



Message from the Founder

Editor's note: The following was written before the current war situation here in Eretz Yisroel.

Rav Shimshon Pincus would say that for *Klal Yisroel*, the *Yomim Tovim* are like the locomotive that keeps the train moving down the tracks. We just experienced the immense fortune of coming off an unbelievable *z'man simchaseinu*. How do we keep this "simchadik" state going?

In order to do so, we must first understand: What is *simcha* actually? The *Olam Hamiddos* (written by my rebbe and mentor, Rav Moshe Don Kestenbaum) says the following:

There is a major misconception that happiness is a feeling that comes naturally. If something good happens, the person will be happy and if something bad happens, *chas v'shalom*, he will be sad. This is the furthest from the truth. Happiness is a *middah* that must be worked on, just like every other *middah*. The way to acquire *simcha* is through being satisfied with what we have, in addition to being *makir tov* for all the good Hashem provides for us. This is why Chazal instituted *berachos* to thank Hashem for each and every *chesed* He does for us. Right away, from the second we open our eyes, we say *Modeh Ani*, thanking Hashem for giving us another day to do His will. Then we continue with the *berachos* for granting us vision, clothes, walking etc.

continued on next page >>>

Dedicated anonymously *liluy nishmas* our recently fallen brothers and sisters, and for Hashem to protect, heal and strengthen Klal Yisroel

Partner with us in this great project and sponsor an issue!
Email us at ashertotheyatzar@gmail.com

Rachum v'Chanun Is The Reality!

We are all in shock and pain from the horrifying mass murders and the deadly missile barrage happening here in Eretz Yisroel since *Shemini Atzeres*. As I write these words everyone is sitting with apprehension, not knowing what the coming days will bring, Hashem *yishmor*. I hope that by the time you read these words we will be *zoche* to good news. Going from the highly spiritual and beautiful days of Tishrei to such heart-breaking events is not easy. I dare not claim that I know what Hashem wants from us, but perhaps I can suggest something that can help us.

Our founder, R' Yossi Hecht, relates how he had a fourth surgery to once again remove a tumor from his spine, and how after the surgery he went through grueling and painful physical therapy to be able to walk again. It was worth it. He progressed to using a walker, and then to being able to use canes. Unfortunately, the tumor came back, and the fifth surgery wiped out all his hard work. This time he became completely paralyzed from his waist down, with no medical solutions. To top it all off, his dedicated mother, who had stood by his side at all times, giving him encouragement and strength, was diagnosed with the *machalah*, and was *nifteres*.

He was not yet married at that point and took his situation very hard. He began to think to himself, "we say that Hashem is '*rachum v'chanun*' – Compassionate and Gracious, but to me, it doesn't look that way. Here I am, a young orphan and wheelchair-bound!" Earnestly, he went to Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky *shlit"a* and asked him this question. R' Shmuel sat for a few minutes in silence until he answered "*rachum v'chanun* is the reality!" Meaning, we don't always see how, but we must know and believe that this is the absolute truth. Everything Hashem does for us is totally and completely out of His extreme and complete mercy and love!

When we hear of tragedies like this shocking attack, it is hard to see how Hashem is the Merciful One. **But He Is.** It may not be easy, but we have to constantly reiterate it to ourselves. One of the ways to do so is to see the great mercy Hashem displays in other areas. We can start with the fact that we are surrounded by

continued on next page >>>

To conclude, if we take a moment to simply recognize that Hashem does so much good for us, especially for giving us a body with all its intricacies, we will feel compelled to thank Him. Then we will become emotionally overwhelmed from His great kindness, and this will certainly empower us to be *b'simcha tamid*.

Perhaps this is an added benefit to this newsletter and campaign. If we concentrate on what we're saying in the *beracha* of Asher Yatzar, besides its tremendous power, it can very well intensify our appreciation for Hashem's infinite kindness for us.

In that merit, *z'man simchaseinu* will be here to stay throughout the year.
Ah gezunteh vinter!

Yossi Hecht

70 wolves who would love, and continuously try, to swallow us alive; Hashem protects us over and over. Then we must each examine our own personal lives. Even though we have many shortcomings, Hashem overlooks them and continues to provide us with all our physical needs, including a healthy body! Each time we use the restroom, we should think of the great mercy He has on us at all times. The Asher Yatzar you say afterward will be one said with true feelings of gratitude.

As you may recall, I started this monthly leaflet as a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for my daughter (**Esther bas Sara Miriam**), a young mother undergoing treatment for the *machalah*. Even though this is a very difficult situation for our family, we see Hashem's mercy even in the middle of the darkness, in so many different ways. **Because He is rachum v'chanun.** May the *chizuk* from this leaflet bring her a complete recovery and also to R' Yossi Hecht (**Yosef Chaim ben Devorah Leah**), founder of ashertotheyatzar.com, and to all our brothers and sisters who have been wounded in this horrible attack.

May we be *zoche* to share *besuros tovos*,
Eliezer M. Niehaus | Editor

The Halacha Corner

Question:

Does one have to say Asher Yatzar while standing?

Answer:

The *Pri Megadim* (432:7) writes that one must stand when reciting a *Birchas Hamitzvah* (such as before *shofar* or *lulav*), and one may sit when reciting a *Birchas Hanehanin* (such as before

eating food). However, it is not clear if one must stand when reciting a *Birchas Hashevach* – a *beracha* which is recited as a praise to Hashem, such as when seeing the ocean.

According to this, since Asher Yatzar is a *Birchas Hashevach*, it is not clear if one must stand. Nevertheless, the custom of many *Poskim* was to stand, and it seems that this is the accepted custom. (This a good idea given the fact that we are praising Hashem for the unbelievable creation of a healthy body!)

Question of the Month

Which two letters are not found in the brachah of Asher Yatzar?

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:

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

Answer:

The Tur (6:1) writes that the words "חלויים חלויים" equal 248 which is the number of limbs in the human body.



Stories that Inspire

Rav Yeshayahu Heber zt"l (founder of "Matnat Chaim - Volunteers for Kidney Transplantation") and his wife once went to Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv to visit a non-religious man named Alex who just had a kidney transplant after waiting 19 years. They spent some time with him, wished him and his daughter well, and left. When they were about to enter their car, Mrs. Heber suddenly remembered that they had not given Alex the Asher Yatzar magnet which they usually present to patients; they quickly went back upstairs. "We returned because we forgot to give you a present," said Mrs. Heber. "A present?!" exclaimed Alex. "You already gave me the greatest present in the world - a healthy kidney!" "No, that was from Hashem, not from us. We want to give you the wrapping for the present," replied Mrs. Heber. She then clarified the words of the beracha and explained that the more we appreciate the special present of a kidney from Hashem, the longer it will last and function well. Despite the sincere presentation however, it did not

seem as if Alex or his daughter were planning to say the beracha. A few days later, Rav Heber received a phone call from Alex. "Rav Heber, you would not believe what happened. The morning after we met, my doctor came with bad news: it seemed like my body had started to reject the kidney. They would be doing more tests, but it didn't look too promising. You can't imagine what I felt like... after finally getting a new kidney and now to lose it?! I turned to my daughter and told her that this is happening because we did not take the Hebers seriously. Hashem gave me a present and we refused to say thank Him!?! Immediately we took upon ourselves to start saying Asher Yatzar from the magnet you gave us, and to say it slowly and carefully with lots of feeling. We did not truly believe it would help, but we took it seriously. Two days later the doctor came in with a big smile on his face. 'Alex, what did you do? This is an absolute miracle! All the tests are fine and the kidney started working normally again. You can go home!' Rav Heber, I am calling to tell you that Asher Yatzar actually saves lives!"

(Taken from *Dirshu*, reprinted from the *Katifa* magazine)



Wonders of Digestion

Part 6 – The Amazing Acids

After our food reaches the stomach, we probably don't give it too much thought, yet there is so much going on. The process of digestion, which usually takes a few hours, is just beginning. We discussed in the last issue the complex physical process that takes place in the stomach, as it tirelessly pushes, mixes, and churns the food, breaking it down into its various components. But this is not the only step in digestion - our stomach is not merely a complex mixer. There is also a chemical process taking place in the very same cavity of the stomach, more vital than the physical one. (It is interesting to note that the chemical process was only discovered in 1822! Until then, all the big "*chachomim*" were clueless about what was taking place in their own

stomachs...)
Hashem phenomenally created the internal walls of our stomach with the ability to secrete gastric juices. These juices are full of strong enzymes and even acids which chemically break down our food to into its components. It is as if we have a laboratory in our stomach which goes to work faithfully every single time we take a bite. It is important to stress that we are not just talking about a little squirt of lubrication here and there. The stomach produces around two and half liters of liquid every day. That is approximately 11 cups! This is an astounding amount of liquid. Many people do not even drink that amount over the course of a day.

Where does it all come from!? Much of our food contains liquid, and Hashem gifted us with clever organs and cells which perform special services to extract these liquids. They work for us constantly, meal after meal, day after day, free of charge!

אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה!

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

The Best Flu Vaccine!

My father-in-law is a doctor, but not the type who believes that he is actually healing the patient. Rather, he tells his patients that the main part of the cure is the *tefillah* said before taking the pills, as it says in Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 230:4), that before any act of healing one should say:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי שיהא עסק זה לי לרפואה
כי רופא תנם אתה
May it be Your will, Hashem, that this endeavor cure me, for You are a free healer
Afterward you should say:

ברוך רופא חולים
Blessed is He who heals the sick
The Mishnah Berurah explains we say this tefillah so as not to think that the cure is coming from anything other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Saying this tefillah helps us place our trust solely in Hashem, as we ask Him with all our hearts to cure us.

My father-in-law gave me another valuable piece of medical advice, which is applicable right now. Many Ashkenazi shuls have a custom to say *selichos* of ב"ה – B'hab, after Sukkos and Pesach. B'hab refers to Monday (ב), Thursday (ה) and Monday (ב), which are

three special days of teshuva and tefillah. (See Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 492.) This year it will begin in the second week of Cheshvan. The Mishnah Berura explains that it is to atone for any *aveiros* we may have done during the days of *simcha*.

However, my father-in-law told me that the *Levush* gives a medical reason for B'hab. He says that the reason for the custom of B'hab is because these are the two times of the year when there is a drastic change in weather, which could cause people to get sick. Therefore, we have three days of tefillah to ask Hashem to keep us healthy! So, even if you don't have the custom of B'hab, this lesson should be taken to heart. Of course, we must live a healthy lifestyle and take care of the wonderful present of the human body that Hashem gave us. But the most important way to stay healthy during the upcoming cold and wet days of the winter is through realizing that all health is from Hashem. Therefore, we must daven to Hashem that we stay healthy.

So whether or not your doctor tells to you take the flu vaccine, don't forget to also get your Asher Yatzar vaccine, as it is the main vaccine for **everything!** Take your Asher Yatzar vitamin every day of the winter and be *zoche* to a truly *gezunteh vinter* - physically and spiritually!

Internalize It!

When performing any action of curing, or of staying healthy, such as exercise, taking vitamins, eating healthy, or even just staying away from matters that are detrimental to health, bear in mind that these are just actions. Make sure to say the aforementioned **tefillah** beforehand, with the feeling that this is what is really curing me and keeping me healthy!

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