

Kindert Torah

Parashas Devarim

כ"ט

Thank You For Everything

“Wooooo waaaaa wooooo!”

The wail of the siren pierces the night air. The ambulance speeds through the city streets, taking its precious passenger to the hospital. It arrives at the entrance to the emergency room.

“This patient is barely breathing. Hook him up to CPR immediately.”

The staff works at lightning speed. The family members look on, eyes filled with tears, mouths whispering prayers. Minutes pass. Life hangs in the balance.

“Hashem, please save my father! His life is in Your hands!”

Everyone breaks down and begins to cry, beseeching the Almighty with broken hearts. Ever so slightly, the vital signs on the monitor begin to pick up.

“The patient is doing better. Keep praying.”

Slowly but surely, the father gets better and better, day after day, week after week, month after month, until he eventually makes a complete recovery.



“We are thankful to You (Hashem) ... for our lives which are committed into Your hand” (from the “Modim” blessing). The sefer Avodas HaTefillah relates that every breath of life is totally in Hashem’s hands, as our story vividly illustrates. We can elaborate on this by explaining that all of the functions of the body that are necessary to sustain life are constantly empowered and guided by the Almighty. We do not think about this because things generally go smoothly, day after day. However, when tragedy strikes and life hangs in the balance, we realize the truth of this reality. When the patient recovers, we thank Hashem profusely for His infinite kindness, realizing that His constant sustenance is equally deserving of our gratitude. This should be our kavannah (intention) when we thank Him thrice daily, in the “Modim” blessing.

“For our souls which are entrusted to You.” Our neshamos are handed over to the Almighty at night when we go to sleep. One who has committed many sins during the day should rightfully have his neshama confiscated and held until he does teshuva (repentance). However, Hashem, with infinite kindness, returns the souls to the body in the morning. This requires special thanks.¹

“For Your miracles that are with us every day” – this refers to visible and open miracles.¹ It is worthwhile to contemplate that when a miracle happens, we benefit

from it every day thereafter. When a person’s life is miraculously saved, that miracle is with him every day thereafter, as he subsequently goes on living.

“For Your wonders” refers to the miracles within the framework of teva (nature).¹ We do not realize that we benefit from these wonders. Were it not for Hashem’s wonders and miracles that we do not recognize, we would have been finished long ago. For all of the officers in heaven fight against us, only Hashem’s protection keeps us alive.¹

“For Your tovot” (good deeds) that You perform for us regularly – evening, morning, and afternoon.²

“The Beneficent One – for Your compassion is never withheld; and the Merciful One – for Your kindness never ceases.” The Holy One blessed be He is different from those made of flesh and blood. Although man has rachmonus (mercy), it has a limit. Sometimes he does not want to continue bestowing mercy, because he thinks the recipient is no longer fit for it. Hashem always wants to be



merciful.

Sometimes man wants, but his kochos (strength and ability) give out and he is unable to continue performing tovot. Needless to say, the Almighty’s kochos to deliver kindness are unlimited.³ A man’s beneficence is incomplete, for he has his own interests in mind. Hashem has no kavannah for Himself at all. He does not need us, and therefore His tovot are entirely merciful, done exclusively for the good of the receiver.⁴ When a person has pity on a poor person, he does it because it pains him to see the poor man suffer. He wants to take away his own tsar (distress). In the same way, he takes medicine for his own pain. However, the Creator’s compassion upon His creations is different. He has no intention of pushing away any personal bad feelings or damage, rather His mercy is total kindness and giving. Therefore, “we always have placed our hope in You” for Your mercy and kindness are never ending.⁵

“For all of the foregoing may Your Name be blessed and exalted, our King, constantly, forever and ever.” Notwithstanding all of the praises and thanks that we have spoken before You, Your Name is exalted over everything, constantly without any breaks, for all time.⁴ Your Name

is exalted over any praise that we can possibly give You.¹ For all of the tovot and wonders that You do for us constantly, we pray that Your Name be blessed and exalted. May all of the nations recognize your G-dliness and thank You and praise You forever!⁶

“Blessed are You Hashem, ‘The Beneficent’ is Your Name, and You are fitting to praise.” The Gemora⁷ relates that a person should not speak praises of his friend, for from amongst the praise will come some degradation, for each and every person is a mixture of good and bad. However, the Holy One, Blessed be He has no bad whatsoever, therefore His Name (i.e. His deeds) are totally good, and it fitting to praise Him (for you cannot possibly come to degradation). When Shlomo HaMelech brought the Aron Kodesh into the Holy of Holies of the newly built Beis HaMikdash he said, “Hashem, Elokim, do not turn back the request of Your anointed one; remember the righteousness of Your servant, Dovid” (Divrei HaYomim 2, 6:42). The fire came down from heaven, consumed the sacrifices and the glory of Hashem filled the Mikdash.

Shlomo HaMelech gave praise, thanked the Almighty, and said, “Blessed is Hashem Who has granted rest to His people Israel” (Melachim 1, 8:56). Immediately the heavenly angels said, “Blessed are You Hashem, ‘The Beneficent’ is Your Name, and You are fitting to praise.”⁸ When concluding this blessing, the Yesod Vi’shoshesh Ho’avodah entreats us to put great simcha (joy) into our hearts for the greatness of Hashem. There is no one whom it is fitting to thank except Him. May His Name be blessed and His memory elevated forever and ever!

Kindertlach ...

Gratitude and thanks are a foundation of avodas Hashem. We should all take some time to think about the good things that the Almighty does for us. We might even want to make a list of His tovot. Health, sustenance, peace, nachas, spiritual growth, seichel, family, and close relationships, are just a few of the items that can be counted. When we reach the “Modim” blessing, we can pull out our list and express our heartfelt thanks to the One Who has given us everything. Thank you Hashem! Your kindness is merciful, perfect, and unlimited! You are the One Whom it is fitting to praise!

¹ Etz Yosef

² Avodas HaTefillah

³ Siddur Iyun HaTefillah

⁴ Maggid Tsedek

⁵ Chovos Halevavos Shaar Avodas Elokim

⁶ Yesod Vi’shoshesh Ho’avodah

⁷ Bava Basra 164b

⁸ Shiblei HaLeket