

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ADON OLAM

Secure With G-d

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Master of the universe ...He is my G-d, my living Redeemer...

אדון עולם אשד
מלך... והוא קלי וחי
גואלי...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the meaning



The first person to refer to Hashem as “Adon” - “Master” - was Avrohom Avinu. By using the term “Adon” at the outset of our morning prayers, we acknowledge Avrohom Avinu who established the Tefillah of Shacharis - and that we are following in his footsteps. We additionally arouse our zechus avos (the merit of the Patriarchs), for no one in the first 1,700 years of the world’s existence referred to Hashem as Adon until our forefather did.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

All Powerful, All Ours

Hashem, the sole force in the universe, is also our **personal G-d**.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Only Ally You Need

אדון עולם consists of ten lines: the first six express **the Jewish concept of G-d – His power, His oneness and His eternity**. In these lines, we forge our connection to the image of a Master, in whose “hands” every aspect of Creation rests. He is an unfathomable Master unlike anything our minds can comprehend, existing outside time and physical description.

The last four lines, beginning with **והוא קלי וחי...גואלי...** teach us that **this mighty and eternal Master is our own personal Master as well**, who cares for us, especially in times of trouble and answers us when we call, as the last line of the hymn, taken from Tehillim, states, “Hashem is with me, I shall not fear.”

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch clarifies the subtle difference between G-d’s identity as a “Master” and that of a “King.” The relationship between a King and his subject is a very distant one, in which the King may be completely unaware of the subject’s identity or his needs. The relationship between a master and his servant

is a personal one. The master knows his servant very well, and takes responsibility for meeting his needs. This personalized care is all the more beneficent because of the incalculable love that our Master has for the Jewish people.

Yet, our image of G-d as the all-powerful Master of the Universe inspires fear as well. Overpowering might is frightening. If you were to encounter a large, angry grizzly bear on a walk through the woods, you would no doubt be gripped by terror and your instinct would be to run as far and fast as you could. However, when that all-powerful force is on your side, loving you and fighting your battles for you, suddenly His might is no longer a threat, but rather, the very source of your own security.

These are the two aspects of G-d that Adon Olam weaves together for us as we begin each day. The combination imparts the utmost optimism, reminding us that the world, as well as our individual lives, is in G-d’s mighty “hands.”

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Seeking Strong Arms

At 11 o’clock at night, a baby wakes up in her cradle and begins crying for attention. Her seven-year-old sister, with whom she shares a room, is the first to respond to the increasingly frantic cries. The little girl gets out of bed, reaches into the cradle and manages to rescue the baby from her misery. However, the baby senses the tenuousness of



her sister’s grasp. She squirms and cries still more.

Meanwhile, in the dining room, the children’s father is finishing some Torah learning. He hears the baby’s cries and goes upstairs to tend to her. On entering the room, he sees his well-meaning daughter

hanging onto the baby as the baby’s chubby little legs kick and her arms flail about. In moments, the baby is quiet, held snugly in her father’s strong arms, secure against his broad shoulder.

Our Master’s all-pervasive might, his mastery of the universe, is our greatest – and only – security. Like the child snug in her father’s arms, we recognize Hashem as our strength and our protection.

Try This!

Think of someone in your present or past who made you feel secure and protected. Imagine a fearful situation in which that person arrives on the scene and takes matters in hand. Pay attention to the sense of relief and trust you feel, and this week, when saying the word “Adon,” in “Adon Olam,” bring this image and feeling to mind.

Did You Know

Objections Overruled

One should be careful to have kavannah while reciting אדון עולם. The *Mateh Moshe* states that *Rebbe Yehudah HaChasid* and *Rav Hai Gaon* “guarantee” that when one has *kavannah* while reciting the beginning of Adon Olam, the prosecuting angel is unable to prevent his prayers from being heard.