

Dear Friends,

In a pandemic ravaged world, many of us are looking for resources. Sources of strength. Measures of spiritual comfort. **Some of these are so close by,** we easily overlook them.

Our siddur is filled with a veritable set of keys. Keys of direction to guide our fears and confusion. **Keys to serenity, connection and centeredness.**

Today we'll rediscover a primary tefilla, a treasure trove of nourishment and strength. Let's open our siddurim together, let's find the gold in the words, **the song of Adon Olam!**

Adon Olam. Morning and evening, or just about any time, we can sing this beautiful piyut. The song we say in the morning is the same song that we say when we go to sleep. Both when we lie down and when we wake up, our eyes are directed to Adon olam, the Master of the world. **Night and day, the cycle of events, good and bad, are linked by man's turning towards Hashem.** It is thus that he gains a sense of security from the anxieties of the night and the hardships of the day.

How appropriate for our current challenges. Days that are fraught with concern and challenge, but also with Hashem's might and revelation in a most undeniable and wondrous form.

Let's go line by line through this beautiful piyut, and see how we can relate to the words, ideas and themes.

Adon olam asher malach b'terem kol yetzir nivra.

Master of the world, Who ruled before any creature was created.

The first person to call Hashem by the name 'Adon' was Avraham Avinu. Avraham Avinu looked at the world through the lens of chesed; his prism was the beauty and goodness he discovered in the world. "What is the source of that goodness?" he asked. **And that was how he discovered Hakadosh Baruch Hu.**

One can't daven to a theoretical concept or to an intellectual idea. Hashem is as we experience Him. Avraham taught us to love Hashem, to feel secure in Him, to acknowledge Him, to trust in Him, to think of Him, to daven to Him.

Adon olam. **At the beginning of each day, we commit to discovering the chesed of Hashem in each day, in each breath, in each gift.** And when night falls, in the darkness, we hold on to our emunah that Hashem is our loving Father, and all that He does is for our ultimate good. In the challenging days. In quarantine. In the sickrooms of the critically ill.

L'eis na'asah b'cheftzo kol, azai melech sh'mo nikra.

At the time when all things were made by His desire, then was His name proclaimed King.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu had malchus, kingship, even before the world was created. But it is only after Creation that we, His subjects, look to Him daily and say, bryosecha anachnu, we are here because You want us to be here, and we are here to serve and do Your ratzon.

Kingship brings unity. Being under Hashem's leadership **enables us to have a shared identity as a whole**, as a klal. To realize that though we may be vastly different, we share a goal.

Social distancing may make us feel cut off from each other. Quarantine isolates. But we have a joint goal—to use this unprecedented time to express our status as Hashem's subjects. **That is what brings us together.**

V'acharei kichlos hakol, l'vado yimloch nora.

And after all things shall have had an end, He alone, the Awesome One, shall reign.

Malchus Hashem. Hashem's rulership. It's the only real, enduring existence.

V'hu hayah, v'hu hoveh, v'hu yihyeh, b'sifarah.

And He was and He is and He will be in His glory.

Hashem is above time. He is above place. He *created* time and place. Time is what enables a process to unfold. Day by day, we take steps to change. We move upwards. We grow. The end product, the place where we're supposed to get to, is what Hashem had in mind from the beginning—sof maaseh b'machshava techilah.

Right now, we're engaged in a difficult process. Each day brings its own set of demands. New lockdown updates. New names to daven for. We know, however, that **all was engineered by He who is above time, and the One who gave us the gift of each moment** so that we can journey, step by step, towards the place we are supposed to come to.

V'hu echad v'ein sheni, l'hamishil lo l'hachbirah.

B'li reishis b'li tachlis, v'lo haoz v'hamisra.

And He is One, and there is none that can compare with Him or be compared with Him.

And His is the strength and the dominion.

Hashem is the kol yachal, the ein sof. And it is this beautiful description of His transcendence, of how Hashem is all powerful and all mighty, that makes Him our address. We can daven to Him, we can trust Him, because He is the melech of the world and before the world. **He is above time, He is strength.**

It's interesting that we're facing a mageifah, and not a war, where two powers show their might, their army, their cutting edge technological warfare. A pandemic. A virus we can't even see has become the source that has sent the entire world into lockdown and turmoil. That something so small and invisible has turned our lives upside down—that must be the hand of Hashem. **That same hand is also embracing us, holding us, shielding us.** We can lean in and feel comforted.

V'hu Keli v'chai goali, v'tsur chevli b'eis tzarah.

And He is my G-d, my Redeemer lives, a rock in my travail in time of distress.

He is my Hashem. There's a synthesis here. Hashem is exalted beyond anything we can imagine—and yet **He is close to me, little me, in my personal circumstances.** Hashem is both the highest and the nearest. We can stand in awe of His greatness and still we can call to Him, relate to Him, thank Him, and connect from wherever we are standing.

And that's why we can relate to Him in a tzara. Because He's here, with me, with us now. I see Him through the prism of my life and personal experience, you see him through the prism of yours—and the hard times we are all facing right now are a means to connect with Him.

V'hu nisi umanos li, m'nas kosi b'yom ekrah.

And He is my banner and my refuge, the portion of my cup on the day I call.

He is my banner.

A banner, a flag, is something that flutters high up in the air. To see it, we tip back our heads, and turn our faces upward. **In a difficult time, we look upwards,** we reach higher, we stretch ourselves to find Him.

And He is our refuge. When we call out to Him, He will be there for us. We can hand Him our grief and anguish, and He, in turn, gives us the strength that comes with emunah.

B'yado afkid ruchy, b'eis ishan v'airah. V'im ruchy g'viasi, Hashem li v'lo irah.

Into His hand I deposit my spirit, when I sleep and when I wake;

And with my spirit, my body also: Hashem is with me, and I will not fear.

Every night, before we go to sleep, we entrust our souls to Hashem, knowing that He will return it in the morning clean and fresh and with renewed ko'ach.

And so it is. The nighttime can be compared to an eis tzarah. Hashem, the Adon Olam, the kol yachol is here, with us, all of us. We can trust b'emunah that he is renewing us. Making us whole.

We can call on Hashem **both when we feel the serenity of sunrise and when night encroaches.**

And when we fear, because we are engulfed in times of panic and the scary unknown, we can let go and confidently lean on Hashem, secure in the knowledge, that **Hashem li - Hashem is with me, therefore v'lo irah - I shall not fear.**

The sefer HaRokach says in the name of Rav Yehudah Hanasi, that one who says Adon Olam with kavanah, his tefilos will be accepted, and the Satan will not be mekatreg. Some add that even his enemies will fall before him.

May we Know Hashems's greatness. May we feel confident in His loving embrace. May we feel **comfort in His closeness and may we all be relieved from our fears and worries.**

Sincerely,

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