



Parshas Vayeishev – Shabbos Chanuka  
Shabbos Mevorchim | Teves 5784 | Issue 8

### Message from the Founder

Chanukah is a time to celebrate the *nissim* Hashem has done for us. It's also a time to revisit the well-known question of the Bais Yosef. The *neis* of this holiday is that the *Chashmonaim* found one jug of oil that should have lasted for only one day and instead burned for eight days. This was the amount of time needed to procure fresh olive oil. The question is, the jug of oil that they found contained sufficient oil to light for the first day. If so, the miracle was only the remaining seven days that the menorah stayed lit. Chanukah should only be celebrated for seven days?

Hundreds of answers have been given to this question. Personally, there is one that resonates with me and is extremely powerful. True, there was enough oil for one night, but who says that the oil should burn!? In other words, nature in it of itself is a miracle. That being the case, the miracle was on the first night as well, being that Hashem allowed the oil to burn.

This is a life lesson that is so poignant to our everyday occurrences. We take for granted that when we wake up our breathing will be perfect. We take for granted that we can talk, walk and write. Let us not forget that *teva* is a *neis*! Thus, this helps us to appreciate even the seemingly mundane acts that Hashem graciously grants us.

A freilichin Chanukal! Yossi Hecht

### Personal request:

My daughter Esther bas Sara Miriam JUST STARTED A NEW TREATMENT. Can you please accept upon yourself bl"n to say Asher Yatzar for the EIGHT DAYS OF CHANUKA from a card or poster as a zechus for a refuah sheleimah for her? Thank you so much!

## Defying Statistics

When we look at the world now, nothing seems to be following statistics. The fact that the Simchas Torah massacre was able to happen does not make sense, and the cold and indifferent response of the world does not make sense. On the other hand, the miracles that we are seeing in Eretz Yisroel also do not make sense.

The Mashgiach of Lakewood, Rav Mattisyahu Salomon *shlit"á* pointed out that the *yom tov* of Chanuka is all about defying statistics. The *Chashmonaim* were a small group of weak, undernourished Cohanim who had no military training and poor weapons. The other side was a huge powerful army, consisting of highly trained strong soldiers, with the best weapons. Statistically, we had a zero percent chance of defeating the Greeks. Next, let us take the jug of oil they found. There is absolutely no question about it – it was not statistically possible for it to last more than one day. Yet, we won, and the oil burned for eight days. The *yom tov* of Chanuka teaches us that Hashem is running the world, and He does not follow statistics! Instead of being frightened and anxious, let us put our trust in Him, and realize that He is taking care of us.

How can we bear this in mind once Chanuka is over? Very simple – just look at the human body – it defies all statistics! There is so much going on inside and every detail must work in perfect tandem. That being the case, statistically, we should not exist. We are only around because Hashem is taking care of us every second of every day. That is the most comforting feeling in the world. Each time we say Asher Yatzar we should bear this in mind, and with that, keep the lessons of Chanuka with us all year long.

This monthly leaflet was started as a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for my daughter (**Esther bas Sara Miriam**), a young mother undergoing treatment for the *machalah*. May the *chizuk* bring a complete recovery to her, to R' Yossi Hecht (**Yosef Chaim ben Devorah Leah**), founder of [ashertotheyatzar.com](http://ashertotheyatzar.com), and to all the Yidden who have been wounded during these difficult times.

Eliezer M. Niehaus | Editor



## Something to Think About

### How Are You Here?

by Rabbi Yossi Rosenberg

(Excerpt from article in Yated Ne'eman, printed here with their kind permission)

It's statistically impossible for you to be here. There are over 1,000,000,000,000 (one trillion) neurons in an average human brain, and over 100,000,000,000,000 (one hundred trillion) synapses, connections through which the neurons communicate with each other. In one eye alone, the part that sees is comprised of tiny rods and cones. Each human retina can have about 7,000,000 (seven million) cones and between 75,000,000 (seventy-five million) and 150,000,000 (one hundred and fifty million) rods!

The human circulatory system has blood vessels that reach every cell in our bodies, including over 10,000,000,000 (ten billion) microscopic capillaries. If we were to stretch our blood vessels out in one straight line, it would go around the world over two and a half times! Yet, our heart, pumping at an average of seventy to eighty beats per minute, circulates all of our blood through our entire system of blood vessels around three times every minute! The pumping is powered by electricity manufactured in the heart itself.

The average adult human produces 200,000,000,000 (two hundred billion) red blood vessels, 10,000,000,000 (ten billion) white blood cells, and 400,000,000,000

(four hundred billion) platelets *per day*. These transport oxygen and whatever is necessary for every cell in the body – such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, salts, glucose, calcium, iron, copper, etc. – all in a perfectly organized and highly regulated manner. They also carry away carbon dioxide and other waste products, and fight off thousands of potential diseases through a sophisticated system of ever-changing, custom-made antibodies.

Every single person since creation has his or her own unique genome sequence made up of approximately 3,000,000,000 (three billion) pairs of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), structured in a stunning double-helix polymer containing four nitrogenous bases attached to a deoxyribonucleic sugar molecule and a phosphate molecule.

These are just a tiny sampling of the trillions of highly sophisticated and exquisitely controlled activities going on each and every second in every human body. Clearly, then, you are not – statistically speaking – here right now, simply because there is no way that you are alive *and* capable of reading. It's impossible. There's just no way for so many trillions of moving parts operated by so many different yet interconnected systems to work properly for one day, let alone for years and years.

The problem is the fact that you *are* here! Clearly, it would be safe to say that our very existence is living proof that Hashem is in charge of that which He created, and that He takes care of it all, down to the minutest details, regardless of what may or may not be the actual statistical outcome.

### Question of the Month

**Even though we recite Asher Yatzar several times daily, the Poskim compare it to a certain brachah that is recited on rare occasions. Which brachah is that?**

Email your answers to [ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com](mailto: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:

Which two brachos deal with health and what is the difference between them?

#### Answer:

In Asher Yatzar we thank Hashem for being healthy and in שמונה עשרה in Shemoneh Esrei we ask Him to heal us. In addition, Asher Yatzar ends off רופא כל בשר – "Who heals **all flesh**," while שמונה עשרה ends off רופא חולי ישראל – "Who heals **the sick of His people Yisroel**."

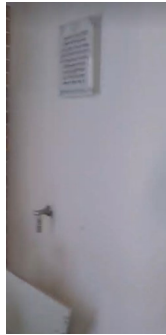


## Stories that Inspire

### The Asher Yatzar That Survived

Due to the war, the Newhouse family of Netivot, like many others, evacuated to Bnei Brak. When things quieted down somewhat, they thought to return to their home in Netivot. However, since Rav Newhouse is a Rebbe in a Yeshiva that was in Bnei Brak, they decided to stay there. Even though it was not easy to live displaced, they felt that for the sake of the father's teaching of Torah they would stay there.

Shortly after, our enemies sent a missile barrage to Netivot and their apartment received a direct hit. Their home was



destroyed and it is scary to think about what may have happened if they would have been there.

But the story doesn't end there. A video of their home circulated where you can see the extreme damage to the entire apartment. Everything was destroyed besides the doorposts which had *mezuzos* on them and a large beautiful **glass** Asher Yatzar sign hanging on the wall! Even the closet under the sign was destroyed – the sign stayed intact!

We don't know why Hashem does things but it definitely wasn't random that only the *mezuzos* and the Asher Yatzar sign survived. It could be that Hashem did so to

show us that Asher Yatzar protects us just like *mezuzos* do!

food pipe. It only opens to allow food into the stomach, but not back out. Even if we lift our feet higher than our head, and even if we stand on our head, the door stays firmly shut.

The truth is that this door is crucial for protecting our food pipe. Our food pipe does not have that thick protective layer of mucus our stomach has. If not for the one-way door, the powerful acids in our stomach would damage the walls of our food pipe. Many people are familiar with the painful feeling of heartburn. Heartburn is actually the feeling that occurs when this door is not working well. Thus, the food gets pushed back into our food pipe, and the uncomfortable feeling experienced is that of the acids touching our food pipe.

We all have and need these acids and they work for us constantly, but their place is only in the stomach. The food is not supposed to back up. If it does, (often due to obesity or overeating), we receive the message that something is wrong and needs attention.

You might want to think about this door when you say:

שָׂאם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם ... אֵי אִפְשֵׁר לְהִתְקִיִּים וּלְעִמּוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ!

## Wonders of Digestion

### Part 8 – The One-Way Door

We learned in the last issue about how our wondrous stomach uses digestive juices and powerful acids to break down the food it receives. Hashem lined the walls of our stomach with a thick mucus and therefore the stomach does not get harmed from these acids. Now, all the food that enters our stomach arrives through an opening which connects our food pipe to our stomach. I would have thought that just like the food enters the stomach through this opening, it should be able to go back into the food pipe through the same hole. So why is it that when we are lying down, and there is no gravity pulling the food downward, the food in the stomach does not back up and start to slide back into our food pipe?

Hakadosh Baruh Hu with His great kindness placed a one-way door at the end of our food pipe. This ensures that the food stays in our stomach and does not return to our

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

### Just Thanking and Praising!

The Gemara in Shabbos (21b) writes, “the next year they established these days (of Chanuka) as a Yom Tov, *lehodos u'lehalel* – to thank and praise.” Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel, zt”l, (Mashgiach of Lakewood Yeshiva) would say that every Yom Tov has its specific theme; here Chazal tell us that the theme of Chanuka is to thank and praise Hashem. Since this is the case, there is only one thing we should be doing the entire Chanuka: Just thanking and praising! (*Leket Reshimos, Chanuka*, p. 110) Obviously, this means we must make sure to say Hallel and *al hanisim* properly, with feeling and emotion, not just to fulfill our obligation. But what about the rest of the time? We are so busy with our daily lives, whether it is learning, *davening*, working, going to school, or taking care of a family. How are we supposed to fill these days with giving thanks to Hashem?

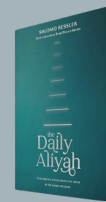
Recently, I gave a shiur in Yeshivas Beis Dovid on the topic of Asher Yatzar and I described some of the mind-boggling

wonders of the body. In the middle of the shiur, my dear *talmid* Nosson Meir Weiss זצ”ל (yes, he is named after Rav Wachtfogel זצ”ל) asked, if so, why do we only thank Hashem when we use the facilities – we should be thanking Him every second of the day? I answered that perhaps Chazal wanted us to say the *brachah* with emotion. Therefore, they established that we only say the *brachah* when we actually feel and experience the kindness of these miracles. So when we say Asher Yatzar, we are indeed thanking Him for all the constant miracles throughout the day. When we say this *brachah* we should have in mind all the wonders that have been going on inside our bodies since the last time we said it.

If we put special effort during the eight days of Chanuka into thanking Hashem for our health, the result will be that we will have transformed the entire Chanuka into one of giving thanks, because it will cause us to be more aware of what is happening all day long. Rav Wachtfogel continues (page 111) that by focusing on giving thanks on Chanuka, we will learn how to continue thanking Hashem throughout the entire year. This is such a crucial tool for all of our *avodas* Hashem – let us make sure it does not slip through our fingers!

### Internalize It!

Even when we are not actually saying Asher Yatzar, let us stop and think about how Hashem is pouring *chesed* upon us every moment just by the fact that we are alive and functioning! These feelings of gratitude will change both the way we say Asher Yatzar, and our entire relationship with our loving, caring, Father in heaven.



### One day or day one? You decide...

Let today be day one of your enhanced journey through the Torah! The Daily Aliyah by Rabbi Shlomo Ressler presents a Torah insight for every aliyah, corresponding to the seven days of the week. Whether you're a seasoned learner or just starting on your journey, this unique book will empower you to reflect, introspect, and engage with the Torah by focusing on one aliyah a day.

### 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](http://www.ashertotheyatzar.org)