

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ויברך דויד
In Hashem We Trust

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

It is You alone, Hashem, You have made the heaven... and all their legions, the earth... the seas... and You give them all life; ... It is You, Hashem the G-d, ...You found his heart faithful before You.

אתה הוא ה' לברך,
אתה עשית את השמים...
וכל צבאם, האדץ... הימים...
ואתה מחיה את כלם... אתה
הוא ה' האלקים... ומצאת
את לבבו נאמן לפניך:

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



The word **אתה** is *lashon nochach*, second person, with which we address Hashem directly, while **הוא** is *lashon nistar*, with which we address Hashem in third person. In many areas of tefillah we find this duality. For example, *berachos* begin with *lashon nochach* **אתה**, and then we switch to *lashon nistar*, *Hashem*. In *Ashrei*, again this “switch” occurs. Of the 21 verses in *Ashrei*, eleven are *b'lashon nochach*, and the other ten are written in *lashon nistar*. Rav Schwab (Rav Schwab on Prayer, Page 167) explains that this represents the two ways a person can relate to Hashem: through *ahava*, love, which is reflected in our direct address

to Hashem in the second person, or through *yirah*, awe, expressed by addressing Hashem in third person.

But why the dichotomy? The Gemara (*Berachos 30b*) states, “Serve Hashem with awe...” (*Tehillim 2:11*), while another Gemara (*Berachos 31a*; see Rema, Siman 93, Se'if 3) state that one should approach prayer with a feeling of happiness. The feeling of awe arises from recognition of G-d as the King, Whose absolute rule extends over every aspect of Creation. Happiness, however, comes from knowing that this Al-mighty King is our personal Father in Heaven. He is always there, in every situation, ready to respond the instant His child calls upon Him.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Hashem Alone

Hashem is the only power in existence. He is the Creator and the cause of everything.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Complete Dependence

The Gemara (*Chullin,7b*) relates that a sorceress sought to remove dust covertly from beneath Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa's feet, in order to kill him through witchcraft. Rabbi Chanina told her, “Take the dust. Your formula will not succeed because it is written (*Devarim 4:35*) ‘*Ein od milvado* — There is none besides Him.’”

The Gemara further explains that Rabbi Chanina's superior degree of merit granted him heavenly protection against the powers of witchcraft. Rav Chaim Volozhin (*Sefer Nefesh Ha'Chaim, Sha'ar Three, Ch. 12*) clarifies that it was not Rabbi Chanina's great stature in Torah learning that granted him this merit. Rather, it was his complete belief in “*ein od milvado* —

there is none besides Him” — that no other force whatsoever can interfere with Hashem's control of the universe.

Therefore, Rav Chaim Volozhin advises: “A person ... must make himself completely dependent upon God, paying no heed to any other power or will in the world. When he truly does this, then, just as with Rabbi Chanina, Hashem will cause all forces and desires in the world to be null and void against him, and none of these will have any effect on him whatsoever.” He states that the words “*ein od milvado*” said with great conviction stand as a full and potent merit to protect one from any harm.

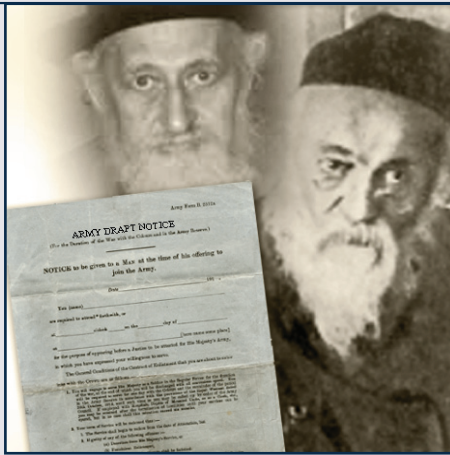
VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Only Strategy Needed

A story involving the Brisker Rav illustrates that when the words “*ein od milvado*” are said with full conviction, they serve as protection from even the greatest dangers.

When Reb Velvel (as the Brisker Rav was affectionately known) reached draft age, he



was called for an interview by the local draft board. It was not easy to obtain a release, and being drafted posed both a physical and spiritual threat to Reb Velvel.

On the appointed day, Rav Chaim of Brisk and his son

traveled to the draft board's office, located in another town. On the way, he and his son sat together and concentrated on the thought “*ein od milvado* — there is no power beside Him” (*Devarim 4:35*). Rav Chaim told his son to continue concentrating on this thought throughout the visit until he received a release, and indeed he was released. (Adapted from *Reb Chaim of Volozhin* by Rabbi Dov Eliach, ArtScrollMesorah Publ. History Series, p. 199.)

Try This!

Imagine putting all your worries and cares in a large trunk. Just as you latch it shut, someone comes to your door and says, “I'll take care of all that for you.” He picks up your heavy, cumbersome trunk with one swift motion and carries it away. Think of that image – that Hashem has it all under control – when you say **אתה הוא ה' לברך**.

Did You Know

A Key to a Livelihood

Mishneh Berurah (*Siman 51:19*) states that the Ari”zl, would give charity when he said the words **ואתה מושל בכל** – “and You rule over all”. Giving charity demonstrates that one believes that success in his livelihood is not dependant on his own efforts, but on Hashem.