



# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

## TEFILLA

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# Modim

מוֹדִים אֲנַחֵנו לָךְ, שְׂאֲתָהּ הוּא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, צוֹר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנו, אֲתָהּ הוּא לְדָר וְדָר. נוֹדֶה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ, עַל־חַיֵּינוּ הַקְּסוּרִים בְּיַדֶּיךָ, וְעַל־נְשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ

*We are thankful to You that you are our G-d and the G-d of our fathers forever. You are the rock of our lives and the shield of our salvation for every generation. We thank You and tell Your praises, our lives are in Your Hands and our Neshamot are dependent on You.*

The second bracha of our concluding section of the Shemoneh Esrei is that of מוֹדִים, in which we thank Hashem for everything He does for us. At first glance, it seems that the structure of the Shemoneh Esrei is set up that we first appeal to Hashem with a list of requests for everything we need and then afterwards politely thank Him, the same way that we say please and thank you in our daily lives to everyone who helps us or provides us with something. The problem is that we are missing a step in the middle. Hashem has NOT yet provided us with our requests! Just seconds ago we asked Him for health, Parnassa, Mashiach, and many other things. How can it be that seconds later we are already thanking Him for providing us with what we asked?

**Refuah Shleima:**  
נפתלי הרץ בן סינה רייזל

One answer is that though Hashem may have not yet granted our requests to us in their entirety, the process was put into action. We expressed ourselves to Hashem, He noted that request, and began in some way to create the beginning of a solution to that problem. After finishing pouring out our hearts to Hashem, we should feel an immediate sense of relief, there is now a Higher Being looking out for us, we don't need to shoulder our burdens on our own, and a tremendous sense of Bitachon that Hashem can and will help us. It may not be right away and it might not be in the way that we would have expected, but we can be sure of His guidance and therefore, can already thank Him for what He has begun to put in motion.

Another answer is as follows – we are not thanking Hashem for granting us the specific requests that we asked of Him. Rather, we are thanking Him for **the opportunity to appeal to Him in prayer**. The fact that we, as mere mortals, are given the ability to *speak* to the Almighty is quite unbelievable and should not be taken for granted!

It is only *because* of this innovation called Tefilla that we are able to recognize and internalize all that Hashem does for us on a daily basis. We thank Hashem for -

עַל־נְסִיךְ שְׂבָכְלֵי־יוֹם עִמָּנוּ, וְעַל־נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ שְׂבָכְלֵעַת, עֶרֶב - *The miracles that we experience every day, the wonders that occur at all times – evening, morning, and afternoon.*

The miracles that we refer to here are not big, supernatural materials which are obvious to all who see. Rather they are miracles that we experience on a daily basis within the confines of nature. Most of the world would not even realize when they experience this type of miracle. Tefilla sensitizes us to the miracles and great acts of kindness Hashem performs for us. The more we pour out our needs and worries to Hashem and see Him as the source of help for all of our problems, the more we are then able to recognize His guiding Hand orchestrating events to help us every day. So we thank Hashem not only for all He does for us but also for the ability to notice what it is that He is doing for us.

The word מודים has a double meaning. On the one hand, it means to recognize, to admit (יודי). On the other hand, it also means to thank (תודה). We can understand this bracha on both levels. Because of our higher levels of sensitivity due to the process of Tefilla, we are able to truly recognize Hashem's hand in our lives. And because of this, we are able to thank Hashem for both the ability to recognize His intervention and for all the individual acts that He continuously performs.

We conclude the paragraph of מודים with אתה ה'... לך נאה להודות - and the entire world should learn to recognize Hashem's hand and to thank Him, the One who is most fitting to recognize and give thanks to - ברוך ■

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