



Parshas Shemos – Shabbos Mevorchim Shevat 5784 | Year 1 Issue 9

Message from the Founder

In the last issue, I discussed the fact that teva, nature, is a neis. Now let's take it a step further. Truthfully, Yidden are above teva. I recently visited HaRav Reuven Feinstein shlita and he quoted the pasuk "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוקיך" which tells us that we should trust Hashem. If we do so, then the laws of statistics fall away. We are no longer bound by the doctor's numbers. Time and time again we hear stories about Yidden who were miraculously healed or about a couple who astonishingly had a baby after many years of infertility. However, if we do place our trust in the doctors and their numbers then we are unfortunately stuck to those parameters and Hashem may not bend the laws of nature. We are indeed fortunate that our generation has been blessed with so many doctors who understand their role as messengers of the Rofei Ne'eman. It is important to mention that we are taught (see Ramban in Parshah Noach) that Hashem usually runs His world according to the rules of teva and doesn't unnecessarily change it. Nevertheless, our Gedolim tell us that we are still above the averages and numbers that are stated by the medical experts. This gives us all more the impetus to daven on behalf of those who need a refuah to be healed quickly by the Ultimate Healer!

Yossi Hecht

Personal request:

Could I please trouble you to accept upon yourself bli"n to say Asher Yatzar for the next week from a card or poster as a zechus for a refuah sheleimah for my daughter Esther bas Sara Miriam? Thank you so much!
Eliezer M. Niehaus

Eight Special Weeks

This year is a leap year, which gives us a special opportunity to strengthen our connection to Hashem. The Seforim tell us that in a leap year we have the special days of SHOAVIM TAT. This acronym, created by the first letters of the parshiyos Shemos through Tetzaveh, refers to the eight-week period that we just entered, where a person can achieve great levels of tahara. Rav Chatzkel Levenstein would say (see Ohr Yechezkel Emunah page 245) that this is specifically through working on emunah. This is because when we read the parshas hashavua, those events occur again on a smaller scale (see Shar Ruach Hakodesh 527 of Rav Chaim Vital). During this time of the year, Hashem is once again fortifying us with emunah through the Ten Makkos and Krias Yam Suf. We stand again at Har Sinai and see the purpose of the world through Matan Torah. And finally, He gives us the ability to keep that revelation with us by means of the Mishkan. Thus, these are weeks during which we strengthen our emunah through clarifying to ourselves that Hashem created the world and is still totally and completely in charge.

This being the case, now is the perfect time to work on how we say Asher Yatzar, as it states in Iyov (19:26) "ומבשרי ומהבשר אלוהים אני רואה" – I see Hashem from my flesh." The more effort we put into this beracha, the more we will notice how much wisdom Hashem has put into the human body, and how He is taking care of us on a constant basis. The result will be a deeper and more real connection to Him, as our level of emunah soars to greater and newer heights. In this edition we elaborate on this concept with practical tips on how to do so.

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 that results from it bring a complete recovery to her, to R' Yossi Hecht (Yosef Chaim ben Devorah Leah), founder of ashertotheyatzar.com, and to all our brothers and sisters who have been wounded during these difficult times. May we quickly be zoche to besuros tovos.

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.

Something to Think About

How Quickly Do We Forget?

In Parshas Va'eira (7:15) Hashem tells Moshe to go down to the water early in the morning and find Pharaoh there. Rashi explains that since Pharaoh declared he was a god, he needed to use the facilities secretly in the river to hide the fact that he was human. Many years later, Chiram, king of Tzor, also thought he was a god. He had provided the cedar wood for the Beis HaMikdash and had lived for several centuries. In addition, he had built a magnificent, multi-tiered palace suspended on massive pillars over the ocean, containing mind-boggling engineering wonders. He began to think that he was a god and would never die. Chazal teach us (Bava Basra 75a) that Hashem proclaimed: "I looked upon you, Chiram, and I decided to perforate man's body with many holes."

From both of these stories we see that one of the reasons we need to use facilities is so that we should never forget that we are human. This gives us a new understanding in that which we say אשר יצר את האדם "בחכמה" – Who fashioned man with wisdom." Hashem, with His infinite wisdom foresaw that man may come to think he is a god.

Therefore, He created him in a way that he will constantly remember that he was created by Hashem and requires His constant kindness. Most of us are not in danger of thinking we are a god, but we do tend to forget about Hashem, and attribute our success to our own talents. So, the need for using facilities is indeed a way to remind us of how frail and helpless we are without Hashem.

But why did Hashem create the requirement to use the bathroom several times a day? Wouldn't once a week or at most once a day be enough? I saw an answer: Even if we do succeed in remembering Hashem, we quickly forget Him! Therefore, we need constant reminders. For that reason, Hashem gives us so many opportunities to find Him. Rav Ben-Tzion Brook zt"l, Rosh Yeshivas Novardok Yerushalayim would say this is what it means in Tehillim (37:3): "בטח בה' ועשה טוב שכן ארץ ורעה אמונה" – Trust in Hashem and do good; dwell in the land and pasture [nourish yourself] with faithfulness." When a sheep grazes, it doesn't have to lift up its head and search for more grass, because wherever it goes it finds food. So too, wherever we go, we can find Hashem – we just have to open our eyes. Yes, strengthening our emunah is something that we must do at all times, and Hashem gave us that opportunity to do just that each time we say Asher Yatzar!

Question of the Month

What other nusach tefillah (which is not usually said) is similar to Asher Yatzar? (Hint – it is found in Hilchos Tefillah.)

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:

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?

Answer:

In the שו"ת מן השמים (אות לד) it says that Asher Yatzar is similar to the beracha of hagomel. The reason is that one of the four people who must say הגומל is a חולה who is healed – and there is no one more sick than a person who needs to expel wastes from his body!



Stories that Inspire

A New Understanding

This past Shabbos, a *chashuvah* Yid named R' Isaac Zev Moskowitz told me that this leaflet has really helped him recite Asher Yatzar with more *kavanah*. Then he told me that he would like to share the following with all the readers:

"In Asher Yatzar we say 'it would be impossible to survive **and to stand before You.**' Recently, I experienced two health issues which helped me say these words with tremendous feeling. The first was that I had some kidney stones, and the pain

from the blockage was so unbearable that I literally could not stand. People say that it is worse than the pain of childbirth, and once I felt this pain, I understood what they meant. The second was that I had a few bouts of a certain type of vertigo. This means that I would suddenly feel so dizzy that I would need to grab onto a bookcase so that I wouldn't fall down. Hashem put inside our ears miniscule crystals which help us keep our balance at all times, no matter what position our body is in. If they get dislodged, we can lose all feelings of stability. These two experiences have definitely changed the way I say these words, as I understand that without Hashem's ongoing kindness, we literally would not be able to stand!"



Wonders of Digestion

By: Rabbi Y. A.

Part 9: The Open Door Policy

We learned in the last issue that all our food enters the stomach through a one-way door at the end of the food pipe. The muscle that closes this door only allows food to go down, but not back up. This is because the acids and powerful gastric juices in the stomach can damage our food pipe, so Hashem keeps them inside the stomach, regardless of the position of our body.

There is one major exception to this rule; when something toxic, rotten, spoiled, or poisonous enters our stomach. Hashem created us with a special protection mechanism that causes our brain to send an emergency message to the stomach when any of these items enter the stomach. This message causes the stomach to immediately contract all its muscles simultaneously, which pushes all its contents upwards against gravity. This

empties and cleans our stomach from all of the unhealthy contents. However, this spontaneous contraction would not help if the door at the end of the food pipe would stay sealed closed, as usual, because then the bad contents of the stomach would remain trapped inside. Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, made us in a way that when we vomit, this sealed door suddenly relaxes and opens up, allowing all the problematic contents to be propelled outwards.

While this is definitely not a pleasant experience, it is an important safeguard that Hashem built into our system. Without this special gift we could end up in terrible situations that are even life-threatening. Take rats for an example. Rats were not created with the ability to vomit and that is why rat poison works so effectively. When poison enters a rat's stomach it is there to stay, but man was created with an emergency self-cleaning system. This too is yet another marvel you can think about when you thank Hashem and say:

או יסתם אחד מהם אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך
If but one of them were to be blocked it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You!

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

Build Your Emunah!

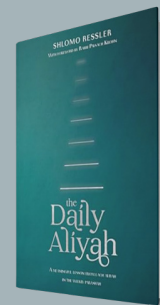
Rav Chatzkel Levenstein would say (see *Ohr Yechezkel Emunah* page 245) that we all believe in Hashem, but that is not enough. Living with *emunah* means that Hashem is so real to us that it changes every aspect of the way we live. The reason why it is so hard for us to reach this level is because we don't see Hashem with our eyes, and what we see in this physical world actually blinds us and hides His presence. But Hashem gave us the ability to "see" with our intellect and that can be even stronger than physical sight. For example, it is possible to see with our imagination cities that we once saw or places that we visited. We need to use our minds to "see" the presence of Hashem

in this world, and make Him more real to ourselves.

This can help us with the way we say Asher Yatzar. A person who doesn't use his intellectual sight may view using the facilities as a purely animalistic act. However, if a person uses his intellectual sight he "sees" that the process of digestion is so complex that if not for Hashem's constant involvement he would be in serious trouble. After he "sees" Hashem's greatness, he will come to "see" Hashem's kindness, and involvement in his personal life. With a little thought a person can come to tremendous *emunah* from something that most people in the world overlook! Before you say Asher Yatzar, take a moment to make Hashem more real, more tangible. Think about how He made you in a way that you can't forget about Him, and He is waiting for you to turn to Him and put your trust in Him!

Internalize It!

Before you say Asher Yatzar, take a moment to make Hashem more real, more tangible. Think about how He made you in a way that you can't forget about Him, and He is waiting for you to turn to Him and put your trust in Him!



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 at ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com or visit: www.ashertotheyatzar.org