

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

**BIRCHAS HASHACHAR**

*What Doesn't Happen*

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

May it be Your will, Hashem, my G-d, and the G-d of my forefathers, **that You rescue me today and every day...**

ויהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי  
ואלקי אבותי שתצילני  
היום ובכל יום...

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



This personal prayer was recited by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi every day after the morning prayer (Berachos 16b). It is a prayer for protection in day-to-day dealings with one's fellow man. In the previous יהי רצון (said after the blessing (המעביר שנה) we also requested Hashem's blessing. However, in that prayer we asked for protection as a nation in the communal merit of the Jewish nation. In fact the blessing ends לעמו ישראל הגומל חסדים טובים.

In this tefillah "שתצילני היום ובכל יום," the **individual** asks Hashem for protection when he, personally, not having the communal merit, is threatened by impending danger (Rav Schwab on Prayer, Page 47).

**THEME:**

An essential concept of the prayer

**Our Only Protection**

It is only through Hashem's grace that we are protected from the many dangers, both physical and spiritual, that lurk around us.

**INSIGHT:**

Deeper meanings of the theme

**Keeping Us From Harm**

Look at the world around you for a moment. The air is filled with microbes. The city streets harbor legions of felons. On the highways, drivers who are tired, distracted or just don't drive very well speed along at 70 miles an hour. It's a miracle that a person makes it through a day.

Looking at the world from a Jewish perspective, it is indeed a miracle — **a miracle wrought by our daily prayers.** The "answer" to our prayers we are looking for when we pray is all around us, in the disasters that don't happen, the diseases that don't strike, the enemies that don't attack. Hashem answers us in ways we cannot readily perceive.

The *Bnei Yissaschar* explains the following verses with this important concept: *Praise*

*Hashem, all nations; praise Him, all the states! For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of Hashem is eternal. (Tehillim, 117:1-2)*

Why would the nations praise Hashem for His goodness on our behalf? How do they even know of the favor that Hashem bestows on His people?

The fact is that the nations of the world are actually more aware than we of Hashem's kindness toward us, because they know of the plots being planned against us — schemes of which we are completely ignorant. That ignorance stems from the fact that Hashem prevents the misfortune of those evil plots from even approaching us.

**VISUALIZE:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

**How Hashem Helps**

SCENARIO #1

A man is accosted by a criminal who waves a gun in his direction and demands his wallet. Suddenly, a police officer on a routine patrol notices the crime in progress and rescues the victim.

SCENARIO #2

Another young man is walking down the street, when he notices the commotion in an alleyway as the police arrest the criminal. Had he left his



home a minute earlier, he would have been the victim!

SCENARIO #3

A pedestrian decides to take the longer "scenic route" through the park to work. He'll never know that a criminal had been lying in wait along his usual route.

At the conclusion of birchas Avos in our daily Shemoneh

*Esrei* we say that Hashem is a Helper (*Ozeir*), a Savior (*Moshia*) and a Shield (*Magen*). Rav Dessler (*Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Volume 4, page 65) explains that these words represent the three levels of Heavenly Help a person may receive. Hashem can help a person in the midst of danger; He can save the person from the impact of danger; or, He can provide a shield, behind which the person lives in tranquil security. Thus, **even though we are completely unaware of it, we may be benefiting greatly from Hashem's help.**

**Try This!**

Imagine a huge corporation whose workers are blissfully unaware that a major downsizing is being considered as a means of improving the company's bottom line. At the last moment, the top executives spare the staff of the dreaded "axe."

A Jewish employee fervently praying for his livelihood in prayer on a daily basis has no idea that Hashem responded to his heartfelt prayers by enabling him to keep his job. Vividly imagine the profound sense of relief and gratitude that would flood your heart if you heard that the business' owners were contemplating laying off workers in this 'down economy', but then changed their mind. Take that feeling of relief with you when you say the words "שתצילני היום ובכל יום" "rescue me today and every day."

**Did You Know**

**In Your Own Words**

Tur (Siman 46) states that during the recitation of the יהי רצון **one may add his personal requests for G-d's help during the day.** The Chofetz Chaim (*Sha'ar Haztiyun*, Siman 230, Os 8) states that in everything that a person does, he must ask Hashem that things should work out well.

He further states (*Kisvei Chafetz Chaim*, *Kuntras Likutei Amorim*, Ch. 10) that one should pray **throughout the day**, from the depths of his heart, for such a prayer for certainly will not return empty.

In his will, Rav Yonah Landsofer (*Sheilos U'Teshuvos Me'il Tzedakah*) wrote: *No one should refrain from praying in his own language after the morning service to request his personal needs.*

Chazon Ish (*Chazon Ish on Orach Chaim*, Siman 137, *Se'if Katan* 5) adds that one's personal prayers, even when said outside the *Shemoneh Esrei*, may include Hashem's Name. He advises using the formulation, "...ויהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי..." "May it be Your will Hashem my G-d..." (see Orach Chaim, Siman 230:4).