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The Ongoing Revival In Creation

In the second blessing of Shemoneh Esrei, we say "מחי' מתים אתה" – "You revive the dead." It is written, "*Hashem revives the dead with His expression.*" Our Rabbis point out that there are five times in this blessing which we mention how Hashem revives the dead. The first time we mention the revival of the dead, it is referring to the general revival of the dead which will be in the future.

But as we know from the words of our Sages, Hashem is constantly reviving the world. Just as He supports life all the time - as we say later on in this blessing, - **ממכלכל חיים בחסד** so does He revive the dead all the time.

The simple understanding of this is that when a person goes to sleep, he returns his soul to Hashem, and when he gets up in the morning, Hashem gives him back his soul; this is the simple understanding of how Hashem revives the dead every day.

But the deeper understanding is that Hashem revives the various parts of our soul. The five times we mention the revival of the dead in this blessing are an allusion to the five parts of our soul.

Generally speaking, there are five parts to our soul. The highest part of our soul^[1] is our *ratzon* (will), followed by our power of *machshavah* (thought) then *hisbonenus* (reflection), then our *middos* (emotions and character traits) and finally, our actions, which are the lowest layer of our soul.

It is written, "*Hashem renews, in His goodness, every day, the act of Creation.*" This does not just mean that Hashem revives the world every day, but that He revives one's personal soul, every day.

The Renewal of Our Ratzon\Will

We will start with the highest layer of our soul, our *ratzon*. How does our *ratzon* get renewed every day? We are referring to a *ratzon* for holiness, not *retzonos* for various physical pursuits. How do we feel any *ratzon* for holiness?

It is really engraved deeply in our soul to always strive for holiness. "It is our will to do Your will, but the yeast in the sourdough [the evil inclination] prevents us." Our *ratzon* gets revived all the time because there is a personal revival of the dead that is constantly taking place in one's personal soul. Whenever I want to do learn or daven or do something spiritual, my *ratzon* is getting awakened, and this can only happen if **I recognize that Hashem is reviving me**. It is not enough for a person to know about this intellectually - he must have an inner recognition of it.

When a person isn't connected inwardly to the concept, then it doesn't work for him, and he is kind of asleep in his soul. Just like our body goes to sleep, so our soul can be asleep – when it is not connected to spiritual realities. But when we believe and recognize that Hashem keeps reviving us, our *ratzon* is revived, and then we are able to keep having a *ratzon* for anything holy.

From where does anyone get the power to sit and learn Torah every day? It is because they have a *ratzon* which is active. What is the difference between someone who shows up to the *Beis Midrash* every day to learn, on a regular basis, and someone who only comes once in a while, when he feels like it? The first person has a *ratzon*. He is connected to the concept of the soul's revival, and therefore his *ratzon* is always ignited.

To give another example, when people begin *Daf HaYomi*, their *ratzon* is active, but as *Daf Yomi* goes on, many people lose interest. Their *ratzon* stops. Why do people lose their *ratzon*? It is because they don't realize that Hashem can keep reviving us. The only ones who are able to last through any spiritual undertaking are the ones who understand that Hashem keeps reviving our *ratzon*, and that is where they get strength from. Those who lose their *ratzon* are unaware of the concept of how their *ratzon* can constantly be revived by Hashem.

The Renewal of Our Actions

From where do people get the ability to always be active in doing the mitzvos? How can people just do, do, and do more good deeds? Don't we need *menuchah* (rest)? How are certain people able to always be doing so many mitzvos and never cease doing mitzvos? It is because they are connected to the soul's revival. Therefore, their actions are constantly getting revived by Hashem. They are constantly experiencing an ongoing *techiyas hameisim* (revival of the dead) in their realm of action.

The Renewal of Our Middos

From where do people get the strength to always work on the *middos*? There are many people who were working on their *middos* when they were younger, but then they got married and "move on" with their life, leaving their aspirations behind, and they stop working on their *middos*. They have "tekufos" (periods) where they work on their *middos*, and "tekufos" when they don't work on their *middos*.

But there are people who are constantly working on their *middos*, for years and years. How are they able to work so hard on themselves? It is because they are connected to the power of the soul's revival. They realize that their *middos* need to always undergo *techiyas hameisim*, and that is how they get the strength to work on themselves.

Elul and Beyond

People work on themselves every Elul, but very few people remain with their progress. How are people to continue their growth? Inspiration cannot build us. We need to build and develop in ourselves a power in our soul that can keep us going. That power is to connect ourselves to the ongoing *techiyas hameisim* in Creation. This will supply us with a constant, inner source of revival.

Attaching Your Entire Soul to the Ongoing Revival

All of us **know** – in our minds, at least – that Hashem exists. But do we **feel** it? We **know**, intellectually, that Hashem keeps us alive, but do we actually feel that way? When we have a *ratzon*, we should feel that it is being enabled by Hashem. When we reflect deeply, we should feel that it's coming from Hashem. When we think, we should feel that it's coming from Hashem. When we work on our *middos*, we should feel that it's only possible because of Hashem. When we do any act, we

should feel that it's only because Hashem helps us.

Listening To Your Breathing

It is written, "Every soul praises Hashem", and Chazal interpret this possuk that for every breath a person breathes, a person should thank Hashem. Every day, for a few minutes, take some quiet time and listen to your breathing, and feel how Hashem is allowing you to breathe.^[2] (Don't do it a whole day. We are not angels.) Our breathing is something we can feel; it is not just something we know about. So pay attention to your breathing, feel yourself breathing, and make sure you are very calm when you do so. You can begin to feel how Hashem is keeping you alive with each breath, reviving you every second with each breath.

We all know in our mind that Hashem keeps us alive, but in order to feel it, we must be able to clearly feel it. Listening to your breathing is a good way for you to feel Hashem's existence. If you do this throughout the day, you will uncover a deep closeness with Hashem, feeling how Hashem is constantly giving you life. Don't just do this mechanically.

If someone practices this with inner calm, every day, he will slowly begin to actually feel his *ratzon* for holiness. His entire life will feel like an ongoing *techiyas hameisim*. This can be applied to the entire spectrum of our soul – our will, our deep reflection, our thoughts, our middos, and our actions – that Hashem is supplying us with energy to do any of these things.

When you get up in the morning and you say *Modeh Ani*, you can feel how Hashem has given you back your life. In the same way, you can constantly feel how Hashem is giving you your life, when you connect throughout the course of the day to the concept of the ongoing *techiyas hameisim*. When this becomes your way of life, you will uncover a deep connection with Hashem, in all your soul layers – all the way from your *ratzon* down to your actions. This will happen slowly, not all at once.

This is the *maayan hamisgaber* (mighty wellspring) that a person can access in his own soul.

The Power To Get Past All Failures

This is how we can gain a constant renewal and always start anew, no matter what failure we went through that day. When you connect to the source of your life – Hashem – and to believe that He is constantly reviving you – you will be able to get past all your major failures. Even when you fail, you will be to immediately get up from the failure, because you are tapping into the power of your soul's constant revival.

The root of all failures is really because after a person fails, he doesn't believe he can get up again afterwards. He isn't connected to the concept of the constant revival, therefore, he doesn't feel renewal in his soul.

Working On This Concept

This is a matter which does not come to you just by knowing about it intellectually. You need to actually connect yourself to the concept, to actually feel where your source of life is coming from [Hashem]. To work on this, take some quiet time and sit in a calm, quiet place [as the Chazon Ish writes to do, in *sefer Emunah U'Bitachon*] and try to feel this concept we have described here.

In Conclusion

The meaning of these words of Shemoneh Esrei, that Hashem is מחי' מתים is that Hashem doesn't just revive the dead in the future. He revives us every second; when we believe in this, that there is an

ongoing *techiyas hameisim* that we can connect ourselves to.

[1] These five layers of the soul are the external layers of the soul, but our actual **essence** of our soul is deeper than our will. It is our actual “I” – our neshamah, which is a “piece of Hashem.”

Refer to the author’s [Getting Know Your Self](#). [1]

[2] For more specific guidance on how to do this breathing exercise, see the shiur of [Rosh Chodesh Avodah: Cheshvah: Breathing](#). [2]

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-034-revival-living>

Links

[1] <http://bilvavi.net/sugya/daes.nafshecha>

[2] <http://bilvavi.net/english/rosh-chodesh-avodah-008-marchesvan-breathing>