

קהל שערי תורה
 CONGREGATION SHAAREY TORAH
THE SHTIEBLE
 98 WEST END AVE BROOKLYN NY 11235

SHABBOS NOACH

6 Cheshvan - October 24

R' Moshe Plutchok - מרה דאתרה שליט'א
 R' Akiva Eisenstadt - ראש כולל

Sponsored by Evan Presser in Honor of The Birthday Celebrations for his Wife Nella and his Daughter Gabrielle

Candle Lighting:	5:45 pm
Mincha/Kabalas Shabbos:	5:55 pm
Shacharis:	8:45 am
Shiur Halacha:	5:05 pm
Mincha/Seudah Shilishi:	5:35 pm
Motzei Shabbos:	7:03 pm

Weekday Schedule

Shacharis

Sunday 8:00 am

Monday - Friday 7:00 am & 7:45 am

Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 pm

Mishna Brurah Chaburah M-F 6:30 am

Talmud Shiur M-F 7:00 am

Night Kollel Mon & Wed 8:00 pm

Torah Tuesday Schmooze 8:00 pm

A Project By The Manhattan Beach Community Kollel



MITZVOS: BEHIND THE SCENE

BY R'AKIVA EISENSTADT

Last Shabbos we “bentched” Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. This blessing of the coming month is an enactment of the Rishonim that allows us all to know when Rosh Chodesh falls and reminds us to pray the correct tefillos on that Chodesh day. Interestingly enough, we also announce the Molad, which is the exact moment when the moon will turn over in its cycle and the new month will start. (Ancient Jewish tradition and modern science tell us that the cycle of the moon is 29 days 12 hours and 44 minutes).

Why do we need to know the exact moment of the start of the new month? The answer is that from the start of the month we count towards the time when we would be able to say Kiddush Levana. The Mitzvah of blessing Hashem’s creation of the Moon. (This Motzei Shabbos, weather permitting). The opportunity to recite Kiddush Levana starts from three days after the Molad and ends 14 days 18 hours and 22 minutes (half of the cycle of the moon) or according to Sefardic custom, a full 15 days after the molad.

What exactly is the idea Behind the mitzvah of Kiddush Levana? Is the mitzvah just saying a blessing, trying to get a ‘shalom Aleichem’ across to our friends and dancing a jig afterwards? Are we praying to the moon? Why is it that the Gemarah says “anyone who recites the brachah on the Chodesh in its time, it is as if he is receiving the divine presence” ?

The true idea and underlying concept of Kiddush levana is much deeper than most of us realize. The very first Mitzvah we received as a nation of Jewish brethren was the Mitzvah of “Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem **Rosh Chadashim**”. When we were about to leave Egypt after centuries of enslavement there, Hashem called to the leaders of Israel and showed them the new moon and told them that “this new moon shall be for you the beginning of the renewal of things”. The sages say this means that the moon is our “guide”, leading us to turn towards G-d and His Torah. Just like the moon rejuvenates and renews itself and shines yet again; so too Israel will be able to renew and rejuvenate itself to a newfound freshness of our Yiddishe life.

As the great sage and Gadol BaTorah Rabbi Sampson Refael Hirsch puts it “When the new moon summons you to rejuvenation and to a new enlightenment before G-d,

when the moon gently shines its light upon you once again, step forward into its presence purified and exalted; **above all declaring G-d to be the founder and sustainer of the universe and of the laws of the heavenly bodies, and perceiving the heavenly bodies which dis-pense sensitivity and life as the servants of G-d.”** (Horeb, R’S.R.Hirsch)

This is the underlying theme and the unifying idea of all the verses and all the words of Kiddush Levana. To renew ourselves, to be close to G-d, to be part of the nation of Hashem in unity with one another (hence the Shalom Aleichim section) and to live with the destiny of our nation (hence the “Dovid Melech Yisroel” section).

The Gemarah tells us that Kidush Levana is performed only at night under the clear light of the moon and under a clear sky while you are standing outdoors. **It is in direct contact with nature. This is because it is so closely linked up with the idea of creation, of which Kiddush Levana is a thoughtful affirmation.** Rav Hirsch explains that it is somewhat akin to Shabbos. Just like Shabbos, Kiddush Levana serves as a reminder of creation and the creator and leads us to remember and contemplate. Interestingly, this mitzvah is mainly performed on Saturday night, right after Shabbos. (Although, according to the Halachah we do not say it on the Shabbos itself. It is also not exclusive to Motzei Shabbos, as one can recite it within 15 days of the Molad on any given night).

It is preferable to recite this beracha on Motzei Shabbos because it is at this time when we are dressed in our finest attire. Additionally, many of the people are to be found in Shul and doing a mitzvah “Berov Am Hadras Melech” (when there are multitudes of people) is an honor for our King. However, if one was not able to join in with the a minyan he would be able to recite the berachah alone.

Perhaps we can now understand the greatness of this once a month Mitzvah. Perhaps we can now understand the gemarah in Sanhedrin that says “anyone who recites the brachah on the Chodesh in its time, it is as if he is receiving the divine presence”.

Have a good Shabbos and a wonderful chodesh.

WEEKLY INSIGHTS - PARSHAS NOACH

BY R' RON FINKELSTEIN

In this week's perasha we learn that the people of the world had become depraved and Hashem was going to destroy them from the earth. Hashem says to Noach that he should make an ark since He was going to bring a flood to the world and in this way he would be able to save himself, his sons, his wife, the wives of his sons. Furthermore, from every living thing he was to bring two of each species to keep alive, one male and one female (6:12, 6:14, 6:17, 6:18-20).

With regards to the making of the ark, Rashi (1040-1105) comments, there are many ways to bring about relief and salvation, why would Hashem trouble Noach to build such a massive construction? The ark's size was 300x50x30 cubits (445x75x45 feet) and took one hundred and twenty years to build. Rashi answers that it was to give time for the Generation of the Flood to repent. The people would see the ark and ask Noach "Of what use is this to you?" whereby Noach would reply "In the future Hashem is going to bring a flood upon the world". It was suppose to be through this response that the people would re-evaluate their direction and repent.

That being said we are still left with a question. One hundred and twenty years is a very long time, should it really have taken so long? Lets us first focus on what the Talmud says about Noach. In the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 6a), while discussing if Noach himself was a tereifah (if he had any physical defects), there is a contemplation on the description of Noach being righteous and perfect. The Talmud intimates in its line of questioning that righteous means in his deeds while perfect means in his character. We find some of our sages, that praise Noach as being especially righteous, indicate that if he would live in a generation of pious individuals he would be even more pious (Rashi on verse 6:9). The Talmud (Sanhedrin 108a) supports this by conveying the words of Reish Lakish who states: "If in his generation he was able to be righteous, then he certainly would have been righteous if he lived in other generations".

So being that he was considered righteous, wouldn't it be correct to say that the commandment from Hashem to build the ark should have been done with greater fervor? Should we not apply the Ramchal's (1707-1746) prescription when presented with an opportunity of doing a mitzvah,

that one should accomplish it with great alacrity ("Path of the Just", chapters 6-8)? Have we not learned in the Talmud (Pesachim 4a): "Those that are filled with alacrity fulfill the mitzvot promptly"? Does it not also state elsewhere in the Talmud (Baba Kama 38b): "One should always deal promptly with matters pertaining to mitzvot" or where it is further stated (Berachot 6b): "One should always run to perform a mitzvah" and David Ham-elech who conveys in Tehillim (119:60): "I hurried and I did not delay to keep your commandments"?

How then can we explain the excessive amount of time of one hundred and twenty years that Noach spent to build the ark if he was really a man that walked with G-d (6:9)? How can we say that Noach was indeed so righteous if he did not fulfill this prerequisite for one dealing with Hashem's commandments with alacrity?

Before elucidating this point, it should be noted that one may utilize this question as a way of challenging Noach's righteousness. Rashi additionally explains (on verse 6:9) that some of our other sages expressed that if Noach lived in the time of Avraham Avinu, he would not have been considered especially righteous, and the greatness of Noach was solely confined to the generation in which he lived. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 108a) expresses this point by communicating Rav Yochanan's view: "In his generation he was considered perfectly righteous, but he would not have been considered perfectly righteous in other generations". That being the case we could possibly believe that maybe somehow the fact that Noach took so long in constructing the ark is a further indication of his spiritual limitations, demonstrating that he was not considered especially righteous overall.

Yet, this conclusion would still be a problematic one, since it stands in stark opposition to an explicit verse in the Torah which states: "Noach made the ark, he did everything that Hashem commanded him" (6:22). So even though Noach may have had certain spiritual limitations, when it came to the building of the ark he did everything as Hashem commanded of him with no sign of defiance and demonstrating that Hashem had no issue with the length of time that Noach took in building the ark.

The answer then must be found elsewhere and can pos-

sibly be uncovered by understanding the details of the events with a more keen perspective.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), in *Likutei Sichot* (vol 15, pg 34) explains that a mitzvah has two main components, the action required to accomplish the mitzvah and the result of that action which is the accomplishment itself. An example to explain this can be seen with regards to tefillin which one might ask: Is the mitzvah accomplished by putting on the tefillin which is the action or is the mitzvah accomplished only after the tefillin are worn, which is the result?

Applying this to Noach we could ask, was he commanded by Hashem to achieve a result by building the ark to its completion or was the action that Noach should be busy building the ark the mitzvah itself?

Rabbi Schneerson explains that the verse of Hashem's instruction to Noach focuses on building the ark without mentioning the reason (the flood) until later. He therefore concludes that the original focus was that the people should repent and they would be inspired to do so by seeing Noach busy building the ark. So in this regard the actual building of the ark was the mitzvah itself.

Taking this thought further, let us analyze how the toil on the ark for one hundred and twenty years may have affected Noach and why being busy with the mitzvah of building the ark sustained his spiritual fiber. Let us also see how this may apply to us in our own lives.

We will start by looking at the first book of Shmuel (17-25), where we learn that Shaul Hamelech promises his daughter Michal to whoever will defeat Goliath. When David defeated Goliath, Shaul gave his daughter to him reluctantly, and then spurred on by a jealousy he had for David, decided to try and kill him. David escaped the threats on his life, but it was thereafter that Shaul mistakenly claimed that the marriage between David and Michal was invalid and gave over his daughter to Palti Ben Laish. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 20a), which discusses this story, looks to then demonstrate the greatness of men who withstood temptation. It depicts Yosef who withstood the advances of Potiphar's wife and then Boaz who did not have relations with Ruth while she lay next to him, and then

lastly, it refers to Palti Ben Laish who had the greatest triumph over temptation of all three.

Why was he considered to have had the greatest triumph? Yosef had a moment's test with the wife of Potiphar while Boaz was tested for one night with Ruth. Palti Ben Laish, though, was faced with an impossible test of living with a beautiful married woman and having to control his evil inclination for years! How did he overcome this test? The Talmud (Sanhedrin 19b) explains that he drove a sword into the bed, leaving it there, between himself and Michal and cried out: "Whoever deals with this matter (having relations) should be stabbed by this sword".

Why did he have to plunge a sword to make this point? Why couldn't he just remove it after making his position known? Rabbi Chaim Shmuelovitz (1902-1979) elucidates that Palti Ben Laish knew that his original commitment would wane over time and he therefore needed to turn that feeling into an action that would serve as a constant reminder to his original intended purpose.

The Generation of the Flood lost their focus because of self grandeur. It is in this way that they lost sight of Hashem and instead paid homage to themselves. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 108a) states "The people of the Generation of the Flood became arrogant as a result of the freedom they exercised with their eyeball", which Rashi explains on this that by gazing upon their own prosperity, they developed arrogance, which in turned led them to lust after whatever their eyes saw. We see that this leads people away from G-d and in essence is a form of idolatry by observing elsewhere in the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 14) which states that Avraham Avinu composed a huge tractate of four hundred chapters that discussed the prohibition against idol worship. Our sages explain that the focus of this work was not on pagan deities, but rather the true source of idolatry: man's arrogance and pride. Now what does the Talmud (Sotah 5a) say regarding this: "The arrogant man and I (Hashem) cannot exist in the same world". From the time Hashem told Noach to build the ark until the next time that Hashem came to speak to him was one hundred and twenty years! That means for hundred and twenty years he had to stay steadfast and committed to

what Hashem originally commanded of him. How did he accomplish this?

Noach kept himself busy with the ark, since that kept him constantly alert to the fact that Hashem originally came and spoke to him and that he had a purpose. It stayed as a reminder and as a sign to him, preventing him from having his feelings wane and from getting caught up in the world around him and in self doubt. Palti Ben Laish made his action be the driving of a sword into a bed while Noach made his action be the building of the ark.

That being said, we as Jews have to ensure our focus is on the commandments of the Torah that we must keep on a daily basis. We must always look to make “signs” with our actions as Noach and Palti Ben Laish did to keep as a constant reminder of what our function is in this world. We should constantly keep striving to make and live in a Jewish environment which will continuously keep us focused on our goal. We need to keep busy in the act of learning, constantly toiling in the Torah in order to grow and most importantly to keep our minds away from the shallow and vain presence that occupies so many parts of the world. It could very well be that in a land of depravity and a loss sense of purpose, the building of the ark became for Noach what our commitment to serving Hashem is meant to be for us.

HALACHIC PERSPECTIVES

BY R' HESHY KAHAN

As the community begins to expand and more families start to settle into their new homes there are many times new utensils purchased that bring forth the questions of exactly which Keilim are required to be immersed in a Mikvah.

Q: What are the general guidelines for utensils that require Tevilah?

A: If either the utensil was either manufactured or just sold by a non-Jew, the Kli is in need of Tevilah¹ in a Mikvah that is deemed kosher for this purpose.

Q: Utensils made out of which material require Tevilah?

A: Kailim made of gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead are biblically required to be Toveled², and those made of glass³, aluminum, pyrex, corelle and duralex⁴ need to be Toveled because of rabbinic decree. All of the above cases require a B'racha to be made before the Tevilah.

Q: Are there any utensils that need to be Toveled, but without a B'racha?

A: Glazed earthenware, porcelain and enamel may sometimes be encased with a heavy glass material and may

therefore require Tevilah but without a B'racha⁵. When dealing with each individual case, especially when discussing today's china⁶, a proper Halachic authority should be referred to.

Q: Are there any Kailim that do not require Tevilah at all?

A: Any utensil made completely out of wood⁷, non glazed earthenware⁸, paper, plastic⁹ and rubber do not require Tevilah.

Q: If one purchases an item from a Jewish store, but the owner cannot tell you accurately whether this item is manufactured by a Jew or not, what should be done?

A: If the item was manufactured in Eretz Yisroel then one need not Tovel the Kli¹⁰. This is the case even if the manufacturer or store owner are non observant¹¹. If the item was manufactured anywhere else in the world then one should Tovel the utensil due to the fact that majority of contemporary manufacturers are non Jewish¹².

Q: If the store features a Mikvah on premises, what is the ideal way of which to immerse one's new utensils?

OMEK HADAVAR

BY R' MOSHE WARSAWSKY

We find that although there's no specific relationship between the Parsha of the week and the Hebrew calendar, many times we stumble across relationships that beg for our attention. I'd like to point out a very interesting correlation to the month in which we find ourselves and this week's Parsha. The Posuk says (7:23) that "only Noach and those with him in the ark were saved". The Gemara in Zevachim (113b) says that this Posuk is coming to teach us that in addition to Noach being saved, Og the giant was also kept alive by holding onto the ark. The Gemara actually says that the boiling hot waters of the great deluge were kept cold around the ark; this is how Og escaped (to understand why G-d actually wanted to save Og is a topic that needs much probing, but not for now). It goes without saying that Og was not an exceptionally good person (stay tuned for later in Chumash when HaShem tells Moshe to wipe out Og and his people). Og in many ways represented the "pre-mabul" mentality; a mindset of such decadence that because of it the world actually had to be wiped out and restarted. Noach was living in the Teivah with an appreciation and awareness of G-d that we could only dream of. Think about it, knowing that the whole world around you is being destroyed, and yet feeling so secure in knowing that without a doubt, HaShem is protecting you and your family. It sounds pretty incredible, doesn't it?

In actuality, this was us just a couple of weeks ago, when we all took up residence in our Succah. The Succah is reference by many by the name of "tzeyla dimeyhem-nusa" which means the "shade of belief." A person who goes out of the comforts of his "permanent" home to go dwell in the temporary Succah learns a very valuable lesson in how the world operates. One begins to develop a strong belief that we need no strong walls and roof to surround us; HaShem is our security. After a whole week of living in the Succah, we're now ready to carry that message with us and walk out of the environment rich in Emunah. But what happens when we come out of Succos and almost immediately our newfound faith is challenged by the people we meet and the circumstances that creep up on us? I can probably imagine it felt a lot like how Noach felt when he walked out of his Teivah and saw Og standing right there.

It should be no surprise that Rashi points out that ac-

ording to one opinion, the leaving of the ark happened in the very month that we're in right now, Marcheshvan. There's no coincidence that our particular test in life right now parallels exactly what Noach had to encounter. We both were in an atmosphere of spiritual safe haven, and HaShem tells us to now go out into the real world and do battle with Og; who's strength will persevere? Og as a mindest represents the ability to challenge our belief in G-d. It becomes very easy to fool ourselves into believing that we actually reap the fruits of our own labor as opposed to knowing that it comes from HaShem. Our counter attack to Og is to employ the hidden spiritual strength of the month. Every month of the Calendar is paralleled by one of the 12 tribes. This month's shevet is Menashe. A little bit of research into Menashe's background will show that they were chosen (due to their great depth in Torah) to give a spiritual boost to the farming and herding tribes of Reuven and Gad. This means that G-d deemed their strength in Torah strong enough that it could keep their surrounding neighbors spiritually uplifted. The power of Menashe is to use the strength of the intellect to realize that although it may look like we're being productive; no success comes without HaShem's assistance and guidance. Be it in finance, army strategy, surgery, it looks like we're carrying out the actions, but like a puppet show, HaShem is really pulling all of the strings. When taking a deeper look at name Menashe, we find that it has the letters in it that spell out the word Neshama. It's the Neshama's strength which enables us to live with our body down here yet still have our mind "up in the clouds."

The Shabbos of every week contains in it unique strength from that particular week's Parsha. If we hone in on it properly, in the month of Menashe, and the Parsha of Noach, we have a tremendous amount to gain in the Realm of Emunah. Let's absorb every day properly so that we can best channel our strengths as Jewish people.

MAZAL TOV

Shifra and Aryeh Blumstien on the birth of two girls and a boy
Also to the grandparents, the Blumstien and Rubin families.

The Shalom Zachor will be in the shtieble starting at 8:30.

.....
Ahuva and Baruch Schwebel on the birth of their daughter

A: L'chatchilah, one should pay for his items first and only then Tovel them. As prior to payment all the store's merchandise is "Kli S'chorah" and not "Kli Seudah", therefore not requiring Tevilah¹³. One should be weary of any store selling "already Toveled" utensils, as according to many Poskim these utensils require another Tevilah after being purchased¹⁴. In a similar vein, when giving a Kli as a gift one should rather have the recipient do the Tevilah¹⁵.

Q: Do disposable utensils (i.e. aluminum pans) require Tevilah?

A: While this is broadly debated amongst the Poskim, R' Moshe Fienstien Zt"l¹⁶ held that even if one were to use an aluminum pan two or three times before throwing it away, it would still not require Tevilah.

Q: Is there any Heter to using a Kli one time before Tovelng it?

A: This is a widely held misconception that has no basis in Halacha. The Rama¹⁷ clearly states that even if the Kli is being used only once it still requires immersion (unlike the previous case of disposables that aren't even considered a "Kli" to ever warrant Tevilah, the items in this question definitely are).

Q: Do all utensils that are involved in food preparation require Tevilah?

A: Only utensils that are "Kli Seudah" need to be immersed. Therefore bottle or can openers¹⁸, vegetable bins, refrigerator racks¹⁹, the metal shell of a removable crock pot, rolling pins, and even metal cookie cutters does not require Tevilah, as they are not considered Kli Seudah. A vegetable peeler the is generally used to peel edible fruits and vegetables (i.e. apples, carrots, cucumbers as opposed to just potato's) requires Tevilah with a B'racha.

Q: Does an oven rack ever require Tevilah?

A: If food is never placed directly on the oven rack and only pots and pans are placed on these racks then no immersion is required. If it is common for people to place food directly on the utensil, such as a George Foreman grill, toaster oven rack or sandwich maker, then Tevilah with a B'racha is required²⁰.

Q: Do empty coffee jars or metal containers that are used for storage require Tevilah?

A: While some Poskim hold that if they are brought to the table they would require Tevilah²¹ with a B'racha²², there are those who hold that one need not make a B'racha²³, the hallacha seems to be in accordance with this veiw.

Q: What pointers should one keep in mind when going to Tovel his utensils²⁴ ?

- That no rust, dirt, labels, stickers or glue should be attached to the utensil prior to immersion.
- One should make the B'rachaasher k'dishanu b'mitvosav v'tzivanu al t'vilas k'li" (or "kailim" for more then one kli) and then immerse the kli.
- The water must touch the entire vessel inside and out.
- The cover can be immersed separately if it is removable.
- A narrow necked bottle should be placed in the water with the neck facing up so as to allow the inner surface to completely fill up with water.
- When one is placing his silverware in a basket he should move the basket around under the water so as to make sure that water gets to each area.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Y.D. 120:11
- 2 Bamidbar 31:32
- 3 Y.D. 120:1
- 4 Tzitz Eleizer 8:26
- 5 Oral Psak heard from R' Plutchok Shlita
- 6 As there are those Poskim who don't require Tevilah for china at all, see Torah V'Horah Vol.2 pg. 20
- 7 Y.D. 120:6
- 8 Chachmas Adam 73:1
- 9 Chelkas Yaakov 2:163, Be'er Moshe 2:52
- 10 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:4
- 11 Ibid
- 12 Yabia Omer Y.D. 6:12, Chazon Ish Y.D. 37:15
- 13 Sefer Tevilas Kailim pg. 164
- 14 Mateh Ephraim 625:32
- 15 Minchas Shlomo 2:66-20
- 16 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:23
- 17 Rama Y.D. 120:8
- 18 Shach Y.D. 120:11
- 19 Be'er Moshe 4:99
- 20 Y.D. 120:4, Pri Chodesh 120:12
- 21 Psak said B'shem R' Shlomo Zalmen Aurbach Zt"l
- 22 Assuming that they are made out of material that warrants a B'racha
- 23 Oral Psak heard from R' Plutchok Shlita
- 24 The following guidelines were taken from the September 2007 issue of Kashrus Kurrents

TEFILLAH

ברכת על נטילת ידים

*Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al Netilat Yadayim
Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe,
Who sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us to wash our hands.*

Upon arising in the morning, each and every Jew should wash his hands and recite the Beracha of Al Netilat Yadayim. The sequence of events upon awakening is that one should first say Modeh Ani Lifanecha (Modah Ani for woman) and then make his way to cleanse his hands. The proper way this is done according to tradition and kabalistic sources, is to wash by alternating from the right hand first and then the left hand with the process repeated until each hand is washed three times. Thereafter, the beracha is made (one should make certain not to say the beracha in the bathroom and to also recite it before drying one's hands).

There are different reasons for why we wash our hands in the morning. According to the Rosh (1250-1328) the reason this is so is because during sleep one may have touched parts of his body which are usually covered. The consequence of this is that one would be deemed unfit to say blessings or prayers.

The Rashba (1235-1310) has a different understanding, he explains that each person in the morning receives a new gift of life and is reborn. So in that regard, each morning we must rededicate ourselves to the service of Hashem just like the Kohanim did in the Beit Hamikdash prior to beginning their service.

The Beracha starts with the word "Baruch" which normally is defined as blessed. Yet, by considering that as the definition it would mean that we are blessing Hashem. How do we, as mere human beings, have the ability to bless Hashem? Rabbi Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) explains that it is precisely for this reason that the definition of some of our sages for the word Baruch is that Hashem is the source of all blessing. Another connotation is that by our commitment to the Torah and having proper faith in Hashem, we will be bringing recognition and blessing to Hashem.

When we say the word "Atah" (You), we are talking to Hashem and should be say it with reverence. We then say "Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam" (Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe), we are conveying that Hashem is the supreme power in the world and the reason why we exist. We are also confirming that it is He in which we believe in and no other and that He is our G-d. This idea extends somewhat into the word "ha-olom" (universe) which has the same root of "ne-elam", which means hidden. We are conveying two beautiful points. The first is that we recognize within the physical make-up of a finely tuned world, whether it be the miracles of all life or the very miracle of our bodies existence, that there must be a creator which is the King. Plus we are aware that this world is transitory, and as Rabbi Shimon Schwab states: "We have been assigned by Hakadosh Baruch Hu to fulfill our role in this world between our hidden beginnings and our unknown departure from this world".

Next we say "asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu" (Who sanctified us with His commandments) that we are fulfilling our role as a holy nation and are sanctified with the fulfillment of Hashem's commandments. Lastly we say "Al Netilat Yadayim" which focuses on the washing of our hands. What does the washing of our hands reflect? It is to represent the taking away of any defilement and impurity in order to bring back our spiritual cleanliness. The source of this washing is associated with the service of the Kohen in the Beit Hamikdash. Before commencing the daily rituals he was required to wash his hands (Shemot 30:20) as a way of making himself holy, our actions today are to emulate this.

This brings us to an interesting point. If the mitzvah is to wash our hands, so the beracha should be rochetz yadayim which means washing hands. Why then do we say "Netilat Yadayim", which literally means "the lifting up of our hands"?

The answer is that our hands are being washed in order so they can be lifted to higher purpose and be designated for fulfilling Hashem's mitzvot. We will take these hands and do good with them. As it says in the Talmud (Shabbat 50b), we wash in order to give honor to our Creator and our service to Him.