

# RECOGNIZING THE HEALER

*by Ben Goldberg*

Last class we reviewed the seventh blessing of the Shemoneh Esrai, focusing on the request for redemption and how it is truly a request for personal redemption. Today, we will continue our close look at the middle blessings of the Shemoneh Esrai and review the eighth blessing overall – the request for health and healing. As always, let's first review the actual text of the blessing:

**"Heal us, Hashem – then we will be healed; save us – then we will be saved, for You are our praise. Bring complete recovery for all our ailments, for You are G-d, King, the faithful and compassionate Healer. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who heals the sick of His people Israel."**

This blessing, a request for good health and, if needed, healing, makes sense to recite after we've just asked for personal redemption. First, we pray for redemption from our personal struggles, whether they be mental or spiritual. Then, we turn to G-d and ask for His help in healing any physical ailments we might have.

This blessing also appears to be the most straightforward one we've encountered yet – we very clearly are requesting physical health from G-d. Is there more we can glean from this blessing?

Let's start with the wording of the blessing, which can at times feel a bit clumsy. What do we mean when we describe G-d as "our praise"? That seems like an odd description. And after we ask for complete recovery for our ailments and before describing G-d as a faithful and compassionate Healer, we seemingly arbitrarily throw the word "King" in there – why? What is it adding?

In truth, this blessing might be the epitome of the lessons this series is trying to impart, as health and healing might be the easiest place to overlook our blessings and G-d's role in our everyday life.

With the wonderful medical care and amazing doctors available today, it's easy to forget that all of our blessings come directly from G-d. That is why we say that G-d is "our praise" and why we refer to Him here as our King – to remind ourselves that even our good health and healing comes directly from G-d. Though it is the medicine we take and the doctors we see who are our direct link, we should remind ourselves as we pray that G-d is the source of our health as well.

Like we first discussed in the introduction to this series, this blessing offers us another opportunity to marvel at the opportunity we are given every time we pray. When it comes to finding the right doctor, we often spend countless hours researching and meeting multiple doctors to see who might be best equipped to handle our needs, and spending untold dollars for our medical care. And that's

only usually for one issue! We have to go through the entire process again should we need a doctor for another issue.

Of course, that money is money well-spent – doctors play an incredibly important role in society. But as we say this blessing, we should take a minute to realize we also have the opportunity to ask for health and healing from the One who knows our medical history and needs with perfect clarity, and is able to heal any malady with perfect precision.