Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Creative Destruction

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

You are eternally mighty, my L-rd, the Resuscitator of the dead are You, abundantly able to save. *(Between Shemini Atzeres and Pesach) He makes the wind blow and the rain descend.

אתה גבור לעולם אד-ני, מחיה מתים אתה, רב להושיע. י(בחורף) משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם.

*(Nusach Sefard) Pesach thru Succos: - מוריד הטל - He makes the dew descend.

he Kuzari (Maamar 3,



WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

comments Ose 17) that from this beracha called "Gevura," one should implant his heart that Hashem's rule in this world is continuous, contrary to heretic philosophers who maintain that Hashem is not involved in "managing" nature which operates on its own without Hashem's daily involvement. From

time to time we are all clearly reminded of Hashem's gevura, as the following excerpt points out (adapted from The Miami Herald, January 2, 2005, "NATURE'S POWER, MYSTERY INSPIRE AWE", Author, Seth Borenstein, page 1A):

"Man can dam rivers, build skyscrapers, even go to the moon, but sometimes nature needs only a split second to remind us of who is really boss. On Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004, the tsunami [that struck South East Asia] offered yet another humbling lesson that the power of nature far exceeds the reach - indeed, even the imagination - of man.

The earthquake and subsequent waves released as much energy as 1,000,000 atomic bombs. That energy changed, slightly but perceptibly to modern science, the wobble and rotation of the Earth. It also redistributed Earth's mass, moving the North Pole one inch and causing the length of a day to shrink permanently by three-millionths of a second, according to geophysicist Richard Gross of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. It also prompted prominent scientists to ponder the relationship among mankind, nature and G-d."

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Restored to Life

Hashem's *gevura* – His might – is demonstrated in the miracle of resurrection.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

What's Natural

In this second blessing, we recognize Hashem's might אתה גבור, by noting that Hashem resuscitates the dead מחיה מתים and ומוריד הגשם, He makes the rain descend. Causing the resurrection of the dead and the rain to descend and are both acts of resurrection. One is resurrection of dead people while the other is resurrection of decayed seeds. Nevertheless, they are both resurrection of something dead. Why do we do not consider rain, which brings seeds to sprout, in the same miraculous context as the resurrection of the dead?

One reason is because we are accustomed to rain. Although the miracle of wheat sprouting from a decayed seed is indeed a form of resurrection, it is a normal occurrence. Resurrection of the dead, on the other hand, is something we never see. Therefore, it arouses

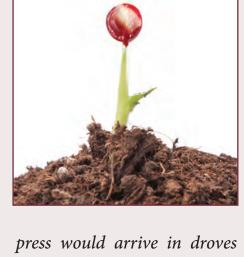
our awe. If the situation were reversed, wheat sprouting from the soil would arouse our awe, while resurrection of the dead would appear as a natural occurrence. For in the absence of the sense of newness, habit causes us to lose all reflection and insight and all possibility of an awareness of spirituality (Michtav M'Eliyahu, Volume 5, Page 24).

Hashem continuously gives life and meets all our basic needs. If we would stop to consider His wondrous and mighty actions and His gevura, immediately we would love, praise, and glorify Him. If not for Hashem's gevura, we would be unable to experience this precious gift of life which consists of many miracles performed by Hashem.

VISUALIZE: Images that bring the prayer to life

Renewal

magine throwing a lollypop **■** stick on the ground. It gets covered up with soil. The rain falls and the stick begins to rot away. Then, lo and behold, a tiny new stick sprouts up from the ground and a new lollipop grows around it. Certainly the



to photograph this incredible phenomenon. Normally, things that decay crumble and dissolve; they do not take on a new life.

put into this world, however, starts with decay. The seed rots in the soil, and from that, new life pushes its way into the world. This is our model of what will happen when, in the times of Moshiach, Hashem's gevura will enable those who rest in the ground to push their way into a new existence in a new world.

The life force that Hashem

decaying and falling away as a tiny shoot unfolds from within it and pokes through the soil. Think of that bright green, tender shoot when you say מחיה מתים.

When man destroys something, it's destroyed. When Hashem

destroys, it engenders new life. Imagine a time-lapse video of a seed

Did You Know

Retrieving Lost Kavannah

In last week's "Did You Know," we provided several solutions for one who does not fulfill the kavannah requirement during the first berachah of Shemoneh Esrei. Here we present additional alternatives:

• If one had kavannah at the end of the first berachah, he satisfies the kavannah requirement (Sh'ailos U'Teshuvos Eretz Tzvi, Siman 22).

· One may wait quietly until Chazaras Hashatz and then have in mind to satisfy his

requirement to have kavannah in the first berachah by listening to the shliach tzibur recite the berachah (Beur Halachah, Orach Chaim, Siman 101, s.v. "V'Ha'idnah"; also see Shailos U'Teshuvos Yabia Omer, Orach Chaim, Volume 3, Siman 9; and Shailos U'Teshuvos Az Nidberu, Volume 2, Siman 59).

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