

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ברכת קריאת שמע

Renewing the World Each Day

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

He Who illuminates the earth and those who dwell upon it, with compassion; and in His goodness renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation...

המאיר לארץ ולדרים עליה
ברחמים, ובטובו מחדש
בכל יום תמיד מעשה
בראשית...
בס"ד

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



רחמים – compassion – is seen in the fact that Hashem positioned the sun exactly 93 million miles away from the earth, the precise distance that makes the world inhabitable by Man. Were the sun any further away, we would freeze; any closer and we would fry. Besides illuminating the earth with compassion, the entire existence of creation is with compassion. If the earth did not revolve, one half of the

surface would be as dry as a desert. If the axis weren't tilted, there would be no seasons and the fields would have no rest. If the atmosphere were any thicker, the sun would not be able to evaporate the waters of the seas and there would be no clouds and rain. If gravity were any weaker, rain would not fall from the sky, if it were any stronger, we wouldn't be able to get out of bed. In other words, life on this earth continues to exist because of Hashem's compassion.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

The Gift of Renewal

Hashem, each day, renews his gifts to us.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Today's Delivery

The tefillah מעשה מחדש בכל יום תמיד מעשה מחדש, בראשית, "in His goodness [Hashem] renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation," reminds us that each day of life is an act of goodness by Hashem. We tend to take the daily beauty of life for granted, i.e. the magnificence of a sunset or sunrise. How do we overcome the tendency for the daily miracles of life to become stale? The tefillah provides the solution ובטובו מחדש, in His goodness Hashem renews daily.

Newness has a unique power to excite one's heart, and that excitement provides the power for higher levels of achievement. In fact, Rav Dessler (*Sefer HaZikaron L'Baal Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Volume 2, page 13) explains: "The root of enjoyment by mankind is built on newness and change.... The greater the change or newness the greater is one's satisfaction and pleasure."

The Gemara (*Yoma 29a*) reveals this concept through a statement that seems to contradict common sense. It states that to re-learn something that has already been studied and forgotten is more difficult than to learn something new. The *Chochmah U'Mussar* (Volume 2, *Maamar 219*) explains that this is because a person is naturally motivated by the prospect of learning a new lesson or skill. Re-learning old lessons, on the other hand, lacks the thrill of newness. It is an act of pure self-discipline, which requires tremendous effort.

Thus, the answer to remaining fresh and enthusiastic in our connection to Hashem is to recognize each day, anew, the gifts He gives us. Each morning in which we awaken from our sleep alive and well, surrounded by our loved ones, endowed with our physical and intellectual abilities and our possessions, is a brand new gift.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

A Lifetime of Monday Mornings

A person is born into a world and begins the hard work of growing, learning and developing his skills. The first 24 hours are exhausting, but in this imaginary world, the sun remains high in the sky and the work does not cease. The day goes on for another 24 hours, and then another 24 hours, and on and on and on, never ending. The person never



has the chance to "call it a day." When the going gets tough, he never has the comfort of thinking, "tomorrow will be better," because there is no 'tomorrow' – just one, long, interminable 'today.'

The rising and setting of the sun, which produces the waking and sleeping cycle

and the division of our lives into individual packages of time, is in fact a key to our sense of hopefulness. Because there is an end to each day and a new day ahead, we can always hope that tomorrow, we'll feel better, tomorrow, we'll have greater success in our endeavors, tomorrow we will start fresh. Creating a fresh and new world daily of day and night is one of Hashem's greatest kindnesses to His creation.

Try This!

▶ If you don't already have your alarm clock set for a pre-dawn hour, set it for sunrise, just for one day. If you're already an early bird, take a moment from your morning to do the following: step outdoors and look at the sun peeking over the horizon. See it as a golden, glowing, precious gift, wrapped in the stunning hues of dawn, being delivered right then and there from Heaven to you. Think of this image when you say יום מחדש בכל יום עליה ברחמים, ובטובו מחדש בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית, and think about how the constant renewal and freshness of each new day is an act of goodness by Hashem.

Did You Know

▶ **Word by Word**

There are phrases in tefillah in which, if two consecutive words are slurred together, a different word with an incorrect meaning is formed. For example, if the words אור and יוצר are said together it sounds as if one is saying יוצור. Therefore, one should be careful to pause briefly between the words אור and יוצר (*Mishneh Berurah Siman 59:1*).

Similarly, one must stop between the word וממליכים (the last word recited at the end of התברך) and the word את (the first word recited in שם) in the first blessing before Shema. If these two words are read quickly they sound like "וממליכימת" – "declare the kingship of a dead person." In order to clearly show that such a belief is a complete abomination, we stop between these two words (*Chasam Sofer, Siman 59*).