

TEFILLAH TIPS

Tzidkasecha Tzedek Leolam

After the Chazzan concludes the repetition of the *Amidah* for *Shabbat Mincha* the congregation recites three verses from Psalms: *Tzidkasecha*...Your righteousness is everlasting and Your *Torah* is truth. *Tzidkasecha*... Your righteousness reaches the heavens and You demonstrate greatness. *Tzidkasecha* Your righteousness is like the mountains; and Your judgment is like the deep waters; unto man and beast You are their salvation.

This short prayer that emphasizes *Tzidkasecha*-G-d's righteousness seems eerily similar to a solemn prayer that is recited at funerals called *Tzidduk HaDin* – The Righteousness of G-d's justice. Additionally, *Tzidkasecha* is said right after the *Amidah* which is the same place that during the week we recite *Tachanun*/mournful supplications. If these associations are correct, why would our sages institute a *Tefillah* on *Shabbat* that is in any way mournful? Public demonstrations of mourning are forbidden on *Shabbat*! Why then do we say *Tzidkasecha*?

One reason advanced by the Elyah Ravah quoting the Zohar is because Moshe Rabbeinu, Yosef Hatzaddik and King David all died during the time period of *Shabbat Mincha*. Therefore a brief Memorial prayer is offered at this time.

The *Arugot Habosem* writes that the choice of these particular verses from Psalms is to reflect the untimely passing of these three great Biblical Jewish leaders.

In acknowledging the death of Moshe Rabbeinu when he asked Hashem if he could live beyond 120 and enter the land of Israel we say, "*Tzidkasecha Tzedek Leolam Veturasecha Emes*" – Your righteousness is everlasting and Your Torah is true-(only G-d decides the lifespan of each person).

In acknowledging the death of Joseph at the earlier age of 110 which is explained by the Talmud as resulting from Joseph living a life of leadership and authority – we recite, "*Tzidkasecha Elokim Ad Marom Asher Asita Gedolot Elokim Mi Kamocha*" – Your righteousness is as high as the heavens, You have done great things (and You, G-d are the only true authority).

In acknowledging the death of King David who requested not to die on *Shabbat* – we recite, "*Tzidkasecha Keharerey E-I Mishpatecha Tehohm Rabbah Adom Ubehaymah Toshiyah Hashem*" – Your righteousness is as mighty as the mountains and as vast as the deep waters – (Hashem decides the time when one king descends from the throne and another ascends).

Take Home Tip: The final hours of *Shabbat* are a serious time to contemplate the gift of *Shabbat* that we just experienced, how time in our lives passes by so quickly and that

ultimately Hashem will decide when we will experience *rest* from this world like Moshe, Yosef and King David. We also pray that when *Moshiach* comes (soon in our days) the world as we know it will end and advance to a permanent state of Shabbat.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein, for Tefillah Tips

Orthodox Union Department of Community Services

Frank Buchweitz, National Director

Hannah Farkas, Program Associate

Maya Carni, Administrative Assistant

Prepared by Rabbi Ephraim Epstein—Congregation Sons of Israel, Cherry Hill, NJ

Rabbiepstein@sonsisrael.org

Archived *Tefillah* Tips and videos may be found at: www.oucommunity.org under **The Tefillah Initiative** banner.