

# SUDDEN DEATH

*by Rabbi Daniel Travis*

The Sage Rebbi Shimon was once walking towards Jerusalem on his way to the Temple. About halfway to his destination he encountered something that caused him to stop abruptly. In the middle of the road lay the body of a man who appeared to have just passed away.

Rebbi Shimon looked into the eyes, nose and mouth of the dead body to try and determine what had caused his sudden death. He did not see any signs of illness or injury and so concluded that he must have died a supernatural death.

Rebbi Shimon concluded: "I am sure that this man did not recite Emes V'Yatziv [the blessing after the morning Shema] properly." On a different occasion one of Rebbi Shimon's students suddenly became very sick. Bad turned to worse, and within twenty-four hours his soul had departed from this world. In his final moments the student was heard to say that if he had said the blessing of Emes V'Yatziv properly he would not have faced such a sudden death (Zohar as cited by Kaf HaChaim 61,46).

Our Sages reveal that whoever mentions the miracles of the redemption in the blessing of Emes V'Yatziv right before saying Shemoneh Esrei will be protected from all harm that day (Brachos 9b, see Tosfos). Let us analyze this blessing in order to understand its unique power.

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