



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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בורא נפשות


A couple of weeks ago, as Taanit Esther came to a close, I remember feeling completely weak and non-functional. Every task seemed so difficult. But the moment the fast ended and I had a cup of water, I immediately felt refreshed and ready to face the world. My immediate thoughts were - "I can't believe how human we are, it's so mind-blowing how dependent we are on our material needs".

It is this feeling that we capture a few times a day as we recite Borei Nefashot after eating foods whose brachot are She-hakol, HaAdama, or HaEtz. We start off the bracha with the words - ברוך אתה ה'...בורא נפשות - *Blessed is Hashem who creates many Neshamot and their deficiencies*. At first glance, this seems like a very strange way to praise Hashem. The fact that Hashem has created so many billions and billions of individuals is certainly praiseworthy, but why focus on the fact that they have inadequacies?

The **Chatam Sofer** (Torat Moshe Ekev) explains that in fact Hashem purposely pre-programmed us to have deficiencies. He created human beings in such a way that without water, they simply cannot survive. The reason for this is to remind us of our dependence on Hashem. Without Hashem constantly supplying us with our basic


necessities, we would cease to exist. He writes that עיקר טובת האדם שלכך נברא בחסרון וכיך את בורא את טוב - *the best thing that man was given is the fact that he was created with deficiencies so that He comes to recognize his Creator and will serve Him... so we see that His lackings are better for Him than all other goods*. We thank Hashem for sustaining us with these essentials and we also thank Him for enabling us to recognize how much we need Him.

We continue on in the bracha with the words - על כל מה שבראת להחיות בהם נפש כל חי - *for all that You created to bring life to the souls*



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of all who live. The **Tur** (OC 207) explains that this is referring to all the extras that Hashem provides for us. He says that in the first half of the bracha, we thanked Hashem for our basic needs – water, etc. Now, we go on to thank Hashem for the “luxuries” - על כל שאר הדברים שברא בעולם שלא היו הנפשות חסרים מהם אם לא בראן שאינן אלא להתענג בהן להחיות נפש כל חי - *for all the things that we don't specifically need to survive, who purpose is to just give us enjoyment.* Hashem could have just given us bland food which contained the nutrients that we need to live. But instead, He created fruits and vegetables with a huge array of colors, scents, textures, and flavors, in order to invigorate and uplift us, and show His special love for us.

This idea can be understood in a broader sense as well, beyond the foods that we eat. Hashem provides us with our basic

necessities in general. He takes care of all of our physical needs, ensuring that our bodies function properly, providing us with sustenance, health, and shelter. But His support doesn't end there. He goes a step beyond and provides us with spiritual sustenance as well, giving us extra levels of “luxuries” to invigorate and uplift us. He provides us the Torah and Mitzvot, Tefilla and inspirational experiences, and the ability to connect and create a deep relationship with Him.

ברוך חי העולמים – Blessed in Hashem who gives life in both the material and spiritual worlds, providing for us all that we need in both spheres. ■

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