

TEFILLAH TIPS



Birchot Hashachar V

After acknowledging the ground that we walk in *על הארץ על המים*, the next two blessings we recite are “שעשה לי כל צרכי” - G-d has provided me with all of my needs and “המכין מצעדי גבר” - G-d prepares the steps of man. We can understand the sequence of blessings leading up to *המכין מצעדי גבר* - G-d prepares the steps of man, but what is the blessing *שעשה לי כל צרכי* all about? The Talmud Brachot states that “שעשה לי כל צרכי” - refers to the wearing of shoes.

Why would we say a blessing about our shoes?

In Tractate Berachos 60B it states: when a Jew dons shoes he should recite *שעשה לי כל צרכי* – that “he has made for me everything”. In another location in the Talmud Shabbos 129A it states Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, a person should even sell the support beams of his home in order that he should own shoes. Rashi explains that this is because there is no greater embarrassment than going in public without shoes. Why?

Rabbi Emanuel Feldman writes in his book *Tales out of Jerusalem* that both human beings and a holy Torah Scroll present themselves with animal skin beneath them. The holy letters of the Torah Scroll are written on parchment, so to speak the shoe of the letters. We too wear the skin of an animal on our feet. He writes, that when man treads upon the earth wearing animal leather on his feet, he demonstrates that he is not just another animal. Instead he is superior to and has the power to dominate over the animal kingdom.

There is an additional deeper lesson here as well. Wearing animal skin under our feet reminds us to rule over the animal instincts within us, to dominate the animalistic tendencies within, to rise above them and be a more spiritual creature.

The next bracha, “המכין מצעדי גבר” expresses thanks to G-d for preparing us for the physical steps we take all day in our shoes all day long. In the Ohr Zafon, the Alter of Slabodka writes that the blessing reminds us to emulate Hashem. Just as G-d plans the steps of mankind and the world, so too we must plan out step by step the road to our spiritual success *המכין מצעדי גבר*.

Take Home Tip: Every part of life from head to toe is a blessing. Reciting the morning blessings enable us to focus on the divine blessings we enjoy each day.

Shabbat Shalom,

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