

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

New Each Day

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Sing (songs of praise) to Hashem everyone on earth, announce His salvation daily. Relate His glory among the nations, among all the peoples His wonders....

שירו לה' כל הארץ,
בשרו מיום אל יום
ישועתו. ספרו בגוים את
כבודו, בכל העמים נפלאותיו....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the meaning

Baal HaTurim (Devarim 3:23) states that the gematria (numerical equivalence) of the word "shira" (song of praise) is 515, the same as *v'eschanan* (I implored). What is the connection between "shira" and imploring G-d through prayer? Rashi (Berachos 4b, s.v. 'zeh hasomaich') explains that a person should first draw G-d near to himself by reciting His praises. Then, while G-d is still at hand, he should pray for his personal requests.



THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Constant Source of Wonder

G-d's constant salvation is worthy of our constant song of wonder and excitement.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

A Miracle a Minute

There is a saying, "Life is beautiful. Live each moment as if it were a miracle." According to Iyun Tefillah, the words בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו, "announce His salvation daily" convey that each moment of life G-d provides is truly a miracle. Yet, even miracles can seem routine.

The Midrash notes that Avraham Avinu was not told that his descendants would miraculously subsist on *manna* in the desert. Had Avraham been given this information, it would have been passed down through the generations and been known by the Jews who were redeemed from Egypt. When the *manna* finally came to fruition, it would have failed to impress them. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that the lesson in this Midrash is that even an open miracle loses its impact if it is not perceived as something new and unanticipated.

It is because of this trait of human nature that the *Shema*, specifies 'And these words that I commanded you **today** shall be upon your heart.' 'Today,' Rashi explains, means that the words of the Torah "should not be in your eyes like an old law to which a person does not attach importance; rather, they should be like a new one to which everybody runs."

Albert Einstein once said: "There are two ways of looking at the world — either you see nothing as a miracle or you see everything as a miracle." The prayer exhorts us to choose the latter. שירו לה' כל הארץ, בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו, "Sing to Hashem, everyone on earth, announce His salvation daily" because every moment is a miracle.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

New and Improved

It's a day before the boy's thirteenth birthday. His father comes home bearing a package. Finally! They came! His tefillin have been completed. He opens the package and reverently removes the smooth, polished leather boxes from their case. The next morning, with his father by his side, he carefully dons his new tefillin, feeling as if he were already standing



upon a whole new, higher rung of spiritual life. He knows this tefillah has to be different. He isn't a little boy any more. Now it is 'for real.'

It is, of course, equally real two years later. However, the inspiration emanating from those sacred boxes has long ceased to move him. He can put

the tefillin on as mechanically as he can don his socks. The newness is gone, and with it the tefillin's power to move him.

Newness has a unique power to excite one's heart, and that excitement provides the power for higher levels of achievement. In fact, Rav Dessler explains: "The root of enjoyment by mankind is built on newness and change.... The greater the change or newness the greater is one's satisfaction and pleasure."

Try This!

Have you ever been so pleasantly surprised that you've wanted to sing and shout out loud? It might have been on receiving some wonderful news, or upon waking up to a long-awaited day, or on the arrival of a beloved visitor. Capture that pure excitement, and this week, inject it into the words "שירו לה'."

Did You Know

Out Of Order

Those who daven *nusach sefard* begin Pesukei D'zimrah with הודו. If one forgot or omitted הודו in its proper order, he may recite it after ברוך שאמר (Piskei Teshuvos 51:2).