

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Your Share of Hashem's Bounty

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Bless on our behalf—O Hashem, our G-d—this year and all its kinds of crops for the best, and give (blessing [Summer]; blessing—dew and rain [Winter]) on the face of the earth, and satisfy us from Your bounty, and bless our year like the best years for blessing. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who blesses the years.

ברך עלינו ה' אלקינו
את השנה הזאת ואת כל
מיני תבואתה לטובה. ותן
(בקץ - ברכה) (בחורף -
טל ומטר לברכה) על פני
האדמה ושבענו מטובך.
וברך שנתנו כשנים הטובות.
ברוך אתה ה', מברך השנים.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



The *Ashkenaz* text is ושבענו מטובך, "and satisfy us from Your bounty" (*Mishneh Berurah, Siman 117:1*). The *Rosh* writes that by saying ושבענו מטובך we are asking Hashem to satiate us from His goodness. The *Sefer Ya'aros Devash* adds that ושבענו מטובך indicates that we want our sustenance to come from that which is good to Hashem—without even a small amount of stealing or inappropriately obtained funds. Alternatively, ושבענו מטובך means we are asking Hashem to satiate us with even a modest livelihood, as *Rashi* (*Vayikra 26:5*) states that one can eat even a little and still feel satiated (*Sefer Avnei Eliyahu*).

The *Sefard* text is ושבענו מטובה (*Siddur of the Ariz"l, Ma'aseh Rav, Iyun Tefillah, Mishneh Berurah, Siman 117:1*). This is not a request that Hashem satiate us from His goodness but rather, that Hashem satiate us from the good with which Eretz Yisroel was blessed—"Eretz zavav chalah u'devash," a land flowing with milk and honey. As the words in this blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei* state, על פני האדמה ושבענו מטובה, "on the face of the earth, we request that Hashem satisfy us from its bounty," referring to *Eretz Yisrael*, which is the *אדמה*. (Adapted from *Hakhel, E-mail Community Awareness Bulletin, Focus on Tefillah Archive*)

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

The Only Provider

By praying for material sustenance, we acknowledge that Hashem is the ultimate cause of our success.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Turning Over the Controls

Of all the *hishtadlus* (effort) a person can apply toward earning a living, there is one "trick of the trade" that helps to ensure success. That is to pray with sincerity for financial success (*Maharsha on Kiddushin 29b*). By praying with kavannah, a person illustrates unequivocally that he knows to Whom he must turn to obtain his daily bread.

The owner of a fast-growing business comes to the realization that he lacks the expertise to manage his company's finances. He carefully researches the field and finds a highly qualified business manager to reorganize the business. However, the owner cannot bear to completely give up control of the finances. Therefore, he tells the manager, "You run half the business and I will keep control of the other half." The manager consents to the arrangement, and watches in dismay as the owner's half of the company's affairs continue to descend into chaos. The manager realizes, however, that if the owner will not hand over control, he cannot help him.

Bitachon in Hashem's management of one's livelihood operates much like the allegory

above illustrates. Hashem manages, guides and protects the livelihoods of those who hand Him control. Those who imagine that they can succeed on the strength of their own ability, however, make a choice that subjects them to the rule of the natural forces Hashem has put into the world (*Chovos Hal'vovos beginning of Sha'ar Habitachon*).

The prayer of "Boreich Aleinu" in *Shemoneh Esrei* begins, ברך עלינו ה' אלקינו את השנה הזאת "Bless on our behalf—O Hashem, our G-d—this year...", voices one's recognition of the Divine source of the sustenance given to the natural world. It echoes the Gemara's (*Shabbos, 107b*) description that Hashem, "sits [in Heaven above] and provides food and sustenance [for every living organism below], from the huge mammoths to the microscopic insect eggs".

In this light, it is fitting that the blessing concludes in the present tense, מברך ה', "Blessed are You, Hashem, Who blesses the years." This expresses our firm belief that Hashem will fulfill His promise to bless the years to come.

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Knowing It's There

Boruch's little boy fell down and gashed his knee. Boruch's wife tried to comfort the wailing child while cleaning off his wound. "Can you get a bandage from the medicine cabinet?" she asked Boruch. He searched and found an empty bandage box. "I'll run out and buy some," he offered. Wishing to get back home in a hurry, he first stopped at a convenience store down the block. Maybe,



just maybe, they'd have what he needed. "By any chance, do you carry bandages?" he asked. Not surprisingly, the answer was "no." A produce market a few doors down, which had a small grocery section, was his next stop. He walked in, looked around tentatively and ran back out again. "I'd better just go straight to the

drug store," he decided. This time, he walked in confidently, asked for the item he needed, paid and headed home.

There's a big difference between our approach to a "maybe" and our approach to a certainty. When we have certainty, we speak and act with confidence. We state our needs clearly because we know that what we need is there for us. This is the spirit in which we say "Boreich aleinu." Hashem has what we need, and is waiting for us to ask.

Try This!

► All the sustenance that is there for us in a given year is stored away for us, awaiting our prayers. Imagine that storehouse, containing the food you will eat, the money you will earn, the items you will buy, and all the earthly goods you will enjoy this year. When you say the words ברך עלינו ה' אלקינו think of the vault door opening, releasing for you and your family, today's portion of your sustenance.

Did You Know

► **Where to Ask**

Last week's issue stated that a person may insert personal requests into each of the middle blessings. According to *Rabbeinu Yonah* (*Siman 119, Se'if 1*) when a person is making a request on behalf of many people (*Mishnah Berurah, Ibid:5*) he should phrase it in the plural and he should only add it at the end of the blessing before he says the words ברוך אתה ה'. This is because one must make the prayer which was ordained by the Sages the principal part of the blessing and his personal request should be secondary.