

This week we learned the final *amud* of the 2nd *perek* of *Brachos* and I would like to share heartfelt wishes of *Mazel Tov* to all the participants with a *bracha* that we should merit to celebrate many more such meaningful occasions together.

On 17a, the *gemara* recounts the interactions that the Rabbis of *Rav Ami's yeshiva* used to have with each other when they were taking leave to return to their homes. They would bless each other by saying “*olam'cha tir'eh b'chayecha*”, literally, you shall see your world in your life. *Rashi* explains *olamcha*, your world, to mean that your physical needs in your own personal world be met. Although this is the simple understanding of the *gemara*, the usage of the term “*olam'cha*” is somewhat perplexing.

The great German rabbi, *Rav Shimon Schwab* (1908-1995), interprets this *gemara* in a different fashion. He explains that the blessing that they were saying to each other, in addition to the simple meaning, was that they should “see” (i.e. reach) their potential in their life. The word “*olam'cha*” is related to the word “*he'elim*”, which means hidden. A person's potential is hidden from them, and they were blessing each other to be able to access and utilize all that is hidden to them, and reach their full potential.

In just a few short weeks, we will restart the Torah from *Parshas Bereishis* where the Torah tells us the story of the snake seducing Eve, who then persuaded Adam to eat from the forbidden tree. Hashem then punished the snake, Adam, and Eve, for disobeying his command. He said to Adam that as a result of his eating from the tree, “*cursed be the ground [on account of your actions]*”, meaning that heretofore the ground will not give forth in the abundance that it is capable of, and thorns and thistles will grow with the produce. The architect of Torah day school education in America, *Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz* (1886-1948) asks a very basic question. This curse seems very severe for Adam and mankind, but why does the Torah focus on the ground being cursed? It should say “cursed is mankind” not “cursed **is the land**”? How does this constitute a curse for the ground? It would have been more appropriate to say explicitly that this is a curse for Adam. *Rav Mendlowitz* answers that the worst curse to bestow on anything is to take away its ability to bring its potential to fruition. Yes, this was a consequence for Adam, but through that, it was a tremendous curse on the ground as well, that it was not able to utilize its capabilities.

Rav Schwab explains that this was the blessing the Rabbis of *Rav Ami's yeshiva* gave one another and this is a powerful message to us. Hashem should help us actualize all of our untapped potential in all areas, but especially in the study of Torah which is equal to all other *mitzvos*, Amen.