

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

MIZMOR SHIR

The Gift of Healing

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Hashem, my G-d, I cried out to You and You healed me.
Hashem, You have raised my soul from the lower world,
You have preserved me from my descent to the Pit....

ה' אלקי, שועתי
אליך ותרפאני.
ה' העלית מן שאול נפשי.
חייתיני מירדי בור....

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Zohar (Shemos 19:2) explains that the difference between two different words for “cry out,” שועה and צעקה, is that שועה means to cry out using words, whereas צעקה is to cry out with only tears and sounds of grief.

”שועתי אליך ותרפאני” -- “I cried out to You and You healed me:” When a person is ill, he “cries out” from a level of distress that resembles hysteria, as his request for Hashem’s help is overwhelming and comes from a bitter feeling (see Shearim B’Tefillah, Page 36). Similarly, during the Jewish people’s servitude in Egypt, the Torah states (see Shemos 2:23), “And it was during those many days... The Jews groaned because of the work and they cried out -- ותעל ותעל ותעל: Their outcry, because of the work, went up to G-d.” The verses describe a despondent people suffering the indignities of persecution. Such requests that come from deep within our hearts can achieve results and open the gates of prayer (Berachos 32b).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

The True Healer

Heavenly assistance is the cause of a doctor’s success.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Doing Our Part

An elderly man was diagnosed with a serious disease. Subsisting on a pension, he had no choice but to use the doctors at the local clinic, who accepted his insurance. His children insisted that he travel to the city to see a top specialist. They were prepared to pay, to drive him, and to do everything necessary to get him the best help available. “Listen, if Hashem wants me to be cured, the clinic here can cure me just as well,” he responded. “I don’t want to be dragged all over the place.”

How much *hishtadlus* should one make in seeking medical assistance? Is there any real benefit in trying to find the best doctor in light of the fact that Heaven determines a doctor's success?

In *Shomer Emunim* (cited in Ma’amar HaBitachon V’Hischazkus, Ch. 5) this issue is addressed in a

letter sent to a seriously ill student: “If your intention is to seek help from a doctor, make sure you search for the best one available ... This is because the best doctor has heavenly assistance, which is the cause of his success.” The Steipler (*Kraina D’igrasah*, Vol. 1, Letter 100, p. 110) states that if one has a potentially life threatening disease, he must try to find the best doctor in the relevant field.

Ideally, seeking medical attention and building *bitachon* are concepts that work hand-in-hand, rather than in opposition to each other. This is the *Beis HaLevi’s* (*Parashas Miketz*) perspective on all *hishtadlus* — that once a person does ‘his part,’ he attains a level of inner peace that enables him to recognize and acknowledge the help Hashem gives him. This, in turn, brings him to a higher level of *bitachon*.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Treating the Symptoms

The little boy had an ear infection. His mother gave him Tylenol every four hours, which eased the pain and allowed him to rest. However, as soon as the Tylenol wore off, the pain resurfaced. Only when he finally went to the doctor and received an antibiotic,



which killed the source of the pain, did he experience real relief.

Physical illness is only a symptom of spiritual weakness. Like Tylenol that only treats the symptoms, our medical

remedies only address the physical symptoms of our illnesses. Prayer is the real antibiotic – the powerful medicine that gets to the root of the problem and helps cure it. G-d is the source of all healing, and therefore, if we accompany all our medical treatments with prayer, we have the best chance of both “killing the pain” and curing the illness.

Try This!

► Think of a time when you or someone you love was seriously ill— someone who has since recovered. Recall your worry and suffering at that time, and then focus on the healthy, walking, talking, living, breathing person who today stands in that sick person’s place. The miracle of that transformation is the emotion to hold in your heart as you say שועתי אליך ותרפאני ה'.

Did You Know

► **Reviving the Custom of the Bais HaMikdash**

The custom to recite this psalm (immediately before *Baruch She’amar*) is not found in the Shulchan Aruch. This psalm was introduced into the prayers during the seventeenth century and is based on the Kabbalah of the Arizal (Rav Schwab on Prayer, Page 120).

Apparently, its inclusion is based on its recitation in the Holy Temple, where it was sung to inaugurate the morning service. Therefore, it is an appropriate prelude to the prayers which are recited in place of the morning service in the Bais HaMikdash (Tikkun Tefillah, cited in “The Complete ArtScroll Siddur”).