



HEAL US, GOD, THEN WE WILL BE HEALED

JUST A SPOONFUL OF PRAYER



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רְפְּאוּנוּ ה' וְנִרְפָּא. הוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְנִשְׁעָה כִּי תִהְיֶה לָנוּ אֲתָהּ. וְהַעֲלֵה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְכֹל מְכֻוְּתֵינוּ.
כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ רּוֹפֵא נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אֲתָהּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', רּוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Heal us Hashem and we shall be healed. Save us and we shall be saved, for you are our praise. Bring complete recovery from all our ailments, for You, God, King are a faithful and compassionate healer.

Blessed are You Hashem, Healer of the sick of his people Israel.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

If you want to achieve maximum health, here are a few things that you should do: exercise regularly, eat nutritious and minimally processed foods, drop those extra pounds -- and pray. **That's right, regular prayer and meditation has been shown in numerous scientific studies to be an important factor in living longer and staying healthy.**

Prayer is the most widespread alternative therapy in America today. Over 85 percent of people confronting a major illness pray, according to a University of Rochester study. That is far higher than taking herbs or pursuing other nontraditional healing modalities. And increasingly the evidence is that prayer works.

It doesn't matter if you pray for yourself or for others, pray to heal an illness or for peace in the world, or simply sit in silence and quiet the mind -- the effects appear to be the same. A wide variety of spiritual practices have been shown to help alleviate the stress levels, which are one of the major risk factors for disease. They also are powerful ways to maintain a positive outlook and successfully weather the trials which come to all of us in life.



The relationship between prayer and health has been the subject of scores of double-blind studies over the past four decades. Dr. Herbert Benson, a cardiovascular specialist at Harvard Medical School and a pioneer in the field of mind/ body medicine discovered what he calls "the relaxation response," which occurs during periods of prayer and meditation. At such times, the body's metabolism decreases, the heart rate slows, blood pressure goes down, and our breath becomes calmer and more regular.

This physiological state is correlated with slower brain waves, and feelings of control, tranquil alertness and peace of mind. This is significant because Benson estimates that over half of all doctor visits in the U.S. today are prompted by illnesses, like depression, high blood pressure, ulcers and migraine headaches that are caused at least in part by elevated levels of stress and anxiety.

The effects of spiritual practice appear to be more than just the result of enhanced focus and concentration. Ken Pargement of Bowling Green State University instructed one group of people who suffer migraines to meditate 20 minutes each day repeating a spiritual affirmation, such as "God is good. God is peace. God is love." The other group used a nonspiritual mantra: "Grass is green. Sand is soft." The spiritual meditators had fewer headaches and more tolerance of pain than those who had focused on the neutral phrases.

A recent survey reported in the Journal of Gerontology of 4,000 senior citizens in Durham, NC, found that people who prayed or meditated coped better with illness and lived longer than those who did not.

But the question remains: By what physiological mechanisms does prayer impact our health? Herbert Benson's most recent research suggests that long term daily spiritual practices help to deactivate genes that trigger inflammation and prompt cell death. That the mind can affect the expression of our genes is exciting evidence for how prayer may influence the functioning of the body at the most fundamental level.



But what about praying for others? On the question of whether intercession-ary prayer works, the jury is still out. Over half the research conducted to date suggests that it helps, while the rest concludes that there is no measurable effect. Critics of these studies say that there is a big difference between praying more or less mechanically and at a distance for a stranger because a researcher has told you to do so and the heartfelt prayers for friends and relatives which arise spontaneously from within.

Prayer, unlike say the behavior of a rat in a maze, cannot be directly observed, and the subtle effects on self and others are difficult to quantify and assess. Moreover, it would be wrong to view prayer as merely a technique to heal illness and promote physical health.

What science can tell us is that people who pray and meditate trend to be statistically more healthy and live longer than those who do not. Whether these boons are merely unintended side effects of still deeper spiritual benefits remains a matter of faith.

❖ HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED PRAYER HELPING HEALING?

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- ❖ DO YOU THINK IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAT YOU PRAY FOR YOURSELF OR THAT SOMEONE PRAYS FOR YOU?
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THE ORIGINAL PETITIONER

Jeremiah Chapter 17	ירמיהו פרק יז
Hashem should heal me and I will be healed, I will call out to Him and He will answer me, for He is my praise.	(יד) רָפְאֵנִי יְקֹקֶךָ וְאַרְפָּא הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאַנְשֵׁעָה כִּי תִהְיֶה לְתִי אֲתָה:

Malbim's Commentary	מלבי"ם ירמיהו פרק יז
It is going back to what is written above, why is My affliction going to be eternal, which is a prophecy of anger which Hashem filled with affliction and punishment, they want Hashem to heal them from their affliction, and he will no longer prophesy about bad things.	(יד) רפאני. שב למ"ש למעלה למה היה כאבי נצח, שקרא נבואת זעם שמלאהו ה' בשם כאב וחולי, בקש שה' ירפאהו ממכתו האנושה ולא ינבא עוד פורעניות:

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- ❖ WHAT TYPE OF PAIN JEREMIAH ASKING TO BE HEALED FROM?
 - ❖ WHAT TYPE OF HEALING DO YOU WISH FOR?
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THE ROLE OF THE DOC



Though we ask Hashem to heal us and save us we also rely on doctors for healing.

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- ❖ IF WE BELIEVE ALL OF THIS IS IN THE HAND OF GOD- HOW CAN WE ASK A DOCTOR TO HELP US?
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Talmud Bavli: Brachos 60a	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ס עמוד א
Abaye said: A person should not say this, for it was taught in the academy of R' Yishmael that "And you shall heal him"- from here we see that the doctor has permission to heal. When one is healed what should he say? Blessed is He who heals for free	אמר אביי: לא לימא אינש הכי, דתני דבי רבי ישמעאל: חורפא ירפא - מכאן שניתנה רשות לרופא לרפאות. כי קאי מאי אומר? - אמר רב אחא: ברוך רופא חנם.

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- ❖ WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK WE RELY ON DOCTORS?
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SPECIAL REQUESTS

Talmud Bavli – Avoda Zara: 8a	תלמוד בבלי מסכת עבודה זרה דף ח עמוד א
R' Yehuda said in the name of R' Shmuel the son of Sheilas in the name of Rav, even though they said that a person should ask for his requests during the bracha of Shomea Tefillah, but if you want to say something at the end of each bracha which parallels that bracha then you can say it then. If there is a sick person in your house, then offer a prayer during Refaenu, and if you need sustenance, then offer a prayer during Barech Aleinu. R' Yehoshua ben Levi said that ideally a person should ask for his requests during Shomea Tefillah, but if he wants to offer a prayer after tefillah, then he can offer a prayer even as long as the tefillah on Yom Kippur.	<p>אמר רב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת משמיה דרב, אע"פ שאמרו: שואל אדם צרכיו בשומע תפלה, אבל אם בא לומר בסוף כל ברכה וברכה מעין כל ברכה וברכה - אומר. א"ר חייא בר אשי אמר רב, אע"פ שאמרו: שואל אדם צרכיו בשומע תפלה, אם יש לו חולה בתוך ביתו - אומר בברכת חולים, ואם צריך לפרנסה - אומר בברכת השנים. אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי, אע"פ שאמרו: שואל אדם צרכיו בשומע תפלה, אבל אם בא לומר אחר תפלתו, אפילו כסדר יוה"כ - אומר.</p> 

This bracha is one of the few brachos that has a special prayer attached to it to ask for others.

Prayer for the sick	תפילה בעד החולה :
May it be Your will, Hashem my God and the God of my fathers, that You should send speedily a complete recovery from Heaven, a healing of the soul and a healing of the body, amongst the other sick members of the Jewish people	<p>יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי. שְׂתַשְׁלַח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם. רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לְחֻלְהַ (פ"ב"פ) בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>

- ❖ DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM ANY SPIRITUAL ILLNESS?
- ❖ DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS?
- ❖ WHAT WOULD YOU ASK HASHEM TO DO?

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Bereishis Chapter 20	בראשית פרשת וירא פרק כ
<p>17) And Avram prayed to God and God healed Avimelech and his wife and his maids and they were relieved.</p> <p>18) For Hashem had completely closed off very womb of the household of Avimelech over the matter of Sarah the wife of Avraham.</p>	<p>(יז) וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי־אֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶת אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־הַתַּיִתּוֹ וַיֵּלְדוּ: (יח) כִּי־עָצַר עֶצֶר יְקֹוֹק בְּעַד כְּלִדְתָם לְבֵית אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְרָהָם: ט</p>

Bereishis Chapter 21	בראשית פרשת וירא פרק כא
1) And Hashem had remembered Sarah just as He said and Hashem did for Sarah as He spoke.	(א) וַיִּקְנֶה פֶּקֶד אֶת־שָׂרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְקֹנֶה לְשָׂרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר

Rashi's Commentary	רש"י בראשית פרשת וירא פרק כא
And Hashem had remembered Sarah: The Torah placed this passage next to the incident of Avimelech to teach you that anyone who asks for mercy on behalf of a friend, he is answered first, as it says "and he prayed etc." placed next to "and Hashem had remembered Sarah" before He healed Avimelech	(א) וה' פקד את שרה וגו' - סמך פרשה זו לכאן ללמדך שכל המבקש רחמים על חבירו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחילה, שנאמר (לעיל כ יז) ויתפלל וגו' וסמך ליה וה' פקד את שרה שפקד כבר קודם שרפא את אבימלך:

- ❖ WHY DO YOU THINK PRAYING FOR OTHERS ALLOWS YOU TO BE ANSWERED FIRST?
- ❖ HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED THIS?
- ❖ WHAT ABILITY DO WE HAVE TO HELP OTHERS THROUGH THEIR PAIN?



BRIS MILAH AND HEALING AND 8

Talmud Bavli: Megilla 17b	תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף יז עמוד ב
Why do we recite Refaenu as the 8th bracha? R' Acha said: Since milah was given on the 8th day, which requires healing, therefore it was instituted as the 8th bracha	ומה ראו לומר רפואה בשמינית? אמר רבי אחא: מתוך שנתנה מילה בשמינית, שצריכה רפואה, לפיכך קבעוה בשמינית.

Rabbi Michael L. Munk in, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet
"The number seven symbolizes the complete purpose of human existence, combining the spiritual level of the Sabbath with the physical effort of the week. Going beyond seven, the number eight symbolizes man's ability to transcend the limitations of physical existence. stands for that which is on a plane above nature, i.e., the \aleph eight, Thus, with a gematria of metaphysical Divine. The study of the Torah and the practice of its commandments are the ways by which Israel can strive to exalt human spirituality towards the realm above the natural."

- ❖ WHY DO YOU THINK HEALING AND THE NUMBER 8 ARE SO CONNECTED?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- ❖ This bracha is about healing from physical, emotional and spiritual pain.
- ❖ We have to pray but we also have to do our part and seek out help from doctors and help ourselves.
- ❖ This bracha has a specific place for special requests and we learn from Avraham that asking for something for someone else will fast track your needs to be responded to first.
- ❖ Lastly, sometimes when all hope is lost we should remember that this is the 8th bracha, 8 is a number that is mystically understood to transcend all boundaries of physicality it goes beyond the possible. When all hope is lost, a spoonful of prayer is probably the best medicine.