

Friday Tefillah: Blessing 2

Divine Might

Part 2 - Giving Life to the Dead

You are mighty forever, Lord,
Reviver of the dead are You, powerful to save.
Causing the wind to blow and the rain to fall,
Sustaining the living with kindness,
Reviving the dead with abundant mercy.
Upholding the falling and healing the sick and
releasing the bound,
And keeping faith with those who sleep in the dust.
Who is like You, Master of might,
And who is similar to You?,
A King who causes death and life and salvation to
grow?
Faithful are You to revive the dead,
Blessed are You, 'ה, who gives life to the dead.

אתה גבור לעולם אֲדָנִי
מְחִיָּה מֵתִים אֶתְּהָ רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
מְשִׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם
מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד
מְחִיָּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים
סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים
אֲמוֹנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עֶפֶר
מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת
וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָךְ
מֶלֶךְ מֵמִית וּמְחִיָּה וּמְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה
וְנֹאֲמָן אֶתְּהָ לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְחִיָּה הַמֵּתִים

From the Genizah

You are mighty forever, 'ה,
And powerful to save,
Blowing wind and causing rain / dew to fall,
Sustaining the living
Reviving the dead
Blessed are You, 'ה, who gives life the dead.

אתה גבור לעולם ה'
ורב להושיע
משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם / טל
מכלכל חיים
מחיה מתים
ברוך אתה ה' מחיה המתים

Reviver of the Dead

מַחְיֵה מֵתִים

<p>Daniel 12:1-2 At that time, the great prince, Michael, who stands beside the sons of your people, will appear. It will be a time of trouble, the like of which has never been since the nation came into being. At that time, your people will be rescued, all who are found inscribed in the book. Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence.</p>	<p>דניאל יב:א-ב וּבָעֵת הַהִיא יֵעָמֵד מִיכָאֵל הַשָּׂר הַגָּדוֹל הָעֹמֵד עַל-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹךְ וְהִיטֵה עֵת צָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִהְיְתָה מִהַיּוֹת גְּזוּי עַד הַעֵת הַהִיא וּבָעֵת הַהִיא יִמָּלֵט עַמּוֹךְ כָּל-הַנִּמְצָא כְּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר: וְרַבִּים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲדַמְת־עֵפֶר יִקְיֹצוּ אֶלֶּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֶלֶּה לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם:</p>
<p>Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 All of the Jewish people have a share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And your people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, for My name to be glorified” (Isaiah 60:21). And these are the people who have no share in the World-to-Come: One who says: There is no resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah, and one who says: The Torah did not originate from Heaven, and an epikoros, who treats Torah scholars and the Torah that they teach with contempt.</p>	<p>משנה סנהדרין י:א כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שְׁנֹאמֵר (ישעיהו ס) וְעַמּוֹךְ כָּלָם צְדִיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירָשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֶצַח מְטַעֵי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהַתְּפָאֵר. וְאֵלוֹ שְׂאִין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, הָאוֹמֵר אֵין תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים מִן הַתּוֹרָה, וְאֵין תּוֹרָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֶפִיקוֹרֵס.</p>
<p>Exodus 15:1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang [will sing] this song to the LORD.</p>	<p>שמות טו:א אָז יִשְׂרָאֵל-מִשָּׁהוּ וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה</p>
<p>Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 90a And why is one punished to that extent? The Sages taught: He denied the resurrection of the dead; therefore he will not have a share in the resurrection of the dead, as all measures dispensed by the Holy One, Blessed be He, to His people are dispensed measure for measure, i.e., the response is commensurate with the action.</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי סנהדרין צ:א וְכָל כֵּךְ לְמָה תִּנָּא הוּא כִּפּוּר בְּתַחֲיַיַת הַמֵּתִים לְפִיכֵךְ לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ חֵלֶק בְּתַחֲיַיַת הַמֵּתִים שְׂכַל מִדּוֹתַי שֶׁל הַקָּב"ה מִדָּה כִּנְגַד מִדָּה</p>
<p>Rashi on Daniel 12:2 And many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken. The dead will come to life.</p>	<p>רש"י וְרַבִּים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲדַמְת עֵפֶר יִקְיֹצוּ. יַחֲיוּ הַמֵּתִים:</p>

Liturgical Alternatives

<p>Jon D. Levenson, <i>Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel</i> It is the inextricable association of resurrection with supernatural intervention that sticks most persistently in the craw of many modern Jews and Christians.</p> <p>Neil Gilman identifies “three possible strategies for handling a liturgy that no longer reflects your theology: replace the Hebrew with a more palatable alternative; keep the Hebrew text and shade the translation to accommodate your new interpretation of the doctrine; or provide options which allow the worshipper to choose a text that reflects his or her personal belief.”</p>	
<p>Kol Haneshamah, Reconstructionist Siddur Faithful are you in giving life to every living thing. Blessed are you, The Fount of Life, Who gives and renews life.</p>	<p>כל הנשמה וְנָאֵן אֶתְּהּ לְהַחַיּוֹת כָּל חַיִּי: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מְחַיֶּה כָּל חַיִּי:</p>
<p>Harlow Mahzor, Conservative Mahzor Faithful are you giving life to the dead. Praised are You, Lord, Master of life and death.</p>	<p>מַחְזוֹר לַיָּמִים הַנוֹרָאִים וְנֶאֱמַן אֶתְּהּ לְהַחַיּוֹת מֵתִים בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים</p>
<p>Siddur Eit Ratzon You are faithful Giving life to [the dead : all that lives]. We bless You, Adonai, You give life to [the dead : all that lives].</p>	<p>סְדוּר עֵת רָצוֹן וְנֶאֱמַן אֶתְּהּ לְהַחַיּוֹת [מֵתִים : כָּל חַי] . בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מְחַיֶּה [הַמֵּתִים : כָּל חַי] .</p>

Spiritual Revival

<p>Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1 In the World-To-Come, there is no body or corporeality, but only the souls of the righteous without bodies, like the ministering angels. Inasmuch as there are no bodies there, there is neither eating or drinking nor anything else that the bodies of human beings need in this world. ... Thus, the early sages said, "ו (Berakhot 17a), "In the world to come there is no eating and no drinking and no bathing and no anointing and no intercourse, but rather the righteous ones sit and their crowns are upon their heads and they derive pleasure from the radiance of the Divine Presence." ... And when they said “with crowns on their heads” this means that the knowledge that they acquired and on account of which they merited the World-To-Come remains with them. ... What does it mean when they said “and enjoy the radiance of the Divine Presence?” That they know and apprehend something of the truth of the Blessed Holy One that they do not know when they are in their murky and lowly bodies.</p>
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Metaphor

Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1

... when you see one of their words that intelligence pushes off, you stop and reflect about it and know that it is a riddle and a parable, and you lay burdened in your heart and occupied by the meaning of the idea in the composition and in its rational meaning and think to find the intelligent intention and the straight faith, as it states (Ecclesiastes 12:10), "to find words of desire and written straightly, even words of truth" - and [if so], look into this book of mine and it will help you, with God's help.

Marc Brettler, My People's Prayer Book: The Amidah

"Giving life to the dead" Similar phrases are used in Akkadian prayers of a deity, where "reviving the dead" means **restoring the gravely ill to health**, the original sense of the phrase here too. Eventually, however, the benediction was expanded to incorporate a belief in resurrection of the dead, and "giving life to the dead" was reinterpreted accordingly.

Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 58b

The Sages taught: One who sees graves of Israel recites:

Blessed...Who formed you in judgment, and Who nourished you in judgment, and Who sustained you in judgment, and collected your soul in judgment, and in the future will raise you from the dead in judgment.

And **Mar, son of Ravina, concludes** the formula of this blessing **in the name of Rav Nahman:**

And Who knows the number of you all, and Who in the future will restore you to life and sustain you.

Blessed...Who revives the dead.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who sees his friend after thirty days have passed since last seeing him **recites:**

Blessed...Who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this time.

One who sees his friend **after twelve months recites: Blessed...Who revives the dead.**

Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 4:4

The school of R. Yannai said: One who wakes from sleep must say: Blessed are You, ה', who **revives the dead.**

תלמוד בבלי ברכות נ:ב

תנו רבנן: הַרְוָאָה קִבְּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֹמֵר:
"בְּרוּךְ ... אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵר אֶתְכֶם
בְּדִין, וְזָן אֶתְכֶם
בְּדִין, וְכִלְכַּל אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין,
וְאַסַּף אֶתְכֶם בְּדִין,
וְעֵתִיד לְהַקְיִמְכֶם בְּדִין."
מַר בְּרִיָּה דְרַבִּינָא מְסִיִּים בֵּה, מְשֻׁמִּיָּה דְרַב נַחְמָן:
"וַיִּוֹדַע מְסַפֵּר כּוֹלְכֶם,
וְהוּא עֵתִיד לְהַחְיֹתְכֶם וּלְקַיֵּים אֶתְכֶם.
בְּרוּךְ ... מַחְיֵה הַמֵּתִים."

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: הַרְוָאָה אֶת חֲבִירוֹ לְאַחַר
שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם, אֹמֵר:
"בְּרוּךְ ... שֶׁחֲחִיבֵנו וְקִיִּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעֵנו לְזִמְן הַזֶּה."
לְאַחַר שָׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ, אֹמֵר:
"בְּרוּךְ ... מַחְיֵה הַמֵּתִים."

תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות

דבית ר' ינאי אמרין הנוער משנתו צריך לומר:
בא"י מחיה המתים.

From the Morning Liturgy, On Waking

My God,
The soul you placed within me is pure.
You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me,
And You guard it while it is within me.
One day you will take it from me,
And restore it to me in the time to come.
As long as the soul is within me,
I will thank You,
'ה my God and God of my ancestors,
Master of all works, Lord of all souls.
Blessed are You, Lord,
Who restores souls to **dead bodies**.

שחרית השכמת הבוקר

אֱלֹהִי
נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא
אֶתְּךָ בְּרֵאתְךָ אֶתְּךָ יִצְרָתְךָ אֶתְּךָ נִפְחָתְךָ בִּי
וְאֶתְּךָ מְשַׁמְרָה בְּקִרְבִּי וְאֶתְּךָ עֵתִיד לְטֹלָה מִמֶּנִּי
וְלִהְחַזְרָה בִּי לְעֵתִיד לְבֹא,
כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ
ה' אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאֲמוֹתַי
רְבוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמְּחַזֵּר נְשָׁמוֹת לְפָגְרִים מֵתִים:

The Cycle of Life and Death

Reb Zalman, *Davening, A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Prayer*

The resurrection of the dead is an ancient principle of the Jewish faith, one that Maimonides included as one of the Thirteen Principles of Jewish belief. Yet in what way can I affirm this? I do not believe that the crypts will open in cemeteries and corpses will crawl out of them. I do not believe that the individual cells of my remains will be reconstituted at the end of days. ...

And yet, just as rationalism makes that idea impossible to swallow, science comes to the rescue. As Albert Einstein is supposed to have said, we can either live our lives as if nothing is a miracle -- or everything is. Take a look: Once we thought of our planet as a lump of sand and rock populated by living beings. Now we have learned that even the balance of our planet's atmosphere depends on living interactions. The call to collaborate as cells of a greater global intelligence is urgent and unmistakable.

Nor does the miracle of life stop there. What are DNA and RNA if not strings of information, encoding the genetic wisdom of a species? So our whole awareness of matter and the physical world is changing. The boundary between the living and inert is becoming blurred. That which we once considered dead is coming alive. What a miracle! And so I praise God with all my heart for giving life today to what yesterday we thought dead.

Marcia Falk, *The Book of Blessings*

To celebrate life is to acknowledge the ongoing dying, and ultimately to embrace death. For although all life travels toward its death, death is not a destination: it too is a journey to beginnings: all death leads to life again. From peelings to mulch to new potatoes, the world is ever-renewing, ever-renewed.

No Final Word

Elliott Dorff, My People's Prayer Book: The Amidah

Even those who doubt that God's power extends to restoring life to the dead can appreciate the assertion here that God is manifest in many things that transcend our understanding and control. They also accept the model of a human life dedicated to imitating God in sustaining the hungry, supporting the fallen, healing the sick, and freeing the bound. At worst, then, they may hold that resurrection of the dead is a logical though exaggerated claim, a literary flare, intended to emphasize the power of God.

In all philosophical honesty, however, we must admit that while we have no experiential evidence to prove resurrection, we also have no evidence to disprove it. Saadiah Gaon, argued that if we concede that God created us to begin with, we should further grant that for God to do so again is a cinch, since originally we had to be created *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing," whereas at resurrection, God can use our remains as raw materials.

Midrash on Psalm 31

'Faithful are the creations of ה' or ("ה' guards the faithful.") (Psalms 31:24).

Another interpretation: These are Israel who say "blessed ... who revives the dead," and with faith answer "amen," who believe with all their might that the Holy Blessed One will revive the dead -- and reviving the dead has not yet come.

They say: "Who redeems Israel," and they are not yet redeemed.

They say: "Blessed ... who rebuilds Jerusalem," and it is not yet rebuilt.

The Holy Blessed One said: Israel was only redeemed for a moment, and they were subsequently enslaved, but they believe I will redeem them in the future. This is the the meaning of the verse "ה' guards the faithful."

מדרש תהלים מזמור לא

דבר אחר "אמונים נוצר ה'."

אלו ישראל שאומרים

ברוך מחיה המתים, ובאמונה עונין

אמר, שמאמינים בכל כחם בהק"ה שמחיה

המתים, ועד"ן לא בא תחיית המתים.

אומרים גואל ישראל, ועד"ן לא נגאלו.

אומרים ברוך בונה ירושלים, ועד"ן לא נהנית.

אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: ישראל לא נגאלו אלא

לשעה וחזרו ונשתעבדו, והם מאמינים בי שאני

עתידי לגואלם. הוי "אמונים נוצר ה'."