

# WORTHY OF THE BROCHA!

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

And he (Pharaoh) treated Avram good because of her (Sarai), and he acquired sheep, cattle, donkeys, slaves and maidservants, female donkeys and cattle. (Breishis 12:16)

And he treated Avram good because of her: Rabbi Chelbo says, "A man should always be careful with the honor of his wife because blessing is only found in a person's house because of his wife. (Bava Metzia 59a)

This is a little odd. If Pharaoh was the benefactor, how do we learn from here that blessing comes to the house because of a person's wife? Was Pharaoh the source of blessing? The Maharsha explains that the word "hetiv" - "did good" - is referring to ultimately to HASHEM, while the agency of that goodness to Avram channeled through, even through Pharaoh. How might one access that blessing?

It was a regular weekday night at home. Dinner was still happening for some while others were in various stages of doing and avoiding doing homework and preparing for bed. My wife and I were feeling like referees in a rugby match. Suddenly a loud honk signaled from outside. I picked up my attaché case, and loudly declared, "My ride is here! I've gotta go now. Bye!" I left. I could immediately feel the waves of serenity washing over me and I could now prepare for the evening lecture in Queens. Yossi the Israeli driver was there with a guest lecturer from Israel, Rabbi Cohen, who specializes in issues of Shalom Bais. He was to give a separate class in Hebrew. We greeted each other and I was ready to go when Rabbi Cohen asked me in Hebrew, "Did you get the Brocha (blessing)?" Between his lack of ability to speak English and my impoverished modern-Hebrew skills I was confused. I asked for clarification. "Do you mean the Brocha- for eating? I did that a long time ago!" We didn't budge from the curb.

He insisted, "The Brocha!" I assumed now he was talking about the "Asher Yatzar" (bathroom blessing) posters that are widely distributed by our office. Wrong again. Then he quoted the statement of the sages referenced above, "Blessing is found in the house of man because of his wife." He passionately pressed on, "How can a man hope to be successful in teaching or business or anything without a blessing from his wife?" I got it, but I told him, "We're late!" He insisted, "We'll wait!"

I walked sheepishly up the lawn and knocked on my front door before reentering the house. There I stood looking up from the landing of our split level home and the kids started shouting out to Ima,

"Abba's home!" My wife arrived immediately with a baby wrapped in a towel and blankly asked me, "Did you forget something? I chokingly let out, "I forgot the Brocha." She wondered aloud, "We ate dinner hours ago." I told her again that I had forgotten the Brocha and so she pointed to where we have stored boxes of those Asher Yatzar posters.

I was glued to that spot and now I had to explain, albeit hesitatingly at first, "The blessing is only found in the house of man because of his wife. How can I give a successful class or do anything well without your Brocha, Ima?!" I remember she looked at me as if I was drunk and asked me, "Did you lose your job?" I said submissively, "Ima, I need your Brocha!" Then she melted and fountain-like flowed the following, "I hope you get to where you have to go and come back home quickly and safely and while you're there, the words should come out from your heart and mouth with ease and enter the hearts of the listeners and make a difference in their lives and in the whole world!" I and all the kids assembled shouted together, "AMEN!"

Now I told my wife, "I hope that the dinner gets magically cleaned up and the homework gets done and everyone settles down in a timely fashion, and you get a chance to unwind and read a good book and talk to your best friend on the phone while I'm out." I earned a mediocre, "amen", and I sped into the night with wind in my sails and the kids shouting out the window, "Be Matzliach Abba! - Be successful!" That piece of advice has since let loose contagion of encouraging wishes. The beauty is that even while engaged in different activities we can always feel that we are working together. Now I cannot imagine leaving home without getting the blessing and doing whatever is necessary to be **worthy of the Brocha**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).