



**RABBI GIDEON  
WEITZMAN**

**Machon Puah for Fertility and  
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

**SHABBAT SHUVA - PARSHAT HA'AZINU**

# The Prayer For Life

Throughout the prayers over the Ten Days of Repentance, from Rosh Hashana and culminating with Yom Kippur, again and again we ask for life. “Remember us for life, King who desires life”, “Who is like You, merciful Father, who remembers His creations for life”, “and You are trusted to give life.”

And yet, we also believe that each person has a certain amount of time that they are allocated in this world. Is it reasonable for us to request a few more years to be added to our lives? Is this not an alteration of the Divine plan for each individual? In addition, one can meet people who do not want to continue living, who are suffering and, at least temporarily, prefer not to have more life. Are more years always such a blessing?

I believe that the prayers' request is not limited to biological life, we do not only pray to live and not die. Rather, it is a request that our life should have meaning; we ask to live a full life. This is distinct from the number of years that we inhabit the earth, we want our life to have purpose and joy.

Numerous long-term studies have shown that what gives life the most meaning is family and community. People can live happy lives in poverty if they are

surrounded by family and friends.

This is why the joyful celebration of Sukkot comes immediately after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. We go from asking for life, to living life. We enter into a precarious dwelling and are happy there with our family and guests. We prove that the meaning of life is not how much we amass, but who we celebrate with.

The joy of a week spent with extended family is a natural extension of our desire for life, not only more time, but more essence, more meaning, more delight.

It is a time and an opportunity to think of those who do not have that joy, who celebrate Sukkot, and Shabbat, and all the other festivals, without children. Since they have no children, even though they have been trying to have children for years.

This helps us appreciate even more the joy of our own families, and increases our sensitivity to such couples, and encourages us to help and support them whenever we can, in whichever way we are able to.

We ask for life, for ourselves and for others, those around us, and those who we do not even know.

Shannah Tovah ■