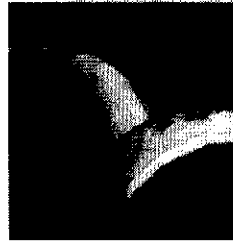


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## ***Purposeful Prayer: Appreciating the Amidah***

### ***Gevuros: Strength & Salvation***

***October 28, 2013***

***Rabbi Shmuel Silber***

***This Series is being sponsored by Richard Simon in memory of his grandmother,  
Elka Frieda bas Chana a'h***



THIS COURSE IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF:

אסתר חיה ז"ל בת צבי ופרומה עלקא      פייגא בת מאיר ופשא לאה ז"ל      נח בן אברהם ופייגא ז"ל  
תחא נשמתם צרוורת בצרור החיים

MAY THEIR SOULS BE BOUND IN THE EVERLASTING BOND OF LIFE

# 1. סדור

אתה גבור לעולם אדני, מחיה מתים אתה, רב להושיע.

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם.

מכלכל חיים בחסד, מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים, סומך נופלים, ורופא חולים, ומתיר אסורים, ומקיים אמונתו לישני עפר, מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך, מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה. ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה יי, מחיה המתים.

GOD'S MIGHT

**אתה** You are eternally mighty, my Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead\* are You; abundantly able to save,

Between Shemini Atzeres and Pesach add the following.

Who makes the wind blow and makes the rain descend;

[If forgotten, see Laws §70-75.]

Who sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy, supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust. Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds, and who is comparable to You, 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.

## 2. תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית דף ב עמוד א

אמר רבי יוחנן: שלשה מפתחות בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא נמסרו ביד שליח, ואלו הן: מפתח של גשמים, מפתח של חיה, ומפתח של תחיית המתים.

## 3. ברוך שאמר (הרב ברוך הלי עפשטיין, קיז)

אתה גבור לעולם

התואר גבור לעולם כלפי מעלה אפשר לפרש עפ"י המבואר בסנהדרין (ק' ב'), שהדאגה אוכלת גם לגבור שבגבורים, וזה הוא מפני שלתכונת בנין האדם ולכחו ולגבורתו יש קצב ומשקל, ותלוי הרבה באופני החיים, במאורעותיו ובסבותיו, כידוע, ואם כן אין גבורתו תמידית גם בחייו, אבל בהקב"ה מעלה זו נצחית, וזהו שמתארים אותו גבור לעולם — עד עולם.

## 4. Worship of the Heart: Reflections on the Amidah (Rav Soloveitchik, page 156)

### The Second Blessing: Gevurot

(A)

Man cognizes God in the world not only as abundant in *hesed* but also as *gibbor*, omnipotent. No action lies beyond His capacity. In this experience of Divine mightiness is embedded also man's sense of frailty and helplessness, and from this sensibility there emerges a recognition of utter exhaustion. Man cannot be his own master; he cannot nourish his personality on his own and preserve his independence. He is not free, nor is he able to plan, initiate and execute through his own powers. He requires God's assistance, blessing and supervision. A feeling of waiting for God suffuses the human being. The Divine attribute *gibbor* implies to him that none of his human achievements are the fruit of his thought and action, but only the product of the

(B)

Divine act and might. Pride recedes, humility grows. At first man approaches with joy and wholeness of soul, a cleaving unto God who calls out to him from the hidden recesses. This optimistic stance gives way to the cry of one who feels frail and miserable and whose eyes are lifted to "deliverance and rescue from another place" [Esther 4:14]. God abounds in kindness and is also mighty. To this latter attribute the Rabbis devoted a special benediction: *Gevurot*.

(1)

Approach #1:

**5. The Koren Siddur with commentary of Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (page 110)**

גבורות *Blessing 2: Divine might.* The fivefold reference to the resurrection of the dead reflects the controversy between the Sadducees and Pharisees in the late Second Temple era. The Sadducees rejected belief in resurrection; the Pharisees, whose heirs we are, affirmed it. Belief that those who died will one day live again is one of Judaism's great principles of hope, set out in the vision of Ezekiel of the valley of dry bones that came to life once more. Jews kept hope alive; hope kept the Jewish people alive.

Approach #2:

**(A) 6. Out of the Whirlwind (Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik zt'l, pages 45-48)**

[ Generally, all that is required to remove one's impurity is *tevillah*—immersion in a *mikvah* or the "living water" of a spring, river or ocean. But while this applies to, say, a person who becomes impure by contact with the carcass of a dead animal, it does not apply to the *tamei met*, the individual who became impure by contact with a dead human body. The sprinkling of the "*mei hattat*" (spring water mixed with ashes of the red heifer) is indispensable for the *tamei met* to regain his previous status of *tahor*, pure. *Tevillah* alone does not suffice. The sprinkling is done twice, on the third and the seventh day of the count; otherwise the person remains a *tamei met* and is enjoined from offering in the Sanctuary. The real question, then, is, why did the Torah single out the *tamei met*? Why should not the latter be subject to the universal cleansing through immersion? ]

(B) [Death denies the very worth of human existence. Hence the *tum'ah* is due not to organic but to spiritual destruction. It is the expression of human anxiety and terror, human helplessness in the face of a mocking Satan. *Tum'at met* is the result of the traumatic experience that dislocates man's self, I-awareness and existential security. Death lurks in the shadows. Death defeats everyone, great or small, clever or simple. "All things come alike to all" (Eccl. 9:2). ]

(C) [ Hence *tum'at met* represents not just an experience of ugliness, but the human situation, the tragic and absurd human destiny. Its cleansing is therefore a dual one. Man, on one hand, must struggle with death and try to defeat it—the cleansing requires *tevillah*, which is symbolic of the human effort in reducing the power of death and prolonging life. In course of time, Judaism believes, man will succeed in taming the death-

monstrosity, in limiting its power. However, Judaism is not so naive as to have unrestricted faith in human capability to eliminate death and raise man to the level of the immortals. The plague of death, it says, will trouble man until the Almighty will save man from the curse of death. "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe off the tears from all faces" (Isa. 25:8).

(D) How can man redeem himself from death, how can he cleanse himself from the fright of death, how can he attain *taharah* from the defilement by death? Through a double procedure. First, through *tevillah*, an organized scientific-medical effort to limit its power as much as possible. Man cleanses himself from *tum'at met* the way every *tamei* person does—all by himself. Second, by *haza'ah*, by placing our trust in the Almighty that at some point in the future He will redeem us "and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean" (Num. 19:19). "The clean person" who will free the unclean from the bondage of defilement is the Almighty, as the prophet says,

(E) "Then I will sprinkle water upon you, and you shall be clean" (Ez. 36:25). Only He will heal man from the threat and terror of nihility. Man cannot solve the enigma or mystery of death. Only God will elucidate and explain to us this awesome mystery. Death is the great marvel, the unintelligible experience, the *hok*, the Torah no one can grasp—"This is the Torah: when a man dies in a tent . . ." (Num. 19:14). ]

## 7. The World of Prayer (Rabbi Elie Munk, page 131)

אתה גבור. From the praise of גדולה, G-d's Great Mercy in the first Bracha, the Tefilla proceeds to the praise of גבורה, His boundless power. In this second Bracha we therefore find an account of the omnipotent acts of the Divine, the greatest being the conquest of death. G-d's power is most signally manifest where human power fails. Hence we enumerate here all those phenomena, the key to which G-d retains in His own hand: "the resurrection of the dead, the rain fall and the sustenance of all living beings." (Taanis 2a; Tur §114).

### Approach #3:

## 8. Worship of the Heart: Reflections on the Amidah (Rav Soloveitchik, page 159)

(A) Interesting is the Jewish conception that the greatest of all kindnesses, the singular ethical act, is resurrection of the dead. God involves Himself with the dead, whose existence has already ceased, who not only are unable to act or attain anything, but who are also stripped of the capacity to demand and complain, to plead and entreat, who, having lived, are now consigned to the abyss of the silent grave. The dead person, too,

(B) needs deliverance, and God will resurrect the dead. The *hesed* that God performs with the dead is the most miraculous and majestic ethical act. *Gevurot* concludes with repeated reference to the motif of resurrection of the dead. Some spark of this conception is embodied in the halakhah about the obligation to bury a *met mitzvah* (an unattended corpse), which overrides many other commandments; also in the idea that burying the dead constitutes *hesed shel emet* [the *hesed* of truth, because it is offered to one who is unable to repay the kindness].

## 9. תהלים פרק כד

זֶשׁאוּ שְׁעִירִים | רָאשֵׁיכֶם וְהַנִּשְׁאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וְיִבֹּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד:

7. [You] gates, lift your heads and be uplifted, [you] everlasting portals, so that the King of Glory may enter.

## 10. The Hirsch Psalms: Chapter 24 Verses 7-10

V. 7. שָׂאוּ גוֹי. It is not only הארץ that is the Lord's. His world order does not rule only in the sphere of immutable Nature. It is His wish rather to found His kingdom in the sphere of unfettered human activity, where His moral Law shall help shape human affairs. תבל וישיבי בה shall be the next sphere to which His reign on earth shall extend. Therefore the call goes out to the שְׁעִירִים, the gates of the world of human society (this is the literal meaning of שָׂעַר; see Commentary to Gen. 19:1), to "be lifted up." Let them be lifted up for the מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד, "the King of Glory," to Whom alone all honor is due, whose כבוד greatness is revealed by all the splendors of heaven and earth (see Comm. to Ex. 16:7). Most men have searched for His ways and His glory "beyond the gates of the life of the community of mankind," in the sphere of "nature." Therefore, now, "lift up your heads, o gates" so that the King of Glory may enter at last into the sphere of the life of human society and so that this life may freely make way—שָׂאוּ—for the rule of His Sovereignty.