

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

ברכת קריאת שמע: לא-ל ברוך...  
*Awaiting the New Light*

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

...May You shine a new light on Zion, and may we all speedily merit its light. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who fashions the luminaries.

...אור חדש על ציון תאיר,  
ונזכה כלנו מהרה  
לאורו. ברוך אתה ה',  
יוצר המאורות.

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



**Y**aavetz (*Siddur Yaavetz*)

explains that the "new light" – "אור חדש" -- is actually a return of the original brilliance of creation, which was hidden away to be enjoyed by the righteous in the Messianic era. *Rambam (Hilchos Melachim 12:5)* teaches that during the Messianic era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor strife. All good things will be

bestowed in abundance, and all delicacies will be as accessible as dust. Further, he states (*Rambam, Peirush HaMishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1*), "in those [Messianic] days it will be so much easier for people to earn a livelihood up to the point that one will work very little in a business and will achieve great profit. In the Messianic era, the overwhelming preoccupations with politics, wars, scandals, and headlines will simply vanish, to be replaced by one intense passion — to know G-d."

**THEME:**

An essential concept of the prayer

*The Hidden Treasure*

The glorious light of creation has been hidden away for us to revel in when the era of Mashiach arrives.

**INSIGHT:**

Deeper meanings of the theme

*Bringing On the Light*

As noted in "Word to the Wise," "אור חדש" refers to the time of Mashiach's arrival. When that time will be depends on us. Mashiach can arrive suddenly — "*achishenah*," (*Sanhedrin 98a*) or at the final designated time. *Ohr Gedalyahu (Bereishis, p. 129, s.v. v'inyan zeh)* teaches that in order for Mashiach to come "*achishenah*," we must prepare the "receptacle" to receive the great "light" from above. If the era of Mashiach comes because we are worthy, then we **all** will merit its light and we will not have to suffer the "pangs of Mashiach," the upheaval that the sages foresaw as the prelude to the Final Redemption (*Ohr Yechezkel, Emunah, p. 313*).

In this vein, Eitz Yosef explains our request: "אור חדש על ציון תאיר", "May You shine a new light"—the light of Mashiach -- on Zion. "ונזכה כלנו מהרה לאורו", may Mashiach speedily arrive—"achishenah"-- as we merit his

coming. In that way, "כלנו", we all will enjoy his arrival. And rather than going through the "pangs of Mashiach" we desire לאורו that we will immediately enjoy the great "light" of Mashiach.

*Tehillim (95:7)* declares: "This day if you will listen to His voice!" Every generation has a special time of its own, as Mashiach is alive and present in every generation, subject to Israel's merit, albeit concealed. He is ready to be revealed at a moment's notice.

How can we prepare for such a glorious event? By revitalizing our devotion to unity with our fellow Jews, honoring Shabbos, intensifying our tefillah, charity, Torah learning, and teshuvah, we can forge a connection to G-d. This will enable the Jewish people to hasten the Final Redemption, and hopefully to greet Mashiach Tzidkeinu, "*achishenah*," in our times.

**VISUALIZE:**

Images that bring the prayer to life

*Don't Sleep Through It!*

Rav Chaim Kanievsky was recently asked (cited in a Hakhel lecture, January 16, 2012) what people should be davening for on a general basis over and above their individual needs. Rav Kanievsky responded, "for Mashiach to come!"

*A traveler set out on the road in a wagon. Fearful of nighttime marauders, he*



*chose to sleep during the day and remain awake at night. He would awaken just as the moon began to rise, and fall asleep with the first glimmer of sun. When he arrived at his destination, he asked the wagon-driver why his route, which was known for its scenic*

*beauty, had been so dark and dismal. The driver answered, "The scenery was beautiful. The sun shone every day, but you never saw it, because you slept through it all."*

The Jewish people are like this traveler, as the Dubno Maggid expounds (cited in *Ohr Gedalyahu, Vayikra, p. 82, fn. 8*). That is because the Jewish people have "slept through" a potential time of redemption, many times throughout history. Yet the potential is always there. We only have to open our eyes.

**Try This!**

► The light of dawn brings the promise of a new day. Carried in its golden rays are possibilities – perhaps yesterday's problem will be solved, yesterday's pain will be soothed, yesterday's hopes will be fulfilled. Imagine a golden ray of dawn's light, carrying with it all the hope and freshness of a brand new day. Imagine the "light" of Mashiach carrying with it the hope of a new spiritual world. Think of that image when you say "אור חדש על ציון תאיר, ונזכה כלנו מהרה לאורו".

**Did You Know**

► *The Earliest Times*

From *alos ha'shachar*, the crack of dawn, until *m'she'yakir*, neither *Shema* nor its blessings may be recited (*Siman 58:1; see Beior Halachah, Siman 89:1; Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:6*). If, however, one mistakenly did recite *Shema* or its blessings during this time, he need not repeat them later on provided that this "mistake" takes place infrequently (*Siman 58:4, Mishneh Berurah, ibid:17*).

If under extenuating circumstances, one would be unable to recite *Shema* later (e.g., due to work, travel or medical reasons), he is permitted to recite *Shema* at this time (*O.C. Siman 58:3 and Mishneh Berurah*). The blessing of *Yotzer Ohr*, however, is omitted and should be said later on (*Mishneh Berurah 58:17 and Beior Halachah, s.v. belo*).