

My vort for אלול, which אני הקטן thought of, and I was inspired by a number of different people, including Rabbi Oelbaum, is as follows: We know that the month of אלול is unique and distinctive in that every day we say לְדָוִד ה' אֹרֵי וְיִשְׁעֵי. In that קאפיטל there's the pasuk ה' מֵאֵת שְׁאֵלָתִי מֵאֵת ה' - that's only one thing that I'm asking for. And then we go home and we wash and we have a nice fresh roll and a little scrambled egg or whatever. And then we bentch, and in bentching we say הקדוש ברוך הוא, I need:

הקדוש ברוך הוא. לְחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרִיחוֹ הַצֶּלֶה וְהַצֵּלָה בְּרַכָּה וְיִשׁוּעָה, נְחֵמָה, פְּרִנָּסָה וְכִלְכֵּלָה, וְרַחֲמִים, וְחַיִּים וְשְׁלוֹם, וְכָל טוֹב. And הקדוש ברוך הוא, in case I left anything out, וּמִכָּל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יְחַסְּרֵנוּ - If I forgot something, please throw in all the other good stuff that you can do.

So hang on. Ten seconds ago, you said, I'm only asking you one thing, אֵחֶת שְׁאֵלָתִי. And now you're asking an entire list. It's an endless list. וּמִכָּל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יְחַסְּרֵנוּ - it's an infinite list.

The תירוץ is that we ask for one thing in bentching that we don't want. לֹא לִידֵי מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם - I want that everything you want to give to me should come directly from you, not from חס ושלום וְדָם. לִידֵי מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם. Let me ask you a question. A kid comes home from school and he says, 'Ma, what's for supper?' So she gives him supper. Is that called מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם? An older kid asks, 'Daddy, I'm getting מצוה בר, can I have a Borsalino?' 'Okay, you can have a Borsalino.' Is that מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם? An even older kid comes along and says, 'Dad, can I borrow the car keys?' Is that מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם? And even better, 'Can I have a car?' Is that מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם? No, that's not מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם. Why? Because that's called משפחה, that's called your family. When you're getting something from your father, mother, and family, that's not מִתְּנַת בְּשֹׁר וְדָם.

What are we asking Hashem? שְׁבִתִי בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּי - Hashem, I want to be part of your משפחה. I want to live in your house. I want to be close to you, as close as a father and a mother. When you ask הקדוש ברוך הוא, הוא שְׁבִתִי בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּי, that I want to live in your house, then you can ask for everything. And that's why when we bentch, we can ask for everything. And may הקדוש ברוך הוא give us the זכות to get all the good things we ask for, לטובה, and to have a wonderful וחתימה טובה.

