

Tefillah Focus Of The Week: הללו א-ל בקדשו *The Ultimate Praise*

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Hallelu-kah, Praise G-d in His sanctuary;
Praise Him... Praise Him with clanging cymbals;
Praise Him with resonant trumpets. Let all
souls praise G-d, Hallelu-kah.*

הללוי-ה, הללו א-ל
בקדשו, הללוהו... הללוהו
בצלצלי שמע, הללוהו
בצלצלי תרועה. כל הנשמה
תהלל י-ה, הללוי-ה.*

* NOTE: there a total of 13 הללוי-ה (including variants like, הללוהו) - see *Insight* below for explanation.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



The Gemara (Arachin 13b) explains that the two parts of the צלצל -- cymbal -- were struck together by one person to produce sound in the Holy Temple. This sound was the loudest of all the sounds that emanated from the instruments. It traveled the furthest, and awakened even the most distant people to offer praise to Hashem. The clanging of the two parts, which is what בצלצלי שמע refers to, represents the joining of

the body and the *neshama* to praise Hashem.

Rabbeinu Bachya (Shemos 32:19) teaches that the צלצלי תרועה -- resonant trumpets -- represent the moon. It is understood that the moon does not generate its own light, but rather, it reflects the light it receives from the sun. Similarly, the body receives its “light” from another source—its subservience to its *neshama*, which is the body’s praise. The sound made by the body in harmony with the *neshama* is the greatest praise of all.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Praising Hashem

The best praise of Hashem is when we emulate His ways.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Forbearance

הללוי-ה. This last mizmor of Tehillim includes the word praise, הללוי-ה (including variants) thirteen times. Siddur Ya'avetz teaches that this corresponds to Hashem’s Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. According to the sefer *Tomer Devorah*, the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy [‘Hashem, Hashem, G-d, Compassionate (before one sins and after); and gracious; Slow to anger; Abundant in kindness and Truth; the Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations; Forgiver of iniquity, willful sin, and inadvertent sin, and Who absolves,] elicits an awareness of all He has done, does, and will do for us set the template for fulfilling the mitzvah of *v’halachta bidrachav*, “walking in Hashem’s ways.”

For example, *Tomer Devorah* (Ch. 1, s.v. *Mi Keil kamocha*) points out that even when a person sins, G-d still sustains him: If he were eating non-kosher food, G-d could cause him to lose the power to swallow. Instead, Hashem maintains his power, even though it runs contrary to His will, until the individual does *teshuvah*. In emulating G-d, therefore, we are called upon to benefit even those who hurt us.

At the peak of acrimony in a hostile divorce, the husband, whose uncontrollable temper was the impetus for the breakup, was stricken with a serious illness. His abusiveness had alienated his entire family and lost him his job, and now, he found himself in a hospital bed, sick and alone, as Shabbos arrived. Suddenly, a delivery man arrived bearing a hot Friday night seudah. Unbeknownst to him, it had been ordered by his ex-wife and her family, for although they could not go forward as a united family, neither could they leave a fellow Jew alone and bereft in his sickbed.

There are situations in which we have been victimized and humiliated. We are filled with righteous indignation against the sinner and we know with absolute clarity that he is wrong and we are right, in the same way that a person who sins is wrong, and G-d is right. In such situations, the mitzvah of *V’halachta bidrachav* is our guide, and it leads us toward sustaining our effort to help the other person come to good.

Doing so, says *Tomer Devorah*, is a *segulah* that will unlock heaven’s mercy and “illuminate the world.”

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Sweetest Praise

Rivkie is only two, but it’s clear to her that the new baby in the house is taking up a lot of her mother’s time. Indeed, two-month-old Chaim seems to grow crankier by the day, and his mother, Naomi, spends hours rocking, walking, feeding and soothing the colicky infant. Naomi is tired, but she sees the helpless little child wailing and flailing about in what certainly looks



like pain, and she somehow finds the strength to care for him yet again.

Naomi sometimes wonders if her adorable toddler, Rivkie, is feeling neglected. But one day, she notices that Rivky has been dragging her teddy bear around with her everywhere she goes. She has the bear in her

arms, on her lap, even on her high chair table while she eats. She stands next to her mother and cradles the teddy bear as the mother rocks Chaim. She leans over the teddy tenderly and says, “poor little Teddy has a tummy ache!”

Naomi feels wonderful. Rivkie’s compassion is a pure reflection of her mother’s, and for Naomi, there could be no higher praise.

In a similar manner, when we emulate Hashem in our compassion for others, we offer Him our highest form of praise.

Try This! ▶

Review the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Think of a way in which Hashem has displayed one of these attributes in your life, and bring that compassion to mind when you repeat the word הללוי-ה .

Did You Know

▶ *Fixing a Mistake*

One must be careful not to speak in between the blessings Baruch She’amar and Yishtabach even for the sake of a mitzvah (Mishneh Berurah 51:4). However, if, between the blessings Baruch She’amar and Yishtabach, a person mistakenly says Hashem’s name in vain, he can

say “ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד” (She’eilas HaRav, pp. 263).

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