



Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME ISSUE NO. 51

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: **BARUCH SHE'AMAR** *Hashem's Compassion*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו...הקל
אב הרחמן המהלל בפה
עמו. משבח ומפאר ... ובשירי
דוד עבדך...

Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d...the G-d, **the merciful Father**, Who is lauded by the mouth of His people, praised and glorified ...and through the psalms of David your servant.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Power and Love

Even though Hashem is *Kel*, a word connoting His power – He is *Av HaRachamon* – the Merciful Father who treats His imperfect children with compassion.

Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

G-d's Boundless Care

“You know, I don't think the children have been doing their chores very well this week,” says the father. “And little Moishy only got a C on his Mishnayos test, and the twins have been fighting with each other non-stop. I don't think I'll buy food for them this week.”

This is a ridiculous scenario, to be sure.

While a worker has to perform his tasks to earn his keep, and a tenant has to pay rent to keep the roof over his head, a child receives his sustenance simply because of his father's love. In precisely this way, a Jew can rely on Hashem's constant care, even when he has no merit to show for himself.

The idea of Hashem as the “loving Father” is, in fact, a central theme of the entire period encompassing the *Yomim Noraim* - a time of judgment. In the *selichos* recited during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, one pleads to Hashem, “as a father has mercy on his children, so, Hashem may You have mercy on us.” On *Rosh Hashanah* blowing the shofar during the *Musaf Shmoneh Esrei*, one recites “Today all creatures of the world stand in judgment—whether as children [of Hashem] or as servants. If as children,

be merciful with us as the mercy of a father for his children.”

Ironically, the Father-child connection one builds with Hashem enhances, rather than diminishes, the sense of His Kingship and power, for in going beyond the bounds of judgment and showing mercy, Hashem illustrates that there are no limits to His power. As a wise King, He must rule firmly over his subjects, but as a loving Father, He bears no restraints in showing boundless benevolence to His son.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Truly Generous Gift

The cashier at the clothing store was very strict about the store's policies. No returns
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Word to the Wise: Meaning within the word

Abudraham asks why is it necessary to say the word הקל, *the G-d*, if we just said אלקינו, *our G-d*? Therefore, Abudraham omits the word הקל from his version of the prayer. However, Darchei Moshe and Rambam include the word הקל in prayer. The Gra (Shemos34:6) explains that the word קל refers to Hashem's power. In our context, הקל recognizes Hashem's power to hold back “His anger” and to be all merciful (LaBoker Rinah, Page 114).



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BARUCH SHE'AMAR Hashem's Compassion

(VISUALIZE cont.)

were permitted after 30 days, no matter what. "But I've been in the hospital since the day after I bought this coat!" Miriam pleaded. "It's very expensive, it's never been worn and it doesn't fit my son. I want my money back!"

The cashier wouldn't budge. "I don't have the authority to take this back," she kept repeating with her best "customer service" tone of voice. Finally, Miriam asked "Is the owner here? I would like to speak to her."

When the owner heard Miriam's story, she did not hesitate for a moment to take back the merchandise and return the purchase price. After all, it was her store. She made the rules, so certainly she could make an exception.

Likewise, Hashem's ability to treat His children with compassion stems from His power. Not only did He create the world with rules of operation; but also, He can bend those rules by integrating compassion in His judgment. It is His will, not the rules He created, which dominates. Therefore, He can do whatever is necessary to express His love for us.

Try This!

► Imagine a father who warns his little boy not to climb on a rickety kitchen chair. The child disobeys, and is soon lying in a heap on the floor, wailing in pain with his leg twisted underneath him. What is the father's first response? Certainly, it's not to chastise the child for disobeying. Rather, he runs to the boy and kneels down to comfort him, even though his pain has come through his own fault. Imagine that father, filled with love and pity for his child, when you say the words "אב הרחמן."

Did You Know

► Stand Up and Say Thanks!

Because ברוך שאמר is a blessing of thanks to Hashem, it is customary to stand while reciting it (Nefesh Chaya, Siman 51, Orach Chaim, Siman 51:7). Mishneh Berurah (Siman 51:1) states that it is correct practice to say the blessing standing even when one prays individually. Since standing is only a custom (Beur HaGra, 51:12) one who is sick or frail need not stand (Sheilos U'Teshuvos Mishpetei Tzedek, Siman 70).