

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

Creation Sings Praise

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

The heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice and say among the nations, 'Hashem has reigned!' The sea and its fullness will roar, the field and everything in it will exult.... Give thanks to Hashem for he is good, for His kindness endures forever.

ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ. ויאמרו בגוים ה' מלך: ידעם הים ומלאו. יעליץ השדה וכל אשר בו.... הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו:

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the meaning

Eitz Yosef explains that the letters of the word "ישמחו" are the same as those in the word "משיח". When משיח comes, the heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.

Furthermore, at that time ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ, all of creation will recognize that Hashem is the Master of all. The first letter of each word in the phrase spells out Hashem's name, י, ה, ו, and ה (see "Word to the Wise," Newsletter 35) which refers to the fact that at that time Hashem's honor will be complete.



THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

A World Filled With G-d

G-d is praised by all His creations.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Our Place in Creation

As we mentioned in "Did You Know" ('Praying With Passion,' Newsletter 28), the fourteen verses beginning with "שירו לה'" until "ויאמרו כל העם אמן והלל לה'" refer to the song of gratitude that everyone will sing in Messianic times when all of G-d's creations will rejoice. Yet, in a less patent way, this phenomenon also exists in today's world.

The "songs" sung by each creation are conveyed in the mysterious and cryptic verses of *Perek Shirah*, the "Chapter of Song," which is cited in the Yalkut Shimoni. It includes verses "sung" respectively by 85 components of creation beginning with the celestial and ending with the insects. Each creature is ascribed with Biblical or rabbinic verses singing God's praises.

Mabit (Bais Elokim, Page 578) states that the concept behind *Perek Shirah* is that all the creations in the natural world have their purpose. By carrying out their assigned tasks according to G-d's will, they are in effect singing His praises.

For man, the image of all these creations praising their Master by doing His will serves as an example and an inspiration, for we

too were created with a Divinely ordained purpose. Mabit explains:

"Man must think as if each of the creations in *Perek Shirah* is saying to him, 'I was created by G-d to serve you [man], for your benefit and for no other purpose. Therefore, you [man] fulfill the purpose for which you were created, which is to serve G-d.' That is what Chazal wanted when they put together *Perek Shirah*."

Rav Chaim Kanievsky (*Braisah Perek Shirah*, Page 4 (found at end of *Braisah D'Meleches HaMishkan*)) explains the purpose of *Perek Shirah* as follows: "By observing the nature of these creations, man can learn to praise G-d. And that is their [the creations'] song, that the greatness of Hakadosh Boruch Hu is recognizable through their actions."

The greatest way to open channels to Heaven is to show G-d our appreciation for all the bounty He has provided for us in this magnificent world. Our greatest growth, spiritual and emotional, comes from attuning our eyes to the goodness and *chessed* in the world, all created for our benefit.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Singing Man's Song

Every morning at 6:30, in cold and heat, sun and rain, Dovid was out jogging along a track that circled a lake. It was November, and the sun was just beginning to rise as he set out past the bare trees and steel-gray water. His mind flashed on the scene just two months ago, when there was still a lush canopy of green leaves stretching over the track. Now, the branches



were visible, and each one, at its very tip, was turned toward heaven. "The trees of the forest will sing with joy," he thought.

He heard the call of the geese and saw the seagulls circling overhead. On the ground, the remainders of the dead, brown leaves were decaying,

making a soft padding for his pounding feet and a new layer of soil of next spring's growth. In their own way, Dovid thought, all these creations were turned toward heaven too. He saw himself as one more species, thinking his human thoughts and carrying his human feelings in his heart as he played his role in this awesome creation. And he, along with all the species around him, acknowledges the Source of it all.

Try This!

Form a mental snapshot of an awesome natural scene – the night sky, a beautiful sunset, a garden, the seashore – whatever stirs you. Think of how every element of that scene is doing G-d's will; imagine you can actually hear a beautiful song emanating from that scene. For this week, carry this image with you when you say the words, "ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ."

Did You Know

► *Up Before Dawn*

Often times, people who must travel to another city must begin their day before dawn to catch an early flight or train. There are different zemanim, times when one may don talis and tefillin and when different parts of Shacharis may be recited (i.e. the optimal time to recite Shemoneh Esrei is netz hachamah, sunrise). With regard to Pesukei D'zimrah, Beur Halacha (Siman 58, s.v. z'man K'rias shema) rules that if need be, one may recite it before dawn. However, see Kaf HaChaim (Siman 89:7).