

DEDICATED ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE COMPLETE RECOVERY OF EVERYONE WHO NEEDS A REFUAH

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Before You Ask...

Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l would say that before we ask Hashem for another year of life, we must first show Him that we appreciated this last year. This gratitude includes so many aspects, but one of the most important ones is the good health that we enjoyed.

"I gave you another year of life," Hashem says, "and it was much more than life in general. All the needs of your life I gave you." If you're still here, it's a result of thousands and thousands of benefits, thousands and thousands of miracles. Your kidneys were working. Your pancreas was working. Your heart was pounding away every day. Your liver is functioning - did you once this year thank Hashem for your liver? You never even thought about it. All year long your blood circulation was working. Do you know how many miracles there are in your blood? Even your blood clotting - just the fact that you didn't bleed to death every time you got a cut this past year is a miracle! There are nissei nissim in the process of blood clotting. Every process in the body is so deep and profound that it's astounding what Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing for us all the time. (Toras Avigdor Shoftim 5783)

Making some sort of *kabbalah* that helps us say Asher Yatzar properly is an excellent way of expressing our *hakaras hatov* to Hashem for 5783, helping us merit another year of good health. Here are some examples: Try accepting on yourself (even once a day for just a few weeks) to say Asher Yatzar while standing in one place. Or perhaps to think about the wonders of the body before saying the *berachah*. Another idea is to have a *choleh* in mind, which can help you have more *kavanah* when saying Asher Yatzar.

May the *chizuk* from this monthly leaflet bring a *refuah sheleimah* to my daughter (**Esther bas Sara Miriam**), a young mother undergoing treatment for the *machalah*, and to R' Yossi Hecht (**Yosef Chaim ben Devorah Leah**), founder of ashertotheyatzar.com. (Please take a moment to say a short tefillah for them.) *B'virchas kesiva ve'chasima tovah,*

Eliezer M. Niehaus | Editor



Message from the Founder

"Who will live with tranquility, who will suffer."

We say these eerie words in *U'nesaneh Takef* on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. These are days of judgement, when Hashem decides what this coming year will look like. And don't we all want a good year?

May I humbly suggest that if we express our appreciation for all the good Hashem bestows upon us, then we will merit His continuing to do so.

Hashem is all-merciful and wants our good. Our great teachers tell us that the more we are thankful, the more He will bless us with only the most delightful things - and we will delight in all He does for us.

May it be His will that we be blessed with a new year filled with health and happiness. K'siva V'chasima Tova,

Yossi Hecht



The Halacha Corner

Question:

When should one say Asher Yatzar when using the facilities after waking up in the morning?

Answer:

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 6:2) cites two customs regarding when to recite the *berachah* of *al netilas yadayim* in the morning. The first custom is to wait until you get to shul and then recite there *al netilas yadayim* together with all the other *birchos hashachar*. The second custom is to recite *al netilas yadayim* at home in order to avoid having a separation between washing your hands and reciting the *berachah*.

The Mishnah Berurah writes (s"k 9) that the *Achronim* conclude that it is best to follow the second custom.

However, you should wait until you have used the facilities and are ready to start davening. At that point, you should wash your hands again and then immediately say *al netilas yadayim* and Asher Yatzar.

In addition, the Mishnah Berura writes (s"k 12) that it is best to say the *berachah* of *Elokai Neshamah* immediately after Asher Yatzar since *Elokai Neshamah* does not start with a *berachah*. The Gra (O.C. 4:1) gives another reason, that since Asher Yatzar is a *berachah* about the body and *Elokai Neshamah* is a *berachah* about the *neshamah*, they should be said one after another (see "Dose of Chizuk" for an explanation). This being the case, it is proper to also say *Elokai Neshamah* while still at home. (If you have more time, it is recommendable to also say *Birchos HaTorah* after those *berachos*.)



Question of the Month

Where in the *berachah* of Asher Yatzar do we find a hint to the number of limbs in the human body?

Email your answers to: ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com to enter a raffle to win our Asher Yatzar book, delivered to your home for free!

Answer to last month's question:

Question:

How many words are there in the *berachah* of Asher Yatzar and what does it represent?

Answer:

The Magen Avraham (O.C. 6:2) cites the *Mekubalim* who write that there are 45 words which is the gematria of דמח .

(Thank you to one of the readers who pointed out that this is only correct according to the Sefardic version. Nusach Sefard has 46 words and Nusach Ashkenaz has 43.)



Stories that Inspire

The following true story was sent in by a reader:

Rabbi Y.S.Y. runs three schools in Beit Shemesh. Two years ago, he suddenly felt very sick and was rushed to the hospital. The doctors could not figure out what was wrong as his vital signs kept dropping. Out of desperation, Rabbi Y.S.Y. asked the boys in the schools to participate in an "Asher Yatzar Campaign." Each child received a card and marked every time he said Asher Yatzar with proper kavanah. No more than a few days passed, and suddenly, without any natural explanation, his medical situation stabilized. After a week he was back at work in the Cheder. But the story doesn't end here.

Twenty months later, one of the rabbeim in the school was diagnosed with the machalah. Rabbi Y.S.Y. decided to again institute the

Asher Yatzar campaign as a *refuah* for the rebbe. In the meantime, the rebbe began an extremely difficult type of treatment, and took to it very badly. It was obvious that this would be a long, hard, and painful process. Once again, the unexpected happened. Not even a week passed and the doctors were shocked by an unexplainable change for the good in the rebbe's situation – something that never happens! Two more weeks went by and the Rebbe miraculously returned to his job in the Cheder. But the story is still not over.

A few weeks ago, another rebbe in a different branch of the Cheder found out that his wife was diagnosed with the machalah. Unfortunately, the machalah was at a very advanced stage. When Rabbi Y.S.Y. heard about it he offered to once again perform the wondrous Asher Yatzar cure. For a third time cards were distributed and the boys once again said Asher Yatzar properly as a *zechus* for the rebbe's wife. A week went by, and lo and behold, they were told that the diagnosis was a mistake – actually, she is completely healthy! Wonders of wonders!

and digest it. Think about that for a moment. Hashem gave you 35 million individual glands in your stomach which work for you every day, all day long! There is not a company in the world that has so many workers. It is more than the population of many countries! And the workers are, of course, free of charge, provided by the "*Gomel chasadim tovim.*"

If you think about what is going on inside the stomach, it is similar to what takes place in the mouth. In your mouth, the food gets chewed, broken down, and mixed with saliva. So too, in the stomach, the food gets broken down, mashed, and mixed with juices. But the stomach has one major advantage over the mouth, and that is that it works involuntarily. It does not need your active participation. After you finish eating a meal, you can shmooze, read a book or go for a walk, and your stomach will do all the mashing for you. It's especially programmed by Hakadosh Baruch Hu to work for you many hours, every single day, faithfully and efficiently.

We can begin to see from this that the stomach is actually such a special gift from Hashem and most probably we were never even conscious of it!

To receive a daily 2-minute audio shiur by phone about the wonders of the human body please text 313-NIFLAOS (313-643-5267).



A Dose of Chizuk

An Odd Couple

The *Smag* writes that the human being is an "odd couple," consisting of both an animalistic body and a *neshamah*, an angelic soul. The body desires pleasures such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like, though the *neshamah* is disgusted by such activities. In contrast, the *neshamah* desires only spirituality as it strives to get closer to Hashem. This combination results in a constant internal struggle: to follow our angelic *neshamah* and pursue holiness, or to be dragged down by our body and indulge in physical delights.

What is the purpose of this peculiar combination? The *Smag* explains that this gives us the opportunity to be involved in physical matters for the sole purpose of serving Hashem, despite the desires of the body. When we do so, we accomplish our purpose in this world – to elevate materialism to a higher and holier level.

Thus, both components are needed: the body to perform materialistic acts and the soul to elevate them.

The Ramchal writes (Derech Hashem) that doing so actually purifies and elevates the physical body to become a more spiritual being, so that it can experience the eternal spiritual pleasure of Olam Haba with its partner – the *neshamah*. On Yom Kippur we experience this in a small way. We still have a physical body – but we focus on the *neshamah* as we act like Malachim and show Hashem what our true desire is – to serve Him and pursue *ruchniyus*!

This explains why we say the *berachos* of Asher Yatzar and *Elokai Neshamah* one after another (see Halacha Corner). Yes, it is important to have a healthy body and we thank Hashem over and over for that great pleasure. But we must not forget its true purpose – to work together with the *neshamah* to elevate this world and itself. This *berachah* helps us do so as we turn what appears to be an extremely materialistic act into a way of connecting to Hashem!



Wonders of Digestion

Part V– The Special Stomach

Let us continue to follow our food down the amazing path of digestion that Hashem created in our bodies.

After you chew and swallow the food it continues to the esophagus, the food pipe, whose walls contract and push it down to the next stop, your stomach.

The stomach is where a major stage of digestion takes place, through two different functions. The first is through the walls of the stomach, which are lined with muscles. When food enters, the stomach becomes very active and the walls move with wave-like contractions which squeeze, mash and move the food, softening it and breaking it down. Amazingly, we usually feel nothing!

Additionally, the walls of the stomach contain 35 million glands which produce special juices to mix with the food and helps soften

Internalize It!

When we say the words "לפני כסא כבודך" or "לעמוד לפניך" let us feel that through this *berachah* we have elevated our physical body to such a high level that we are now standing in the presence of Hashem, before His throne of Glory!

We love feedback!

To receive this leaflet in your Shul or by email or if you have any comments or personal stories we can share with our readers please email us or visit:

www.ashertotheyatzar.org