

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Hoping and Waiting

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

The offspring of Your servant David may you speedily cause to flourish, and enhance his pride through Your salvation, **for we hope for Your salvation all the day.** Blessed are You, Hashem, Who causes the pride of salvation to flourish.

את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה
תצמיח, וקרנו תרום
בישועתך, כי לישועתך
קוינו כל היום. ברוך
אתה ה', מצמיח קרן ישועה.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

In this fifteenth blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say "את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה" – the offspring of Your servant David may you speedily cause to flourish." *Zecharia* (Chapter 6, *Posuk* 12) teaches that *Mashiach's* name will be *צמח*, which means the sprouting or flourishing of a plant. The *Midrash* (*Tehillim*, *Mizmor* 18) explains that when a "tzomai'ach," a plant, is first planted, its seed lies dormant beneath the ground. After a time, when the seed sprouts and flourishes, its existence finally becomes evident and its hidden potential is realized.

The blessing "את צמח דוד" refers to the sprouting of the *geulah*, because the process is as gradual as that of a growing plant. One who continuously watches over a plant will not notice it growing, yet over time, it becomes obvious that the plant did indeed grow.

Similarly, it is as difficult for us to perceive how each challenging period of Jewish history contributes to the final redemption as it is for us to see a plant grow. Nevertheless, the seeds of the *geulah* are already present, waiting to be nurtured by Hashem.

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Always Possible

Every day we confirm our belief that today, *Mashiach* could come.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

The Merit of Hope

It seems like a very long journey from the present world to the times of *Mashiach*. Yet, the Jewish people keep going, traversing the rough terrain of history on a journey whose estimated time of arrival is unknown. In the face of centuries of wandering, our persistent faith that there is an ultimate destination, and that we will reach it, is in itself a tremendous merit for the Jewish people.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab (Adapted from "Selected Speeches," Rav Shimon Schwab, CIS Publishers, Abridged Edition, Page 27-28) once commented that if he were asked what merit the Jewish people possess that makes them deserving of *Mashiach*, he would answer,

Because of our emunah that Mashiach will come and our continued bitachon despite constant disappointments....Normally, a person who is disappointed over and over again would give

up. Yet, my father and yours, and my mother and yours, and our grandparents and great-grandparents, year after year at the Pesach Seder, all said 'next year in Jerusalem.' Then came another year, and another Seder, and Mashiach still did not come. Nevertheless, they did not stop singing 'next year in Jerusalem'...

This requires emunah and bitachon. And if we ask what our generation can say for itself as to why it deserves the coming of Mashiach, we reply that we deserve it for one reason: We didn't give up! ... We don't know the word 'y'ush,' to give up.

The *Chafetz Chaim* (*Tzipisa L'Yeshua*, Chapter 1) similarly explains, "With the length of the exile, the merits of the Jewish people grow and become greater from generation to generation from the merits...of their waiting and hoping for the coming of *Mashiach* for such a long time..."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Birth from Destruction

The child takes a peach pit and plants it in a special spot in his back yard. Beneath the soil, the pit is anything but safe. The rain comes and soaks the soil, which softens and decays the pit's rock-hard casing. The ants and worms in the soil nibble away, bit by minute bit, at the tasty morsel. The summer heat furthers the



forces of decay. The little boy laments – how is a tree ever going to grow if the pit gets ruined? But at last, after weeks of abuse at the hands of the weather and the insects, the peach pit pushes a tiny shoot through the soil. The breakdown of the pit was not an

obstacle; it was the vehicle through which the tree would sprout.

Likewise, our *geulah* will sprout like a plant. Not in spite of the challenges, but because of the challenges, persecution, pain and destruction we endure, the hard shell of the yetzer hora will soften and decay, at last propelling the pure spiritual essence of Klal Yisrael to emerge full-force into the world.

Try This!

► The image of something sprouting brings to mind a shoot poking through the soil – something dormant that at last bursts through a barrier into full view. Imagine that moment of a shoot bursting through the soil; one moment you see dirt, and the next, you see a tiny speck of green poking through. Think of the seeds of the *yeshuah* that lay dormant right now, and the future, pivotal moment of break-through, when you pray in this *blessing* for Hashem's *yeshuah* to come.

Did You Know

► *Fulfilling the Mitzvah*

The Gemara (*Shabbos*, 31a) teaches that when each of us gives an account in the World to Come of our actions in this world, one of the questions will be "Tzipisah l'yeshua," did you hope for the *yeshuah*; did you truly wait hopefully every day for the coming of *Mashiach*?

According to the *Arizal* (see *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Orach Chaim*, *Siman* 118), the place in *davening* where one hopes for the *geulah* is in the blessing "את צמח דוד" when we say "כִּי לִישׁוּעַתְךָ קוִינּוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם." Therefore, one should have *kavannah* to fulfill the mitzvah of *tzipisa l'yeshuah* when reciting "כִּי לִישׁוּעַתְךָ קוִינּוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם."