

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

www.gatherthepeople.org

FAMILY SIDDIR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 14

WE'RE CONTINUING TODAY ON PAGE 33, ON THE PRAYER CALLED הַשְּׂכִיבְנוּ.

- Can anyone remind us of why we call this prayer הַשְּׂכִיבְנוּ?
- Someone please read the first four words of the prayer in Hebrew on page 33: הַשְּׂכִיבְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם.
- And now in English: “Help us, Adonai, to lie down in peace.”
- *What do you think that means?*

THE MEANING OF THOSE FIRST FOUR WORDS IS KIND OF CONFUSING BECAUSE THE FIRST WORD, WHICH OUR סִדּוּר TRANSLATES AS “HELP US,” REALLY MEANS “MAKE US” OR “CAUSE US.”

- *What's the difference when someone helps you to lie down at night and when they make you lie down?*
- When someone makes us do something, we don't have any choice—we're forced to do it, whether we want to or not.

THE FOURTH HEBREW WORD IN THE SENTENCE, לְשָׁלוֹם, MEANS “IN PEACE.”

- *What's it like to feel “peaceful”?*
- *Calm, contented, relaxed?*
- The שׁוּׁ or root letters of שָׁלוֹם—the three letters that tell us the basic meaning of virtually all Hebrew words—are ש-ל-ם.
- *Can anyone teach us the basic meaning of those three letters, ש-ל-ם?*
- They mean to be “complete and harmonious.”
 1. Suppose you bullied someone at school or were mean to someone at work who has been kind to you—maybe you failed a test or messed up a work assignment and you were in a bad mood and took it out on that person.
 2. *Do you think you would feel complete and harmonious when you went to bed that night?*

3. *What if you took something that didn't belong to you during the day, would you feel complete and harmonious when you went to bed?*
 4. Sometimes we have bad dreams when we do something the Torah teaches us we shouldn't do, like lie or steal or treat someone unfairly.
- *So how can God make us lie down in peace at night, make us feel complete and harmonious, when we go to bed?*
 - *What if we do what the Torah teaches us—we try very hard to always be kind and fair?*
 - *Then how will God make us feel when lie down—will doing God's מצוות, following the commandments, make it possible to go to sleep in peace, feeling in harmony with ourselves and everyone else?*

IF YOU LOOK AT THE HEBREW OF THE SECOND LINE OF THE PRAYER, IT READS: ותקננו בעצה טובה מלפניך והושיענו

- Translated, it says: “Guide us”—or put us on the right path—“with your good advice and save us....”
- Then it goes on to list the things we want to be saved from—including enemies, disease, starvation, war, and losing people we love, which are some of the things that happened to people because of the tsunami.
- *Where do we find God's advice on how to avoid bad things?*
- *What would be different if everyone followed all of God's laws in the Torah, if everyone treated everyone else fairly and with kindness?*

NOW WE COME TO THE LAST THREE LINES OF THE PRAYER ON PAGE 33.

- Someone please read them in Hebrew, beginning with ופרש עלינו: ופרש עלינו שְׁלוֹמְךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִבַּת שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.
- And now in English: “Spread over us the shelter of your peace. Blessed are You Adonai Who spreads the shelter of peace over us, over all of His people Israel, and over Jerusalem.”
- *So what is this “shelter of peace” that's mentioned in the prayer?*
- The shelter of peace, the thing that allows us to be complete and harmonious—calm, contented, and relaxed—is שְׁבֵת.
- So when we sing these closing lines of the prayer on Friday night, what we're saying is this:
- If we do God's מצוות, we ask God to make us complete and harmonious on שְׁבֵת—which God does when we do.
- Here's how we like to sing these last two lines.