

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

BARUCH SHE'AMAR

Created With Words

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Blessed is He Who spoke, and the world came into being—blessed is He. Blessed is He Who speaks and does; blessed is He Who decrees and fulfills... blessed is He Who has mercy on the creatures....

ברוך שאמר והיה העולם, ברוך הוא. ברוך אומר ועושה. ברוך גוזר ומקים... ברוך מרחם על הבריות....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



In the context of the opening ברוך שאמר והיה העולם, “Blessed is He Who spoke, and the world came into being,” it appears redundant to repeat ברוך הוא, “blessed is He.” Tz'lusa D'Avrohom explains that ברוך הוא is an abbreviated way of identifying the “He” as “Hakadosh Boruch Hu”. Therefore, by saying the words ברוך שאמר והיה העולם, we are declaring that it is Hashem, “Who spoke and the world came into being,” who is blessed. Therefore, ברוך שאמר והיה העולם ברוך הוא, is one thought.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

The Power of Hashem's Word

Hashem is the Creator Who brought all of creation into being with nothing more than His word.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Breathing Spirituality Into the World

The Torah (Bereishis 2:4) teaches several profound lessons about how the world was created: “These are the products of the heaven and the earth when they were created.” The word בְּהִבְרָא, meaning “when they were created,” can be divided into two words – בִּה”ה בְּרָאָם, meaning that G-d created these products with the letter “ה”. The sound of the letter “ה” requires a mere exhalation of one’s breath, an effortless act with no movement of the lips, tongue, or mouth (Tanchuma Bereishis 16). This symbolizes the effortless creation of the world out of nothing—as the verse (Tehillim 33:6) testifies, “By the Word of Hashem the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their hosts.”

The Gemara (Menachos 29b) explains that G-d

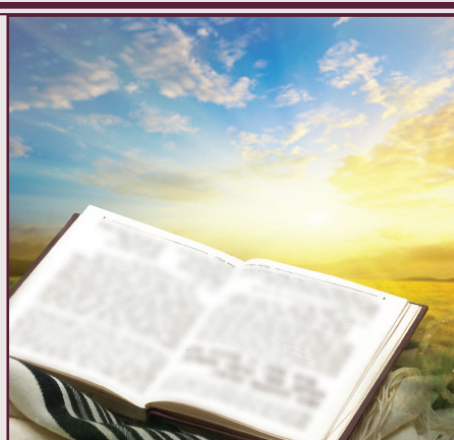
used the letters “י” and “ה” to create the World to Come and this world, respectively. The “ה” which indicates creation of This World, is also found in the Divine Name when the letters “י” and “ה” are combined. Thus, G-d did not create This World as a purely physical world, but also imbued it with the Divine Spirit. Maharal teaches that the letter “ה” consists of a “ד” and a “י”. The vertical and horizontal lines of the “ד” represent the physical world that is measured in its expanding width and height. The “י” signifies spirituality, the World to Come. Thus, the “ה” teaches us to instill spirituality into our physical lives in this world. (The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Michael L. Munk, Artscroll, Page 85)

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Power of Our Words

Hashem created the universe with His words – a seemingly impossible feat. However, even in the world of human beings, words have the power to change reality or even to create new realities. When a person signs a contract, the words within it redefine his world. Suddenly, he owes a bank \$200,000. Suddenly, the house on the



corner of the block belongs to him. Suddenly, an insurance company is required to pay for his doctor’s visit. Spoken words, too, create new realities. With a few words, a man and woman become a husband and wife. By uttering a promise, a person becomes obligated to do something

that, only moments before, he had no obligation to do.

The ultimate creative use of a person’s words is his prayers. Those are the words that literally re-create and re-energize Hashem’s creation from moment to moment. By praying, a person draws Divine power and energy into his life, sustaining his health, bringing success to his endeavors, bolstering his spiritual strength and giving him literally all he needs to perform his mission in the world.

Try This!

► Think of a time when a few words from you changed a situation dramatically. Perhaps you were able to make a crying child smile, or stop an argument in its tracks, or close a difficult deal. Think of the power of that moment when you say the words “ברוך שאמר והיה העולם.” A few words from Hashem, and a universe was created!

Did You Know

► *Made in Heaven*

Tola's Yaakov in the name of the Ohr Zaruah states that about 2,400 years ago, the Men of the Great Assembly transcribed ברוך שאמר from a script that fell from heaven. The prayer contains 87 words, the same numerical value as the word פז which means “finest gold.” This alludes to the verse in Shir HaShirim 5:11: ‘ראשו כתם פז’ -- His opening words, referring to Pesukei D’Zimrah, were “finest gold” (Mishneh Berurah 51:1).