

Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Ki Seitze

Birchos HaShachar (2)

"Avi, let us now continue with our study of the *Birchos HaShachar*. In the next brocho, 'pokeach ivrim' (Who gives sight to the blind) we thank Hashem for the gift of vision. While we were sleeping at night, we could not see anything. Now in the morning, Hashem, with His infinite kindness, has returned the vision to our eyes."

"I never even thought about that, Abba."
"I will give you a simple way to appreciate your sight, Avi. Close your eyes and walk to the back of the Beis HaKineses."
"I'll try, Abba."

Avi closes his eyes and takes two steps. He stops and turns back.

"I'm scared, Abba. I do not want to bump into anything and hurt myself."

"I don't blame you, Avi. You see that you are basically helpless and vulnerable without your sight."

"Yes Abba, I never realized how much I depend upon my eyes. Besides just getting around, I use them for reading, praying, and learning Torah. Through them I appreciate the beautiful wonders of Hashem's world."

"That is correct, Avi. The eyes themselves are among the Almighty's most awesome creations. They are far far better than the world's most sophisticated camera. Their capabilities of focus, image recognition, retention, and resolution proclaim the unfathomable wisdom of the all powerful Creator. For this priceless gift, we thank Him every morning."

"This inspires me to use my eyes properly, and not look at anything which is harmful or forbidden."

"One hundred percent, Avi. Guarding your eyes keeps your *neshama* (soul) pure. Let us move on to the next brocho, 'malbish arumim' (Who clothes the naked). We thank Hashem every morning for the clothing that we don. He was the original clothier, as the verse states, 'And Hashem G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and He clothed them' (Bereshis 3:21). Our clothes protect us from the cold in the winter and from the bright sun in the summer. They keep us dry in the rain, and cool when we are indoors. They also protect our *neshamos* by keeping us *tsnuah* (dignified). We dress in the way that befits our exalted status as the chosen nation, servants of Hashem."

"It is a big privilege to dress *tsnuah* Abba."

"Yes, Avi. We must not take it for granted. The next brocho is 'matir as-

surim' (Who releases the bound). The *siddur Ohr HaChama* relates that at night when we go to sleep, we are in a certain sense 'bound' with the ropes of unconsciousness. We cannot move freely as when we are awake. We mention this in the blessing before closing our eyes at night, 'Who casts the **bonds** of sleep upon my eyes.' When we awake in the morning, Hashem restores our freedom of movement and releases the 'bonds' of sleep. We thank Him for this, and indeed for the mobility that we have in all of our limbs all of the time."

"I remember when one of my classmates broke his arm. It was immobilized in a cast for six weeks. It was very difficult for him without the use of that 'bound' arm. I am sure that he was very happy and appreciative when the cast was removed. He must have made the brocho of '*matir assurim*' with great *kavannah* (intention)."

"I am sure that he did. We should do this every morning, and thereby never need to break a bone in order to remind us to appreciate the full movement of our limbs. The next brocho is '*zokeif kifufim*' (Who straightens the bent). This power to stand up straight was also taken away from us during the night when we were sleeping. Our bodies were laying limp in bed. Now in the morning, the strength has returned to our muscles and we can stand erect. What a gift from the Almighty! Unfortunately, there are many sick people who do not have the *koach* (strength) to straighten their bodies. We also thank Hashem that we are healthy and able to stand straight."

"We can also use this to serve Him during the day, Abba, by not slouching when we should be standing straight. Good posture is also part of the dignified manner in which the servants of King of kings conduct themselves."

"Excellent, Avii! You have wonderful practical insights into these blessings. We now move on to the brocho that expresses our appreciating for the dry land that we walk on, '*rokah ho'oretz al ha'mayim*' (Who spreads out the earth above the waters). Avudraham explains that if the land were all the same elevation, the water would spread out over the entire planet and completely cover the earth. Hashem gathered the waters into seas, and elevated the land so that we have dry land to live on. It is something that we take for granted, but

it must be seen and appreciated as a gift from the Creator."

"Abba, these *brochos* are teaching me to be grateful for so many things! I am gaining a new appreciation of Hashem and His infinite kindness."

"That is the point, Avi. May your love and awareness of Him continue to grow."
"Amen!"

Kindertlach . . .

Your sight, your clothing, your mobility, your strength, and the dry land that you walk upon are all wonderful gifts from the Merciful Creator. Enjoy them! Appreciate them! Thank Him for them every day! Use them to do His mitzvos! Say the birchos hashachar with great kavannah and elevate your entire life.

Safety

"You shall make a fence around your roof" (Devarim 22:8). The *Sefer HaChinuch* (Mitzvah 546) explains that Hashem is supervising our lives and He decrees everything that happens to us. Still, a person must guard himself from dangerous situations. Hashem decreed that fire will burn, and water will extinguish the fire. A falling rock will smash a person, and a person who falls from a high roof will die. He blew our souls into our bodies and gave us wisdom to guard ourselves. He then placed us among the elements, subjected us to the laws of nature, and commanded us to guard ourselves from dangerous situations. The exceptions are those chosen *tsaddikim* like Avraham Avinu, who was able to allow himself to be thrown into a fiery furnace and live. The rest of us however must guard ourselves from danger.

Kindertlach . . .

Fences were erected to protect people from falling. They are not meant for climbing. The jungle gym in the park is for climbing. A thrown rock can hurt someone very badly. A wound inflicted with a metal object is serious enough to allow *chilul Shabbos* to treat it. A car, traveling at even the slowest speed, is so big and heavy that it will hurt someone very badly. A person can drown in the shallowest water. Firecrackers are so dangerous that they are illegal in many places. Hashem wants you to take care of yourself. He gave you a wonderful body and put a beautiful *neshama* (soul) into it. He wants you to do mitzvos with that body and soul. How can you do mitzvos properly if you are hurt? We know that Hashem protects all of us. He gives extra protection to His special *tsaddikim*. We still must protect ourselves. We fulfill His wishes by properly caring for the body that He gave us.

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