

TEFILLAH TIPS



Birchat Hashachar, Conclusion

The final blessing of Birchat Hashachar is "המעביר שנה מעיני ותנומה מעפפי"-I thank G-d who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. An all-encompassing paragraph of prayer follows this blessing and begins with, "יהי רצון – *May it be His will*" It contains the eternal aspirations of every Jewish soul requesting the privilege of being steeped in Torah learning and connected to Mitzvoth. We then beseech G-d to help us avoid negative influences and to pursue intrinsic goodness in life. The supplication concludes "הgomel chasdim tov'im le'omo" "We thank you G-d who bestows good and genuine kindness to his people-Israel."

It appears that "Removing sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids" could be more appropriately placed at the beginning of the Birchat Hashachar. In addition, how is this blessing different than "פרקח עוריהם" – "He who gives sight to the blind?"

Rav Schwab zt'l writes that this blessing is included with the previous three blessings relating to the people of Israel as a whole. As we conclude our morning blessings, we appreciate our unique role as a nation defined by the Torah. We reflect upon the fact that G-d has awarded us a Torah to learn and to live by. By giving it to us, Hashem has awakened us forever from an otherwise dark and deep slumber. It is the Torah that fortifies and maintains our nation from generation to generation long after thousands of nations have risen and fallen throughout the ages.

The fifteen individual morning blessings seem to be a unit of their own. Why would the sages see fit to attach them to a follow up prayer? The Siddur Hagra advances a reason why the fifteenth blessing is followed by the prayer, "יהי רצון". His answer is based on the principle- "הכל הולך אחר ראשיתו"-the success of one's day is influenced by the strength of its start". Therefore the moment we finish expressing blessings and praises to G-d for the ability to rise and prepare ourselves for our daily responsibilities, we immediately dedicate ourselves to fulfilling His Torah. By beginning the "יהי רצון" with alacrity we affirm the depth of our commitment as well as create a positive and determined start of the day.

The prayer concludes "הgomel chasdim tov'im" -G-d bestows good kindness to the people of Israel. What is implied by good kindness? Is there any other kindness besides good kindness?

When people are kind to one another there may be underlying motives generating the kindness. I owe a favor, I need a favor etc. The omnipotent Creator of the universe needs favors from no one. Therefore the kindness he bestows upon us is **good** kindness- "הgomel chasdim tov'im le'omo" -Israel.

Shabbat Shalom & have a wonderful summer,

Rabbi Epstein, Congregation Sons of Israel Cherry Hill NJ

Orthodox Union Department of Community Services

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Frank Buchweitz, National Director
Hannah Farkas, Program Manager
Adina Tabak, Administrative Assistant