

“Hashem Elokim cast a deep sleep upon the man, and he slept.” (2:21)

Hashem determined that Adam *Ha'rishon* should not witness the creation of his wife-to-be. To circumvent this problem, He made Adam fall asleep. The *Torah* does not record him waking up from his spiritual slumber. *Horav Shimon Schwab, z.l.*, derives from here that indeed, in comparison to the clarity of vision and spiritual perception that Adam manifest prior to his slumber, he and his descendants are considered to be in a deep spiritual sleep. Only *Klal Yisrael* stood at *Har Sinai*, being spiritually awakened as they experienced the Revelation and received the *Torah*.

With this idea in mind, *Horav Schwab* proceeds to explain the daily *Bircas ha'Shachar*, morning blessing, “Who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.” This blessing is immediately followed with the supplication regarding our success in *Torah* and *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty, “that You accustom us to (study) Your *Torah* and attach us to Your *mitzvos*: Let not the evil inclination dominate us.” The blessing concludes, “Who bestows beneficent kindness upon His People, *Yisrael*.”

If we think about it, a number of anomalies exist regarding this *brachah*. First, this blessing is our praise to the Almighty for awakening us from our nocturnal slumber. This is the first blessing one should recite upon arising. Why then does it follow after the blessing, “Who restores souls to dead bodies,” “Who gives sight to the blind,” and “Who straightens the bent?” Second, how is the supplication regarding proficiency in *Torah* and *mitzvos* related to the beginning of the *brachah*, “Who removes slumber from my eyes”? Third, the blessing’s conclusion, “Who bestows beneficent kindness upon His People, *Yisrael*,” implies that the *chesed*, kindness, of awakening in the morning is bestowed only on *Klal Yisrael*. Does not everybody wake up

– not only Jews?

Horav Schwab presents a novel interpretation: This blessing does not praise Hashem only for our physical awakening, since this is included in the blessing of “Who restores souls to dead bodies.” We are also offering our gratitude for warranting our spiritual awakening, while everyone else wallows in a deep slumber. Since this awakening occurred during *Kabbolas ha'Torah*, the receiving of the *Torah*, the appropriate place for noting it would be with the supplication for proficiency in *Torah*, concluding the blessing by emphasizing that this *chesed* was bestowed only on *Klal Yisrael*. They received the *Torah*, while everyone else continues to sleep.

During the course of time and the travail of the exile we have certainly descended from the spiritual plateau we achieved at *Har Sinai*. Yet, the terms “awake” and “slumber,” as well as “seeing” and “sightless” are relative. Our ability to observe and perceive on a spiritual level is considered limited in comparison to Moshe *Rabbeinu*’s ability. Each person – each generation – each situation, however is to be viewed in its own context, exclusive of others. It is for this reason that we praise

the Almighty daily for granting us spiritual perception.

Horav Schwab writes that he once heard an analogy that sheds light on the matter. He compares this to a home for the visually impaired where everybody has been sightless from birth. One day, a surgeon appeared at the home with the claim that he had perfected a procedure which could restore anyone's vision, regardless of his impairment. There was, however, one drawback: The results would last for only one day. The individual would see, but only for twenty-four hours. Understandably, no one was interested in this temporary cure.

One person, however, decided that it was worth undergoing the pain of surgery if he could see, even for a single day. The surgery was successful. Lo and behold, the world opened up before him. Suddenly, he could see faces, images and colors. He could perceive an entire world. Even after he lost his sight, he would still have memories to treasure. He could relate to what he heard from others. The members of the home proclaimed him as their leader because, indeed, he could "see" better than they.

This same idea applies to *Klal Yisrael*. Unfortunately many have fallen back asleep, resorting to a state of spiritual slumber once again. The material/ physical blandishments of this world have blinded so many. Although, this may all be true now, nonetheless, these people all stood at *Har Sinai* and were healed; their spirits and sights were aroused. The impression lasts forever in the hearts, minds and psyche of every Jew. Deep down they know what a "*mamleches Kohanim v'goi kadosh*," "kingdom of Priests and a holy nation" should look like. They have a goal to which to aspire, and thus, they are still a "light onto the nations."