circumstance in which one may do so. If one arrived late to shul and there is a later minyan, but in that minyan he will be unable to pray in his set place, he may daven in his 'makom kavuah' (set place) with the first minyan, even though he will have to skip part of Pesukei D'Zimrah (Ashrei Ha'Ish [Piskei HaRav Elyashiv], Chapter 8, page 53).