



Praying WITH Passion

GIVING MORE MEANING TO OUR TEFILLAH - ONE WEEK AT A TIME ISSUE NO. 34

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: **PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU** *Hashem's Delight*

**עז וחדוה במקומו: הבו לה'
משפחות עמים.... אף תכון תבל
בל תמוט:**

Meaning:

The simple translation of the prayer

Might and delight are in His place.
Render to Hashem, O families of the peoples, ... Indeed, the world is fixed so that it cannot falter.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

The Value of Struggle

Hashem treasures the strength His people display in the face of struggle.

Insight:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Receiving Credit for Our Effort

Meshech Chochmah (Bereishis 50:10) explains that when the Jewish people are in exile, subjugated by the nations of the world, Hashem "cries" since His people cannot completely fulfill the mitzvos as they would when they are at peace. However, when Hashem sees that despite the difficulties, the Jewish people exert their might to perform His mitzvos, notwithstanding that they may not be performed in their entirety, Hashem is delighted and offers great reward, as the

Mishna (Avos 5:23) states ...**"according to the struggle is the reward."**

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

A Pure Connection to G-d

The following is adapted from a true story related by Lady Amelie Jacobovits, the widow of the late Rav Lord Immanuel Jacobovits, Chief Rabbi Emeritus of the British Commonwealth.

In 1940, when the Nazis began bombing Paris, my mother fled with us — her four children — on the last train before the main onslaught. It was the eve of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot.

The mass of people on that train — a tornado of humanity — repeatedly wrenched us from one another. Months later, on another leg of our desperate

journey I lost track of my family altogether and began to wander from village to village. Lone children all over were doing the same.

One night just before dawn, I could go no further. I knocked on the farmhouse door of what turned out to be a kind, courageous gentile farmer. He took me to his cellar where I found another little girl. Eventually two boys and another girl joined us. None of us admitted we were Jewish for several days.

It was a dire winter. Each morning, a few rays of light would poke their way into the cellar through two windows high on the wall. Every day, through those windows, the farmer lowered a net with five morsels of food and a bucket for our natural needs.

One day, peering through the windows,

Word to the Wise: Meaning within the meaning

Malbim (Nechemiah 8:10) explains the connection between חדוה "joy" and עז "strength" based on the verse (*Ibid.*) which states, "Do not be sad, for [your] enjoyment of Hashem is your strength." One has strength in his heart because his bond with Hashem fills him with joy, as Tehillim (84:6) states, **"Happy is the man whose strength is in You."**



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 PESUKEI D'ZIMRAH: HODU *Hashem's Delight*

one of us saw blades of grass penetrating the frozen terrain. We concluded that, if the weather was indeed changing with spring on its way, **maybe we were nearing Passover**. Each of us children came from a different range of Jewish commitment, yet we shared a strong desire to do something to celebrate what we sensed was the upcoming Passover holiday.

When the farmer appeared with our food the next morning, we asked if he would lower in tomorrow's basket a small amount of flour, a bottle of water, a newspaper and a match. Two days later we received a small bottle of water, but we had to wait several days for the flour. The entire region was drained of provisions.

A day later, a newspaper came through — and then a match. We waited a few more days. We saw a full day of sunshine and blue skies, and we decided that, in order to

cultivate a festive spirit, we would switch clothing with one another and wear them as if new. So we changed clothes; the two boys trading and the girls exchanging dresses. Before evening we baked our matzah, though we hadn't a clue how to do so. We poured water into the flour and held the dough in our bare hands over the burning newspaper on the floor. We produced something which resembled matzah and, whatever it was provided enough for the five of us.

That night we celebrated Passover. One of us recalled the kiddush. Another remembered the Four Questions. We told a few stories of the Exodus that we remembered having heard from our parents. Finally, we managed to reconstruct "Chad Gadya," the song which typically ends the evening.

We had a Passover to remember. With no festive food, no silver candlesticks and no

wine — **with only our simple desire to connect with G-d — we had a holiday more profound than any we have known since**. I thank G-d for allowing me to live to be able to tell my children and grandchildren about it. Even more, I feel obligated to the younger generations of my family, who never experienced what I did, to pass on the clarity it gave me — the vivid appreciation of G-d's presence in my life, of His constant blessings, wonders and teachings...**and of His commitment to the survival of the Jewish people**.

(Aish.com, March 17, 2004. *This article originally appeared in The Jewish Women's Journal of the Jewish Renaissance Center, a learning institute for women located in New York City.*)

Try This!

- ▶ Think of a mitzvah that does not come easily to you – one you must do frequently. Imagine that every time you do this mitzvah, you become a little stronger in it. Picture the mitzvah as a weight-lifting exercise; each time you do the mitzvah, your spiritual muscle gets stronger and the weight becomes easier to lift.

Did You Know

▶ No Time for a Talk

Unless there is an emergency, **it is forbidden to talk during Pesukei d'Zimrah** (starting with *Baruch She'amar*), as this would constitute an interruption between the blessing of *Baruch She'amar* and the blessing of *Yishtabach* (Siman, 51, Se'if 4, Mishnah Berurah, Se'if Katan 6 and 7). Between *Birchos ha-Shachar* and *Baruch She'amar* there is no specific prohibition against talking. However, the *Mishnah Berurah* (Siman 37, Se'if Katan 7) states that one who is wearing Tefillin should

be scrupulous to refrain from idle talk at all times.