

## RESURRECTION

### **Is Resurrection a Jewish Belief?**

Many people associate it with other religions and are surprised to know that it is an authentic, essential part of Judaism.

There are many references to resurrection in the daily life and observance of a Jew. Here are but a few from the daily prayers:

#### Modeh Ani

“Modeh Ani” is recited every morning immediately upon waking. Some commentaries on the Siddur consider this an affirmation of our faith in Resurrection (Anaf Yosef in Siddur Otzar HaTefillot). The idea is, just as G-d returns our departed souls to our body each day, so too He will resurrect the dead.

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקיים, שהחזרת בי נשמתי בחמלה, רבה אמונתך.

*I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.*

#### Elokai Neshama

“Elokai neshama”, one of the daily morning blessings, directly refers to Resurrection:

אלוקי, נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא, אתה בראת...ואתה משמרה בקירבי, ואתה עתיד ליטלה ממני, ולהחזירה בי לעתיד לבא, כל זמן שהנשמה בקירבי מודה אני לפניך... רבון כל המעשים אדון כל הנשמות. ברוך אתה ה', המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים.

*My G-d, the soul which You have placed within me is pure. You created it...and You preserve it within me. You will eventually take it from me, and restore it within me in the Time to Come. As long as the soul is within me, I offer thanks to You...Master of all works, Lord of all souls. Blessed are You, G-d, Who restores souls to dead bodies.*

#### Atah Gibor

The second blessing of the Shemoneh Esreh, the central prayer of the services recited three or more times a day, praises He who resurrects:

אתה גבור לעולם ה'...מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים...ומקיים אמונתנו לישני עפר, מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך, מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה. ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה ה' מחיה המתים.

*You are mighty G-d...who resurrects the dead with great mercy...and fulfills his trust to those who sleep in the dust... Who can be compared to You, King, Who brings death and restores life, and causes deliverance to spring forth! You are trustworthy to revive the dead. Blessed are You, G-d, Who revives the dead.*

## Ani Ma'amin

Rambam includes belief in the resurrection as one of the thirteen essential tenets of belief incumbent on every Jew (based on Rambam's introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah of Sanhedrin, ch. 10):

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה, שתהיה תחית המתים בעת שיעלה רצון מאת הבורא...

*I believe with perfect faith that the dead will be brought back to life when G-d wills it to happen.*

### Textual References to Resurrection

There are a plethora of references to Resurrection in Jewish sources. Here are some Scriptural and Talmudic passages, as well as the opinion of early, authoritative commentaries:

#### Ezekiel 37

1. The hand of the Lord came upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, and that was full of bones. 2. And He made me pass by them round about, and they were exceedingly many on the surface of the valley, and they were exceedingly dry. 3. Then He said to me; "Son of man, can these bones become alive?" And I answered, "O Lord G-d, You [alone] know." 4. And He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.' 5. So says the Lord G-d to these bones; Behold, I will cause spirit to enter into you, and you shall live! 6. And I will lay sinews upon you, and I will make flesh grow over you and cover you with skin and put breath into you, and you will live, and you will then know that I am the Lord... 12. Therefore, prophesy and say to them, So says the Lord G-d: Lo! I open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves as My people, and bring you home to the land of Israel. 13. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and lead you up out of your graves as My people. 14. And I will put My spirit into you, and you shall live..."

#### Daniel 12:2

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken, some to everlasting life, and some to reproach and everlasting contempt. Now go your way to the end and rest, and you shall arise to your destiny at the end of days."

[We will see later that several important details about Resurrection are derived from these passages.]

#### Pirkei Avot 4:29

רבי אליעזר הקפר אומר...הילודים למות והמתים לחיות.

*R' Elazar HaKapar says: "Those who are born are destined to die; those who are dead are destined to live again".*

## Resurrection from the Torah

Sanhedrin 90b

רבי סימאי אומר, מניין לתחיית המתים מן התורה? שנאמר (שמות ו) 'וגם הקימותי את בריתי אתם לתת להם את ארץ כנען'. 'לכס' לא נאמר אלא 'להם', מכאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה.

*R' Simai says, Whence do we learn Resurrection from the Torah? - From the verse, 'And I also have established My covenant with [the Patriarchs] to give them the Land of Canaan.' The verse does not say 'to give you' but 'to give them.' [Meaning, since the Land was given to their descendants, and has not yet been given to them personally] their future Resurrection is thus proved from the Torah.*

Ibid

מניין לתחיית המתים מן התורה? שנאמר (במדבר יח) 'ונתתם ממנו [את] תרומת ה' לאהרן הכהן וכי אהרן לעולם קיים, והלא לא נכנס לארץ ישראל שנותנין לו תרומה! אלא מלמד שעתיד לחיות וישראל נותנין לו תרומה. מכאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה.

*How is Resurrection deduced from the Torah? It is written, "Of [these tithes] you shall give G-d's heave-offering to Aaron the priest" (Nu. 18:28). But would Aaron live forever? After all, he did not enter the Land of Israel and thereby make it possible that terumah be given to him! Rather, this teaches that he will ultimately be resurrected, and the Jewish people will give him terumah".*

## Description of Resurrection

Sanhedrin 91a

א"ל קיסר לרבן גמליאל אמריתו דשכבי חיי הא הוו עפרא ועפרא מי קא חיי אמרה ליה ברתיה שבקיה ואנא מהדרנא ליה שני יוצרים יש בעירנו אחד יוצר מן המים ואחד יוצר מן הטיט איזה מהן משובח א"ל זה שיוצר מן המים א"ל מן המים צר מן הטיט לא כל שכן.

*An emperor said to Rabban Gamliel: "You maintain that the dead will live again; but they turn to dust - can dust come to life?" Thereupon the [emperor's] daughter said to [Rabban Gamliel]: "Here, let me answer him. In our town there are two potters: one fashions his vessels from water, and the other from clay. Who is the more praiseworthy?" "He who fashions them from water," replied [her father]. She concluded: "If He can fashion man from water [Rashi: "From a drop of semen which resembles water"], surely he can do so from clay."*

Ketubot 111b

א"ר חייא בר יוסף עתידין צדיקים שמבצבצין ועולין בירושלים שנאמר (תהילים עב) 'ויציצו מעיר כעשב הארץ' ואין עיר אלא ירושלים שנאמר (מלכים ב יט) 'וגנותי אל העיר הזאת'.

*Chiya bar Yosef said: A time will come when the righteous will break through the soil and rise up in Jerusalem, for it is written, 'And they shall blossom out of the city like grass from*

the earth' (Psalms 72:16) - and 'city' alludes to Jerusalem, as in the phrase, 'For I shall defend this city' (II Kings 19:34).

#### Sanhedrin 90b

שאלה קליאופטרא מלכתא את ר"מ אמרה ידענא דחיי שכבי דכתיב (תהילים עב) 'ויצו מעיר כעשב הארץ' אלא כשהן עומדין, עומדין ערומין או בלבושיהן עומדין? אמר לה ק"ו מחיטה ומה חיטה שנקברה ערומה יוצאה בכמה לבושין, צדיקים שנקברים בלבושיהן על אחת כמה וכמה.

*Queen Cleopatra said to R' Meir: I know that the dead will live again, for it is written, 'And they shall blossom out of the city like grass from the earth' (Psalms 72:16); but when they arise, will they arise naked or clothed? He replied, You may deduce the answer by observing a wheat grain. If a grain of wheat, which is buried naked, sprouts forth in many coverings, how much more so the righteous, who are buried in their garments.*

#### Sanhedrin 92a

אמר ר' טבי אמר רבי יאשיה מאי דכתיב (משלי ל) 'שאול ועוצר רחם ארץ לא שבעה מים' וכי מה ענין שאול אצל רחם? אלא לומר לך מה רחם מכניס ומוציא, אף שאול מכניס ומוציא. והלא דברים קל וחומר ומה רחם שמכניסין בו בחשאי מוציאין ממנו בקולי קולות, שאול שמכניסין בו בקולות אינו דין שמוציאין ממנו בקולי קולות?

*R' Tavi said in the name of R' Yoshia: "What do we learn from the following text? 'There are three things that are never satisfied: ...the grave and the womb....' (Proverbs 30:15,16). How comes the grave next to the womb? - This juxtaposition teaches you that just as the womb takes in and gives forth again, so the grave takes in and will give forth again. Moreover, if the womb that takes in silently gives forth with loud noise [i.e., the crying of the infant], does it not stand to reason that the grave that takes in with a loud noise [i.e., the wailing of the mourners], will give forth [those who are revived] with a loud noise?"*

Rambam, in his Discourse on the Resurrection ch. 4, summarizes the above discussion as follows:

"The concept of Resurrection - which is well known among our people and accepted throughout all its circles, and which is often mentioned in the prayers and aggadic teachings and supplications with which the Talmud and the Midrashim are replete - signifies the following: The soul will return to the body after they have been separated [by death]. No Jew has disputed this concept, and it cannot be interpreted other than literally. One may not accept the view of any Jew who believes otherwise.

"As I shall explain in the present discourse: Why should we not interpret these verses [regarding the Resurrection] allegorically, as we have done with many other Biblical verses, departing from their literal meaning? The reason is as follows: The concept of Resurrection, namely, that the soul will return to the body after death, is expressed by Daniel [12:2] in such a manner that it cannot be interpreted other than literally: 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken, some to everlasting life, and some to reproach and everlasting contempt.' Daniel was likewise told by the angel, [Ibid, v. 13] 'Now go your way to the end and rest, and you shall arise to your destiny at the end of days.'"

## When Will the Resurrection Occur?

Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 11:4

ואם יעמוד מלך מבית דויד הוגה בתורה ועוסק במצוות כדויד אביו, כפי תורה שבכתב ושבועל פה, ויכוף כל ישראל לילך בה ולחזק בדקה, ויילחם מלחמות ה', הרי זה בחזקת שהוא משיח. אם עשה והצליח, וניצח כל האומות שסביביו, ובנה מקדש במקומו, וקיבץ נדחי ישראל, הרי זה משיח בוודאי.

*If a king will arise from the House of David who, like David his ancestor, delves deeply into the study of the Torah and observes its mitzvot as prescribed by the Written law and the Oral law; if he will compel all of Israel to walk in [the way of the Torah] and repair the breaches [in its observance]; and if he will fight the wars of G-d; - we may, with assurance, consider him Mashiach. If he succeeds in the above, builds the Temple on its site, and gathers in the dispersed remnant of Israel, he is definitely the Mashiach."*

From Rambam, it is clear that the sequence of events toward the end of days, even before Resurrection, is the Coming of the *Mashiach*, Building of the Temple, and the Ingathering of the Exiles. This view is based on the verse, "G-d builds Jerusalem, He gathers together the outcasts of Israel" (Psalms 147:2).

The Zohar (Toldot, Midrash Hane'elam) writes that the next verse in Psalms, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (147:3) refers to the Resurrection, demonstrating that it will occur after the three stages mentioned above – specifically forty years after the Ingathering of the Exiles.

Nevertheless, several sources indicate that there will be an early, limited Resurrection at the onset of Redemption:

- Moses will come together with the Prophet Elijah who is considered the harbinger of the *Mashiach* (Midrash Rabbah, Parashat Eikev ch. 17).
- Moses, Aaron and his sons will be resurrected at the time *Mashiach* comes, so that they will be able to instruct the people in the Temple service and other matters (Tosafot on Pesachim 114b s.v. *echad*; Yoma 5b).

Since some special individuals will be resurrected before, or upon, the arrival of the *Mashiach*, does the *Mashiach* himself have to be among the living at the time of the final redemption, or could *Mashiach* be of those who are resurrected early?

Recall Rambam quoted above. His description suggests a gradual process whereby a righteous and learned leader of his generation will fight the wars of G-d, become a potential *Mashiach*, go on to build the Temple and then gather in the exiles. Accordingly, the *Mashiach* will not himself be of the resurrected.

However, Abarbanel (Yeshuot Meshicho, Sec. 2, Ch. 1, p 104) writes that it is possible that a righteous individual deemed to be the *Mashiach* will live, will not become revealed on account his generation's lack of merit, but will eventually be resurrected. Similarly, Sedei Chemed (Pe'at HaSadeh, Ma'arechet Alef, note 70) writes that if Israel is exceedingly meritorious, *Mashiach* will be resurrected from the dead in a miraculous manner. Both opinions are based upon the idea that *Mashiach* was among those who died before their

time (Derech Eretz Zuta Ch. 1) and the sages identifying *Mashiach* as someone who lived in a previous generation (San. 98b).

## Will the Dead of the Diaspora Be Resurrected?

Ketubot 111a

א"ר אלעזר מתים שבחוץ לארץ אינם חיים שנאמר (יחזקאל כו) 'ונתתי צבי בארץ חיים'. ארץ שצביוני בה, מתיה חיים. שאין צביוני בה, אין מתיה חיים. מתיב ר' אבא בר ממל (ישעיהו כו) 'יחיו מתיד נבלתי יקומון'. מאי לאו 'יחיו מתיד' מתים שבא"י, 'נבלתי יקומון' מתים שבחוץ לארץ? ולר' אלעזר, צדיקים שבחוץ לארץ אינם חיים? אמר רבי אילעא ע"י גלגול. מתקיף לה ר' אבא סלא רבא גלגול לצדיקים צער הוא?! אמר אביי מחילות נעשות להם בקרקע.

*R' Elazar said: The dead of the Diaspora will **not** be resurrected for it is written, 'I shall bestow glory upon the land of life' (Yechezkel 26:20). [This implies that] the land with My glory, its dead shall be resurrected; a land without My glory, its dead shall not be resurrected. R' Abba bar Mamal objects: It is also written, 'The dead men of your people shall live; my dead body shall arise' (Yeshayahu 26:19). Does not 'the dead men of your people' refer to the dead of the Land of Israel, and 'my dead body' refer to the dead of the Diaspora, [implying that the dead of all lands shall arise]?" [The Gemora asks:] According to R' Elazar, is it conceivable that the righteous buried in the Diaspora will not be resurrected? R' Ila'a answers: They will be resurrected through gilgul [their bodies will be rolled through the ground]. R' Abba asks: Is this not painful for the righteous? Abaye answers: Tunnels will be made for them under the ground.*

Note: If the righteous dead of the Diaspora will be resurrected, why did Jacob and Joseph wish to be buried in the Land of Israel and not outside it (Bereishit 47:29-30; 50:24-25)? They were not sure that they would be found worthy of being brought there through the subterranean channels.

## Where Will the Dead of the Diaspora Be Resurrected?

Bereishit Rabbah 96:5

מה הקב"ה עושה? עושה להן מחילות בארץ ועושה אותן כמערות הללו והם מתגלגלים ובאים עד שהם מגיעים לארץ ישראל והקב"ה נותן בהם רוח של חיים והם עומדים. מנין שכן, כתיב 'הנה אני פותח את קברותיכם והעלתי אתכם מקברותיכם עמי והבאתי אתכם אל אדמת ישראל', אח"כ 'ונתתי רוחי בכם וחייתם'. אמר ריש לביש מקרה מלא הוא שכיון שהם מגיעים לארץ ישראל הקב"ה נותן בהם נשמה שנאמר 'ונתן נשמה לעם עליה'.

*What, will G-d do? He will make subterranean passages and they will roll to the Land of Israel, where G-d will infuse in them a spirit of life and they will arise. And how do we know this [that the Resurrection will take place in the Land of Israel]? It is written, 'Behold! I shall open your graves and raise you up from your graves, O My people, and I shall bring you to the Land of Israel' (Yechezkel 37:12-14). Only then does the passage go on to say: 'I shall put My spirit into you and you shall live'. Resh Lakish said: It is explicitly written that as soon as the bodies reach the Land of Israel, G-d will infuse a soul in them, as it is written, 'He gives a soul to the people upon the Land' (Yeshayahu 42:5).*

## Why in the Land of Israel?

Zohar I, 113b (Midrash HaNe'elam)

רבי יהודה ברבי אלעזר שאל לרבי חזקיה: מתים שעתיד הקב"ה להחיות, למה לא יהיב נשמתהון באתר דאתקברו תמן, וייתון לאחיא בארעא דישראל? אמר ליה נשבע הקב"ה לבנות ירושלים ושלא תהרס לעולמים, דאמר רבי ירמיה: עתיד הקב"ה לחדש עולמו ולבנות ירושלים ולהורידה בנויה מלמעלה בגין שלא תהרס. ונשבע שלא תגלה עוד כנסת ישראל ונשבע שלא יהרס בנין ירושלים...לפיכך אין מקבלין נשמתין אלא במקום קיים לעולמים, כדי שתהיה הנשמה קיימת בגוף לעולמים.

*R' Yehudah the son of R' Elazar asked R' Chizkiyah: The dead that the Holy One, Blessed be He, will resurrect, - Why won't He return their souls in the place where they were buried and then bring them to live in the Land of Israel? [R' Chizkiyah] answered: The Holy One has sworn to build Jerusalem and that it shall never be destroyed. As was said by R' Yirmiyah: The Holy One, Blessed be He, will renew His world and build Jerusalem and lower it ready built from above so that it shall never be destroyed. He has sworn that He will never again exile Israel and He has sworn that the rebuilt Jerusalem shall not be destroyed...Therefore they will not receive their souls except in a place that will exist forever so that the soul will exist in the body forever.*

## The Dead of the Land of Israel Will Arise First

Jerusalem Talmud, Ketubot 12:3

'אתהלך לפני ה' בארצות החיים' (תהילים קטז)...ארץ שמתיה חיים, תחילה לימות המשיח.

*'I will walk before G-d in the Land of the Living' (Psalms 116)...The land whose dead are 'living' is first to experience the days of Mashiach.*

## From What Will the Body Be Resurrected?

Kohelet Rabbah 12:5

אדריאנוס שחיק עצמות שאיל את רבי יהושע בן חנניה, מהיכן אדם מניץ לעתיד לבוא? אמר ליה מלוז של שדרה.

*Hadrian 'the bone-crusher' asked R' Yehoshua ben Chananya: 'From what will a person sprout forth [be resurrected] in the future? [R' Yehoshua] replied, 'From the luz bone in the spine'.*

This involves the 'Dew of Resurrection'

Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 5:2

ומניין שאין המתים חיים אלא בטללים? שנאמר (ישעיהו כו) 'יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומו' הקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר כי טל אורת טלך וארץ רפאים תפיל'. מהו 'וארץ רפאים תפילי' א"ר תנחום אדרעיא וארעא תפקידה תפלט.

*From where do we know that the dead will not come to life except with 'dews'? As it written, 'May Your dead live, My corpses shall rise; awaken and sing, you who dwell in the dust, for a dew of lights is your dew, and to the earth You shall cast down.' (Isaiah 26:19). What is meant by 'and to the earth You shall cast down'? R' Tanchum said: That which has been deposited in the earth, the earth shall give forth.*

## Identifying the Luz

As above, Bereishit Rabbah 28:3 also states that the *luz* is in the spine. Some opinions locate it at the base of the spine (Rashi on Bereishit Rabbah 28:3; Aruch, s.v. *luz*). However, the Arizal identifies it as the bone at the back of the skull upon which the knot of the *tefillin* of the head is placed (Likkutei Nach, Parshat Shoftim).

## The Luz Bone is Indestructible

Bereishit Rabbah 28:3

[רבי יהושע בן חנניה] הביא לוז אחד של שדרה, נתנו במים ולא נמחה, באור ולא נשרף, ברחיים ולא נטחן. נתנו על הסדן והכה עליו בפשיט, נחלק הסדן ונבקע הפטיש ולא הועיל כלום.

*[R' Yehoshua ben Chananya] brought a luz bone from a spine. He put it in water and it didn't dissolve, in fire and it didn't burn, in a mill and it didn't get crushed. He put it on an anvil and struck upon it with a hammer; the anvil broke and the hammer split but it didn't accomplish anything.*

## Why Does Resurrection Occur Specifically Through the Luz Bone?

Adam introduced death into the world by eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Those organs that were nourished at that time, which was a Friday, were destined to demise and decay. The *luz* bone alone will never decompose, because it is nourished only by *Melaveh Malkah*, the departing meal of Shabbat (Caf HaChaim, Hilchot Shabbat 300:1). Other opinions explain that the *luz* bone is the source of Resurrection because: 1] It receives no nourishment whatsoever from food. 2] It is sustained only by the food of Shabbat. 3] It is sustained only by the wine of *havdalah* (Eliyah Rabbah, Orach Chaim, sec. 300).

## How Will the Body be Formed?

Bereishit Rabbah 14:5

בית שמאי אומרים לא כשם יצירתו בעולם הזה כך יצירתו לעולם הבא. בעולם הזה מתחיל בעור ובבשר, וגומר בגידים ובעצמות. אבל לעתיד לבוא, מתחיל בגידים ובעצמות, וגומר בעור ובבשר... בית הלל אומרים כשם שיצירתו בעולם הזה כך יצירתו בעולם. בעולם הזה מתחיל בעור ובבשר, וגומר בגידים ובעצמות. כך אף לעתיד לבוא מתחיל בעור ובבשר, וגומר בגידים ובעצמות.

*Beit Shammai say, The formation of a person in this world is not like his formation in the World to Come. In this world, [formation of the embryo] starts with the skin and flesh, and finishes with sinews and bones. But in the Future to Come [Resurrection], the body will begin to take shape with sinews and bones, and the skin and flesh will follow; Beit Hillel say, Just as formation in this world, so will be his formation in the Future to Come. In this*



world formation commences with skin and flesh and concludes with sinews and bones. So too in the Future to Come, formation of the body will begin with skin and flesh, and finish with sinews and bones.

### In What Form Will the Body be Resurrected?

As at death:

Sanhedrin 91b

ר"ל רמי כתיב (ירמיהו לא) 'בם עור ופסח הרה ויולדת יחדיו' וכתוב (ישעיהו לה) 'אז ידלג כאיל פסח ותרון לשון אלם כי נבקעו במדבר מים ונחלים בערבה'. הא כיצד? עומדין במומן ומתרפאין.

*Resh Lakish contrasted two verses: It is written, '[I will gather them in...] Among them will be the blind and the lame, the woman with child together with the woman in labor. (Yirmiyahu 31:8). And yet another verse states: 'Then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing, for waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert' (Yeshayahu 35:6). How so? - They shall rise with their defects and then be healed.*

Zohar III, 91a

תא חזי, כד יתערוך מעפרא, כמה דעאלו, הכי יקומו, חגרין או סומין. עאלו חגרין וסומין, יקומו בהוא לבושא, דלא יימרון דאחרא הוא דאתער. ולבתר, קודשא בריך הוא ייסי לון, וישתכחון שלימין קמיה, וכדין יהא עלמא שלים בכלא, כדין ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמנו אחד.

*Come and see, when they will awaken from the dust, as they went in they will rise, lame or blind. If they entered lame or blind, they will rise with the same garment [body] so that none would say it is another who was revived. Afterward, the Holy One, blessed be He, will heal them so they will be whole before Him, and the world will be whole in everything. Regarding this the verse says, "on that day G-d shall be one, and His Name One" (Zecharyah 14:9).*

By contrast, the following suggests the body will be resurrected anew:

Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 34

רבי שמעון אומר: כל הגופות נוגעין בעפר הארץ עד שאינו משתייר מן הגוף אלא כמלא תרווד רקב והוא מתערב בעפר הארץ כשעור שהוא מתערב בעיסה. ולעתיד לבוא כשיקרא הקב"ה לארץ שיתן פקדון, כל הגופות ההוא שמתערב בעפר הארץ כשעור שהוא מתערב בעיסה, מיפה ומרבה ומעלה את כל הגוף בלא מום כשעור שהוא מיפה ומרבה את העיסה.

*R' Shimon says: All bodies come in contact with the earth until nothing remains of the body except a small portion of decayed matter that is mixed with the ground like leavening mixed in dough. In the future time, when the Holy One, blessed be He, calls upon the earth to return its deposit, all of the body that is mixed in the dust of the earth like leaven mixed in dough, will beautify, increase and establish the entire body without blemish just as leaven beautifies and increases the dough.*

## Do the Righteous Decompose before Resurrection?

Ordinarily, the bodies of the perfectly righteous do not decompose in the grave. For example, the verse recording the death of Moses states, "His eye had not dimmed, and his vigor had not diminished" (Deut. 34:7). Rashi writes, "even after death, his life fluids remained within him; decomposition did not affect him." There are many examples of this in the Talmud as well:

### Baba Batra 58a

ההוא אמגושא דהוה חטיט שכבי. כי מטא אמערטא דרב טובי בר מתנה, תפשיה בדיקניה. אתא אביי א"ל במטותא מינך שבקיה. לשנה אחריתי הדר אתא, תפשיה בדיקניה. אתא אביי לא שבקיה עד דאייתי מספרא וגזיא לדיקניה.

*A certain magician used to dig after the dead for the purpose of stripping them [of their clothing]. When he arrived at the burial cave of R' Tuvi bar Matna, [R' Tuvi] grasped him by the beard. Abaye came and said [to R' Tuvi], 'With your permission sir, please release him'. [He did so.] The next year the magician returned [to the burial cave of R' Matna intending to strip him of his clothes] and R' Tuvi grasped him by his beard. Abaye appeared [and pleaded for his release but] R' Tuvi would not let him go until Abaye brought scissors and cut off his beard.*

### Shabbat 152b

הנהו קפולאי דהוו קפלי בארעא דרב נחמן. נחר בהו רב אחאי בר יאשיה. אתו ואמרו ליה לרב נחמן, נחר בן גברא. אתא ואמר ליה, מאן ניהו מר? אמר ליה, אנא אחאי בר יאשיה...[א"ל] והא קרא כתיב 'וישוב העפר על הארץ כשהיה'. אמר ליה, דאקרייך קהלת, לא אקרייך משלי דכתיב (משלי יד) 'ורקב עצמות קנאה', כל מי שיש לו קנאה בלבו עצמותיו מרקיבים, כל שאין לו קנאה בלבו אין עצמותיו מרקיבים.

*Some gardeners were digging in the property of Rav Nachman. Rav Achai bar Yoshia [who was buried there in the ground] grumbled at them. They went and told Rav Nachman, Someone grumbled at us [from in the ground]. [Rav Nachman] came and said to him, Who are you sir? He said, I am Achai bar Yoshia...[Rav Nachman said to Rav Achai], behold the verse says, 'The dust on the earth will return as it was'. He replied, you may have read Ecclesiastes, but you haven't read Proverbs as it's written, 'Jealousy decays the bones' (Prov. 14) – anyone who has jealousy in his heart, his bones decompose; anyone that doesn't have jealousy in his heart, his bones will not decompose.*

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned source concludes that even the righteous who did not decay after death in this world, will return to dust for a short while before the Resurrection:

### Ibid

גששיה, חזייה דאית ביה מששא. אמר ליה ליקום מר לגווייה דביתא. אמר ליה גלית אדעתך דאפילו נביאי לא קרית דכתיב (יחזקאל לו) 'וידעתם כי אני ה' בפתחי את קברותיכם'. א"ל והכתיב (בראשית ג) 'כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב'. א"ל ההוא שעה אחת קודם תחיית המתים.

*[Rav Nachman] felt him and saw that there was substance [to Rav Achai's body]. He said to him, Stand up sir and come into the house. He replied, Apparently you haven't even read the Prophets, as there it is written: 'And you shall know that I am G-d when I open up your graves...' (Yechezkel 37). He responded, behold it is written, 'You are dust and to dust you shall return' (Gen. 3). [Rav Yoshia] answered, that is referring to shortly before the Resurrection.*

This is because since the sin of the Tree of Knowledge tainted the world with evil, even the bodies of the completely righteous need to be refined to attain the degree of purity necessary to experience the state of perfection that will exist after Resurrection.

### **Will Those Who Will be Alive at the Time of the Resurrection Need to Die?**

Zohar II, 108b

*'אני אמית ואחיה': עד השתא מותא הות מסטרא אחרא, מכאן ולהלאה, 'אני אמית ואחיה'. מכאן דבההוא זמנא כל אינון דלא טעמי טעמא דמותא, מניה תהא לון מותא, ויקים לון מיד. אמאי? בגין דלא ישתאר מההוא זוהמא בעלמא כלל, ויהא עלמא חדתא, בעובדי ידוי דקודשא בריך הוא.*

*"I cause death and bring life". Until this moment, death was brought about via the Other Side; from this time on, 'I will cause death and give life'. [Meaning] From that time on [from Resurrection] all those who did not experience the taste of death [and were still alive at the time of the Resurrection], will experience death directly from G-d and then rise immediately back to life. Why [is it necessary that those living then experience momentary death]? In order that no impurity will remain in the world and that there be a new world brought about from the workings of the Holy One, blessed be He.*

Since at that time G-d will remove the worldly impurity that causes death, the bodies of those who are then alive will have to be disassembled and reconstructed to live forever - this involves a momentary death followed by resurrection.

### **The Resurrection of Non-Jews**

Bereishit Rabbah 13:6

*רבי חייה בר אבא אמר, וגדולה [גשמים] מתחיית המתים. שתחיית המתים לאדם, [וגשמים] לאדם ולבהמה. תחיית המתים לישראל, [וגשמים] לישראל ולעובדי כוכבים.*

*R' Chiya bar Abba said, Rain is greater than the Resurrection of the Dead. Resurrection is only for humans, while rain benefits man and animals. Resurrection is only for the Jewish people, while rain is for Jews and non-Jews as well.*

This suggests that only Jews are resurrected, but gentiles are not. However, the commentaries differ on this point. Yefei Toar (on the Midrash) explains that it includes righteous gentiles as well. Similarly, the Zohar (I, 181b) states that the idolatrous nations of the world will not be resurrected, perhaps implying that the righteous gentiles will. Abarbanel, in Ma'ayanei HaYeshuah p. 11a, writes that Resurrection will apply to all of mankind. He notes two purposes: 1] All the dead will be resurrected - the righteous to enjoy the benefits they merited, and the enemies of Israel in order to witness their own ultimate downfall. 2] In order for the nations to realize the folly of their beliefs and to

acknowledge G-d as King - as in the prophecy, "For I shall then make the nations pure of speech, so that they will all call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose" (Tzephaniah 3:9). Still other authorities are of the opinion that only the righteous will merit Resurrection (see R' Sa'adiah Gaon, *Emunot VeDeyot*, ch. 7; Rambam, *Perush HaMishnayot*, Sanhedrin, ch. 10; Ramban, *Sha'ar HaGemul*, sec. 11).

### **Summary of the Order of Resurrection**

We have seen above that Moses, Aaron and his sons will be resurrected with the coming of *Mashiach* so that they will be able to instruct and lead the people. Another source indicates that Moses will come together with Eliyahu HaNavi even before *Mashiach*. Elsewhere, the Midrash states that Moses was buried in the desert with his people so that upon Resurrection he will lead them all to the Land (*V'etchanan* 2:10). Combining these two Midrashim, Moses together with his whole generation will be resurrected and will appear with Eliyahu upon the arrival of *Mashiach* (*Lev Chaim*, Vol. I, p. 32). Other righteous individuals will also be resurrected early on; as a reward for their lifelong service, they will participate in the rejoicing of *Mashiach*, and the rebuilding of the Temple. Furthermore, Masters of Torah learning will rise before those who excel in the observance of mitzvot (*Zohar* I, 182a).

According to one tradition, the dead will be summoned by name in alphabetical order (Midrash quoted in *Ohev Yisrael*, *Likkutim* on Parashat Berachah). The Mabit (in *Beit Elokim*, *Sha'ar HaYesodot*, end of sec. 55) points out that according to this view, Adam will rise first since his name begins with *alef*. Alternatively, he suggests that perhaps the alphabetical order will apply only within each generation, while the Resurrection of each generation will take place in historical order. The last of all will be the Patriarchs: When they finally rise, their joy at encountering all their righteous descendants in Jerusalem with the rebuilt Temple, will be boundless. May we merit seeing all this, speedily in our days!