



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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It is very common to hear certain religious phrases amongst the Jewish people in Israel, among the religious and the secular alike. Phrases like *Be'ezrat Hashem* ("with the help of Hashem"), *Baruch Hashem* ("blessed is Hashem"), and *Chasdei Hashem* ("the kindnesses of Hashem"), to name just a few, all express the idea of recognition of the role of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* in our lives and gratitude for the miracles He is doing for the Jewish people, on a personal level and on a *Klal Yisrael* level. And, of course, we have just entered the month of Elul and suddenly, everybody is wishing everybody a *ketivah vechatimah tovah*, to be written and sealed for the good in the heavenly books.

The vocabulary, the way we talk, the custom of bringing *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* into the words and the sentences that we say, has brought us to a stage in this country and amongst the Jewish people where saying *Baruch Hashem* is the norm.

I made *aliyah* when I was entering fourth grade. The song that was very popular when we made *aliyah*, which we sang as a family a lot, was the Miami Boys Choir's *Besiyata Dishmaya* - Aramaic for "with the help of Heaven." And I always used to make sure that "*bet-samech-daled*" was on the top of every new piece of paper I wrote on, and I've continued to do it to this day. In this way, I can bring *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* into everything I do.

A week ago, I decided, together with my wife and children, to celebrate the fact that it has been over five years since I was diagnosed with kidney cancer, and *Baruch Hashem*, I am

completely clean after many MRIs and many CTs to check up. In addition, I wanted to thank Hashem that I was able to *Baruch Hashem* finish Shas Bavli in its entirety, to thank Him for fifty years of my life, and of course, to thank Him that our boys are home from the army after endless rounds in Gaza and Lebanon. Most of all, I thank Hashem for all the many miracles that have happened to the Jewish people. There is so much to be grateful for, and we organized a celebration and expression of our gratitude.

Luckily for me, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, the *posek* of the OU and a *Rosh Yeshiva* at Yeshiva University, was in Israel to teach at NCSY Kollel. I invited him and his Rebbetzin to come and join. I also invited Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, who I have the privilege of being a close student of and of broadcasting with him twice a week on Radio Galei Yisrael. I also invited Rav Nachman Kahana, who for many decades sat in the OU building and wrote his commentary on *Tosafot* called *Mei Menuchot*, and with whom I have the privilege of weekly studying together. We invited many rabbis and friends, although since we held it in our backyard, I had to keep it pretty small and tight, really only inviting a very small group of about 120 people from each stage in my life. But *Baruch Hashem*, we got to celebrate together with many people that we love.

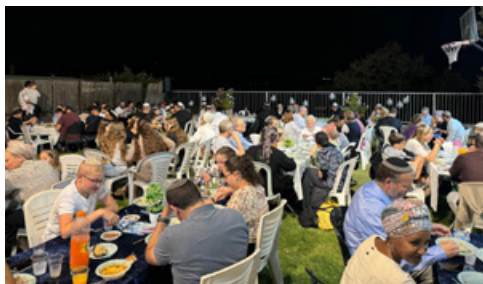
I stood up there and expressed gratitude to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for all the good He has done for me and for *Klal Yisrael*. How many times did I pray before every scan, every CT, every ultrasound, every endoscopy? I asked

so many times that with the great efforts of my doctors, and all the changes in the way I lived, Hashem should give me health. Now that I have received, *Baruch Hashem*, a clean bill of health, I thought it was time to say thank you. You know, Jews have a character trait of knowing how to ask for a favor - and it's so wonderful that Jews love to help other Jews. I believe it's so important that the person who receives the favor turns around after all is said and done and explains to the favor-giver how much it meant to them. So too with Hashem. We are constantly *davening* for so many different people, for their health, prosperity, that they should find the right match, that they should have the child they have been waiting for. How many times do we actually dedicate an entire evening to say "Thank you Hashem"?

It just felt so overdue after asking *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for so much. And I hope to continue dedicating time not just to the asking, but to have more and more concentration in the *Modim* prayer, and in all the ways that I can continue connecting to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and developing that relationship.

In the month of Elul now, many people say, "*HaMelech BaSadeh*" - that the King (of all kings) is not in His palace now, not in His ivory tower, but *HaMelech BaSadeh*, the King is here with us, accessible to all who seek Him. If only we could just open up, if only we could talk to Him personally, we would be able to get so much in return. Having a chance to enter the month of Elul with this great evening of just thanking *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* was so meaningful to me.

It does not mean that we do not have challenges in life, and it does not mean that we do not have trials. But that being said, there is just so much to thank *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*



for, and hopefully Hashem sees the thanks that we have for Him. I am purposely writing it publicly on these pages of Torah Tidbits so that I can even more publicly declare my thanks to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. *Be'ezrat Hashem*, giving thanks should take all of us to a place where we are feeling more and more connected to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants to do more and more and more positive for all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

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