

# GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

www.gatherthepeople.org

## FAMILY SIDDIR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 8

**THIS WEEK WE'RE STARTING ON PAGE 23, PSALM 92.**

- We find this psalm several places in the שַׁבָּת service.
  1. On עֶרֶב שַׁבָּת, Friday night, we find it here on page 23.
  2. On שַׁבָּת morning, Saturday, it's included twice: first on page 72, then on page 94.
- So this psalm must have some important things to teach us.

**THE PSALM BEGINS WITH: מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת—IN ENGLISH: “A SONG FOR SHABBAT.”**

- Would someone read the next line in Hebrew? (טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה)—in English: “It is good to thank God.”
- Sometimes we find ourselves saying “Thank God!”—without even thinking about it?
- *When we do that, what's going on with us? Why is our thinking short-circuited so that we simply react instinctively?*

**WHY DO WE THANK GOD WHEN SOMETHING GOOD HAPPENS THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO US?**

- *Does God make all the good things happen?*
- *What about when you or someone else chooses to do something good?*
- *When you're tempted to do something bad, but you decide not to do it, you decide instead to do the right thing, does God have any part in that?*
- *Do animals have a choice of whether to do good or bad the way we do?*
- *Why do we have the choice to do good or bad and animals don't—how did we get that choice?*

**IF IT'S TRUE THAT WE EXPERIENCE MANY GOOD THINGS BECAUSE GOD GAVE US FREE WILL, THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE TO DO GOOD, THEN THE REST OF THE FIRST LINE IN THE PSALM MAKES A LOT OF SENSE.**

- Can someone read it for us in Hebrew? (וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלִינוֹן)—in English: “to sing praise to Your Name on high.”

- ***What does it mean to “sing someone’s praises”? What are we doing when we do that?***
- We’re telling ourselves and other people how great they are!
- ***But why do we want to do that?***
- If you have a really good friend—someone who helps you and supports you, maybe even looks out for you—do you like to think about that person sometimes, maybe even tell other people about that friend?
- So it’s not surprising that sometimes, without even thinking about it, we hear ourselves saying “Thank God!”—singing God’s praises!

**WOULD SOMEONE READ THE NEXT LINE OF THE PSALM IN HEBREW? (לְהַגִּיד בַּבֹּקֶר חַסְדְּךָ, וְאַמְוֹנֶתְךָ בַּלַּיְלוֹת)—IN ENGLISH: “TO TELL OF YOUR GOODNESS IN THE MORNING AND YOUR FAITHFULNESS AT NIGHT.”**

- ***So why would we want to think about the good things that happen to us because of God—or a friend—the first thing in the morning and the last thing before going to bed at night?***
- Because on some days it seems like only *bad* things happen to us:
  1. Someone treats us unfairly or unkindly.
  2. Even worse, we treat someone else unfairly or unkindly!
  3. Or we make a mistake, do the wrong thing, and get into trouble.
- ***So why might it help to think about the good things that God gives us? Why sing God’s praises when you get up in the morning and before you go to bed at night?***
- ***If you do that every day, how are you likely to feel when you begin and end the day—thinking about God’s goodness?***
- ***And how are you likely to behave?***
  1. *Are you more or less likely to treat other people badly?*
  2. *Are you more or less likely to do bad things yourself?*

**WE’RE GOING TO CONTINUE NOW ON PAGE 24 WITH THE MOURNER’S KADDISH—קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם.**

- Does anyone remember from last week who is a mourner, an אָבֵל?
- Jews say this prayer when they’re in mourning, when some close to them has died.
- ***How do you think people feel when they lose someone they love very much?***
  1. Often they feel very alone and lonely, afraid of death themselves.
  2. They get frightened that other bad things are going to happen to them.
  3. Sometimes they even start to feel that God has forgotten them!
- So they say this prayer and it helps them feel better.

- The prayer is not in Hebrew but Aramaic, another language that's very much like Hebrew.
- Let's turn to page 82 and read the English translation of the קדיש יתום, the Mourner's Kaddish, on the bottom of the page.
- ***Where in the prayer does it say anything about anyone dying?***
- So what is the prayer about? (SINGING GOD'S PRAISES!)
- It's to remind us that, even when things look very bad, God is still here, still a comfort to us.

**NOW TURN BACK TO PAGE 24 AND LOOK AT THE FOURTH LINE IN THE MOURNER'S KADDISH.**

- ***Who's supposed to say that line?—"May God's great name be praised throughout all time."***
- ***Why do you think it might help a mourner to feel better if the whole congregation praises God's name?***
- ***Except for that one line, what's the last word in every other line of the prayer? (אמן)***
- ***Can anyone tell us what אמן means?***
  1. It comes from the same root as the Hebrew word אמת, "truth" in English.
  2. אמן means "I agree—this is true."
- ***Who's supposed to say אמן at the end of each of these lines?***
- Why do think it might help a mourner feel better if the whole congregation says אמן at the end of each of the lines when the mourners are standing up and saying them?
- When we all praise God and say אמן together during the קדיש יתום, we're letting the mourners know something important:
  1. We believe God is still here and that things will get better for them.
  2. We understand that they feel very bad and we want to be with them and support them.
- So when you say אמן during the קדיש יתום at the end of each line, you're showing kindness to the people who are mourning.