

And bless Hashem, Your G-d. (8:10)

One of the most common blessings we recite following food or drink consumption is the *brachah acharonah*, after-blessing, *Borei nefashos rabos v'chesronan*, "Who creates numerous living things with their deficiencies." The *Tur* explains the concept *chesronos*, deficiencies, to mean that Hashem has created the *hashlamah*, completion, the (sort of) antidote to everything that we might be missing from our lives. The *Rashba* (*Teshuvos* 149), however, disagrees, explaining that we pay gratitude to Hashem specifically for (what appears to us as) the deficiencies in our lives. It is our way of affirming the manner in which Hashem has created us. For example, He could have created us without having the need to eat. We thank Him for this "deficiency," which requires us to be human, to subsist on what provisions Hashem furnishes us with.

The idea that one must appreciate everything that "life" doles out to him, despite its initial appearances as deficient, is underscored by the late *Rosh Yeshivah* of Tshebin/*Eretz Yisrael*, **Horav Avraham Genichuvski, zl**. He related the story of a Holocaust survivor who arrived in America shortly after liberation. Seeking a livelihood, but unable to navigate the language and culture, his options were limited. One of the *shuls* in the neighborhood in which he found a simple apartment was in need of a *shamesh*, sexton, and all-around *usher*, clerk, someone to greet the members who came "visiting," someone who could communicate with them and make them feel comfortable in *shul*.

The *shul* administration was impressed with his self-confidence, quick wit, and social graces. He was about to get the job and sign on the dotted line, when one of the board members asked, "Of course, you speak English?" Our hero replied in the negative, explaining that in Poland he had had no need to speak English, nor did it matter during his internment in the Nazi concentration camp.

"We are very sorry that we cannot offer you employment. In our *shul*, we often have celebrations which are attended by family and friends to whom a *shul* is very foreign. They require someone to guide them through the service. All of this requires fluency in the English language. We would love to help, but you simply do not have the qualifications for the job."

Now that his choices were down to zero, the man decided to purchase a used pushcart and sell trinkets and whatnots on the corner of one of the busy intersections. Business was lucrative, so he expanded, hiring a young fellow to manage an additional pushcart. The success of his endeavor continued until he had a string of pushcarts throughout the city. At this point, he decided it was time to close the pushcart business and open a large retail department store.

Business was booming, and soon he was purchasing other businesses. The simple pushcart had now become a large conglomerate! At the closing of a major transaction involving the purchase of a number of stores, he was asked to read and sign the contract. The man gave the contract to his secretary to read it to him. The businessmen and lawyers who had gathered around the conference table were incredulous to see that the CEO of these large businesses could not read English. They

asked him, "How is it possible that you were able to build and maintain such a large business empire, yet cannot read English?" they asked him.

"Let me tell you something," he countered. "If I had spoken English, I would today be washing floors in the *shul*!"

The *Rosh Yeshivah* concluded his discourse with the following exhortation to his students, "We do not realize how specifically it is the deficiency that may avail us the opportunity to succeed in life. The *chisaron*, inadequacy, the failure, can often turn our lives around."