

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Daily Redemption

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Behold our affliction, take up our grievance, and **redeem us** speedily for Your Name's sake, for You are the powerful Redeemer. Blessed are You, Hashem, Redeemer of Israel.

ראה בענינו, וריבה
ריבנו, וגאלנו
מהרה למען שמך,
כי גואל חזק אתה.
ברוך אתה ה', גואל
ישראל.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



In this seventh blessing of Shemoneh Esrei, we pray for redemption from everyday troubles and request that Hashem relieve hardships which come our way. Rashi (Megilah 17b) explains that the reference to "redemption" in this blessing does not refer to the ultimate Redemption. It is in the later blessings of Shemoneh Esrei that we ask Hashem to gather the exiles (blessing 10), rebuild Jerusalem (blessing 14), and bring Mashiach (blessing 15). In fact, Bais Yosef (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 115) writes that this blessing of redemption, וגאלנו, refers to each

and every difficult situation from which we beseech Hashem to redeem us.

Rav Shamshon Rafael Hirsch explains that with the phrase ראה בענינו "behold our affliction," we ask Hashem to save us from *tzaros* which are not caused by other human beings (such as floods, economic downturns, diseases and so forth). In וריבה ריבנו "take up our grievance," we ask Him to redeem us from the *tzaros* caused by human beings (criminals, terrorists, enemy forces, etc.). The blessing concludes in the present tense—גואל ישראל, Redeemer of Israel—because we truly experience some form of *geulah* every day.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Forgiveness and Redemption

When we gain Hashem's forgiveness for our sins, we gain redemption from the suffering our sins cause us.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Free From Suffering

This blessing is connected to the previous one in which we requested Hashem's forgiveness without exacting suffering as punishment. Once an individual has repented and sincerely asked for Hashem's forgiveness, suffering as punishment is unnecessary.

Everyone experiences difficulties and pain. What is the purpose of *tzaros* that we all experience? One explanation arises out of the episode of the spies (Bamidbar 13:2) that Hashem permitted Moshe Rabbeinu to send into the land of Canaan (Eretz Yisroel). Rashi (Ibid.) points out that this episode is juxtaposed with the story of Miriam's criticism of Moshe Rabbeinu and her punishment. The reason for this, he states, is to demonstrate that the nation should have seen Miriam's punishment and learned from it the gravity of malicious slander. Instead, the spies slandered the Land of Israel and brought disaster upon the nation.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (Sichos Mussar, Ma'amar 74, *Zechiras Ma'aseh Miriam*, page 325; Ma'amar 17, *Midah Keneged Midah*, page 71) elucidates Rashi's point:

"[One] purpose of G-d's punishment is corrective, to notify the recipient that he must mend his ways. In addition, Divine retribution is meted out *midah k'neged midah*, measure for measure, to enable a person to pinpoint his sin and to improve that which needs correction."

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz applies this important concept to the Chazal (Berachos 12b) which states: "Anyone who commits a sin and is embarrassed by it is forgiven for all his sins [those for which he is embarrassed]." Since the purpose of punishment is to force a person to recognize his misdeeds, it follows that if a person comes to this recognition on his own, as evidenced by his embarrassment, his sins are forgiven and no further punishment is necessary.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Redemption From Troubles

Two little boys chased a stray cat across the lawn. Finally, it stopped running and lay down in a shady spot under some shrubbery. One of the boys ventured in after the cat, aiming to pet its soft gray coat. The boy's mother, standing at a distance, shouted, "Don't touch! If you bother the cat, it might scratch you!" But the little boy was too fascinated to listen and too fast to be stopped. He reached out his hand and the cat took a protective swipe at



him, leaving a raw red scratch down his arm. His friend, who witnessed the entire episode from a safer distance a few feet away, quickly grabbed the injured boy's hand and ran with him in the opposite direction. No one needed to tell him to stay away from the cat. Nor would anyone ever again have to warn the injured boy to stay away from stray cats.

When we ask Hashem to

redeem us from our troubles, we do so either in the position of the injured boy in the above story, or from the position of his friend. Sometimes we commit a sin and the negative consequences of our act bring us to the realization that we must do complete teshuvah. No more suffering is needed, for we will never stray onto that dangerous path again. Other times, we are like the second boy; we see the results of someone else's wrong turn and commit ourselves to the right path. Thus, our redemption from troubles comes as a result of our pre-emptive realization.

Try This!

► Think of a particular difficulty you have been having in your life. When you say ראה בענינו, וריבה ריבנו וגאלנו imagine that Hashem lifts that difficulty right off your shoulders.

Did You Know

► **Getting Personal**

The blessings of the *Shemoneh Esrei* relate to every area of human aspiration, both material and spiritual. Each blessing offers an opportunity to present one's personal requests to Hashem. Rabbi Yehudah Ha'Chasid (*Sefer Chasidim, Siman 158*) states, "When you pray, add to each relevant *berachah* that which pertains to it for your needs, because that will prepare the heart to pray with proper concentration." There are several places throughout the *Shemoneh Esrei* in which one may insert personal requests: in each of the middle blessings, in the *berachah* of *Shema Koleinu* or in *Elokai Netzor*. Next week we will begin to explain where to add these important requests.