



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative

When I was a child, I lived with the innocent belief that the entire world was waiting expectantly for Mashiach to arrive. I grew up on songs like “We want Mashiach now and we don’t want to wait” and I thought that everyone lived with those ideals. I remember clearly when my assumptions were shattered. My sister came home from school laughing that a teacher had remarked that they would have a test the following day “unless Mashiach comes first”. She and everyone else thought that was such a random thing to say. Why would anyone think that Mashiach might actually arrive tomorrow? I remember being very disturbed by this conversation I had overheard and how I mulled it over in my head for many days afterwards.

This very same dialectic shouts out at me when I recite the bracha of את צמח דוד.

את צמח דוד עבדך מְהֵרָה תִצְמִיחַ. וְקֵרְנוּ תְרוֹם בְּיִשׁוּעָתְךָ.
כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוִינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מִצְמִיחַ קֶרֶן יִשְׁעוֹהָ:

The offspring of Your servant Dovid Hamelech may you speedily cause to flourish, and raise Him up with Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day long. Blessed are You, Hashem, who causes salvation to flourish.

The גרי"ז מבריסק explains that when we say the words of כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוִינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם, we should have in mind “that all day long, every single moment, we believe and are waiting for salvation, and there is no day or moment which is without longing for Mashiach”. While this description is beautiful, it is also a bit jarring, because I don’t know about you, but I’m not sure I can honestly say that I wait for Mashiach every single day, *all day long*. Is my mind constantly focused on Mashiach or am I bogged down with all the trivialities of this world? And even more scary a thought – Do I truly want Mashiach to come right now? Maybe I want him to come in theory, at some point in the future, but am I

ready for him to come *right now*? The words of this bracha put us to the test, challenging us to confront our innermost beliefs and desires and to assess where we are holding.

The אריז"ל explains that we shouldn’t view this Tefilla as a statement of how much we are waiting for Mashiach, but rather as a request to Hashem to help us get to that level. We are given the oppor-



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75 min. in length, with Hebrew subtitles

tunity three times a day to stop whatever we are doing and to focus for half a minute on what the ultimate goal is. He says that by utilizing this daily tool, we can work on ourselves so that when we go up to Shamayim, we will be able to answer the question of צפית לישועה (*did you wait expectantly for salvation*) with a resounding yes.

The מבי"ט writes that as we get closer and closer to the Geula, our Tefillot are all the more powerful. Each Tefilla that is recited in every generation for the past 2000 years brings us one step closer to the Geula. We should never think that our Tefillot are in vain or don't accomplish anything. Throughout history, there were many people who truly cried and yearned for Mashiach. Their Tefillot were not for nothing, they were simply laying the foundation for the prayers of future generations.

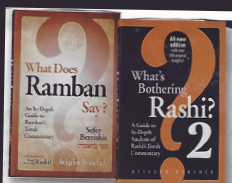
Our goal is to take those strong foundations and continue in our ancestors' footsteps by saying this Tefilla with Kavana and building up our yearning and desire for Mashiach. May all of those millions of Tefillot from throughout history combine together to ultimately penetrate the gates of Shamayim, bringing us the long awaited Mashiach, במהרה בימינו. ■

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