

A CONSTANT SUPPORT SYSTEM

by Ben Goldberg

Last week we continued our classes on the second bracha of Shemoneh Esrai and focused on G-d's abundant mercy in resuscitating the dead. Today, we move on and focus on other manifestations of G-d's mercy. As a reminder, the second blessing states:

"You are eternally mighty, my Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead are You; abundantly able to save. [He makes the wind blow and He makes the rains descend]. He sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy, **supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust.** Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds, and who is comparable to You, O King Who causes death and restores life and makes salvation sprout! And You are faithful to resuscitate the dead. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who resuscitates the dead."

Today we will be focusing on the bolded text – "supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust."

After discussing G-d's mercy and kindness in sustaining the living and resuscitating the dead, we now can focus on other ways that G-d shows us mercy throughout our lives.

First, we praise G-d for supporting the fallen. There are infinite ways He can support anyone who is in need – whether it's a need for money, for sustenance or for physical or mental health. As we pray, we should remember how grateful we should be to have a direct connection to this incredible support system. Instead of having to deal with life's problems on our own, we have an opportunity when we pray to solicit direct assistance from G-d, who only wants to support us.

G-d also heals the sick, whether that be physical or mental health. Once again, we should relish the opportunity we have to take action when, G-d forbid, we or a loved one is ill. Later in Shemoneh Esrai we again discuss G-d's healing powers and we will revisit this topic at that point.

Finally, we praise G-d for releasing the confined and for maintaining His faith to those asleep in the dust. There are, of course, many interpretations for this verse. But, in sticking to our theme, let's focus on how we can apply this in our own personal lives.

In life, how often do we feel spiritually blocked? Although there are times we may be bursting with faith and rushing to pray, there are other times where upholding the strictures of our faith may feel like a burden. G-d does not hold this against us and, instead, we can use prayer to ask for relief from

this malady. We praise G-d as One who can release the confined and ask that He do the same for us – to allow us to always shake free from the shackles that sometimes hold our faith back.

Of course, sometimes it's not just a temporary block on our faith – sometimes we are like one asleep in the dust, cut off from the practice of our faith. Should we get down this low, we may wonder what the point of trying to reestablish a connection with G-d may be – if we have fallen so low, can we ever get back up? Yes, we can! Even to those asleep in the dust, G-d always maintains His faith. He has never given up on us and we should never give up on ourselves.