

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

שמנה עשרה

Revival

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

He sustains the living with kindness, **resuscitates the dead** with abundant mercy ... O King Who **causes death and restores life** and makes salvation sprout! And You are faithful to **resuscitate the dead**. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who resuscitates the dead.

מכלכל חיים בחסד, מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים... מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה. ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה ה', מחיה המתים.

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the word

“and He makes salvation sprout” is included in this blessing of מחיה מתים “He resuscitates the dead,” because

Alternatively, “and He makes salvation sprout” refers to the salvation of the Jewish nation. It is called sprouting, because the process happens gradually, like the growth of a plant. (Midrash Tehillim, Mizmor 18). A person who continuously watches a plant grow will not notice the plant changing. Yet, over time, it’s obvious that the plant grew. Similarly, we cannot see how each period of Jewish history contributes to the final redemption; only when we look back from the vantage point of a redeemed world will we perceive these developments.

of the connection between bringing the dead to life and bringing a seed to sprout. Just as a planted seed first disintegrates in the ground and then a sprout emerges, so does a person’s body decompose in the ground prior to being recreated in a more spiritually elevated form. We observe that when things in our world die, they appear to end. Yet, death is actually the groundwork for a more spiritual life (Dovair Shalom in Siddur Otzar Ha’Tefillos).

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

Reviving Body and Soul

Hashem’s *gevura* expresses itself in the many ways He brings revival.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Keeping His Promise

Ritva (on Taanis 2a) points out that the concept of *t’chiyas ha’mesim*—revival of the dead, which represents Hashem’s *gevurah*, is mentioned four times in this blessing and each mention is separate and distinct. They are as follows:

to those who Hashem brings to life in the *Olom HaNeshomos*, the world of the souls.

Resuscitator of the dead, are You, abundantly able to save – This is immediately followed (in the winter months) by the words ומוריד הגשם, and He [Hashem] makes the rain descend, because Hashem brings us life with proper rain, providing us with our food and sustenance.

[Hashem] is faithful to resuscitate the dead – This refers to the ultimate *t’chiyas ha’mesim*. (Cited in Hakhel, E-mail Community Awareness Bulletin, Focus on Tefillah Archive)

[Hashem] resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy – This refers to people who are seriously or even deathly ill whom *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* brings back to life through miraculous healing power. מחיה מתים is therefore followed by the words [Hashem] supports the fallen.

At the end of this blessing, we acknowledge that You [Hashem] are faithful to resuscitate the dead. The essence of the Jewish relationship with Hashem is that we believe in G-d and that He keeps His word. Just as He had fulfilled His promise to bring the Jewish people out from Egypt and save them from the clutches of their pursuers, He will fulfill His promise to resuscitate the dead.

[Hashem] causes death and restores life – This refers to the departed who the *Neviim* (such as Eliyahu HaNavi and Elisha HaNavi) helped bring back to life. It also refers

Jewish faith is the unqualified trust in the complete certainty and dependability of Hashem’s every word. It is at the heart of the bond between G-d and the Jewish people. Accordingly, we are secure in our belief that G-d, Whose every word is truth and righteousness, fulfills His word. (Adapted from “With Hearts Full Of Faith,” Rabbi Mattisyahu Saloman, ArtScroll, page 21).

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Spring

Walking along the lake in December, Sarah observed the bare gray branches of the trees stretching up to the sky. Closer to the ground, tangles of thorny vines created a barbed-wire barrier along the pathway. The earth was carpeted with dead leaves and dried pine needles. But for the blue sky, the entire scene could



have been accurately captured in a black-and-white photo. But by the time June came around, the thorny bushes were thick with brilliant green leaves. The tree branches were barely visible behind the lush foliage that had sprung from

the wood. The carpet of dead leaves was pierced by shoots of grass and wildflowers. Life and color had come flooding back into the world.

The cycle of seasons hints to us at the miracle of Hashem’s revival of the dead. From bleak, bare emptiness springs new life, fresh and vigorous, surging with energy. So will it be for us, and for the Jewish people, when Hashem redeems the world.

Try This!

▶ “Dead tired” is a feeling most people know. Think of that feeling of heaviness, as if you cannot hold up your weight for one more moment. Then imagine getting a sudden burst of strength. Suddenly, your body feels strong and energetic. Your mind feels clear and alert. Think of this sudden “resurrection” when you say מחיה מתים.

Did You Know

▶ **More Options**

In last week’s ‘Did You Know’ we provided several solutions if one did not fulfill the *kavannah* requirement during the first *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Here we present the final alternatives:

- Even if one did not have the proper *kavannah* for the words of *Birchas Avos*, as long as he had even fleeting *kavannah* during the *berachah* that he is saying in *Birchas Avos*, he is considered to have recited the first *berachah* properly (Halichos Shlomo (Tefillah) [from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach], Chapter 8, Siman 9, footnote 32).
- If one did not have the proper *kavannah* during the first *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* he should have *kavannah* when reciting *Modim* in *Shemoneh Esrei* (according to the Rokeach, cited in Kehilas Yaakov, Berachos, Siman 26; and Sefer Chasidim, Siman 158).