

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

To Be Set Free

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the banner to gather our exiles and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who gathers in the dispersed of His people Israel.

תקע בשופר גדול
לחרותנו. ושא נס
לקבץ גליותינו. וקבענו
יחד מארבע כנפות
הארץ. ברוך אתה ה'
מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word



In this tenth blessing, we pray that Hashem remove the hardships of exile: "Sound the great shofar for our freedom," תקע

awaken those who have become lost due to their total involvement in the pleasures and comforts of this world. As the Rambam (Hilchos Rosh Hashanah) says: "the sound of the shofar is intended to wake up [spiritual] slumberers from their slumber."

A second spiritual redemption will occur through seeing the banner held up high—ושא נס לקבץ גליותינו. The Hebrew word for banner is נס which is also the Hebrew word for miracle. These words express the spiritual heights we will reach when we witness the outstanding and extraordinary miracles that will occur in the process of redemption (Sefer Sifsei Chaim—Rinas Chaim, Page 145).

בשופר גדול לחרותנו to gather our exiles" from the enslavement by other nations, ושא נס לקבץ גליותינו (Maharal, Netzach Yisroel, Perek 1).

The phrases תקע בשופר... ושא נס לקבץ גליותינו reveal that there will be two means of spiritual redemption. One will occur through hearing the shofar—תקע בשופר. Rav Tzadok HaKohen (Sefer Machshovos Charutz, Ose 13) explains that in the Final Redemption, when the exiles are gathered, a "great shofar" will be needed to

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

All Kinds of Exile

The prayer for redemption includes all situations that "exile us" from our service to Hashem.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Shades of Redemption

From the fourth through the ninth blessing in Shemoneh Esrei, we pray to Hashem for individual needs, namely: intelligence, teshuvah, forgiveness, relief from our daily troubles, health and healing, and prosperity. This tenth blessing -- along with the fourteenth blessing in which we ask Hashem to rebuild Jerusalem and the fifteenth blessing which concerns the arrival of Mashiach -- deals with the elements of the future redemption of Klal Yisroel (Rashi, Megilah, 17b).

However, our request for freedom from exile in this blessing also applies to the personal exile experienced by those whose evil inclination has driven their neshamah "into exile", and to those who cannot perform mitzvos because of their troubles (Sefer Me'or Aina'im, Parshas Tzav).

In 1991, with the disappearance of the Soviet Union, we merited to see the beginning of the ingathering of Klal Yisroel from that region of

the world. During the Communist oppression of Judaism of the 1930's and onward, the Chafetz Chaim and R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski sent letters to Jewish communities all over the world telling them about the closing of shuls and schools, about rabbis exiled to Siberia, and Torah scrolls burned in the streets. What advice to worldwide Jewry did those letters contain? "Pray for our people! Pray! Pray! Pray!"

And pray they did! For decades, Jews the world over prayed and cried for Russian Jewry trapped behind the Iron Curtain. So what happened to the millions of prayers? In the most miraculous and astounding way, G-d used these prayers to bring down the Soviet Union. When the right time came, it was over.

Remember the advice of the Chafetz Chaim and R' Chaim Ozer "Pray for our people! Pray! Pray! Pray!" (With Hearts Full of Faith, Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, Art Scroll, page 250.)

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Finding Real Freedom

The first day after the blizzard, the children were thrilled. Freedom! A day off from school – maybe even two! By the third day, they were becoming cranky and demanding. "There's nothing to do!" they complained as they sat amid a pile of board games, arts and crafts projects and snack food. Their freedom



had become a trap itself, for it kept them from really engaging in meaningful activity and enjoying the energizing feeling of accomplishment.

Likewise, the real exile of the Jewish people is the separation—caused by political oppression,

cultural influences, financial worries, health issues and so forth—between our souls and their Source. When we pray to witness and hear the harbingers of cheiruseinu—our freedom—it's not freedom from responsibility, but the freedom to fulfill our responsibilities to Hashem with clarity and joy, unobstructed by the cares and lures of the material world.

Try This!

► Think of the most stirring, heart-piercing tekiah gedolah you have ever heard on Rosh Hashana or the blow during the final moment of Yom Kippur. Think of how the sound literally penetrated your heart, shaking loose everything that weighed it down. Each second of the sound, as it intensified to seemingly impossible levels, brought you closer and closer to a feeling of utter purity and closeness to Hashem. Hear that shofar sound in your mind and heart, and feel it setting your neshama free, when you say the words תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו.

Did You Know

► Asking for Yourself

Last week's "Did You Know," explained that one may insert personal requests in each of the middle blessings. When a person is making a request on behalf of many people (Mishnah Berurah, 119:5) he should phrase it in the plural and he should only add it at the end of the blessing before he has said the words ברוך אתה ה'.

However, one is permitted to insert his request in the middle of the blessing when praying for his own needs, such as for a member of his household. In that case, he should express himself in the singular. When a person makes an addition to a blessing, he should begin with the wording of the blessing and make the addition subsequently. He should not make the addition first and then begin the wording of the blessing (Orach Chaim, Siman 119:1).