

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## PARASHAS MATOSMASEI

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Two Conditions for Tefillah

נחנו נעבר חלוצים לפני ה' (לב לב)

The *Baal Haturim* cites two additional *pesukim* where the word "nachnu" appears: One is "kulanu bnei ish echad nachnu, we are all the sons of one man," (*Bereishis* 42:11) and the other is "nachnu pashanu umarinu, and we have sinned and rebelled," (*Eichah* 3:42).

The connection between these three *pesukim* is explained by Harav Yosef Lieberman, *shlita*:

The *passuk* here, "nachnu naavor chalutzim" alludes to the power of *tefillah*, because the meaning of the word "chalutzim" is as used in the *passuk* "chalutzei tzava mezuyunim," armed soldiers, (*Rashi* *ibid* 31:3). *Tefillah* is the weapon of Am Yisrael, as *Onkelos* explains (*Bereishis* 48:42): "Becharbi ubekashti," to mean "bitzlosi uba'usi" with prayer and pleading.

The two other *pesukim* teach us about two principles that need to be present for *tefillah*: "We are all the sons of one man," as the *Magen Avraham* says (beginning of *siman* 46) in the name of the Ari, that before *tefillah* each person must commit to love every other Jew like himself. Two, "we have sinned and rebelled" – each person must admit truthfully to his sins before davening, and thus his *tefillah* will rise to acceptance before Hashem.

Rabi Akiva Vesoraso, p. 72

#### Reading the Masaos Without Stopping

ויכתב משה את מוצאיהם למסעיהם על פי ה' (לב ב)

The *Magen Avraham* (428 8) rules like the *Tzeror Hamor* in this *parashah*, that the 42 *masaos* of Bnei Yisrael must be read continuously, with no interruptions, so that they should correspond to the Shem HaMeforash, which has 42 letters.

Harav Avraham Gurewicz, *shlita*, Rosh Yeshivas Gateshead, compares this *halachah* and the ruling in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 651:11), that during the *na'anuim* (shaking of the *arba minim*) one should press the four *minim* together so that they should be like one. The *Taz* explains on this *halachah* (*ibid* 14) in the name of the *Rekanati*, that the reason is because the four *minim* correspond to the four letters of the Shem Havayah, which should not be separated.

Thus we can answer the question of the *Rishonim* in this *parashah* as to why the Torah

repeated in detail all the *masaos* here, even though some of them were already described in previous *parshiyos*. The answer is that we should be able to read them in one continuous flow without separating between them, as ruled by the *Magen Avraham*.

Ohr Avraham

#### Not One Amen is Missing

ולא נפקד ממנו איש (לא מט)

The *Midrash* (*Tanchuma* 96 7) says: "Rabi Yehudah ben Gadya says: Anyone who answers amen in this world merits to answer amen in the World to Come, as it says (*Tehillim* 41:12): 'Baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael mei'haolam v'ad ha'olam amen v'amen' – amen in this world and amen in the World to Come.

Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, the Rav of Shamloi, offers an allusion to this *Midrash* from this *passuk*: The acronym of "velo nijkad mimenu ish" is "v'amen", to teach us that one who is strict about answering amen in this world will merit that his place to answer amen in the World to Come will not be overlooked. This is hinted to in the word "v'amen" in the *passuk*: "Mei'haolam v'ad ha'olam amen v'amen."

Even Shlomo

#### Tefillah Betzibbur Prevents Accusations

ויסעו מהר שפר ויחנו בחרדה: ויסעו מחרדה ויחנו במקלהות (לג כד-כה)

Harav Yeshaya Romanim, one of the *Rabbanim* of Venice, derives a beautiful allusion to the virtues of *tefillah betzibbur* from this *passuk*:

"And they traveled from Har Shefer and camped in Charadah" – anyone who has deviated from the path of Torah that we received on Har Sinai, and from the *shefer*, the grace and beauty of good deeds, and when he repents he is *chareid*, afraid that his sins will prevent his *tefillas* from being accepted, then "Vayisu meCharadah vayachanu beMakheolos" – in order to lift this fear from the person, the advice is to daven with the *tzibbur*. Then he is guaranteed that his *tefillah* is accepted, as the holy *Zohar* says (*Vayechi* 234 1): "Before

the *tefillah* enters its final place, HaKadosh Baruch Hu watches over it, and looks at the sins and merits of the person, which is not the case with the *tefillah* of many together."

Mussar Melachim (Venice 5504) p. 14

#### Bemakhelos Am Barchu Hashem

ויסעו מחרדה ויחנו במקלהות (לג כה)

A story happened in the *bais medrash* of Harav Naftali of Ropschitz: One Shabbos, when the *chazzan* was singing "befi yesharim tisromam... ubekerev kedoshim tis' hallal" one of the *chassidim* thought to himself: "I am not one of the *yesharim*, and certainly not one of the *tzaddikim*, *chassidim* or *kedoshim*. How, then, can I praise Hashem?!" Only when the *chazzan* continued and said: "Ubemakhelos rivevos amcha Bais Yisrael" did he calm down. After all, he was certainly counted among the "many tens of thousands of Your Nation Bais Yisrael..."

That *chassid* was very surprised when—despite not having shared his thoughts with anyone—during the *seudah*, the Rebbe sent him a bottle of wine, and noted that he was giving it to the person of the "makhalos"...

The *sefer Chayei Tzvi* says that an allusion to this story can be found in this *passuk*: "Vayisu meiCharadah" – how did that *chassid* 'travel away' from his fear? "Vayachanu beMakhelos" – when he realized that he was an integral part of the "makhalos rivevos amcha Bais Yisrael."

#### The Custom of Rabi Akiva

*Maseches Brachos* (31a) says: "Rabi Yehuda said: This was the custom of Rabi Akiva, when he would daven with the *tzibbur*, he would not prolong the davening, so as not to tax the *tzibbur*, but when he davened himself, one would leave him in one corner of the room and find him in another corner of the room." [This means he moved around a lot.]

The *Kedushas Tzion* of Bobov said:

This custom of Rabi Akiva is alluded to in this *passuk*: "Vayisu meiCharadah" – even though the fear of Hashem caused Rabi Akiva to 'travel' from place to place while davening, "Vayachanu beMakhelos" – while he davened with the *tzibbur* he would keep the davening short and "camp" in his place.

Mekach Tov

This was the custom of the Ari HaKadosh: (Passed away on 5 Av, 5332/1572)

"It is written in the name of the Arizal that he would hear *Birchos Hashachar* from people who made the *brachos* in shul, and even if there were a hundred people – he would answer amen after them. Even in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimrah*, he would stop and reply amen."

Shaarei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim 6 6

## Birchos Hashachar BECHAVRUSA



Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa - Minhag Avoseinu Beyadeinu.

This was the custom of the Rema MiPano: (Passed away 4 Av 5380/1620)

"How good it is to establish that the *Shat"z* should recite *Birchos Hashachar* out loud... And not only that, but friends who sleep in the same room... should rise early so each one can make the *brachos* and his friends can answer amen. Then they will go to shul. Anyone who makes the *brachos* himself, and has his wife and children, young and old, reply amen, and then he does this for them, there is nothing more beloved than this. And this is the *din* for those who make the *brachos* in shul, one after the other."

Shu"t HaRema MiPano, 109

## Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the  
Seder Hatefillah

### Birchas Ahavah Rabbah (2)

#### There Is No Compassion Like a Father's Compassion

There are several types of *chessed* in our world. There is *chessed* that can be called "pikuach nefesh." This *chessed* is also found among nations of the world, and it means that when a person is on the verge of death – people make an effort to save him. The purpose of this *chessed* is primarily to calm the guilty conscience of the people. As Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest of all men said, (*Mishlei* 14:34): "Vechessed l'umim chatas." A level above that is the *chessed* found among Jews, who seek to share the burden with their friends and try to ease things for them on a daily basis. That *chessed* is done because of the *mitzvah* and not only in difficult or life threatening cases.

But the highest level if *chessed* is that between parents and children. It is a *chessed* that does not rise to the fore only in certain cases, but rather it exists every minute of every hour. The benefit of the child is always on his father's mind, whether he is busy attending to his affairs or during his free time. Therefore, when we ask about the Torah, we take care to mention the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is "Avinu Av Harachaman", our Father, a compassionate Father – and He has compassion on us like a father has for his son. Even if the son strays and rebels, he does not stop carrying for him. Why is this? Because Torah learning, and any progress made, is not only the domain of those of lofty stature. Every Jew, wherever he is, can merit the crown of Torah. Therefore, we ask "Avinu Av Harachaman", meaning, even if we have strayed, *chalilah*, we are Your children, and *min hadin* You should help us with Your compassion to learn and to teach, to understand and to study intellectually. (*Nefesh Shimshon – Siddur Tefillah* p. 300).

#### Bitachon As a Condition for Torah

Later in the *brachah*, we mention the *middah* of *bitachon* in whose merit our forbears merited the Torah – "Avinu Malkeinu, for the sake of our fathers who had faith in You and You taught them the statutes of life."

Aside for the tremendous virtue of the *middah* of *bitachon* in Hashem, in and of its own, it emerges that this is also a prelude and fundamental for receiving the Torah. As Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai says (*Mechilta Beshalach, Pesicha*): "Torah was only given to study – for those who ate the *mann*," those whose *bitachon* was constant and tangible. They never had food for the next day, and thus, they had no choice but to rely on the *chessed* of Hashem.

Indeed when the Torah was offered to Bnei Yisrael right after they emerged from Egypt, they did not think twice before accepting it: "Naaseh venishma," they said. With this statement they expressed their absolute *bitachon* in the Creator, *bitachon* that mounted and became imbued in their hearts after the wondrous miracles that accompanied their redemption from Egypt. As *Rabbeinu Bechayei*

writes (*Shemos* 13:17): "And know that all the matters of Yisrael and their happenings in the desert were all a complete test, so that their souls should grow in levels of *bitachon*, which is the root of *emunah*, so that they should be worthy of receiving the Torah."

*Maseches Shabbos* (88a) relates that Rava sat and learned Torah in depth and with such great effort that his finger joints bled. One of the haters of Am Yisrael happened upon him and when he saw this, he sneered and said: "You are a hasty nation that hurried to accept the Torah before you heard what was written in it." Rava replied to him (according to the *Rashi* there): "We did not do it out of haste, but rather out of absolute trust in Hashem that He would certainly not give us something that we could not withstand. Of us, who went with our Creator with innocence, it says (*Mishlei* 11:3): "Tumas yesharim tancheim" while of you, who went with Him with trickery, it says (*ibid*): "Veselef bogdim yeshadeim."

For this reason, a person cannot properly accept the yoke of Torah unless he has acquired the *middah* of *bitachon* in his heart, because one who begins learning Torah does not know what will happen afterwards, if he will succeed or not. If he accepts the yoke of Torah that is a sign of the acquisition of the *middah* of *bitachon* in his soul. (*Siddur Otzar Hatefillas – Eitz Yosef; 'Meirosh Tzurim' Behar*)

#### Bitachon of Amen

It is fitting to cite here the insightful words of the Mashgiach, Harav Yeruchem Halevi of Mir (*Daas Torah Bereishis* p. 196):

"All that our forbears merited was only in the merit of *emunah*... This is a nice explanation for the words of *Chazal*: 'Anyone who answers amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are opened to him' (*Shabbos* 119b)... Where do we take a strong hammer that can open them? *Chazal* revealed to us that the hammer that opens the gates of Gan Eden is 'anyone who answers amen with all his might' – *emunah!* Not out of wisdom or understanding, but specifically after forfeiting the understanding, 'amen, I believe, I don't know anything, I just believe!' That is the strongest hammer to open the gates of Gan Eden."

The Mashgiach further explains that in order to be granted wisdom, which we ask for in the *brachah* of *Chonen Hadaas*, one does not need to author a *Moreh Nevuchim*. Just amen, I believe, without knowing and without understanding. In order to achieve *Rofei Cholei Amo Yisrael* – one does not need to learn anything; one just needs to answer amen, I believe that He heals the sick!

Perhaps this is what *Chazal* were referring to in their words "Bechol kocho - with all his might," that the secret of *emunah* is the secret of the strength. "Ani Chomah" comes specifically from *emunah*, without any knowledge. That is the secret of the power; it is like a vessel as strong as steel that cannot be moved. And if indeed it can be moved, because it changes, that is a sign that the *emunah* is lacking.

## A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About  
Amen and Tefillah

### The Power of One Tefillah

A stranger who happens upon the upscale neighborhood in the heart of Miami, Florida, would certainly notice the impressive structure of the local shul, which is one of the most magnificent in America.

Hundreds of families are regular members of this shul, but few know that it began with a small daily *Shacharis minyan*, established by Rabbi L., who currently serves as the Rav. The *minyan* took place in a small room adjacent to his home. It grew slowly, and eventually expanded to include *Shabbos* and *Yamim Tovim*, until, in time, it drew many of the neighborhood's residents to join.

In those long ago days, it took great effort and creativity for Rabbi L. to cobble together the *minyan* each morning. Often, he resorted to calling the large car service company in the area and asked that they send over one of their Jewish drivers. When the driver would come, the Rav would ask him to park the taxi, switch the meter on, and enter the shul. At the end of davening the driver would receive the amount that the meter recorded.

There were also times when no Jewish drivers could be found in the whole area. In such cases, the Rabbi would go out to the street and seek out anyone who looked like they might be Jewish. When he found such a person, and confirmed his identity, he would ask him politely to come into the shul so he could complete a *minyan* for them.

One of those times, the Rav went out to the street, as was his custom. The street was quieter than on a normal morning, but after a few minutes of waiting, the rabbi finally found an older man who looked Jewish. The man wore a faded cap and walked slowly, added by a cane.

"Excuse me," the Rav asked gently, "do you happen to be Jewish?"

"Yes," the man snapped. "What business is it of yours?"

"I have to say *Kaddish* after a relative and I need a tenth person for a *minyan*," Rabbi L. explained, as he usually did during such encounters.

"Leave me alone," the old man said indifferently, and turned to continue on his way. "I'm not interested in religion and I'm hurrying to the café to get my breakfast..."

The next few minutes passed in futile waiting. The Rav did not find another Jew in the entire area. When he realized that the rest of the *mispalleim* were losing their patience, he ran over to the café, where the old man sat reading the morning paper and waiting for the meal he had ordered.

"Please, kind sir," Rabbi L. pleaded, "I really need this *minyan* and I have no one to appeal to but you. Please reconsider."

"I have never prayed," the old man said, but Rabbi L. was unfazed.

"I am not asking you to pray, just to be present and answer amen with the congregation."

"I already ordered my breakfast," the man tried to refuse. "I'll pay you for the meal you lose," the Rav promised, and the man acquiesced.

But then he added, "I have no plans to pray with you. Don't even try to give me a *tallis* or *siddur*."

Throughout the *tefillah*, the old man sat in his place and stared into space. From time to time, when Rabbi L. motioned with his hand that he needed to pay attention, the man obediently listened and answered with the other *mispalleim*.

The next day, Rabbi L. had to go out once again to get a *minyan*. Like yesterday, he saw the old man walking slowly towards the café. This time, it was easier to persuade him, but like the day before, the man emphasized that he had no intention of davening.

On the third day, the man—who had identified himself as Mr. S. – already came to shul himself; this happened the subsequent days as well. To Rabbi L., observing from the side, it seemed that the man had started walking

straighter since he'd begun to pray with them, as if he was finally finding some significance in his life.

A short time passed, and Mr. S. actually agreed to pick up a *siddur*, and later, to don a *tallis*. At first, he refused to hear of *tefillin*, and only after a lot of cajoling from Rabbi L. did he agree to put them on, but announced, "I will do it only on this coming Erev Rosh Hashanah!"

Rabbi L. almost forgot about it, but Mr. S. did not. On Erev Rosh Hashanah he appeared in shul, and as promised, he was carrying a dusty, faded velvet satchel, from which he took out an ancient looking pair of *tefillin*.

"Today," the man related with tears in his eyes, "I am celebrating my 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Exactly eighty years ago, I put these *tefillin* on for the first and last time. I haven't touched them since."

Tears of emotion flowed from the Rav's eyes as he helped the old man place the *tefillin* on his head. "They look like a crown on you," he complimented sincerely, and the elderly man's eyes shone.

Over the next year, Mr. S. grew steadily closer to *Yiddishkeit*. He began to wear *tzitzis*, keep *Shabbos* and eat kosher, until he became a proper *baal teshuvah*. Rabbi L. was at his side throughout, devoting time and attention to him.

At the same time, with no connection, a revolution began to take place in the community at large. The residents of the area realized that there was a shul nearby and began to take an interest in what happened there. Things came to th point that for the upcoming *Yamim Noraim*, hundreds of people signed up for *tefillas*, and Rabbi L. had to make special arrangements.

One morning before Rosh Hashanah, a few dozen boxes with *machzorim* and other *sifrei kodesh* were deposited at Rabbi L.'s doorstep. At the same time, he conducted negotiations with a facility nearby where he planned to hold the large *tefillas*.

That morning, when Mr. S. saw the piles of *machzorim* resting near the door of the shul, he asked the Rav if he had obtained funding for them. When the Rav replied that he had not, Mr. S. declared, "I'll pay for them!"

This greatly surprised the Rav, because the man appeared to wear very shabby clothes that did not indicate that he was a man of means at all. But the bigger surprise awaited the Rav on *Motzaei Yom Kippur* when he announced to the hundreds of people who had gathered to daven that a committee was being established to raise funds to build a proper building for the shul.

"How much will the building cost?" Mr. S. asked when the crowd began to disperse.

"About two million dollars," Rabbi L. replied. "I'll transfer half a million dollars into your account tomorrow!" the old man shocked the Rav a second time.

Some four years later, Mr. S. was hospitalized, and his condition deteriorated rapidly. Rabbi L. received the news while in New York, but he quickly caught the first flight back to Miami. The old man was already in his final moments, but when he saw Rabbi L. at the door of his room, his eyes lit up. His hands lovingly grasped the Rav's hands as he asked to recite *Shema Yisrael*.

When they reached "Uvisharecha", the old man's eyes closed forever. A tear of sadness rolled down Rabbi L's cheek, and he consoled himself with the fact that the man had returned to his heritage in his final years.

A short time after Mr. S.'s passing, the Rabbi received an official looking envelope. Inside was a document signed by a lawyer informing him that Mr. S. had left a large sum in his will for the continued development of the shul and its outreach efforts.

All in the merit of one *tefillah*.

Levush Yosef, Simchos, Vol. 1, p. 420