



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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ברוך שאמר

Many years ago, King Stanley celebrated his 55th birthday. In honor of his birthday, he invited all of his servants to give him a bracha and offer him some words of praise. His first servant thought for a moment, realized that he couldn't praise the king for being wise (since he wasn't) and astutely praised the king instead for his strength and courage. The second servant also thought carefully and decided to avoid the fact that the king had a terrible temper and instead praised him for his fine taste in clothing. The third servant, Jack, got up and instead of praising the king, declared that the king had a crooked nose! Everyone was in shock! Who would say such a thing to the king?! As Jack was being led to the gallows, he explained his strange behavior. He pointed out that the other servants had a lot of negative things to say about the king, so they avoided speaking about those areas and only mentioned those areas that they had something to say positive about. On the other hand, Jack had only positive impressions of the king – he felt that the king was amazing in every area, the only fault he could think of was the king's crooked nose. So in fact Jack's declaration was the greatest praise of all.

The **Gra** used the above story to explain Baruch Sheamar. We declare in Baruch Sheamar that Hashem is a מלך מהולל, in His greatness, He is praised with praises. It seems redundant to say that He is praised with praises – how else can one possibly be praised? But we see from the above story, that it is possible to “praise” a human by pointing out the fact that they only have one fault. Hashem, on the other hand, does not even have one slight fault, and therefore the *only* way one could extol Hashem is with praises.

That being said, as we enter into the Psuzkei d'Zimra section of praises, we feel as if we are walking on eggshells. Who are we to praise Hashem? How can we even begin to measure the greatness of G-d?? It's like a child trying to measure the wealth of a multi-billionaire and expressing it by saying “He's so rich, he has even more than 200 shekels!”. Anything we say will just lessen and limit the vast greatness of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

The Mishna Berura recounts that the words of Baruch Sheamar fell down from the sky on a little piece of paper and the Anshei Knesset Hagedola used that note to compose the Tefilla. What does that mean? Many explain that it is not necessarily a physical note, it could have been Ruach Hakodesh. The main idea is that we are

about to run through a litany of praises for Hashem. We need to know that these were not made up by the Anshei Knesset Hagedola, they are based on Divine direction. We can therefore be comfortable with praising Hashem in this way. We are not picking and choosing which of Hashem's attributes to focus on and how to describe it, we are being directed from Above.

Though we are just humble people, of flesh and blood, we actually have the ability to bring the most *nachat* and praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu

The **Tur** writes that one should sing Baruch Sheamar בנגון ובענימה, using a pleasant tune, for it is the most beautiful praise to Hashem. It is recorded that in certain communities in Europe, the congregation would take an entire hour to recite this Tefilla! We stand when we recite this Tefilla and men hold their Tzitzit to show its importance, and that we are speaking about things that are ברומם של עולם שעומדים, of the most lofty in nature.

In this Tefilla, we use various titles to define who Hashem is and His basic characteristics. Rav Eliyahu Munk in his book *Olam HaTefillot* writes that it is important for us to clarify to ourselves every morning exactly who it is that we are davening to. There is a pasuk in Tehillim

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Sunday, Oct. 11 - Rabbi Breitowitz's shiur was sponsored by **Julie Glassman** in blessed memory of her dear mother-in-law, **שיינא בשא בת חיים** "ע"ה, mother of Michael Glassman, a woman who embodied love for all.

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Tuesday, Oct 13 - Rabbi Breitowitz's shiur was sponsored by **Leah & Bert Weinberg** - wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year

Sunday, October 18 - Rabbi Breitowitz's shiur is sponsored in honor of Rabbi Breitowitz. In gratitude and appreciation of his words of inspiration and wisdom. May he continue to be a source of illumination through Torah, especially during these challenging times. Thank you and Chodesh Tov Sara Leah Cracau

Sunday, October 18 - Rabbi Bienenfeld's shiur is sponsored in loving memory of **Dr. I. M. Brauer z"l** of Chicago **לעילוי נשמת יצחק משה בן גדליהו ז"ל** whose yahrzeit is 30 Tishrei, by his family.

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Tuesday, October 20 - Rebbetzin Shira Smiles shiur is sponsored by **Bracha Sukenik** in memory of her father **Daniel Dov ben Shlomo Zeev and Rudah Bailah z"l (Sukenik)** לעילוי נשמת דניאל דב בן שלמה זאב ורודא ביילא סוקניק ז"ל

91 which says - “אשגבהו כי ידע שמי, יקראהו” - “ואענהו”. Hashem says – I will raise him up because he knows My name, he calls to me and I will answer him. The midrash on this pasuk explains that Hashem only answers us when we know His Name, when we understand His essence. The midrash explains that we often wonder why Hashem does not answer our Tefillot. One reason why is מפני שאינם יודעים את שם שם, because we do not know Hashem’s name, we don’t comprehend who Hashem truly is.

Baruch She’amar comes to solve this issue, by briefly defining who Hashem is as we begin our Tefilla. Let us look briefly at the titles we use to define Hashem -

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁאָמַר וְהִיא הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בְּרוּךְ עֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית – Hashem is the Creator of the world

בְּרוּךְ אֱמַר וְעֲשֵׂה, בְּרוּךְ גּוֹזֵר וְמִקְיָם – Hashem decrees and fulfills

בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הָאָרֶץ, בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת – Hashem is merciful

בְּרוּךְ מְשַׁלֵּם שְׂכָר טוֹב לִירְאָיו (and punishes)

בְּרוּךְ חַי לְעַד וְקַיָּם לְנֶצַח – Hashem is eternal

בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל – Hashem saves those in need

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁמוֹ – Hashem is the source of all blessing

These are some of the most basic tenets of our understanding of G-d. Obviously, one can and should delve deeply into each of these, but at the start of our Tefilla, we just briefly mention each notion as a short summary and reminder of Who we are praying to.

We then conclude with a bracha in which we basically say that Hashem’s greatest praise is the fact that all of His people praise Him! What could be more gratifying to a parent than to hear his children sing his praises?! Though we are just humble people, of flesh and blood, we actually have the ability to bring the most *nachat* and praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu! אין מלך אין מלך, a king cannot be a king without a nation to rule over. We humans are given the zchut to crown Hashem as our King and to glorify Him in the best possible way. What an unbelievable privilege and responsibility! ■

— Cut and paste into your siddur —



In Baruch Sheamar, we use various titles to define who Hashem is and His basic characteristics. This is because it is important for us to clarify to ourselves every morning exactly who it is that we are davening to. We conclude with a bracha in which we say that Hashem’s greatest praise is the fact that all of His people praise Him! What could be more gratifying to a parent than to hear his children sing his praises?! Though we are mere humans, we actually have the ability to bring the most *nachat* and praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu!