



November 14, 2020

Chayei Sarah – Shabbat M'vorachim

27 Cheshvan, 5781

### Thanks

Even before you know what's inside the gift you say "thank you." Before you've tasted that heavenly-looking dessert the waiter brought, you murmur, "thanks."

And before you start your day, as soon as you realize that you are no longer in that delicious mode of sleep, you can say the Modeh Ani prayer: "I give thanks to You, living and eternal King, for having restored within me my soul, with mercy; great is Your trust."

Though we haven't rinsed our hands, washed our face, brushed our teeth - proscribed preparations for prayer - we can say this prayer.

Because, as Chasidic thought teaches, the "Modeh Ani" of the Jew - a Jew's very essence - is always pure and pristine.

The concept of expressing thanks to G-d is one of the fundamental principles of Jewish life. Thus we begin each day with an expression of thanks Modeh Ani - in which we gratefully acknowledge that G-d returned our soul. This, our first act of the day, serves as the foundation for all of our subsequent conduct.

It teaches us to be grateful, to take nothing for granted, to appreciate everything we have.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement, was renowned for spreading Jewish teachings even among small children. Before he became a rebbe, he served as a teacher's helper.

In fact, when the story of the Baal Shem Tov's life is related - before his scholarship, piety, unbounded love of all Jews, and miracles that he wrought are recounted - it is first told that he began as a teacher's helper. At that time, he would remind children to begin their day with praise of and thanks to G-d, by reciting Modeh Ani.

Through starting one's day with Modeh Ani, a Jew acknowledges G-d's sovereignty. In addition, it sets the tone for the whole day and for one's entire life.

It teaches us to be grateful from our earliest moment in our lives at the earliest moment in the day.

Jewish teachings explain that every night when one goes to sleep one's soul returns to its Divine source and gives an account of its activities that day.

In the prayer before going to bed we say, "Into Your hand I pledge my soul; You have redeemed me, G-d of trust."

A pledge is something the debtor gives to the creditor as security that the debt will be repaid. Usually the creditor will not return the pledge as long as the debtor still owes him money. But G-d is merciful; though every day we are indebted to Him, He returns our soul to us.

Our Sages also explain: When a person gives a pledge, even if it is a new thing, it becomes old and used by the time it is returned. But G-d returns our "pledge" new and polished even though it has been "used," and so it is written, "They are new every morning; great is Your trust."

The fact that we go to bed "dead tired" and wake up refreshed, returning from the unconscious world of slumber, is similar to the "revival of the dead" which will take place in the Messianic Era.

This daily experience strengthens our conviction in the "resurrection of the Dead," one of the 13 principles of Judaism.

And this adds further meaning to the words, "Great is Your trust," for we have absolute trust in G-d not only that He will return our soul in the morning, but also will return our soul into our body at the end of days, when all dead will arise from their "sleep."

Try getting into the habit of giving thanks, right from the very first moment of the day. Gratefulness goes a long way.

## Just Ask

Much of this week's Parashah describes the journey of Avraham's slave (Eliezer) to bring back a wife for Yitzchak. R' Leib Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ha'masmidim and Rabbi of Khal Adat Yerushalayim in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) writes: One of the primary lessons to learn from the actions of the Patriarchs and their servants is that they always felt that they were standing in front of Hashem, such that they could turn to Him and request whatever they needed. Thus, Eliezer unhesitatingly asked (24:12): "May You so arrange it for me this day . . ." And, when the Patriarchs and their servants were answered, they immediately bowed down to Hashem and thanked Him, as we read (24:26), "So the man [Eliezer] bowed low and prostrated himself to Hashem." This should be a lesson for every person, teaching him or her the proper path to follow regarding every detail of one's life, i.e., to ask of Hashem whatever one needs and to thank Hashem when one's needs are filled.

The entire story of Eliezer's journey to choose a wife for Yitzchak is told twice in our Parashah—once as it happens and again as Eliezer retells it. Our Sages contrast this with the fact that many Halachot are merely hinted to in the Torah, and they say, "The mundane conversation of the servants of the Patriarchs is 'better' in G-d's eyes than the Torah of the Patriarch's descendants." Why? R' Mintzberg writes: Because the conversations of the servants reveal the Patriarchs' way of life, i.e., they were always attached to Hashem, so much so that it even rubbed off on their slaves. (Ben Melech Al Ha'Torah)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))

We happily wish Mazel Tov to

**Rabbi Shmuel and Rebbetzin Rochelle Kaplan**  
on the **Birth of a Grandson**, born to their children  
**Rabbi Peretz and Devora Leah Riesenbergs.**



We mourn the passing of  
Hagaon Hagadol HaRav Dovid Feinstein, zt"l  
and  
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

### Yahrzeits This Week:

Chaya Statman	1 Kislev - Monday night / Tuesday	for father	Alter Chaim ben Yitzchok Eizik
Aaron Margolies	2 Kislev - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for mother	Shoshana bat Moshe ha-Levi
Terry Frank	3 Kislev - Wednesday night / Thursday	for father	Avigdor Shaul ben Paltiel
Sally Friedman	3 Kislev - Wednesday night / Thursday	for husband	Avigdor Shaul ben Paltiel

### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

#### **Friday, 11/13 — 26 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 7:00  
Candles — 4:34 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Shabbat, 11/14 — 27 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:17 a.m.  
Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 3:50 p.m.  
Minchah — 4:20 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 5:35 p.m.

#### **Sunday, 11/15 — 28 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Monday, 11/16 — 29 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Tuesday — Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 11/17 — 1 Kislev**

Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Wednesday, 11/18 — 2 Kislev**

Shacharit — 7:00a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Thursday, 11/19 — 3 Kislev**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

#### **Friday, 11/20 — 4 Kislev**

Shacharit — 7:00  
Candles — 4:29 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.