

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ויציב

No Doubt About It

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

And certain, established and enduring, fair... good and beautiful is this affirmation to us forever and ever.

ויציב ונכון וקים
וישר... וטוב ויפה
הדבר הזה עלינו
לעולם ועד...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Beginning with the word ויציב and ending with ויפה, this section of the *Krias Shema* begins with 15 consecutive words that start with the letter "vav." The numerical equivalent of the fifteen "vavim" adds up to 90 (15 "vavs" x 6, which is the numerical value of the Hebrew letter "vav"). Rama (*Orach Chaim* 61:3) explains that this corresponds to three mentions of Hashem's Name (*Yud, Hei, Vav, and Heh*), the numerical value of which is 26 (*Yud* =10, *Hei* =5, *Vav* =6, and *Heh* =5). By taking into account the fact that Hashem's Name has four letters, we reach a total numerical value of 30 for each mention of the

Name. Therefore, together with the reading of them (which counts as 1), the total equals 91 which is the *gematria* (numerical value) of the word אמן (50 = א, 40 = מ, 1 = נ).

Iyun Tefillah (citing *Sidur Sha'ar Ha'Rachamim*) explains that each of the sixteen descriptions which begins with "vav" corresponds to one of the sixteen verses contained in the first two parshiyos (sections) of Shema (ואהבת והיה) which start with the letter "vav." See Rama (*Siman* 61:3) for an additional reason why the 15 consecutive words beginning with the word ויציב and ending with ויפה start with the letter "vav".

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Rock-Solid Faith

Our belief in G-d's promise to bring the final redemption is firmly established.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Kindness We Can Count On

The Gemara (*Berachos* 12a) teaches that whoever does not recite the blessing "אמת ויציב, true and certain" following the morning Shema, and the blessing "אמת ואמונה, true and faithful" following the evening Shema, has not discharged his obligation. This is based on the verse (*Tehillim* 92:3) "To relate Your kindness in the morning, and Your faith in the nights." The blessing 'אמת ויציב' that we recite in the morning is devoted to the kindness that G-d did for our forefathers in redeeming them from Egypt, splitting the Reed Sea and bringing them across it, etc. By reciting this blessing, we fulfill the first part of the verse (ibid) "To relate Your kindness in the morning..."

The evening blessing, "אמת ואמונה, true and faithful," mentions these miracles, but also embodies our faith that in the future G-d will fulfill the promise and redeem us from our oppressors, sustain us in life and lift us over our enemies. By reciting this blessing, we fulfill the latter part of the verse (ibid) "...and Your faith in the nights" (Rashi, *Berachos* 12a, s.v. "She'ne'emar"). This implies that in the morning, we express gratitude for the already existing kindness, while in the evening we express our faith in the final redemption that has not yet taken place.

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Shir HaShirim, Remez*, 986, s.v.

Kol dodi) explains that when Moshe Rabbeinu told the Jewish people that they would be redeemed from Egypt during the month of Nissan, they replied, "How can we be redeemed? We do not have good deeds... Egypt is full of our idols!" Moshe responded, "Because Hashem wants to redeem you, He does not look as much at your bad deeds. To whom does Hashem look? To the righteous ones among you."

The "righteous ones" in our day are the Jews who, in spite of all the confusion of this world, in spite of all the excess materialism that pulls people so strongly, in spite of all the lusts and desires that are readily acquired, reject the falsehood and turn to G-d. To the best of their abilities they cleave to Torah and mitzvos in the midst of the social and spiritual riptide that exists in pre-Messianic times. Their good deeds will suffice to bring the Final Redemption.

G-d truly wants to redeem us. As He did when we were redeemed from Egypt, G-d will overlook the sins of those whose bond with Him was broken by the hardship of exile, and set His eyes instead upon those who, despite every obstacle, have served Him and clung to Him for so long. For the sake of this precious group, "the righteous among you," the world will be redeemed (See *Mesillas Yesharim*, Ch. 13).

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Holding Onto a Promise

When the Levine family's fishing boat capsized in the middle of a large lake, the parents and their four small children fell, thrashing about and shouting, into the water. They had their life vests on, but the water was cold and choppy, and none of the children were strong swimmers. "We're not strong



enough to swim all the way to shore!" one of the children cried out. "We're all going to drown in the lake!" But the parents quickly grabbed hold of the situation and calmed the children down. "You're as strong as you need to be to just hold onto the boat and

wait. Look at the shore. A rescue boat is on its way. Just hold on."

We are like the children thrashing about in cold, choppy waters. We feel our weakness and wonder how we will ever survive. But "ויציב, certain" tells us that the rescue boat is on its way. Our promised redemption is certain to come, and we have our Torah and emunah to keep us afloat. With that knowledge, we can find the strength to hold on.

Try This!

▶ When you say the word "ויציב" make a special effort to feel the strong certainty in your heart that you are proclaiming with your lips that just as G-d redeemed our forefathers from Egypt, in the future G-d will fulfill His promise and redeem us from our oppressors.

Did You Know

▶ **Omitting the Blessings**

In "Insight," we cited the Gemara (*Berachos* 12a) that whoever does not say the blessing ויציב in the morning and the blessing ואמונה in the evening, has not fulfilled his obligation to perform the mitzvah as it was ordained to be performed (*Orach Chaim* 66:10). Mishneh Berurah (*Siman* 66:53) points out that this does not mean that he did not fulfill his obligation at all regarding the reading of *Krias Shema*, since the saying of the blessings is not essential to the fulfillment of the obligation. However, because of the omission, his reading of *Krias Shema* was not as it should have been. If a person omits the blessing before reciting *Shemoneh Esrei*, he should at least go back and say the blessing after he has recited *Shemoneh Esrei*. It is also desirable for him to say *Kerias Shema* again.