

Good morning and thank you for coming today.

Today, as I celebrate becoming a bat mitzvah I will be sharing with you the Tefilot that a Jewish Woman should say every morning. I will combine explanations about the prayers with the prayers themselves.

The first prayer a Jew says when waking up in the morning is typically the Modeh ani. The prayer is usually said while you are still in bed (I decided to spare you the pijamas).

נִשְׁמָתִי בִּי שְׁהַחֲזִרְתָּ. וְקִיָּם חַי מֶלֶךְ לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי מוֹדֶה אֲמוּנָתְךָ רַבָּה. בְּחֻמְלָה

This blessing follows a common rule in Torah and mitzvot in General. The rule is that you don't get to enjoy something until you thank God. Some examples of this are that before you eat you have to say a blessing. Another example is that in process of making Challah, one is meant to give a portion of the dough to the Kohen. In biblical times the Kohen had no land, or wheat of his own, and therefore no dough for shabbat, therefore he would get some as a gift. We continue this practice in theory when we take a small portion of dough off of the challah bread before it is baked even in our own times. It is a way of being appreciative of what Gd has given you.

An interesting fact about Modeh Ani is that doctors recommend that a person should sit up for 12 seconds before standing so you won't get dizzy. The Modeh Ani has 12 words, so you can say 1 word per second.

The next prayer is the Matovu

יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשַׁכְּנֶתֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב אֱהָלֶיךָ טָבוּ מָה בֵּיתְךָ אָבָא חֲסִדֶּךָ בָּרַב וְאֲנִי בִּירְאָתְךָ קֹדֶשְׁךָ הֵיכַל אֶל אֲשֶׁתְּחֹה

כְּבוֹדְךָ מִשְׁכַּן וּמִקוֹם בֵּיתְךָ מֵעוֹן אֶהְבֵּתִי יְיָ.
עֲשֵׂי יְיָ לִפְנֵי אֲבִרְכָה וְאֶכְרַע אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְאֲנִי
רָצוֹן עֵת יְיָ לְךָ תִּפְלְתִי וְאֲנִי
יִשְׁעֶךָ בְּאֵמֶת עֲנֵנִי חֲסֶדְךָ בְּרַב אֱלֹהִים

How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!
As for me, O God abounding in grace,
I enter your house to worship with awe in Your sacred place.
To You, Eternal One, goes my prayer: may this be a time of your favor.
In Your great love, O God, answer me with Your saving truth.

We say this prayer when we walk into shul and the Ohel or tent to which we refer is infact the Synagogue. Bilaam the evil non-Jewish prophet was the one who said this, even as he tried to curse the Jewish People, he actually praised them as he was impressed by their Tent of Prayer. The Tent, or beit hamikdash was beautiful because it allowed the Jewish people to do teshuva or repentance. This prayer helps us to recognize how fortunate we are to have a spiritual home to come to.

Washing Hands: יָדַיִם נְטִילַת עַל

(**Instructions (do not read)**: The first thing that you do is that you pick up the cup on your left hand to pour it on to your right hand. Then you place the cup in your right hand and pour it on your left hand. You do this 3 times.)

בְּמִצּוֹתָיו קִדְּשָׁנוּ אֲשֶׁר הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱתָה בְּרוּךְ
יָדַיִם נְטִילַת עַל וְצוּנוּ

There are several explanations for why we wash our hands in this fashion in the morning. Allow me to share two of these reasons.

One of the reasons is for Impurity, because you don't know where they went during sleep and they may have touched part of the body that would require us to purify our hands. Thus you have to wash your hands when you are awake and aware of where you put your hands.

Another reason is because the Cohanim had to wash their hands because they were going to do the holy work in the Temple. Also as Jews we do holy things all day so that's why we wash our hands. In Judaism every thing which is special or holy requires preparation, we never just jump in but we try to appreciate how holy or special it is. This washing of the hands is the same, it prepares us for the special things we will do during the day such as prayer or any of the other mitzvot.

The next blessing is the Asher Yatzar commonly referred to by the funny name, the Bathroom Blessing.

We are thanking God that our body is made well and that we are healthy. This prayer was written 2000 years ago by a Rabbi Named Abayeh and it tries to break down in specific detail the gift of health. It goes as follows

**הָאָדָם אֶת יֵצֶר אֲשֶׁר, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ 'ה אֶתָּה בְּרוּךְ
גְּלוֹי. חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים, נִקְבִּים נִקְבִּים בּוֹ וּבָרָא, בְּחֻכְמָה
אִם אוֹ, מֵהֶם אֶחָד יִסְתֵּם שָׁאֵם, כְּבוֹדְךָ כִּסֵּא לְפָנֶי וַיְדוּעַ
אֶחָת שָׁעָה אֶפִּילוֹ לְהִתְקִים שְׂרָאָף אִי, מֵהֶם אֶחָד יִפְתַּח
לַעֲשׂוֹת וּמִפְּלִיא בְּשָׁר כָּל רוּפָא 'ה אֶתָּה בְּרוּךְ**

**Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe,
Who formed man with wisdom and created within him many
openings and many hollows (cavities). It is obvious and**

known before Your Throne of Glory that if but one of them were to be ruptured or if one of them were to be blocked it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You (even for a short period of time). Blessed are You, Hashem, Who heals all flesh and acts wonderously."

Abyeh described the gift as the fact that we have we many openings that stay opened closed parts that stay closed. For example if we have a hole in our cheek, we won't be able to drink or eat because the food or drink will fall out. Also another example is that if we have food stuck in our throat we won't be able to eat and it might be hard to breathe. Of course both a heart attack and a stroke are examples of blood vessels that need to be open, that actually get blocked up. This blessing is so unique because there was even an article written about it in the Journal of the American Medical Association. In that article Dr. Kenneth Prager says that Abyeh's description actually describes almost every know final medical change before death.

We say this after we go to the bathroom because it's an event that we can appreciate when our bodies are working well. In theory we could say this blessing on every bodily function, but it is hard to feel your blood moving or your liver working. I guess we could say the prayer after every breath, but that would not leave room for anything else. Going to the bathroom is the best opportunity to appreciate that your body is working well during the day. What the prayer is really saying is that we are appreciating that are bodies are working well heart pumping, eyes seeing, saliva digesting and that we are healthy. It is not only about appreciating to go to the bathroom, it is about every function of the body.

Next we say the blessing over the Torah.
In this blessing we thank Hashem for the fact that
We are sanctified with the words of the Torah and that We are

commanded to involve ourselves with the Torah. We also specify that Hashem sweetened the Torah in our mouth and Israel's mouth, and to help us in being successful in passing the Torah to other people, in particular our children when we have them. For now it could just be my VTT little buddy. Lastly we celebrate the fact that Studying the Torah it is because you love it not because it's part of your job, or you want to get money.

בֵּית עַמָּךְ כָּל וּבְכִי בְּפִינוּ תוֹרָתְךָ דְּבָרֵי אֶת, אֱלֹהֵינוּ 'ה, נָא וְהַעֲרֵב
יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית עַמָּךְ כָּל וְצִאֲצִאֵי, וְצִאֲצִאֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְנַהֲיָה, יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַמְּלִמֵּד, 'ה אֶתְּךָ בְּרוּךְ. לְשִׁמָּה תוֹרָתְךָ וְלִוְמָדִי, שְׁמָךְ יוֹדְעֵי כָלֵנוּ
. יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲמֹ תוֹרָה

וְנַתַּן הָעַמִּים מִכָּל בְּנוֹ-בָּחַר אֲשֶׁר, הָעוֹלָם מְלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ 'ה אֶתְּךָ בְּרוּךְ
הַתּוֹרָה נוֹתֵן 'ה אֶתְּךָ בְּרוּךְ. תּוֹרָתוֹ אֶת לָנוּ
יְהוָה יִשָּׂא כּו. וַיַּחֲנֹךְ אֵלֶיךָ פָּנָיו יְהוָה יָאֵר כֵּה. וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ יְהוָה יְבָרְכֶךָ
שְׁלוֹם לְךָ וְיִשֵּׁם אֵלֶיךָ פָּנָיו

**Blessed are you Hashem, our God, King of the universe,
Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has
commanded us to engross ourselves in the words of Torah.
Please, Hashem, our God, sweeten the words of Your Torah
in our mouth and in the mouth of your people, the family of
Israel. May we and our offspring and the offspring of Your
people, the House of Israel- all of us- know Your Name and
study Your Torah for it's own sake. Blessed are You
Hashem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel.
Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe,
Who selected us from all the peoples and gave us His
Torah. Blessed are You, Hashem, Giver of the Torah.
May Hashem bless you and safeguard you. May Hashem
illuminate his countenance for you and be gracious to you.
May Hashem turn his countenance to you and establish**

peace for you.

The reason why we say this blessing is because we are thanking God that he chose us to give the Torah to and not to someone else. This bracha is the bracha you read before every Torah reading and before the Aliyah

The torah study that follows the blessing is like the bread you eat after hamotzi, the first morsel of enjoyment from the subject of the bracha. In particular it is the bracha that the kohanim give to our people. Also on Friday night this bracha is used for the parents to do on the children.

The bracha also covers any act of a mitzvah that has no separate bracha such as for tzedakah or for being kind to people. The Bracha recognizes that doing mitzvot is also a form of torah study as we learn from all the mitzvot we do.

There is one last set of blessings in which we celebrate all the gifts of the physical world.

Talmud says, “anyone who benefits from this world without making a blessing, it is as if they have stolen from Gd.” If you ate pasta without making a blessing what would you have stolen?

Most people say that you stole the pasta, but Rashi says you stole the bracha. In other words stealing a bracha really means that you are missing out on the opportunity to understand how wonderful the pasta is. It comes from a tiny seed that gets mushed into the ground and then becomes grass and then grows up to be a full grown plant. We take the top of the plant and grind it into a fine flour and then make it into a delicious pasta. There are countless miracles involved in that process and if you make the bracha you will miss out on the opportunity to think about all of that.

The next 17 brachot are an opportunity to make ourselves aware of all the small miracles that are part of waking up. We say each one in order of the general process of waking up, getting out of bed, and taking our first steps

The First bracha speaks about the fact that Hashem gave us the blessing of understanding, and gave it to us on many different levels.

The words sechvi has 2 interpretations heart and rooster. The first one means heart as we are thanking God that we understand the difference between the day and night by knowing there are things in the morning that we can't do in the night, or the other way around.

The second interpretation for sechvi is thanking God for our internal clock in our brain that wakes us up in the morning like a rooster.

**בִּינָה לְשִׁכּוֹי הַנּוֹתֵן, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ
לֵילָה וּבֵין יוֹם בֵּין לְהַבְחִין**

Blessed are you Hashem who gives us the understanding to
understand the difference
between day and night

We are thanking God for not putting us in the category of those having less mitzvot and we walk through a progression of those who have more and more mitzvot, from the non-Jew to the indentured servant to a full fledged free Jew.

:(גוי עשני שלא, העולם מלך אלהינו, 'ה אתה ברוך

:(עבד עשני שלא, העולם מלך אלהינו, 'ה אתה ברוך
:

כרצונו שעשני ברוך -)

We are thanking God for the ability to see because once we wake up we open our eyes.

עוֹרִים פּוֹקֵחַ, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ
Blessed are you Hashem who gives sight to the blind

It is clear that at this point the Brachot are following the pattern of waking up, first we thank Gd for the ability to know we are awake, then we thank Gd for opening our eyes. Next . . .

We are thanking God that we have clothes because after we wake up, you usually get changed.

With the next blessing we are thanking God that our body produces a chemical while we sleep that allows us to rest and not act or talk out our dreams...this would be embarrassing! When we wake up in the morning our bodies stop making the chemical so we can lift our arms and legs etc.

אֲסוּרִים מִתִּיר, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ
Blessed are you Hashem who releases those who are tied down

Next, We are thanking God that we can sit up when we wake up

and when we stand up we can balance and stand straight

כְּפוּפִים זֹקֵף, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who makes the bent stand straight

After standing up, it is advisable to be dressed, walking around without clothing is not recommended by Jewish law and is also very embarrassing. Did you know that Humans are the only living creatures that wear clothes, it is part of what makes us unique

עֲרֻמִּים מְלִבִּישׁ, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who clothes the naked.

Next, We are also thanking God that we have a firm surface to stand on...just think how hard it is to stand in the water.

הַמַּיִם עַל הָאָרֶץ רוֹקֵעַ, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ

: Blessed are you Hashem who collects the earth and separates it from the water.

Even though we say very detailed brachot, we also have a bracha to thank God for “everything” in case we might have forgotten to thank Hashem for something.

צָרְכֵי כָּל לֵי שְׁעָשָׂה. הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who provides for all our needs.

This is a transition bracha. All the other brachot brought us to the point of standing up.

But we are still an object that rest. God wants us to be an object in motion. This is part of our spiritual growth. This prayer is thanking God that we can set yourself in motion and that we can

make choices to walk where we want to. This is a little like **Newton's first law** of motion - An object at rest stays at rest and an object in motion stays in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted upon by an unbalanced force. So too with people, if we start at rest we are likely to stay at rest. Sort of like an afternoon playing candy crush. If however, we get going we are more likely to stay going. In fact this wording comes from the Tehilim. If we take the first step God will help us go a little further. Even if you fall, it feels like God isn't helping you, but sometimes a step backward means a step forward.

גָּבֵר מַצְעֵדֵי הַמָּכִין, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who makes proper steps of men and women

The last three blessings are purely spiritual because they thank hashem for giving us spiritual strength and a spiritual reward for doing mitzvot.

בְּגִבּוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹזֵר, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who clothes Israel with strength

יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹטֵר, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

בְּתִפְאָרָה:

Blessed are you Hashem who crowns Israel with glory.

Finally we thank Hashem for giving us strength in general for all the activities we have already listed.

כַּח לִיעָף הַנוֹתֵן, הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'ה אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ:

Blessed are you Hashem who gives strength to the weary.

Thank
you!!