

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

עזרת אבותינו

Hashem's Dear Children

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

From Egypt You redeemed us, Hashem, our G-d... You split the Sea of Reeds for them; the wanton sinners You drowned; the **dear ones** You brought across... the **dear ones** offered hymns, songs, praises, blessings, and thanksgivings to the King, the living and enduring G-d...

ממצרים גאלתנו ה' אלקינו...
וים סוף בקעת, וזדים טבעת,
וידידים העברת... ונתנו
ידידים זמירות שירות
ותשבחות, ברכות והודאות,
למלך א-ל חי וקים...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

Just as the ידידים, dear ones, praised Hashem with "Az Yashir" when Hashem split the Sea of Reeds, we too recite זמירות hymns, songs, praises, blessings, and thanksgivings—למלך א-ל חי to the King, the living and enduring G-d. Magid Tzedek explains that the different expressions of praise refer to our Shacharis prayer, as follows:

- זמירות - Pesukei D'Zimrah
- שירות - Az Yashir
- תשבחות - Yishtabach
- ברכות - Yotzair Ohr - 1st birchas Kerias Shema
- הודאות - Ahava Rabbah\Olam-2nd birchas Kerias Shema
- למלך א-ל - Kerias Shema (we accept the Yoke of Heaven)
- חי - The numerical equivalent of the hebrew letters "ches" and "yud" equals eighteen which is a reference to the Shemoneh Esrei (18 blessings).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Endearing

Our belief and trust in Hashem make us dear to Him.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Keeping the Faith

The Jewish people who crossed the Reed Sea are called ידידים, dear ones. Rav Schwab (Rav Schwab on Prayer, ArtScroll, Page 392) explains that the Jewish people were called ידידים because they had full bitachon in Hashem and followed His directive, given through Moshe Rabbeinu, to go directly through the Reed Sea. First, Nachshon ben Aminadav went into the Sea, followed by the tribe of Binyamin followed by the rest of the Jewish people. Only after they had demonstrated their complete bitachon, and were already in the water, did the great miracle occur, and the Reed Sea split.

From our present position, the distance between now and the times of Mashiach seems like an impossible journey. Yet, like the Jews leaving Egypt, the Jewish people keep going across the rough terrain of history on a journey in which the prospects of salvation are unknown. In the face of centuries of wandering, our persistent faith that there is an ultimate destination, and that we will reach it, is in itself a tremendous merit for the Jewish people.

The Chofetz Chaim (Tzipisa L'Yeshuah, Ch. 2) explains: "With the length of the exile, the merits of the Jewish people become greater from generation to generation, because of the merit... of their waiting and hoping for the coming of Mashiach for such a long time..." One means by which to hasten and actualize the Messianic redemption is by believing in, and anticipating, the coming of Mashiach (Abudraham, end of Yom Kippur Prayers).

The Midrash (Tehillim 31:1) affirms G-d's guarantee to those who hold onto their hope and faith in Him:

When the Jews enter their synagogues and houses of Torah study, they say to the Holy One, Blessed is He, "Redeem us!" He responds to them: "Are there righteous people among you? Are there G-d fearing people among you?" They reply: "...as we go from generation to generation it grows darker for us..." The Holy One, Blessed is He, then says to them: "Trust in My Name and I shall stand by you...for I shall save whoever trusts in My Name."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Love and Trust

Three-year-old Chaim goes every day to nursery school. One day, there is a class performance. The mothers are all invited to attend, and Chaim's mother happily does so. When the performance is over, refreshments are served. Chaim receives a chocolate chip cookie, which is quickly swiped out of his hand by Moishy, his three-year-old



nemesis. Chaim's mother witnesses the crime and begins to make her way over to her son, who is running toward her crying. But Chaim runs right past his mother and seeks comfort in the arms of his Morah, instead.

If such a thing were to happen, most mothers would feel

crushed. "Why does my child not come to me for comfort?" The fact that a child turns to his parent above anyone else around, and that he places all his reliance and trust in his parents as the source of help and comfort, endears the child to the parent. "Look how he counts on me." So, too, Hashem finds dear those who trust in Him, who turn to Him for comfort and courage and would never look anywhere else.

Try This!

▶ Think of a person you find especially endearing. Think of that person's facial expression, tone of voice, actions and words that stir your heart. Now imagine that warm feeling, magnified beyond measure, emanating from Heaven and directed at you. Imagine how very beloved you are in Hashem's eyes. This is the emotion contained in the word ידידים.

Did You Know

▶ **A Mix-Up**

If a person accidentally starts Emes V'Emunah in the morning instead of Emes V'Yatziv (or if he starts Emes V'Yatziv in the evening instead of Emes V'Emunah), as long as he has not yet said Hashem's Name at the end of the blessing, he should start again. If he has already mentioned Hashem's Name, he should complete the blessing and he need not go back (Mishneh Berurah, Siman 66:53).