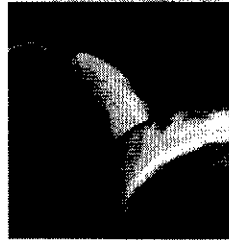
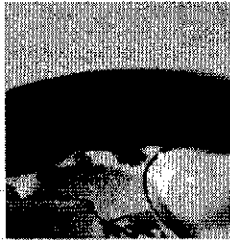
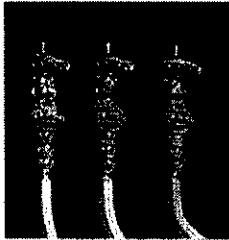


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***Purposeful Prayer: Dialogue with the Divine***

## **Shemonah Esrei – Part 3**

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***February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013***



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  
תהא נשמתם צרורות בצרור החיים

MAY THEIR SOULS BE BOUND IN THE EVERLASTING BOND OF LIFE

## Purposeful Prayer: Shmona Esrei (Part III)

## 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, ומקים  
 אמונתו לישני עפר, מי כמוד 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. The Koren Siddur with commentary of Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (page 110)

*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.

## 4. 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 there-  
 fore 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 enumer-  
 ate 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." (Ta'anis 2a; Tur §114).

(A)

[ 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)

( I believe that the peculiar method of cleansing the *tamei met* is indicative of the human situation, of the existential metaphysic of man. The basic difference between immersion and sprinkling lies in the fact that the *tevillah* is accomplished by the impure person himself. No one can help the *tamei* to immerse; he must bow his head and bend his knees in order to obtain *taharah*. He plunges into the water and then emerges from the water *tahor*, clean and pure, because of his own effort. Man defiles himself and must cleanse himself. *Tevillah* symbolizes human freedom and creativity. Man has the ability to raise

himself to greatness, to take the initiative and reach new heights.

(C)

However, as regards sprinkling, the situation is the reverse: the *tamei met* cannot sprinkle the water upon himself; another person must do it. "And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean" (Num. 19:19). The *tamei met* cannot liberate himself from the state of impurity. Someone who is clean, who possesses the strength to redeem others and restore purity after it had been lost, must sprinkle *mei hattat* on him. He cannot attain *taharah* if left completely to himself. Pertaining to other impurities, *taharah* is within the reach of the individual who lost it; but the impurity associated with human death is of a more persistent character and does not lend itself to being washed away with plain water. Another person, a *tahor*, must assist the *tamei*, sprinkle upon him the *mei hattat*. Otherwise the *tamei met* will never free himself from the bondage of *tum'ah*, which holds man in its clutches and does not let him go. ]

(D)

(D)

1. [As far as the zoological kingdom is concerned, death is not a monstrosity; it simply destroys the functionality of the organism. Human death, however, terminates a personality, an ontological dimension, a spiritual individuality who was self-aware and self-conscious, a personality which was driven by vision and hope, which despaired, rejoiced and grieved, which lived not only in the present moment but in both retrospection and anticipation. In a word, death destroys a world. It is the tragic experience of the human being who is endowed with the time-awareness, and knows that his existence is a mockery. Death contradicts the God-man relationship.]

(E)

[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). ]

(F)

[ 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).

(G)

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,

(H)

"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 nihilism. 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). ]

(3)

## 6. The Hirsch Siddur (page 132)

... וּמִקֵּים אֲמוּנָה . etc. could be construed as indicating any one, or perhaps all, of these three thoughts: 1) "Even if the person himself should die without receiving the salvation for which he had looked to God, God will still keep faith with him even in the world to come, and with his children who will live after him." 2) "God is sure to fulfill the promise which He made to those who would be loyal to Him, namely, the pledge that He will reward the children

and even grandchildren for the good deeds of their parents, even though the parents themselves might long since have joined the slumberers in the dust." 3) "God, in unchanging faithfulness, will fulfill the promise He had given the slumberers in the dust that He will one day awaken them and cause them to rise again to a new life."

## 7. The Hirsch Siddur (page 133)

בְּדֶרֶךְ זְכוּי מַחִיָּה הַמַּחִים

There can hardly be another thought that can so inspire man firmly to resolve to live a life so vigorous, unwavering, fearless and unswervingly dutiful than the belief in תַּחִית הַמַּחִים. This is the firm conviction that to God not even the dead are lost forever, and that, even for the physical body, death is not the end but only a transition period from one life to the next.