

The Lands of Life : The Power of Placebo

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאֲרָצוֹת הַחַיִּים

Et'halech lifnay Yah B'Artzot HaChayyim. Psalm 116:9

I will walk before God in the Lands of the Living

I will walk before God in the Lands of Life.

As I was exploring the power of my beliefs, I was curious about the word placebo. I learned that its origin was Psalm 116:9 which was translated into Latin and adapted into a Catholic funeral Ritual. They sang, "Placebo Domino in regione vivorum" ("I will please the Lord in the land of the living") The word, "placebo" came into the English language to mean sycophant or flatterer, because of the interpretation "I will please..." and then it came to mean simulator, because ...how can you trust someone who is trying to please?

Today the phenomenon of placebo is linked to the miraculous power of Belief. When I chant these compelling words from Psalm 116, I am embodying my belief in God's loving life-giving Presence that surrounds me and beckons me towards ever-more radiant vitality. As I strengthen, nurture and refine this belief, God's Presence manifests before me as the miracle of my Life.