

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ובא לציון

Praying for an Open Heart

**MEANING:** The simple translation of the prayer

...May He open our heart through His Torah and imbue our heart with love and awe of Him and that we may do His Will and serve Him wholeheartedly. So that we do not struggle in vain nor produce for futility.

...הוא יפתח לבנו בתורתו, וישים בלבנו אהבתו ויראתו לעשות רצונו ולעבדו בלבב שלם למען לא ניגע לדיק, ולא נלד לבהלה.

**WORD TO THE WISE:** Meaning within the word

In this segment of ובא לציון we beseech Hashem וישים בלבנו אהבתו ויראתו לעשות רצונו our heart with love and awe of Him so that לעשות רצונו we may do His will. Does loving Hashem affect our desire to do His will?

recite blessings, we both eat apples. We are both pretty much the same."

The Rebbe, noting the subtle change in his disciple's demeanor, said, "I eat apples and you eat apples. I recite blessings and you recite blessings. The difference is that when I get up in the morning and see the wonders of the world, I want to recite a blessing to express my love of Hashem, so I must 'use' the apple to enable me to recite a blessing.

But when you arise in the morning, your first thought is "I'm hungry." So you take an apple, recite the blessing, and eat it. You make a blessing so that you can eat the apple, while I eat an apple so that I can make a blessing." (Adapted from The Maggid Speaks by Rabbi Pesach Krohn, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publ., p. 163)

One morning, a disciple of R' Aharon HaGadol, the first Rebbe of Karlin, came to visit him. During their conversation, the Rebbe's attendant brought a plate of fruit. The Rebbe chose an apple and fervently recited the appropriate blessing, thanking Hashem for the fruits of the tree. He then cut off a slice and ate it.

The chassid sat across from his Rebbe and a thought flashed through his mind. "We both

**THEME:**

An essential concept of the prayer

Heavenly Help

Even though a person's spiritual success is something a person must achieve for himself, Hashem will help those who pray for His help.

**INSIGHT:**

Deeper meanings of the theme

Praying for Spiritual Success

In this segment of ובא לציון we pray for spirituality by asking Hashem to open our heart through His Torah and imbue our heart with love and awe of Him, so that we may do His will and serve Him wholeheartedly: הוא יפתח לבנו בתורתו, וישים בלבנו אהבתו ויראתו לעשות שלם רצונו ולעבדו בלבב שלם. Yet, this request seems to contradict the Gemara's (Berachos 33b) conclusion that spirituality is in Man's hands.

The Maharsha (Kiddushin 81b, Shabbos 156b, Moed Katan 28a, and Berachos 10a) resolves the question, explaining that by praying for spirituality, a person receives Heavenly assistance that

enables him to ascend far beyond his personal spiritual limitations. He cites Chazal's (Yoma 38b) promise that, "One who comes to purify himself (*bah l'tahair*) receives *siyata d'Shmaya*—Divine assistance, and without Divine assistance it is impossible to withstand temptation" (Kiddushin 30b). Therefore, the person praying for spiritual assistance is, in effect, coming to purify himself. In fact, such a prayer is necessary for his spiritual success as Rav Yisroel Salanter (cited in Michtav M'Eliyahu, Volume 3, page 277) teaches, "even in our days it is certain that prayer for spirituality is always accepted."

**VISUALIZE:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

Getting on Board

Someone who boards a flight to England will, most likely, end up in England. Someone who boards a flight for China will most probably end up there. Certainly, boarding



the flight is only a small part of the task of getting to the destination. The rest is in the hands of the pilot. However,

the first, most essential choice is which plane the person boards.

Choosing the direction in which we wish to go in our spiritual lives constitutes the first and most important element of spiritual success. Once we choose our destination, Hashem will do His part to help us get there.

**Try This!**

Sometimes our spiritual lives get complicated. We pray fervently for something that never happens. We try to do better with our performance of mitzvos but never seem to get anywhere. We become tangled in confusion about what Hashem wants from us and where we stand in His eyes. That's the time to stop thinking and just open our hearts – just feel the unconditional love of a child to his father. For a moment, when saying the words וישים בלבנו אהבתו ויראתו לעשות רצונו imbue our heart with love and awe of Him and that we may do His will, try turning down the volume in your brain and listening closely to the call of your heart.

**Did You Know**

▶ **Praying for Righteous Children**

A father and a mother should perpetually entreat that their children should become Torah students, righteous and of good character. Accordingly, one should have intense *kavannah* when he says the words ולא ניגע לדיק ולא נלד לבהלה, so that we will not struggle in vain nor produce for futility, in the ובא לציון prayer (Mishneh Berurah 47:10).