

Lesson #7

Ashrei_ (Shacharit pg 96), (end of Torah service pg 151), (Minchah pg 226)

- Ashrei comes from the book of Psalms: *Tehilah L'David ...Psalm 145*.
- The Talmud recommends a threefold repetition as a highly meritorious act (*B'rachot 4b*) Rabbi Elazar: *"All who say Tehilah L'David (Ashrei) three times a day are assured of their place in the world to come"*.
- Alphabetic acrostic with 21 verses א to ת. However there is no verse with the letter Nun נ: It is made up in the next verse נשען *"Adonai supports all who stumble (the fallen)...."*.
- The missing verse starting with the nun was found in a manuscript among the Dead Sea Scrolls – the Psalm Scroll: *Ne'eman Elohim bidvarav v'chasisid b'chol ma'asav*.
- Each verse contains two parallel phrases a. and b.:
e.g. Verse 9: a. *Adonai is good to all*; b. *G-d's compassion embraces all*.
- Ashrei is a hymn of praise extolling the power of G-d. It highlights G-d's enormous power (and desire) to do good.
- The Spirit of Goodness (verses 9 ט, 17 יז, 18 יח, 20 כ)
- G-d's attributes are Kindness beyond expectation and helpfulness to those in need. (verses 8 ח, 14 יד, 16 טז)
- G-d is good to all not just to some (the most frequently recurring word is כול kol= all).
- The recital of G-d's deeds of kindness is intended to inspire humans to do likewise. A guide for the pursuit of love and justice.

Ashrei is basic to the spirit and message of the Jewish prayer book. It conveys the special message of Judaism to us, to other people and to the world.