**Understanding the Second Bracha of Shemoneh Esrei**

* The second *Bracha* corresponds to *Elokei Yitzchak,* the title of *Gibor* and the attribute of *Gevurah/Din.*
* The attribute of *Gevurah* is about discipline and self-control. *Gevurah* in the personal realm means lives completely conscious, self-aware and purposeful; not acting out of habit or weakness. In the interpersonal realm it is about giving to others when it is deserved, and having the strength to say no when appropriate. In the realm of parenting and leadership it is about stepping back and allowing the child or follower to accomplish as much as they can on their own.
* Hashem’s expresses his attribute of *Gevurah* by concealing Himself in the world so that we gain a sense of independence and feel that we are “earning” our share in this world and the next. Any concealment of Hashem in this world is the beginning of *Gevurah*.
* Concealment without revelation at the end, though, cannot be considered the ultimate expression of *Gevurah* because it can be confused as abandonment. The greatest expression of Hashem’s *Gevurah*, therefore, is only when he conceals Himself at first, allows us to get as far as we can on our own until we realize how much we need Him, and then He reveals Himself and “finishes the job”. This is the theme of the second Beracha which focuses on the cycle of suffering and salvation in this world (*somech noflim, rofeh cholim*, etc.), but mainly the next (*mechayeh meisim*).
* Additionally, if pure kindness (*Chessed*) is not shown before *Gevurah,* one might think that the discipline is not coming from a place of love. Only once the child is convinced of his parents love, can the discipline of the parent be appreciated. This is why we also mention Hashem’s *Chessed* in the Bracha (*Mechalkel Chaim B’Chessed*).
* In the Torah, Yitzchak embodies this trait. He was born only after his parents had given up on ever having children. In his own life, he was ready to completely give himself over as a sacrifice to God. And as a parent, he wanted to hold back all worldly pleasures from his more righteous son, Yaakov, and give him only pleasure in the Next World.
* Our Sages teach us that there are four areas where Hashem truly displays his Gevurah. They refer to these areas as the four “keys” that G-d controls directly without delegating it to administering angels. They are the processes of Birthing, Techiyas Hameisim (resurrection of the dead), Parnassah (Livelihood), and Rain. These keys are all referenced in the second blessing.