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AND

HEI TEVES: BRINGING GEULAH INTO OUR TEFILAH

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Q

What lesson can we take from Hei Teves that will help us in our avoda to bring Moshiach throughout the year? –Michoel B.

A

There are surely many answers, but here's one that I personally took away from Hei Teves a couple of years ago and of which I still often need to remind myself today.

The Rebbe once explained¹ that Hei Teves is an auspicious day to ask Hashem for the Geulah, based on the idea that the our tefilos are supposed to be prefaced by the concept of Geulah (“*semichas Geulah l'tefilah*”). In halacha, this simply means that we make sure not to have even the slightest interruption between our praise to Hashem for redeeming us from Mitzrayim (“*Baruch atah Hashem, Go'al Yisroel.*”) and the beginning of shemoneh esrei (in shacharis). In this context, however, the Rebbe explains that the Geulah of the seforim on Hei Teves creates an opportune time for our tefillos to be accepted—especially our tefillos for the Geulah, as the Rebbe explains there.

When I learned this for the first time, after shacharis on Hei Teves that year, I was very excited, and I felt the need to tell everyone I could reach that we had to use the remaining tefillos of the day to truly, sincerely ask Hashem for the Geulah Ha-Amitis v'Ha-Shleima—which the Rebbe already told us so strongly that we have earned.

But in the process of telling everyone that, I realized that I was missing something. Even though it is true that Hei Teves is a *particularly auspicious* day to sincerely ask Hashem for the Geulah, we really should be sincerely asking Him for it *every day*!

Of course, we all know this. In every weekday shemoneh esrei, we ask Hashem explicitly to be our Goel, to blow the great shofar to gather our exiles, to rebuild Yerushalayim, to send Moshiach ben Dovid as a source of salvation, to restore the avoda of the Beis HaMikdash, and to restore the Shechinah to Tzion (Yerushalayim). We also ask him for wisdom, the ability to do teshuva, forgiveness for our sins,

complete healing, parnassah, the end of heresy (or, according to Chassidus, all kelipah), our reward for serving Him, and peace for the whole Jewish people—all of which will only be given to us in a complete way after Moshiach comes. And all of this is prefaced with praises of Hashem which include His bringing a redeemer to the Jewish people and His faithfulness to resurrect the dead. So our daily prayers are replete with requests for Moshiach—and this is in the shemoneh esrei alone! If one would also analyze Hodu, Kaddish, bentching, the bracha me'ein shalosh, and other parts of the tefillos, one could probably write a whole sefer about all the references to Moshiach and Geulah in davening.

But the question we have to ask ourselves—myself included—is not how many times we say these words every day. It is how often we actually take the time to stop thinking about our mundane affairs, focus on G-d, talk to Him, and ask Him from the depths of our hearts to reveal Himself in this world by sending Melech HaMoshiach to bring the Geulah. Chassidus emphasizes that davening is not about saying the words. Of course, we can't fulfill our obligation without saying the words, but the words are really just there to teach us what ideas and emotions we should be expressing when we speak to Hashem.² And the words are teaching us to ask for Moshiach over and over again.

This sincerity is also the key to the whole idea of saying “ad mosai?”. On Chof-Ches Nissan, the Rebbe said that even when we say “ad mosai?”, it is only because we were told to do so, but if we had said it “*mit an emes*”, then Moshiach would have come long ago. In other words, the key is not the words that come across our lips. It's the feeling that comes from our hearts.

If so, then Hei Teves is the perfect time to strengthen ourselves in sincere avodas ha-tefilah where we truly ask for the Geulah, and hopefully this is all that will be necessary. But if—chas v'shalom—those tefillos are not answered,³ then we should only continue to learn more about Moshiach and use that knowledge to strengthen our requests and demands for Moshiach every day until he is finally revealed, bim'heira v'yameinu mamash.

¹ Sichas Hei Teves 5752, ois 4.

² See Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah at the beginning, about the origin of the fixed nusach ha-tefillah.

³ See Sichas Devarim 5751, ois 10, about saying “im chas v'shalom Moshiach yisakeiv” when making hachlatos.

