

## Could You Pass the Conversion Test - Section #1 - Weekday Living:

### Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #23 - Miscellaneous Laws of Blessings Part 2:

#### Type 2 - Fragrant Plants:

1. If the fragrance comes from a grass or herbaceous plant, the blessing "**Borei Isvei Vi'samim**" is recited.
2. Examples in this category is mint.

#### Type 3 - Fragrant Fruits:

1. Nowadays, most fruits and vegetables do not emit a strong enough aroma to warrant a bracha.
2. But if these three conditions are fulfilled, then you would recite the blessing:
  1. It has a particularly strong and enjoyable fruit or vegetable fragrance (perhaps a large quantity together will emit such a strong fragrance).
  2. It is primarily consumed as a food, and not as a spice such as cinnamon.
  3. You pick it up for the purpose of smelling it, rather than simply to eat it
3. The blessing ends with the words: "**Hanosein Ray'ach Tov Ba'payros.**"
4. If you also want to eat the fruit, first eat it with the intention not to benefit from the smell, and then to say another blessing on the smell.

#### Type 4 – Miscellaneous Fragrances

1. If you are enjoying a delicious natural fragrance, but it doesn't fit into any of the other categories, or you simply cannot determine which blessing to say, there is an all-inclusive blessing which may be recited over any good aroma. This is the case with cinnamon and cloves.
2. The blessing ends with the words: "**Borei Minei Vi'samim.**"
3. Examples in this category are cloves, cinnamon, and **hot roasted** ground coffee.

#### Havdala:

1. According to Ashkenazi tradition, the blessing on the spices is always "Borei Minei Vi'samin" regardless of what type of fragrance you are smelling.
2. It is ideal to smell something that initially has this blessing, such as cloves.
3. Ensure that the spices in the Havdala box are still potent, and that you are not merely smelling the fragrant box.

#### Springtime Blossom:

1. This blessing is based on **seeing**, not smelling.
2. Upon the first sighting of the new blossoms of fruit trees in the month of Nissan (springtime), a special blessing is recited. This is known in Hebrew as "*Birchas Ha-Ilan*, the blessing of the tree.
3. Ideally, the bracha should be recited upon seeing multiple qualifying trees.
4. If the bracha was not recited upon the first sighting, it can be said upon subsequent sightings of the new blossoms.
5. This bracha may be recited after the month of Nissan, as long as the fruits on the tree are not fully developed.
6. This bracha may be recited on Shabbos and holidays.

**Blessings on Natural Phenomenon:**

1. The breathtaking magnificence of our natural world inspires us to praise God with wonder and appreciation. Therefore, the Sages ordained blessings over various natural phenomenon such as mountains, deserts, places of miracles etc.
2. The blessing should preferably be said while standing.
3. No blessing is made on viewing a phenomenon on film or broadcast.
4. A bracha is said when viewing with the aid of a telescope.
5. If you are in doubt whether or not the blessing applies in a particular situation, the blessing may still be recited, but without using God's name.

**Blessings on Mountains or Desserts:**

1. The blessing ends with the words "Oseh Ma'aseh Vereishis."
2. This blessing may only be recited by one who is awed by the height of the mountain or the expanse of the dessert. Therefore, one who is not impressed with such mountains (perhaps as a result of familiarity) does not recite the blessing.
3. This blessing should not be recited from an airplane where the height of the mountain or expanse of the dessert cannot be appreciated.
4. If the same mountain or dessert was seen in the past 30 days, the blessing is not recited.

**Blessings on Thunder & Lightning:**

1. You should recite the blessing "Oseh Ma'aseh Veraishis" immediately upon seeing lightning during a storm.
2. It is not necessary to see the actual bolt of lightning.
3. A separate blessing – "She'kocho Oog'vuraso Malay Olam" – is said immediately upon hearing thunder, regardless if it was seen before or after lightning.
4. A blessing may be said on each of these phenomena no more than once a day, if it is during a single storm. As long as there is no complete clearing of the clouds, it is still considered the same storm.
5. If you simultaneously experience the lightning and thunder, then only the blessing "Oseh Ma'aseh Veraishis" is recited over both phenomena.

**Astronomical Phenomena:**

1. The blessing "Oseh Ma'aseh Veraishis" is said upon observing a comet, shooting star or meteor shower.
2. A new blessing is not recited if the same phenomenon is sighted again within 30 days.
3. Only one blessing is recited if multiple comets or shooting stars are seen during one night.
4. No blessing is recited upon viewing an eclipse.

**Earthquakes & Fierce Winds:**

1. Upon experiencing either an earthquake or strong and stormy winds, recite the recite the blessing "Oseh Ma'aseh Veraishis."

**Natural Bodies of Water:**

1. Upon seeing an impressive natural river (such as the Euphrates or the Nile) or sea (such as the Mediterranean), you should recite the blessing "Oseh Ma'aseh Veraishis."
2. Say the blessing "She'asa Es Ha'yam Ha'gadol upon seeing an ocean.

3. You say the blessing “Oseh Ma’aseh Veraishis” on spectacular waterfalls like Canadian Niagara falls, if you are awed by its sight.
4. If the same body of water is sighted within 30 days, a new blessing is not recited.
5. A new blessing may be recited if another body of water is seen, unless it was during the same leg of a journey.
6. One who sees such bodies of water on a regular basis does not say these blessings.

### **Rainbows:**

1. Upon seeing a complete rainbow, recite the bracha “Zocher Habris....”
2. The blessing may be said multiple times if multiple rainbows are seen during the same storm.
3. It is forbidden to gaze excessively at a rainbow.
4. Most opinions say that it is inappropriate to inform others of the rainbow.

### **Animals & Trees:**

1. Upon seeing a strikingly beautiful person, animal, bird or tree for the first time, you should recite the blessing “She’kacha Lo B’olamo.” However, due to some doubt as to what objectively qualifies as an “beautiful creature,” the blessing is recited without the mention of God’s name.
2. Upon seeing impressive, exotic animals (e.g. elephants, monkeys or apes), you recite the blessing “Mishaneh Ha’briyos.” This is a very subjective blessing, depending on how amazed you are by seeing them.
3. Upon viewing multiple exotic animals in a zoo, only one blessing is said -- while having in mind all the others that will be seen.

### **Strange-looking People:**

1. Upon seeing a person with a strikingly unusual physical feature (that was present since birth), you should recite the blessing “Mishaneh Ha’briyos.”
2. Upon subsequent sightings of the same person after 30 days, the blessing is recited without God's name, if you are still amazed by the features.
3. Another blessing is recited upon subsequent sightings of other persons with similar features, even within 30 days, if you are still amazed by it.
4. Be careful not to recite the bracha in a manner that will embarrass the subject.

### **Friends & Relatives:**

1. If you did not see a close friend or relative for 30 days (and you did not hear any communication about him), you should recite She’hecheyanu upon seeing him.
2. In practice, this is said only if the person is very close to you and it makes you extremely happy to see him (e.g. parent, child, spouse). With modern technology, it is not likely that you would make this blessing nowadays.
3. Only one bracha is recited upon seeing multiple such people at once.
4. If it has been over a year since seeing the close friend or relative, recite the bracha “Mechayeh Ha’meisim.”
5. Upon seeing a friend who has recovered from a life-threatening illness, recite the bracha “B’rich Racha’mana Dee Yahavach Lan, V’loe Yahavach L’afra.”

**Jewish Multitudes:**

Upon seeing 600,000 Jews at once, recite the bracha “Chacham Ha’razim.”

**Great Leaders:**

1. Upon seeing a non-Jewish ruler who has the power to pardon people sentenced to death, such as the president of the United States or the Queen of England, recite the bracha “She’nasan Mee’kivodo Le’vasar Va’dam.”
2. There is a dispute if this blessing may also be said upon seeing female rulers.
3. Upon seeing a state governor or someone who has the power to pardon people sentenced to death, one should recite the bracha without the name of God.
4. If the same ruler is seen again within 30 days, a new blessing is not recited.
5. If multiple rulers are seen during one day, multiple blessings should be recited, unless they are all seen at once.

**Outstanding Torah Scholars:**

1. The blessing “She’chalak May’chach’maso Lee’ray’av” is recited upon seeing an outstanding Torah scholar:
2. This blessing is rarely recited nowadays, as it is only said upon a world- renowned Torah scholar who excels in both wisdom and is truly God- fearing. Perhaps an example of such an individual today is Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky.

**Places of Miracles:**

1. If you ever experienced a miracle and were saved from imminent danger, then upon returning to that spot, recite the blessing “She’asa Lee Nase.”
2. Upon visiting a place where a miraculous rescue occurred for either your parents, ancestors, your Torah teacher, or the majority of the Jewish people (Sea of Reeds, Jordan River), recite the blessing “She’asa .....Nase Bamakom Ha’zeh.”
3. However, the places mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch are not discernable nowadays, and we do not recite this blessing unless we know the exact place of the miracle that was done for all or most of the Jewish people.