

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Redeeming the Children

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Blessed are You, Hashem... Who recalls the kindness of the Patriarchs and brings a Redeemer to their children's children, for His Name's sake, with love...

ברוך אתה ה'... וזוכר
חסדי אבותי ומביא
גואל לבני בנייהם
למען שמו באהבה...

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, Who recalls the kindness of the Patriarchs - Hashem recalls the charity and benevolence performed by our Avos as if they were being performed today. They are a merit in our Heavenly account, available to us when we identify fully as their children, claiming to Hashem that "These are our Forefathers!"

וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, And (Hashem) brings a Redeemer (Mashiach)- In the light of these words, we can see that our difficulties serve a purpose. They are all part of the preparation for the Final Redemption. Moreover, the phrase וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה is written in the present tense - the Redemption is a constant work in progress. Every event,

no matter how terrible it may seem, is a step toward the ultimate arrival of *Mashiach* (*Siach Yitzhak*).

וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, To their children's children - At the end of all generations, even if the merit of our Patriarchs has been totally depleted, Hashem will eventually bring Mashiach (*Baruch She'amar*)

וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, For His Name's sake - For the sake of Hashem's Name, He will reveal His honor and glory to the nations of the world; this is the purpose and objective of Creation.

וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, With love — Everything Hashem does is with love, and is for the purpose of bringing the Final Redemption. Even the current Diaspora, with all its torment, is part of a plan motivated by Divine love.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Promise Redeemed

Hashem will redeem the Jewish people as He promised to our Forefathers.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Guarantee of Redemption

Hashem promises that וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, He will bring the Final Redemption. This is in fulfillment of G-d's promise to Avraham (*Bereishis* 12:2): "And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great ..." Yet, the Jewish people have suffered like no other nation. How can the two be reconciled?

The Chofetz Chaim (*Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah, Bereishis* 48:3, p. 79) explains that when Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers and declares, "I am Yosef" (*Bereishis* 45:3), G-d's master plan becomes clear to the brothers. Everything that had happened during the previous twenty-two years suddenly falls into perspective. Likewise, when the time comes for G-d to reveal Himself and announce, "I am Hashem!" the veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will comprehend everything that transpired throughout history. In the full light of redemption, we will also

recognize how every episode of the exile, no matter how terrible it may seem, was the work of the Creator, aimed at bringing the world to perfection. Rav Dessler (*Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 3, p. 245) draws this message from the words of *Shir HaMaalos* said on Shabbos and Yomim Tovim prior to reciting the Grace After Meals: "When Hashem will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers." When the return to Zion (Jerusalem) comes, the suffering of past oppressions will seem like a dream (*Tehillim* 126:1) — a vaporous non-entity leading us to open our eyes to the true reality.

That the Final Redemption will come — this is G-d's promise. By revitalizing our devotion to G-d, we can forge a connection to Him that will enable the Jewish people to hasten the Final Redemption, and hopefully to greet *Mashiach Tzidkeinu* in our times.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Retrieving the Treasure

A king, concerned with the ultimate welfare of his descendants, stored a large treasure in a hidden cavern in a far-off province of his land. He knew that there would come a time when his kingdom would face fierce enemies and desperate straits, and that this great treasure would lift his descendants above their troubles and enable them to set the kingdom upon a higher plane of existence. When that time would come, the entire kingdom would recognize the greatness and foresight of the king who had seen to their needs so many years ago. The



descendants would only need to prove their relationship to the king in order to claim their treasure. How could they do that generations or perhaps even centuries down the line? By maintaining the ways of the king's household, no matter what else was going on around them. To this end, the king wrote a document - a promise to his descendants - that when the time was right - when they had no other place to turn, no other means to survive - they would find this treasure and

carry the kingdom forward into a glowing new era.

Because of the firm promise of deliverance, the king's offspring continue in the ways of their father. Because they know that this deliverance will come only when they are completely reliant on the king's legacy, they know that a world of shrinking options and growing troubles is in fact a road to this deliverance. Likewise, when we see our troubles as a spur to turn only to Hashem, to emulate the ways of our Forefathers and claim ourselves as their children, we bring the world closer to the "right time" for our promised treasure to be retrieved.

Try This!

▶ A grandfather looks at his grandchildren with special affection. Their flaws are overlooked and their sweetness and goodness shine through in his eyes. In this verse of Shemoneh Esrei in which we say וזוכר חסדי אבותי באהבה, "Hashem brings a Redeemer to their (Patriarchs') children's children," think of that grandfatherly love.

Did You Know

▶ **Addressing Hashem**

Last week's "Did You Know" explained that understanding the words one says in *Shemoneh Esrei* is essential. But knowing and feeling that these words are being addressed to an exalted and holy King are more essential still. Otherwise, one performs a recitation, not a prayer. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Siman* 98, *Se'if* 1) defines the correct state of mind:

"(One) should regard it as if the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) is before him...for if he was speaking before a human king, he would arrange his words and concentrate on them so that he would not stumble or fail. How much more so before the King of kings Who examines all thoughts and intentions."

Rav Moshe Feinstein would stand motionless and erect when reciting *Shemoneh Esrei*. When asked why, he related that he was once brought in for interrogation by the Communist authorities in the city of Luban, Russia, and forced to stand at attention during the entire ordeal. Rav Moshe resolved that from that time on, he would do the same when reciting *Shemoneh Esrei*. After all, he reasoned, standing at attention in Luban was a display of submissiveness to the Russian authorities; surely Hashem, *Melech malchai ha'melachim*, the King of all kings, deserved no less (Cited in "Five Great Lives", Mesorah Publications, page 174).