



Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME ISSUE NO. 76

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: הללוי-ה כי טוב זמרה *The Jewish People's Unique Role*

...מגיד דבריו ליעקב, חקיו ומשפטיו לישראל. לא עשה כן לכל גוי, ומשפטים בל ידעום, הללו-יה.

Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

...He relates His Word to Yaakov, His statutes and judgments to Israel. He did not do so for any other nation, such judgments—they do not know them, Hallele-kah.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Gift for Yaakov

Hashem has given the Jewish people the unparalleled gift of "His word," enabling us to perform His will in this world.

Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

A Big Job

G-d relates His Word to Yaakov... לא עשה כן לכל גוי. He did not do so for any other nation.

A Jew has 613 mitzvos and the Gentile world has only seven. Hashem structures the Jewish people's lives so much more intricately, directing our daily lives with so much more detail. Even one transgression

of these 613 commandments casts a great shadow on a Jew's soul, and yet a Gentile can transgress all but seven and still be considered righteous. Why are we held to so high a standard?

The answer might be derived from considering the impact of a grain of sand blown by the wind. If it lands on your hand, you might not even feel it. If it would land in your eye, however, you would be in agony. A hand and an

eye are both essential, but they have different strengths and sensitivities. The same applies to a Jew and a non-Jew. While both are Hashem's beloved creations, they have different strengths and sensitivities to suit their different tasks in the world. (Adapted from Lazar Beams: *No Easy Way Out*, Rabbi Lazer Brody, September 2, 2008)

Hashem has given the Jewish people a (cont. P. 2)

Word to the Wise: Meaning within the word

G-d relates His word, the Torah, to Yaakov—the entire Jewish people. It should have said הגיד, in the past tense, referring to when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. *Sfas Emes* explains that the Torah is transmitted continuously through Torah study. Each and every Jew experiences the Torah's impact according to the degree and measure in which he learns. That is why, even though the Torah was given thousands of years ago, the verse says מגיד, G-d relates His word, in the present tense (*Sfas Emes, Ha'azinu*).

As an infant, Yehoshua ben Chananya's mother would wheel him in a stroller to the study hall every day so that his ears would absorb the Torah being learned there. Eventually, he emerged as one of the greatest Talmudic Sages of his generation. (Jerusalem Talmud, Yevamos 1:6)

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya's mother understood that growing spiritually does not depend on an occasional powerful lesson. Rather it is constant and consistent exposure that plants the seeds of Torah within the person.



Inside This Issue: Focus on הללוי-ה כי טוב זמרה

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(INSIGHT cont.)

sensitive position in a vast, universal operation, trusting us to trust His leadership and do our parts to the best of our human ability, even if we do not always understand how a mitzvah contributes to the overall plan. We need only know that we are working within Hashem's complex universe, and that any deviation from His instructions—our Torah -- damages the entire system.

Our deeds affect our individual fates, yet, we are not acting only as individuals. A Jew's hands are on the controls of the entire universe. As Rav Yisrael Salanter once said, that time wasted from Torah study in the holy city of Kovno causes Shabbos desecration in the secularized homes of France.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Working on Trust

A 17-year veteran in Israel's Dimona nuclear plant was asked if he knew whether Israel has an atom bomb. He answered, "Believe me, I don't have a clue what I am working on. I sit in a cubicle with a window. They give me an object through the window with instructions on what to do with it. It could be for a bomb, it could be for a table. I have no way of knowing. But in the 17 years I have worked here, I have never been bored, because I know that whatever we are working on is of top priority."

Similar to this worker, who knows only that he is a vital cog in a complex system,

we cannot always know the purpose of the mitzvos Hashem puts before us to do. Even if we are given some reason, the real spiritual impact of our mitzvos is impossible for us to fathom. We know only that Hashem has given us a mission and directions on how to fulfill it. That the end result is "top priority" for the functioning of the entire universe is enough to keep us enthusiastically engaged.

Try This!

► Imagine the globe, and on one spot upon it, a power plant. This plant receives a constant flow of energy from Heaven, which then flows out to sustain the world. Now imagine that the Jewish people are workers at this power plant. G-d's word, which he gives to us, מגיד דבריו ליעקב, provides our instructions for working at the plant. Use this image to strengthen your internal connection to the tefillah when you recite these words.

Did You Know

► The Priority of K'rias Shema

A person should not interrupt in between reciting Baruch She'Amar and Yishtabach. However, if he is concerned that the time for K'rias Shema will pass before he has the opportunity to recite it in the davening, and he forgot to say it before the blessing Baruch She'Amar, he is permitted to make an interruption during Pesukei D'Zimrah to recite it. (Mishneh Berurah 51:10)