

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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FAMILY SIDDUR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 25

WE'RE CONTINUING TODAY WITH THE LAST PART OF THE עֲמִידָה.

- Who remembers what we do when we say this prayer?
- On Friday night we say it in a very low whisper, almost silently.
- We're on page 38 in the third paragraph.
- Someone please read the Hebrew, beginning with וְכָל הַחוֹשְׁבִים, and read up to וְגוֹאֲלֵי: וְכָל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלֵי רָעָה. מִהֲרָה הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקִלְקַל: וְגוֹאֲלֵי: מִחֲשַׁבְתָּם: עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יִמְיֶנְךָ. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשְׁתָּךְ. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תִּוְרַתְךָ, לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ הַוְשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי: יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֲמִרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְגוֹאֲלֵי
- Now in English, beginning with “frustrate,” and reading up to “redeemer.”

IN THE FIRST PART OF THE PARAGRAPH WE'RE ASKING FOR GOD'S HELP TO DO THE מְצוּוֹת.

- We know the מְצוּוֹת are the things God commands us to do or not to do—which, of course, we know we can ignore them because God has given us free will.
- But we also know the מְצוּוֹת are a kind of gift because they show us that bad things happen to us when we ignore them and good things when we follow them.
- *What do you think are some of the most important מְצוּוֹת?*
- *Has it ever happened that when you wanted to do a מְצוּוָה, like returning a lost object that you found or telling the truth about something, someone was trying to keep you from doing the right thing—like trying to talk you out of it?*
- So here we're asking God not to let such people succeed in keeping us from doing the right thing by doing bad things themselves.
- But then it says that God should stop such people, not because of what we're trying to do, but because of *God's* compassion and power, and holiness and Torah.

- *But what does it mean that, if we're trying to do a מצוה, following one of God's commandments, like not stealing, and someone is trying to get us to steal, God should stop that person—not for our sake but for God's sake?*
- Maybe what it means is that when we're doing the right thing, not just because it feels good to us but because it's a מצוה, what God wants us to do, somehow God helps us when others try to keep us from it.
- So we're not alone when we're trying to do the right thing, even when other people are working against us—God is there to help us.

THE LAST PART OF THE PRAYER SAYS: “MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU, MY ROCK AND MY REDEEMER.”

- *What are “meditations”?* [SILENT THOUGHTS]
- *Why should we call God our “Rock”?*
- *And what's a “Redeemer”?* [ONE WHO SAVES US FROM GOING OFF THE PATH OF DOING THE RIGHT THING.]
- *So why would our prayer not be acceptable to God?*
- *What might make a prayer unacceptable?*

SOMEONE READ THE LAST SENTENCE IN HEBREW, BEGINNING WITH עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ: עֲשֵׂה וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ, אָמֵן.

- Now in English, the last line in the third paragraph.
- *What are we asking God to do in this last sentence?*
- *What's the Hebrew word that's translated here as “peace”?*
- *Does anyone remember the basic meaning of “שְׁלוֹם”?*
- Think for a moment about how *you* would be different if you were more complete, if important things weren't missing from you—like if you were always kinder, maybe more truthful, perhaps even more courageous.
- *What can we do to help God make the world more complete?*