



# Asher to the Yatzar

SHABBOS MEVORCHIM  
AV 5783

YEAR I ISSUE 3

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

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## THE MONTH OF "AV" – OUR LOVING FATHER

As we enter the month of Av, many of us feel a slight pang in our hearts. We are experiencing the darkness of the *galus* in one way or another, and hope that this year Tisha b'Av will be a Yom Tov instead of a day of mourning. But it is important to remember that the *seforim* say that the word "Av" refers to the fact that Hashem is our Father. Meaning, this pain is coming from our loving caring Father in Heaven, and is for our good, to help us come back to Him and improve our ways.

This is especially important when *davening* for a sick person. Sometimes it may seem that Hashem has *chas v'sholom* forsaken the *choleh*, which makes it hard to *daven*. But the truth is that Hashem, our loving Father, only made the person sick for good reasons, one of them being that we should come close to Him in *tefillah*. The *gemara* (Shabbos 12b) says that the *Shechinah* is over the head of sick person, and perhaps this is because Hashem is the One Who brought the sickness upon the person. He comes close to the *choleh* so that we, and the *choleh*, will turn to Him in *tefillah*. However, there is another reason for sickness and that is our subject - to remind us that good health is a gift from Hashem.

This leaflet is published monthly *b'ezras Hashem* in order to help us say Asher Yatzar with feeling and *kavanah* and thank Hashem for a healthy body. As mentioned in the past, it was started as a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for my daughter (ESTHER BAS SARA MIRIAM), who is a young mother undergoing treatment for the *machalah*, and for R' Yossi Hecht (Yosef Chaim ben Devorah Leah), founder of [ashertotheyatzar.com](http://ashertotheyatzar.com). (Please take a moment to say a *perek Tehillim* for them.)

May we be zoche to a month of *besuros tovot* for all of Klal Yisroel,

Eliezer M. Niehaus  
Editor

Rabbi Niehaus is the author of "Oasis: Experience the Paradise of Shabbos" and "HEAVENWORDS: Elevate your Tefillah and Yourself". He is the Rosh Kollel of Kollel Zichron Aharon Yaakov in Kiryat Sefer and is a rebbi in Yeshivas Beis Dovid and Yeshivas Imrei Binah in Yerushalayim.

STORIES  
THAT  
INSPIRE

The following stories were submitted by readers:

When the wife of Rav Chaim Stein *zt"l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe Cleveland, was *nifteres*, he had the status of *onen* until the *kevrurah*. The halacha is that an *onen* is exempt from *mitzvos*, and therefore doesn't recite *berachos*. During the *levaya*, his grandson was quite surprised to see Rav Stein saying Asher Yatzar after using the facilities. "Zaidy," he said respectfully, "perhaps you forgot that you are an *onen*?" At first, the Rosh Yeshiva didn't want to answer. After his grandson repeatedly asked the question he finally answered: "No, I didn't forget," said Rav Stein. "I am so full of gratitude to Hashem, that even though I am 95 years old, my body is still functioning properly. I just had to say thank you! So I said Asher Yatzar, but not in the form of a *beracha*; I said it without the name of Hashem!"  
- Heard from his grandson

Rav Abba Kleinerman *shlita* is one of the hidden *tzadikim* of Yerushalayim. A talmid of his once heard him reciting Asher Yatzar including the words "*afilu sha'ah echas* - even for one moment." "Rebbi," he asked, "don't you follow the minhag Ashkenaz which doesn't include those words? "You are correct," answered Rav Kleinerman, "but once I had a certain medical condition which prevented me from using the restroom. I was in such excruciating pain that I thought I couldn't last even one more minute! When I was finally able to use the facilities, I had so much *hakaras hatov* to Hashem that I adapted the minhag *s'fard*, as I truly understood and felt these words!"  
-Heard from his talmid

(Editor's note: Both of these stories are about Rabbonim who knew how and when it is permissible to make an exception to the rule. One should only do so after asking a Rav.)

## Message from the Founder

This month, I would like to send a message to myself. It is more than a message. It is a reminder. But it must be a constant reminder.

Every single day there are numerous ordeals that can get us frustrated. It could be getting stuck in heavy traffic, or, in today's society, if our phone dies, we think the world is collapsing. These are a few examples where we can get extremely upset at the situation at hand.

But wait. Am I seriously upset at this? When things do not go my way, why should I get frustrated? Deep down we know that G-d is running the world... Every single move we make is impossible without Hashem. Since that is the case, why should I get upset?

Granted, we are human and this is a difficult task. This is something I've been working on since my first surgery. It is a daily grind. It is hard. Of course, I would love to walk and run like everyone else. Day by day I try to chisel away these feelings, and look at all the good I have.

I am fortunate to have so many parts of my body that are fully functional. Moreover, I am fortunate, thankful, and blessed to be married amid this ordeal.

May we continue to tap into the superhuman strengths that Hashem gave our ancestors which have been passed down to us. Namely, the ability to live more appreciative lives.

Because appreciative lives are happy lives.

-Yossi Hecht

## THE HALACHA CORNER

**Q:** Does one have to wash with a cup three times after using the restroom?

**A:** The Shulchan Aruch writes (O.C. 4:18) that a person who comes out of a restroom must wash his hands with water. And he adds that if a person doesn't wash his hands, if he is a Talmid Chochom he will forget his learning, and if he isn't a Talmid Chochom he will lose his mind. The *Mishnah Berurah* (s.k. 38, 40, 47) explains that this is because there is a "*ruach ra'ah*," an evil spirit that dwells in the restroom and it possesses one who doesn't wash his hands, and causes him to do *aveiros* (not that he actually goes insane). Therefore, one should wash with water as soon as possible. Ideally one should wash until the wrist, but until the knuckles is also enough.

The *Mishnah Berurah* adds (s.k. 40) that even if a person merely enters a restroom without using the facilities, he still must wash with water, because the spirit goes on whoever enters the restroom. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach said that this is only true regarding a restroom that doesn't stay clean (such as a public restroom in a park), but if it is usually clean, there is only an evil spirit if one actually uses the facilities. Regarding if one must wash three times, the *Mishnah Berurah* (s.k. 39) cites an argument. The contemporary Poskim say that although the halacha follows the opinion that one time is sufficient, it is a good practice to wash three times, at least after expelling solids.

Finally, most Poskim say it is unnecessary to use a cup, however, if it is not too difficult, it is praiseworthy to do so.



# Wonders of Digestion



## A DOSE OF CHIZUK

From His Throne of Glory



### PART III – SWALLOW THIS!

We explained in previous issues that digestion begins in the mouth. When we chew our food, it gets physically crushed and broken down, and when in contact with saliva, it gets taken apart chemically. Let us continue to follow the path of our food. When we swallow, the chewed mass gets forwarded down our food pipe – otherwise known as the esophagus. We do not give too much thought to the muscle contractions called swallowing, but there is something phenomenal that takes place every time.

The opening of our food pipe is located in the back of our neck, right next to the opening of our wind pipe. The large entrance to the windpipe is usually wide open, due to the fact that we constantly use it to breathe. If food or drink would go down our windpipe it would be very dangerous. The lungs are not equipped to deal with food - they were created to process oxygen. To stop food from going down the wrong opening, Hashem created a special cover that seals the wind pipe. This happens every time we swallow.

On average, we swallow 600 times a day, half being just to swallow our saliva. Every time, without fail, the cover flips down on top of the windpipe, protecting our lungs. In other words, 600 times a day, our lives are in danger, but Hashem kindly arranged a flap to save us from harm.

What if you are deep in thought and preoccupied while eating, and you forget to seal your windpipe? Don't worry, Hashem took care of that too. This function happens automatically - it does not need our active participation. In fact, numerous times during our sleep we swallow the saliva that gathers in our mouth.

Hashem ensures that our food is headed in the right direction - towards our digestive system to nourish us, and not to our lungs which would choke us! (Editor's note: Of course, we must do our part, and not speak while eating, as stated in halacha.)

Thank you, Hashem, for thinking of every detail!



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

### ANSWER TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH OF ISSUE 2:

**Q:** Why is it that Asher Yatzar is the only *berachah* that mentions the “Kisei Hakovod - Hashem’s Throne of Glory,” while even the *berachos* we say on very *kadosh mitzvos* such as shofar or tefillin do not mention it?

**A:** See this month’s “Daily Dose of Chizuk”



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

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The Story is told that the *berachah* of Asher Yatzar complained to Chazal, “Why did You connect me to such an un-respectable act of using the facilities? Couldn’t I be like my friends who are recited with awe and trepidation over holy *mitzvos* like shofar or matzah?” Chazal answered, “Don’t worry — We will make you part of the Sheva Berachos ceremony. Then, you will get the respect you deserve!”

This may be a cute joke, but the opposite is really true. Asher Yatzar is one of the holiest *berachos*! The proof is that it is the only *berachah* that mentions the “Kisei Hakovod - Hashem’s Throne of Glory.” Why is this so?

The Gra explains (*Siddur Hagra*) that there are those who believe that Hashem is so holy, it is impossible for Him to have anything to do with the lowly and mundane aspects of this world. In order to negate this folly, we proclaim that from His Holy throne, the place from where even the highest and holiest angels must stand tens of thousands of “miles” away, Hashem oversees every detail of our lives, even seemingly lowly matters such as using the facilities.

This is brought out through the verses found in Hallel (Tehillim 113:4-6): “*Ram al kol goyim Hashem* – High above all nations is Hashem.” The nations of the world believe that Hashem is holy and way above this world and doesn’t interact with it. We continue: “*Mi ka’Hashem Elokeinu hamagbihi lashaves, hamashpili le’ros ba’shomayim uv’aaretz* - Who is like Hashem, our G-d, who is enthroned on high - yet, deigns to look upon the heaven and the earth?” Yes, Hashem is very holy and high, infinitely beyond the comprehension of the holiest angels. However, He still lowers Himself to watch over us and take care of our lowliest matters.

When a person recites Asher Yatzar, he is not only thanking Hashem for the gift of being able to use the facilities normally. He is turning what seems to be a lowly animalistic act into a declaration of Emunah which makes his connection to Hashem much greater! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is surrounded by myriads of mighty angels who stand with trepidation and anticipation. Multitudes of fiery Serafim, magnificent Ofanim, and holy Chayos praise Hashem in the most exalted manner. Yet from that very place, Hashem is interested in EVERY aspect of our lives! This should envelope us with feelings of awe, and at the same time closeness, to our Father, our King!

### ----- INTERNALIZE IT! -----

While we wash our hands before reciting this *berachah* (see the Halacha Corner), let’s think about how we are preparing ourselves to recite a very *kadosh berachah*, one that connects us to Hashem’s Throne of Glory. Let us also contemplate how He is watching over us from there!

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

Let’s follow the lead of R’ Yossi Hecht in his message in this issue.

Do you remember a situation where you tried to appreciate something that was hard for you?

If yes, email it to [ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com](mailto:ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com) to be entered in a raffle to win our Asher Yatzar book, delivered to your home for free!