

# RETURNING OUR SOULS

*by Rabbi Daniel Travis*

As mentioned previously, when we go to sleep our souls leave our bodies. As soon as we wake up on the morning, they are returned to us, rejuvenated for a new day. Therefore, right after saying *asher yatzar*, which acknowledges the gift of our bodily functions, we thank Hashem for implanting in us a Divine spark, our soul, and returning it to us today.

Unlike the other morning blessings, the "Elokai neshama" blessing does not start with the word "Baruch." Some halachic authorities explain that this blessing does not need to start with *baruch*, while others rule that it should be said following another blessing so that the *baruch* of that blessing will be adjacent to *Elokai neshama*. One should try to follow the latter opinions and say *Elokai neshama* immediately after *asher yatzar*.

Let's look at the example of Jonathan, who overslept one morning. When he noticed the time he jumped out of bed and ran to synagogue. In his hurry, he forgot to say *Elokai neshama* before reciting the other prayers.

According to some views, acknowledgment for the return of our souls in the morning is covered by the blessing of resurrection of the dead which is part of the *Shemoneh Esreh*. Since the halacha can be extremely complex, Jonathan should consult with a rabbi on whether he may recite *Elokai neshama* after he has completed all the other prayers (*Mishna Berura* 6,12; *Biur Halacha* 52,1).

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