RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

PLANTING AHEAD

SHEMONAH ESREI SERIES
PLANTING AHEAD!

Silent prayer- Blessing of Mighty Deeds

You are eternally mighty, My Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead are You, abundantly able to save.
He who makes the wind blow and the rain descend.
He 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, 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.

Temporal Myopia: Making Bad Long-term Decisions

The brain was not designed to make long-term decisions

Published on September 23, 2012 by Dean Buonomano, Ph.D. in Brain Bugs

The United States is $16 trillion in debt. There is widespread agreement among scientists that the planet is warming and water levels are rising as a result of man-made causes. The average American household holds $6,770 in credit card debt. Without intervention the Medicare system will be bankrupt in the 2020s. Over a third of Americans are obese.

Many of the most serious and pervasive problems we face as individuals and as a society reflect the fact that we are temporally myopic creatures who are inherently inept at long-term planning.

Which of the following two options would you choose: $100 now or $120 one month from now?

The average economist would argue that the rational decision is to take $120 one month from now—because an additional $20 in one month is a very good yield. But studies show that given this type of “intertemporal” choice most people choose the immediate $100.

Now what about the following choice: $100 in 12 months, or $120 in 13 months?

In both sets of choices, you would gain an extra $20 by waiting one month. Logically one would expect that people who chose the $100 option in the first case would again choose the $100 option in the second scenario. Yet, studies show that many people reverse their strategy, waiting the extra month for the additional $20 in the second scenario.

In other words, when the immediate award is off the table, and both rewards are placed in the future we behave more rationally. Our thirst for immediate gratification clouds our judgment: It is simply inherently more exciting to learn that we will be given $100 right now.
Although no one has probably ever offered you these exact set of choices, we are continuously making real life decisions that require balancing short and long-term trade-offs. Should I purchase the new TV today using my credit card and pay interest over the next six months, or wait until I have the cash on hand? Should I buy the cheaper gas-fueled car, or the more expensive hybrid, which, in the long run, will be better for the environment and allow me to save some money on fuel? Similarly, politicians throughout the world are currently making even more important decisions relating to the economic health of nations: Should they cut spending and increase taxes immediately, or continue borrowing money?

The upside of borrowing is to potentially stimulate the economy, postpone difficult decisions now, and probably increase one’s chances of remaining in power. But the downside of continued borrowing is that more and more tax payer money will be devoted to paying interest, not to mention the possibility of economic collapse at some point in the future. The teetering economy of Greece nicely illustrates the consequence of politicians clinging to short-term “solutions” for too long.

There is no mystery as to why the brain comes with a strong built-in bias towards immediate gratification. For our ancestors, life was a shorter and a much more unpredictable journey. The immediate challenges of obtaining food and survival took precedence over thoughts about what was to come in the months or years ahead. If someone offered our ancestors one apple now or two apples in a full moon from now, what’s the correct choice? If you are hungry now, or have any reason to believe there is a chance you may not be alive in a month, or that the person making the offer is not trustworthy, the correct decision is to take the apple and run.

Psychologists have trained monkeys to choose between receiving two food pellets now or six food pellets at some future point in the time. How long are the monkeys willing to wait for the four extra pellets? The monkeys make an impulsive five-year-old trying to wait a few minutes to get an extra marshmallow look like a Buddhist monk. The patience limits of the monkeys seemed to run out at around 14 seconds! That is, they were not willing to wait more than 14 seconds to get three times the amount of food.

Animal studies remind us of just how complex intertemporal decisions are, and why it does not even make sense to ask if other animals can make choices that will only payoff in months or years. Part of the problem is the concept of months and years! There is no evidence that other species can conceptualize time or think about the future, or are capable of understanding or quantifying periods of time.

In a world in which life was short and governed by the unpredictability of disease, the availability of food, and weather, there may have been little advantage in tackling the strenuous complexities that arise from long-term planning.
But in the modern world, the opposite is true: the biggest threats to human beings arise from the lack of long-term thinking. Yet, we tend to make temporally myopic decisions that influence not only our health and finances, but also encourage us to elect officials who promise short-term “solutions” aimed at exploiting our shortsightedness rather than actually solving problems. Long-term planning is a skill best accomplished by conscious awareness of how the disproportionate sway of short-term gratification affects our allegedly rational decisions. Additionally long-term planning benefits from practice and foresight. Given the current state of affairs—not to mention the fact that the word foresight does not even exist in some languages—we clearly need a lot more practice.

Why do you think it is so hard to make long-term decisions?

The Legacy of Yitzchak

The first blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei is related to Avraham and it specifically references him. This second blessing is referencing the life of Yitzchak, specifically the pinnacle event of Akeidas Yitzchak- the binding of Yitzchak.

Bereishis Chapter 22

12) And he said “Do not send forth your hand to the lad nor do anything to him for now I know that you are God-fearing, and you have not withheld your son, your only one from Me.”
13) And Avraham raised his eyes and saw and behold a ram, afterwards, caught in the thicket by its horns; so Avraham went and took the ram and brought it up as an offering instead of his son.

Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer, Perek 31

Rabbi Yehuda says: When the sword came upon his neck, the soul of Yitzchak departed, and when the voice was heard from between the Keruvim saying, “Don’t send your hand out,” his soul returned to his body, and Yitzchak stood up on his feet, and Yitzchak knew that this was how the dead would come back to life and he said “Blessed are you God, who resuscitates the dead.”
These three qualities were inherited in the merit of the strong ones of the world, our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. In the merit of Avraham - the time of Mashiach, for Hashem made a covenant with us without stipulation to give to his sons the ten nations. In the merit of Yitzchak there is the resurrection of the dead, for he extended his neck on the altar and he nearly gave up his life, and there it says "I will increase your children like the stars of the heavens." The world to come is in the merit of Yaakov whose bed was whole without any blemish whatsoever, and his holiness reached the final boundary to where no human could reach.

THE CONCEPT OF REVIVAL OF THE DEAD IS A BASIC FEATURE OF OUR RELIGION. WHY DO YOU THINK BELIEVING IN IT IS SO CENTRAL?

KEYS OF THE WORLD

God holds three keys in His hand that He does not entrust to the hand of any emissary. They are: The key of rain, the key of giving birth and the key of resurrection of the dead.

WHAT DO THESE THREE “KEYS” HAVE IN COMMON?

THE RAIN CONNECTION

We mention the strength of the rains. What is the reason? Rav Yosef says: Since it is equated to the Resurrection of the Dead,
therefore it was established to be recited during Techiyas Hameisim.

*WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RAIN AND RESUSCITATION OF THE DEAD?*

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<tr>
<th>Avudraham</th>
<th>אבדרהם</th>
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<td>We mention the resuscitation of the dead three times in this blessing. What can we learned from this repetition? The first one is intended to reflect the kindness of God who returns the soul to the body each and every day as if He makes us newly alive. The second one is the reference to rainfall which is like a revival for the ground. The third one is a remembrance of biblical revivals which references the actual miracle.</td>
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*ARE ANY OF THESE THREE REFERENCES MORE MIRACULOUS THAN THE OTHER?*

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**PLANTING SEEDS**

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<tr>
<th>Gur Aryeh: Bereshis 2:7</th>
<th>לגר אהנ האראשית פרשת בראשית פק ב</th>
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<td>The concept of burial is really for the concealment of growth for the future. Therefore man who has the potential to rise again in messianic times is buried.</td>
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*THE CONCEPT OF BURIAL IS CENTRAL IN JUDAISM, CREMATION IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN, ACCORDING TO THE GUR ARYEH, WHY IS THIS SO?*
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<th>Siddur of Vilna Gaon</th>
<th>אשי ישראל – סידור הגרא</th>
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<td>He puts to death, gives life, and causes salvation to sprout, meaning there is much salvation before Him, for even one who does not have his own merit, sometimes he will merit through his son if his son is following a straight path, or one who does good deeds and fixes things which are broken while they are still alive and they produce good fruit, even after the days of his life, he will be compensated, and therefore it says that salvation will sprout, meaning to make him lean towards resurrection, when he will come back to life.</td>
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**WHAT DOES THE VILNA GAON REVEAL ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR ACTIONS AND THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY PASSED ON?**

**HAVE YOU EVER DONE SOMETHING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS NO LONGER LIVING?**

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**PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE**

**Pay it forward (2000)**

Young Trevor McKinney, troubled by his mother’s alcoholism and fears of his abusive but absent father, is caught up by an intriguing assignment from his new social studies teacher, Mr. Simonet.

The assignment: think of something to change the world and put it into action. Trevor conjures the notion of paying a favor not back, but forward—repaying good deeds not with payback, but with new good deeds done to three new people. Trevor’s efforts to make good on his idea bring a revolution not only in the lives of himself, his mother and his physically and emotionally scarred teacher, but in those of an ever-widening circle of people completely unknown to him.

**HAVE YOU EVER FOUND OUT RETROACTIVELY THAT ONE OF YOUR ACTIONS HAD FAR REACHING EFFECT?**

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Shemoneh Esrei

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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

❖ This prayer considers the concept of making long term decisions because all our deeds have long term ramifications even outside of our current physical existence.
❖ The first introduction to the concept of revival of the dead is from Yitzchak our forefather in whose merit we believe we will eventually be resuscitated.
❖ The prayer for rain is included in this blessing because rain is that which revives the ground and enables new life.
❖ Rain, renewed life each day and the promise of eventual resurrection are the three repetitions of the phrase “Who resuscitates the dead.”
❖ Being buried is crucial in Judaism; it reflects our belief in the promise of eventual resurrection. It also mystically expresses that our deeds live on beyond us.