

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU

The Power of Holiness

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Render might to G-d, Whose majesty hovers over Israel and Whose might is in the clouds. **You are awesome, O G-d, from your sanctuaries**, O G-d of Israel—it is He Who grants might and power to the people, blessed is G-d.

תנו עז לאלקים על ישראל
גאותו ועזו בשחקים:
נורא אלקים
ממקדשיך הוא נותן עז
ותעצמות לעם. ברוך אלקים:

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Chazal (see *Yechezkiel* 11:16) tell us that because we no longer merit having the Holy Temple, our *shuls* serve as a *Mikdash Me'at*, a small Sanctuary, and our prayers substitute for the offerings. The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Siman 151, Se'if Katan 1*) explains that since a *shul* is called *Mikdash Me'at*, the exhortation “and My Sanctuary shall you revere,” (*Vayikra*, 19:30) applies to every synagogue, each of which has the halachic status of *kedushah*. So holy are these way stations of exile scattered throughout the world that they will be transported to Jerusalem when *Mashiach* arrives (*Megillah* 29a).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Powerful Presence

Hashem's holiness is powerful in our sanctuaries.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Always Near

A fundamental question arises: If Hashem is Omnipresent, why do we single out the *Shechinah's* Presence in certain holy places -- such as a shul during *tefillah*? What is the significance of the *Shechinah's* Presence in these sacred places if Hashem is everywhere and anywhere?

The *Aruch L'Ner* (*She'eilos U'Teshuvos Binyan Tzion, Siman 3*) explains the concept as follows: the *Shechinah*, which we refer to as residing in various holy places, is not the actual entity of the Divine Presence, but an emanation of it. The Torah calls the *Shechinah* “the Glory of Hashem,” and specifies locations in the earthly sphere where the *Shechinah's* Presence is apparent (*Shemos* 24:16; 40:34): “And the Glory

of Hashem dwelled on Mount Sinai” and “the Glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan.”

Rav Chaim Friedlander, *Mashgiach* of the *Ponevezh Yeshivah* (*Sifsei Chaim, Pirkei Emunah V'Hashgachah*, Volume 1, page 170, citing the *Ramchal*) explains that “*Shechinah*” — which refers to “that which resides in your midst” — represents *our* relationship with Hashem. Thus, although His Presence is indeed constant, *our* awareness of the *Shechinah* is stronger when we are inspired by an occasion or a place of holiness. To the extent that we seek the *Shechinah*, we find It.

Therefore, Eitz Yosef explains that even though the actual entity of the Divine Presence rests above, *נורא אלקים ממקדשיך*, the emanation of it is awesome here in our own shuls.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Where the Shechinah Shines Bright

The sun shines down upon the earth. One person, living near the equator, stands outside in broad daylight and feels intense heat beating down on his head. He travels a few hundred miles north, and the rays seem weaker. He steps into the shade of a tree and the sun's rays are obstructed. Dusk sets in and the sun disappears below the horizon. Yet out there in space, 93 million miles



away, the sun is still emanating its constant blaze of light and heat, utterly unabated. To the person experiencing the sun's heat, it seems to change from time to time and place to place, but it is not really the sun that is changing.

The same idea applies to the *Shechinah*; the Glory of Hashem resides in the

distant Heavens, while the *Shechinah's* Presence on earth refers to the force of holiness and sacredness that emanates from the Glory of Hashem so far away. This explains how different degrees of *Shechinah* rest in diverse holy places. The *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh* (*Bereishis* 46:4) comments that the levels of *kedushah* emanating from the *Shechinah* vary according to the holiness of people present, the activities in which they are engaged, and the place they are occupying.

Try This!

▶ The next time you walk into your shul or beis medrash, imagine that the room is ablaze with brilliant light, and that light is the *Shechinah*, shining, its holiness for everyone to see.

Did You Know

▶ *Special Sanctity*

Even after the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed, the Mount upon which the Bais HaMikdash stood still retains its special sanctity. Therefore, today, while we are all in a state of *tumah*, ritual defilement, it is strictly forbidden for a Jew to enter the Temple Mount (*Mishneh Berurah Siman 561, Se'if Katan 5*).