

ה. עבודה

Avodah  
5. Serving

**READER:**

There is still a long road ahead of us, in order to finish what we began to do. We began to ask great questions once -- among ourselves and in the ears of the entire world: but we have not yet answered. We will ask what we can.

**ALL:**

מָה אָנוּ: מָה חַיֵּינוּ: *Mah anu? Meh haieinu?*

What are we?

What is our life?

**READER:**

We stand in the middle of our questions. All ears strain for us to answer; we cannot stop asking, we do not want to. The truth within us is so rich and overpowering that we cannot express it in clear and simple language. We will ask what we can.

**ALL:**

מָה חֶסֶדְךָ: *Meh hasdeinu?*

What is our love?

**READER:**

But we will ask what we can, as much as our power of speaking and understanding permit, even as generations before us have done. We will ask what we can.

**ALL:**

מָה יִשְׁעֶךָ: מָה יִשְׁעֶנוּ: מָה יִצְדִּיקְךָ:

*Mah-tzid'keinu? Mah-yishenu? Mah-khohenu?*

What is our justice?

What is our help?

What is our strength?

**READER:**

And we know that in the course of time, others will ask that which we cannot. We shall not stop until all has been asked, for our sake, for the sake of our community, for the sake of the world.

**ALL:**

מָה גְבוּרַתְךָ: *Mah-g'vurateinu?*

What is our power?

FROM *Kol Haneshamah*:

רִצָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִהְיוֹת תְּפִלָּתָם  
בְּאַהֲבָה תִּקְבַּל בְּרִצּוֹן וְתִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוֹדַת  
יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ:

וְתִחְזֶינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוֹבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים:

*Retzeh YHVH eloheinu b'amekha yisrael  
v'lahav tefilatam b'ahavah t'kabel b'ratzon  
ut'hi l'ratzon tamid avodat yisrael amekha:*

*V'tehezeina eininu b'shuvcha l'tzion  
b'rahamim:*

🌸 Take pleasure GRACIOUS ONE, our GOD, in Israel your people; lovingly accept their fervent prayer. May Israel's worship always be acceptable to you.

And may our eyes behold your homecoming, with merciful intent, to Zion.

לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמֵּר  
וְלֹא אַתָּה בְּיַחְזִיקֵינוּ לְהַבְטִיל מִמֶּנָּה.  
*Lo aleikha hamlakha ligmor  
V'lo atah ben horin l'hibatel mimenah.*

🌸 It is not for you to complete the work but neither are you such a child of freedom that you can desist from [doing your part].

-- *Pirkei Avot* 2:21