

THE DAILY REVIVAL

by Ben Goldberg

If you've been with us since the beginning of this series, congratulations! Last week we finished our in-depth look at the first blessing of Shemoneh Esrai. If you're just joining us, you've picked a good place to start, as we will now start looking at the second blessing of this seminal prayer. Of course, feel free to peruse the archives to see the previous classes examining the first bracha.

The second bracha of Shemoneh Esrai 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."

Before exploring each portion of the bracha in-depth, let's raise a few preliminary questions and introductory points.

As we saw last class, the first blessing was clearly focused on Abraham and the primary trait associated with him, *chessed*, or kindness. This blessing in turn focuses on Isaac, whose primary trait was *gevurah*, or strength. G-d's strength is referenced throughout the blessing but it's important to note that it is still strength manifesting through kindness. G-d resuscitates the dead, He supports the fallen, He heals the sick, releases the confined and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust. In the coming weeks, we will take a closer look at the blending of strength and kindness.

One common theme of this blessing is G-d's power to resuscitate the dead. It's mentioned at the outset of the blessing ("the Resuscitator of the dead are You"), again in the middle ("He...resuscitates the dead") and closes the blessing ("Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who resuscitates the dead"). Obviously, resuscitation of the dead is miraculous and a clear indication of G-d's power. But why such a focus? In the coming weeks, we'll focus on this question further as well.

However, I do want to focus on one aspect of that question. In our day, when open miracles are no longer performed, it may be hard to find a personal connection to the idea of the resurrection of the dead. As Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer notes, though, prayer can offer its own resurrection of sorts. Anyone able to pray with sincerity should feel renewed, as prayer restores vitality to the soul. Before

praying, one might feel disheartened and hopeless at a situation he finds himself in. The idea, however, of reaching out to G-d and having Him hear your every request should leave one feeling uplifted and renewed. Given the great gift of prayer, how could you not feel spiritually resurrected?

Even, however, if one does not feel that sincere prayer truly leaves him reinvigorated, doesn't everyone experience a resurrection each morning when we wake up? Isn't each day we open our eyes and take a breath not a miracle from G-d? With proper perspective, and a bit of gratitude, even the concept of resurrection hits closer to home than we might think.