

FROM SEED TO SALVATION

by Ben Goldberg

Last class, we continued reviewing the second bracha of Shemoneh Esrai and focused on the myriad ways G-d can offer us assistance, whether it be in healing sickness, supporting the fallen, releasing the confined or even maintaining His faith in us. Today, we move on to discuss G-d's uniqueness and might. 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 – "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!"

We begin this phrase by praising G-d as the Master of mighty deeds and we exclaim that there is nothing comparable to Him. G-d's power is endless and while humans are certainly capable of causing death, G-d alone can restore life, a topic that we have discussed in depth in previous classes.

While there is a lot to unpack in this phrase, I want to focus on the end piece, when we state that G-d can make salvation sprout. Those few words can easily get lost in the shuffle, as they are sandwiched between two portions of the blessing focusing on G-d's ability to resuscitate the dead. Those few words - [He] makes salvation sprout - deserve a second look and I think there are three main takeaways we can consider as we pray:

1) Nothing in life is ever truly hopeless. No matter how bleak things seem, no matter how rough the situation might be, G-d can bring salvation at any moment and in a flash. Just recently, we celebrated Purim and Pesach. Think about how the Jews must have been feeling during those times. During the time of the Megillah, the Jews were facing what seemed to be an upcoming genocide. What hope could they have possibly had? And then, in a blink of an eye, everything changed. Similarly, before *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Jews only knew a life of slavery and subjugation. What hope could they possibly have had? And then, just like that, they were a free nation. This may explain why

we say He makes salvation sprout right after discussing resuscitation of the dead. Just as G-d can remedy what seems to be the most hopelessly final situation of all – death – so too can He bring salvation for any of your problems.

2) The phrase "makes salvation sprout" is an interesting one. Wouldn't it be easier to just say G-d brings salvation? Why use such colorful language? The word "sprout", of course, brings to mind a plant growing from a seed and that metaphor perfectly explains our praise of G-d. Although G-d's salvation may seem sudden, we should keep in mind that it is sprouting – that G-d always had a plan and even the unfortunate events we went through served as the "watering" of the plant that was to come. Should we (G-d forbid) face unsettling moments in our life, let's remember that it may just be a planted seed for later salvation.

3) Lastly, we should remember the big picture – that G-d is always guiding things. Too often when salvation sprouts we have the tendency to chalk it up to an amazing coincidence or good luck. As we say this phrase during the Shemoneh Esrai, let's pledge to never forget it's the hand of Hashem guiding everything around us – something we should always be grateful for.