

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

Encounter With Holiness

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Exalt Hashem, our G-d, and bow at His footstool; ... **and bow at His holy mountain;** for holy is Hashem, our G-d....

רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחו
להדם רגליו... והשתחו
להר קדשו. כי קדוש
ה' אלקינו....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

The term, להדם רגליו, His [Hashem's] footstool, refers to the place on earth where Hashem rests His glory as we find in *Yeshaya* (66:1): "So says Hashem: "The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool." Although His footstool—the Bais HaMikdash—has been destroyed, Hashem heeds our prayers at הר קדשו, *His holy mountain* as its holiness remains (*Eitz Yosef*).



THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Forever Holy

The original holiness at the site of the Bais HaMikdash remains forever.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Directing Our Hearts

Most Jews in the Western world know that they are to face East when they pray. They also know that the reason for that orientation is the Shulchan Aruch's (*Siman 94, Se'if 1*) statement that those praying outside the Land of Israel should face Israel; those within Israel should face Jerusalem; those within Jerusalem should face the site of the Bais HaMikdash and try also to face the direction of the Holy of Holies.

These detailed directions only address one's physical orientation in prayer. The Mishneh Berurah (*Siman 94, Se'if Katan 3*) explains that a person should direct himself *mentally* toward these places, imagining vividly that he is standing in the *Beis HaMikdash*, in the Holy of Holies, before the Cover of the Ark (*Ibid, Se'if Katan 7*).

Through this mental exercise, a person directs his prayers to the place on earth from which prayers ascend. This is derived from King

Solomon's prayer (*Melachim I, 8:44*) regarding the *Beis HaMikdash*: "And they direct their prayers to Hashem by way of ...the Temple that I have built for Your Name." To these words, Hashem responded (*Ibid, 9:3*): "I have heard your prayer and supplication ... I have sanctified this Temple that you have built, to place my Name there forever, and My eyes and My heart shall be there all the days."

To this day, Hashem's promise holds true. The *Beis HaMikdash* remains the "clearinghouse" of Jewish prayer, even though the Jewish people are dispersed throughout the world. Even after the Holy Temple has been destroyed, the site has retained the power to ensure that prayers are accepted, as the Rambam (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 6:16*) teaches, "... in the *Beis HaMikdash* and Jerusalem, the original holiness remains forever ... because ... of the *Shechinah* that never ceases."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

A Live Connection

Imagine that in Jerusalem, on the Temple Mount, over the exact spot where the Holy of Holies stood, there is a large, glowing beam of light that emanates from that spot, shining through the upper reaches of the atmosphere and then out of sight. It is a portal to the Heavenly spheres – a direct connection that transports prayers up to Heaven. The



beam of light is impossible to gaze upon, because its light is purer and more brilliant than 1,000 suns.

From each Jewish soul in the world radiates a stream of light, connecting his soul with this center. The connection remains accessible to him wherever he goes to pray; he need only

imagine in his heart and mind that he is facing the Holy of Holies, to send his words of prayer streaming along his personal connection, straight to the portal and upward to Heaven.

Imagining in his heart and mind that he is facing the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem enables a person to enter into a state of **true awe and trembling**. This is the introduction to praying, since this enables *tefillah* to be heard.

Try This!

If you have ever had the privilege of praying at the Kosel, or in the company of an esteemed Rebbe or Rosh Yeshiva, or with a particularly elevated, fervent minyan, you have experienced the feeling of being in the presence of holiness. Recall this feeling when you say the words, "השתחו להר קדשו" and focus on the immense holiness of coming before Hashem to daven.

Did You Know

► **Connected to Karbanos**

According to *Nusach Sefard*, הודו is recited prior to Boruch She'amar. Seder Olam (Chapter 14) explains that the first fifteen verses of Hodu (הודו לה' קראו בשמו - אל תגעו במשיחי ובנביאי אל תרעו) were recited when the morning *Korban Tamid* was brought. The fourteen verses that follow (שירו לה' כל הארץ - ויאמרו כל העם אמן והלל לה') were recited when the afternoon *Korban Tamid* was brought. Therefore, the Siddur *Tzlusa D'Avrohom* explains that הודו has a greater connection to the karbanos section of Shacharis. Accordingly, *Nusach Sefard* and *Nusach Ari (Arizal)* place "Hodu" before "Boruch She'amar" to place it closer to the *Karbanos* (after *Birchos HaShachar*).