

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ויושע ה'


Love, Fear and Faith

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Hashem saved — on that day— Israel from the hand of Egypt, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. **Israel saw the great hand that Hashem inflicted upon Egypt and the people feared Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant.**

ויושע ה' ביום ההוא את ישראל מיד מצרים, וירא ישראל את מצרים מת על שפת הים. וירא ישראל את היד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים, וייראו העם את ה', ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו:

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



Emunah and yirah are two principal feelings which the Jewish people must forever have towards G-d. There is only One G-d, Whom we should fear and trust simultaneously. Hashem is equally characterized by His love and His justice, and all-powerful in the exercise of both of these

traits. The great moment of salvation from Egyptian bondage revealed three facts the Jewish people needed to understand about Hashem: that His justice is to be feared, that His love is to confidently relied upon, and that He is able to fully express these two seemingly contradictory traits simultaneously. (Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch, Shemos 14:31).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Hashem Alone

Whether one is witnessing Hashem's justice or His kindness, one must realize that it all emanates from the same place.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Deepest Form of Emunah

When Moshe Rabbeinu told his nation that they were about to be redeemed from Egypt, the Torah (Shemos 4:31) testifies "And the nation believed, and they heard that Hashem had remembered the Children of Israel ..." Yet, on the day they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore after the Jews had crossed the Sea of Reeds, the Torah (Ibid., 14:31) states, וירא ישראל את היד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים. ויראו העם את ה'. ויאמינו בה ובמשה עבדו "Israel saw the great hand that Hashem had inflicted upon Egypt; and the people feared Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant." If they already believed, as is related in the first verse (Shemos 4:31), why did the Torah have to reiterate that they had faith?

The answer lies in the difference between *emunah sichlios*, an intellectual belief, and *emunah chushis*, a sensory awareness imprinted on one's consciousness, generally, through direct experience. The Alter of Kelm explains the difference between the two types of belief with a parable:

A person has never tasted bread. His friend describes to him in great detail exactly what

bread is like, including its taste, texture, and ability to satiate the appetite. The person accepts the information intellectually, but it is not as if he has actually tasted bread, for if someone argues convincingly that bread is totally different than initially described to him, he might believe that second opinion, instead. On the other hand, someone who himself has tasted bread even once will not be swayed by any argument to the contrary.

Similarly, one whose belief in Hashem is based on actual experience has a rock-solid faith that will not be called into question, even if that person is presented with apparently powerful counter-arguments. This rock-solid faith was the kind the Jews had when they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore (Shemos 14:31). Obviously, not everyone merits the opportunity to witness earth-shattering miracles in their lifetimes. However, *emunah chushis* is a spiritual achievement available to all. The key lies in learning to "taste the bread" Hashem sets before each individual in his own daily life.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Like the Sun in the Sky

The Chazon Ish once told a student, "there are different levels of emunah. For some it appears a distant vision — obscured as if in a fog, while others see it up close — as if one can touch it with his hands."

The Chofetz Chaim once



commented in response to a question about emunah, "Do you see the sun? That is how clear Hashem's presence is to me." (Cited in *Praying With Fire 2, Day 17*,

'Emunah Chushis', page 79)

These examples from the Chazon Ish and Chofetz Chaim's illustrate how there is a vast gulf between that which one knows only in his head and that which he knows also in his heart. *Emunah* — the recognition that everything comes from Hashem — becomes a very different entity when it moves from the mind to the heart.

Try This!

▶ Take a few minutes to vividly imagine yourself at the scene of the splitting of the Reed Sea. Imagine the great wind blowing, the waters parting into towering walls, the amazement as you stand there with hundreds of thousands of other Jews and begin traversing the dry sea bed, thereby escaping the Egyptian pursuers. Think of that picture when you say the words: וירא ישראל את היד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים. ויראו העם את ה'. ויאמינו ביהוה ובמשה עבדו.

Did You Know

▶ **Segula for Forgiveness**

Sefer Chareidim states that if one recites ויושע ה' with happiness and with a tune, it is one of the ten segulos that one's sins are forgiven without additional afflictions (Cited in Siddur Otzar HaTefillos). Mishneh Berurah (Siman 51:17) rules that if one recites the Song of the Sea with joy and imagines to himself that he himself crossed the sea that day, his sins will be pardoned.