

*NCSY Torah* — *on One Foot Series*

# GAM ZU L'TOVAH

גם זו לטובה



## IT'S ALL GOOD

compiled by Rabbi Jack Abramowitz  
designed by Renée Rosenfeld

## MODIM

The name of the *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei* that starts "Modim" is "Bircas Hoda'ah" – the blessing of thanks to Hashem. Did you ever actually read it?



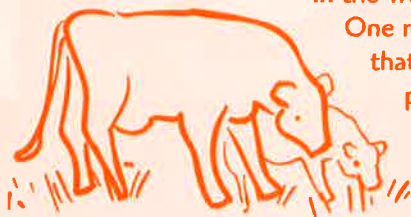
"We acknowledge that You, Hashem, are our G-d and the G-d of our ancestors now and forever. You are

the foundation of our lives and the shield of our security from generation to generation. We thank You and tell Your praises for our lives, which are in Your hand and our souls which are entrusted to Your care; for Your miracles which are always with us and Your wonders and goodness at all times, evening, morning and afternoon. You are the Good One because Your mercies never cease, and the Compassionate One because Your kindness never ends. We have always placed our hopes in You."

## ASHREI

The Talmud tells us that whoever recites Psalm 145 ("Ashrei") three times a day is guaranteed a place in the World to Come.

One reason for this is that it includes the phrase, "You (Hashem) open Your hand and satisfy the needs of every living



thing." But Psalm 136 ("Hallel HaGadol") contains a similar idea, "He gives food to all creatures." So why isn't Psalm 136 the one recited three times a day? *Ashrei* has the added benefit of being an alphabetical acrostic that praises Hashem from Alef to Taf (A to Z). (*Brachos* 4b)

## WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

We say many *brachos* to praise Hashem for His wonderful world. Here are just a few of them:

**Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech Haolam...**

**May You be blessed, Hashem our G-d, King of the Universe...**

**On smelling fragrant fruits**

*Hanosein raiyach tov bapeiros*

The One Who places a pleasant aroma in fruits.

**On seeing lightning**

*Oseh ma'aseh b'reishis*  
Who makes the works of creation.



**On hearing thunder**

*shekocho u'gvuraso malei olam*  
Whose strength and power fill the world.

**On seeing a rainbow**

*Zocher habris v'ne'eman biv'riso v'kayam b'ma'amaro*

Who remembers the agreement, is faithful in His agreement and keeps His word.

**On seeing a Torah scholar**

*shechalak meichachmaso lireiav*

Who shares some of His knowledge with those who revere Him.

**On seeing a secular genius**

*shenasan meichachmaso l'vasar vadam*

Who has given some of His knowledge to human beings.

**On seeing a non-Jewish King who has absolute authority in his land**

*shenasan m'kvodo l'vasar v'dam*

Who has given some of His honor to human beings.

**On seeing a particularly beautiful creature**

*shekacha lo b'olamo*

Who has such things in His world.

**On seeing an unusual creature**

*m'shaneh habriyos*

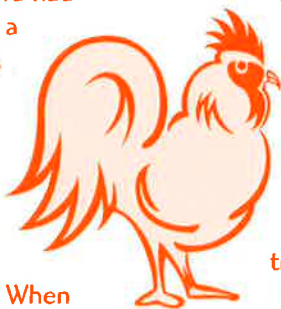
Who varies His creations.

# GAM ZU L'TOVAH

The phrase *gam zu l'tovah*, "This, too, is for the good," was coined by Nachum Ish Gamzu (a nickname meaning Nachum, the man who said "this, too") in the Talmud (*Taanis 21a*).

## ALL THAT HASHEM DOES, HE DOES FOR THE GOOD

Rabbi Akiva used to say, "All that Hashem does, He does for the good." Once while he was traveling, Rabbi Akiva had with him a donkey, a rooster and a torch. When he couldn't find lodging in town and had to sleep in the woods, he said, "All that Hashem does, He does for the good." When the donkey and the rooster were eaten by wild animals, he said, "All that Hashem does, He does for the good." Even when



the torch was blown out by the wind, he said, "All that Hashem does, He does for the good."

The next morning, Rabbi Akiva learned that bandits had destroyed the town overnight. He realized that had he found lodging in the town, or had the thieves seen his fire or heard his donkey or rooster, he would have been killed. In this way, his faith that his "misfortunes" were actually for the best was verified.

(*Brachos 60b*)

## THE DIFFERENCE

What's the difference between the statements of Rabbi Akiva ("All that Hashem does, He does for the good") and Nachum Ish Gamzu ("This, too, is for the good")? Rabbi

Akiva's means "I believe that this bad thing will ultimately have a good outcome." Nachum's means

"I believe that this bad thing is really good *in and of itself*, even if I don't understand how."



## GOOD AND BAD

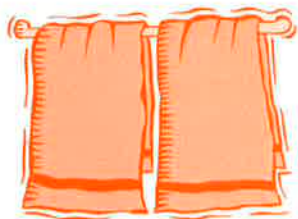
The Mishna tells us that we must bless Hashem for the bad things that happen to us the same way we do for the good things. The Talmud

then asks the obvious question: On good things we say the blessing *hatov v'hameitiv*, that Hashem "is good and does good," but on bad things we say *Dayan ha'emes*, that Hashem is "the true Judge." So what does it mean to bless Him in the same way? It doesn't mean with the same words, it means with the same sincerity and acceptance of Hashem's will. (*Brachos 60b*)

## THE BRACHA ON WHAT?

Isn't the human body a miraculous thing? *Asher Yatzar* is the *bracha* we say after we use the... you know - the *facilities*.

In it, we thank Hashem that "He formed man in His wisdom and created in him many holes and openings." We continue that, "It is obvious to You (Hashem) that if one of (these holes) opened or closed (counter to its proper function), it would be impossible for a person to survive, even for an hour."



**The whole world  
is a very narrow bridge,  
but the most important thing  
is not to be afraid.**

– R. Nachman of Breslov

## Who Is ...?

Ben Zoma says:

### Who is wise?

The one who learns from all people.

### Who is strong?

The one who can conquer his temptations.

### Who is wealthy?

The one who is satisfied with what he has.

### Who is honored?

The one who gives honor to others. (*Avos 4:1*)

## Don't Worry, Be Happy

- Serve Hashem with joy; come before Him singing in happiness.

(*Tehillim 100:2*)

- It is a great *mitzvah* to be happy at all times. (*R. Nachman of Breslov*)

- You, Hashem, put more joy in my heart than all their food and drink. (*Tehillim 4:8*)

- Hashem's commandments are righteous; they gladden the heart... (*Tehillim 19:9*)

- There is nothing better than to be happy and do good in life. Everyone who eats and drinks and is satisfied with his work - this is a gift from G-d.

(*Koheles 3:12-13*)

- The whole world should shout joyfully to Hashem and sing the glory of His Name...

(*Tehillim 66:1*)

- Be pleased when things go well; when they don't, remember that Hashem has made both of them...

(*Koheles 7:14*)

- Don't be sad, because enjoying Hashem is your strength!

(*Nechemiah 8:10*)

- Celebrate and sing with joy because the Holy One is great among you!

(*Yeshayahu 16:6*)

## Thanks for Everything!

- Everyone has heard the saying "The L-rd giveth and the L-rd taketh away," but do you know the rest of the sentence? The whole verse actually says, "Hashem gives and Hashem takes; now may the name of Hashem be blessed."

(*Iyov 1:21*)

- Now give thanks to Hashem and do His will. (*Ezra 10:11*)

- I will thank Hashem for His righteousness and praise the Name of Hashem the Almighty. (*Tehillim 7:18*)

- My soul will sing to You and will not be silenced; Hashem my G-d, I will thank You forever.

(*Tehillim 30:13*)

- Give thanks to Hashem because He is good; His kindness lasts forever.

(*Tehillim 118:29*)

## Hashem Turns Things Upside Down

- He raises the lowly from the dirt and picks up the destitute from the gutter to sit with royalty.... He makes a childless woman a happy mother of children. Praise Hashem!

(*Tehillim 113:7-9*)

- The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This thing came from Hashem; it is amazing to us!

(*Tehillim 118:22-23*)

- At that time, their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a holiday.

(*Esther 9:22*)

**Day by glorious day.**

- Mikey Butler a"h

