

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS NITZAVIM VAYEILECH

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Hundred Brachos Protect Against One Hundred Curses

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם (כט ט)

"Why is this *parashah* written next to the *parashah* of the curses? Because when Yisrael heard the one hundred curses, minus two, in this *parashah*, in addition to the forty nine stated in *Chumash Vayikra*, they paled in fear and said, who can withstand this? Immediately Moshe called them and soothed them with words." (*Tanchuma* 1)

The **Chida** offered a beautiful *chiddush* on this: Moshe soothed Yisrael by establishing for them one hundred *brachos* (see *Sefer Hamanhig*, introduction), which have the power to save a person from the curses. As the *Rokeach* writes (320) one who makes one hundred *brachos* is saved from one hundred rebukes; ninety eight are written in *Parashas Ki Savo*, and two additional ones are alluded to in the *passuk* (*ibid* 28:61): "*Gam kol choli vekol makkah...*"

An allusion to this can be found in the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (16:9): "*Lachen samach libi vayagel kevodi af besari yishkon labetach.*" In the merit of "*lachen*" [numerically equivalent to 100] *brachos*, I will be saved from the curses in the *tochachah*, and thus my heart will rejoice and my flesh will rest in security, with no harm or disease.

Ruach Chaim, Drush 1; Chomas Anach, Tehillim 16

All of Yisrael Stood at the Covenant

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם... כל איש ישראל" (כט ט)
The *passuk* already said "*kulchem*, all of you"; why does it repeat "*kol ish Yisrael*, every person in Yisrael"?

The Rav of Yerushalayim, **Harav Tzvi Pesach Frank**, explained: In the *tefillah* of Rosh Hashanah we ask: "*Meloch al kol ha'olam kulo bichvodecha*". Here, too, the word "*kulo*", all, seems redundant, after we have already asked that Hashem "rule over the **entire world**". Hence, the *Taz* explained (582 3) that because sometimes we say "*kol*", all, but we mean most, as we know that "*rubo kekulo*", most is like all, (*Horiyos* 3b), therefore we emphasize that our desire is that Hashem should rule over the **entire** world, literally.

Similarly, in this *passuk* ask well, the Torah wants to emphasize that **all** of Bnei Yisrael, literally,

stood at the covenant of Hashem, and His oath, and not only most of them.

Har Tzvi

The Severity of Being Lax in Amen

"הלא על כי אין אלקי בקרבי מצאוני הרעות האלה" (לא ז)
The word "*al*" is numerically equivalent to 100, and the words "*ki ein*" are numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as amen. From here we can learn that refraining from reciting one hundred *brachos*, and being lax about replying amen, are the causes for "*metza'uni hara'os ha'eileh*," *R"l*. (See *Rokeach* 320; *Zohar Veyelech* 285 2)

Notrei Amen, Vol. II, p. 295

The Dead Join the Prayers of the Living

"כי את אשר ישנו פה...ואת אשר אינו פה עמנו היום" (כט יד)

"And those that are not with us here today" – even with the generations that are destined for the future. (*Rashi*)

The *Chasam Sofer* explains:

When forging this covenant, in addition to the members of that generation, all the souls that were destined to be born in the future generations were present as well. One should not wonder about this, because we have already learned from *Chazal* that each year on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the souls of our deceased forbears join us when we daven in shul.

Thus we can explain the words of the *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 32b): "The Ministering Angels told HaKadosh Baruch Hu: 'Ribbono shel Olam, why don't Yisrael say *shirah* before You on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?' He said to them: 'Is it possible that a King is sitting on the throne of judgment, with the books of life and death open before Him – and Yisrael sing songs?'" This can be explained to mean that the "books of the dead" are those deceased people that daven with us on the Day of Judgment. Even though they are permitted to daven, and their *tefillah* makes an impression, they are not permitted to recite *shirah* until the time of the resurrection of the dead will come. At that time, the words (*Yeshayahu* 26:19)

"*hakitzu veranenu shochnei afar*, wake up and rejoice, those who dwell in the earth" will be fulfilled.

Drashos Chasam Sofer, Vol. II, Drush Parashas Nitzavim p. 700

The Main Point of Teshuvah – 'Ad Hashem Elokecha'

ושובת עד ה' אלקיך" (לא ב)

The **Rambam** writes (*Teshuvah* 2 2): "And what is *teshuvah*? That the sinner should leave his sin, and should remove it from his thoughts, and should resolve in his heart not to do it again...And the One Who knows all secrets will testify that he will never return to do this sin again."

The **Chida** adds that this concept is alluded to in this *passuk*:

"*Veshavta ad Hashem*," *ad* is a language of "*eidus*", testimony, to teach us that genuine *teshuvah* is one that afterwards Hashem will testify of the person that he will not return to this sin ever again.

Nachal Kedumim

Why Don't We Make a Brachah on Writing a Sefer Torah?

ויעתה כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת" (לא יט)

In this *passuk* we are commanded with the mitzvah of writing a *sefer Torah*. Why do we not make a *brachah* on this mitzvah, as we do for the rest of the *mitzvos aseh*?

The **Chasam Sofer** explains: *Chazal* have told us (*Kiddushin* 30a) that we are not experts today in the missing and extra letters [of a *sefer Torah*] and because a *sefer Torah* that lacks even one letter is not considered a *sefer Torah* (*Menachos* 31a), therefore, we cannot make a *brachah* when writing it.

But the **Sdei Chemed** asks: If indeed our *sifrei Torah* do not have the law of being a *sefer Torah*, how can those who have *aliyos* make a *brachah* on reading in them?

Harav Chaim Kanievesky, shlita, replied: We have to differentiate between *Birchos HaTorah* and *Birchos Hamitzvos*. The former does not require a kosher *sefer Torah*, because we recite the *brachos* each morning during *Birchos Hashachar* without having an *aliyah* to the Torah. But with regards to *Birchos Hamitzvos*, how can we make a *brachah* on a mitzvah that we may not be performing properly?

Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim 54; Sdei Chemed, Vol. IV, Brachos 1 16; Siach HaTorah, Vol. I, p. 39



Chazal tell us (*Brachos* 47a; *Yerushalmi Brachos* 8 8): "Anyone who extends the amen – then his days and years are extended in goodness."

The significance of this extension is explained by the *Ohr Zarua* (*Hilchos Seudah* 193): One must answer amen slowly, for as long as it takes to say the words "*Kel Melech Ne'eman*", and the *Tosafos* (*Shabbos* 119b) adds that one should think about these words when reciting amen.

Let us undertake to extend our amens and we should all merit to be written and sealed immediately for a long, good life. Amen.



Birchas Ahavah Rabbah (10)

The Reasons Why We Are
Worthy of Redemption

In the previous article, we explained that the Redemption and returning to Eretz Yisrael are conditions for the fulfillment of Torah in its entirety. Therefore, with the conclusion of the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah*, we add a request for the Redemption: "*Maher vehavei aleinu brachah veshalom meheirah, mei' arba kanfos kol ha'aretz.*"

Now we have to explain why we are worthy of meriting this. We attribute it to two reasons: One, "*Ki Kel Po'el Yeshuos Atah,*" and two, "*ubanu bacharta mikol am velashon.*"

The commentators offer a few reasons why there is a connection between these reasons and the Redemption:

Ki Kel Po'el Yeshuos Atah

1. The *Siach Yitzchak* writes (in *Siddur Ishei Yisrael*) that it is possible that although we are not worthy because of our deeds for the Redemption, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is called "*Kel*" – all the powers are in His Hand. In addition, He is a *Po'el Yeshuos*, meaning, He Himself effects the salvation and does not need any assistance. (See *Yeshayah* 59:16). Therefore, we ask Him to redeem us and send us salvation even though our deeds do not "help" Him do so.

2. By way of *drash*, the Ateres Moshe of Makava explained (*Inyanei Shavuous*, p. 137):

HaKadosh Baruch Hu is like a "*po'el*", a laborer, with relation to us, as it says in *Tehillim* (44:2): "*Po'el pa'alta...biyemei kedem.*" As we say in the davening of Rosh Hashanah, "*Veyeida kol pa'ul ki Atah pe'alto.*" Just like in the laws of laborers we find that a worker can retract from doing his work after half a day (*Bava Metzia* 10a), in any case, for a "*davar ha'aved*," something that will cause a loss, he cannot retract (*Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* 333 305). The same is with us: if *chalilah* HaKadosh Baruch Hu retracts His promise to redeem us, then we will be lost, and thus we ask, save us "because You are a *po'el yeshuos*" with the laws of a laborer, and we are like a "*davar ha'aved*."

3. Another explanation, by way of *remez*, was written by Rabi Chaim Palagi: There is a *halachah* that a person must not leave Eretz Yisrael for *chutz l'aretz*, unless his livelihood is in another land. (see *Rambam Melachim* 5 9). Therefore, after asking: "Take us standing erect to our land," we immediately ask for a *brachah* for *parnassah*: "*Ki Kel Po'el Yeshuos Atah*" – and the acronym of "*Po'el Yeshuos Atah*" is "*pa'i*", which alludes to the *passuk* of "*Poseach es yadecha.*" By providing us *parnassah* in abundance, then we will never have to leave the land. (*Artzos Hachaim Shaar* 8, 33)

This is the place to note that the acronym of "*Po'el Yeshuos Atah*" is numerically equivalent to 91, which is amen, an allusion to the fact that answering amen

with *kavanah* can bring about *yeshuos*. (*Nachal Eisan, Terumah*)

Ubanu Bacharta Mikol Am
Velashon

Another reason for the Redemption is: "and You have chosen us from all other nations and languages." We can understand this according to the words of the *Rama"k* in *Tomer Devorah* (Ch. 1, *Middah* 13) that one of the *Middos* of *Rachamim* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is "*mimei kedem*," early times. The meaning of this *middah* is that even when Yisrael does not have merits, *chalilah*, Hashem remembers the love that He had for their forbears in earlier times, and in the merit of this love, He redeems them. That is what we are asking here: "*Ubanu bacharta mikol am velashon*" – remember those early days, when You chose us from all other nations and languages, and through that, You will redeem us now, even if we do not have enough merits. (*Siach Yitzchak – Ishei Yisrael*)

Another explanation is offered by the *Lechem Rav*: We mention the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu effects *yeshuos* each and every minute for all the creations, and yet, of all the nations and languages, only we were chosen to thank Him for it. This merit makes us worthy that Hashem should have mercy on us and redeem us.

Kamayim Hapanim Lapanim

There is a famous question: Isn't "*ahavah*" an emotion that is aroused in a person's heart? How, then, can a person be forced to love his G-d?

Harav Akiva Eiger explained this according to the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (27:19): "*Kamayim hapanim lapanim kein lev ha'adam l'adam*" - As in water, face answers to face, so is the heart of a man to a man. *Rashi* there explains: According to what a person knows that his friend loves him, that is the face he shows him.

Because we recognize the great love that Hashem has for us, therefore, He can command us to love Him, because of "*kamayim hapanim lapanim.*" For this reason, we recite the *brachah* of *Habochoer B'Amo Yisrael B'Ahavah* before *Krias Shema* in *Shacharis*, and *Ohev Amo Yisrael* before *Shema* in *Maariv*, because through recognizing His love for us, our love for Him will be aroused in our hearts, "*kamayim hapanim lapanim.*" (*Milin Chadetin – V'eschanan*)

Habochoer in the Present Tense

The *Sfas Emes* (Balak 5643) explains why we conclude this *brachah* with the words "*Habochoer B'Amo Yisrael*" in the present tense: Each day, the love that Hashem has for His nation is reawakened. When is that? When they are *meyached* His Name, and accept the Yoke of Heaven in *Krias Shema*. Just like Bnei Yisrael accept the Yoke of Heaven each day anew, so too, Hashem's love for them, and His selection of them as His nation, occurs each day anew.

The Mechalkel Chaim that Sustained Life

There is a well known custom in Jewish communities to honor the Rav with davening *Ne'ilah* for the *amud* on Yom Kippur. This custom was practiced in the glorious community of Prague as well, and thus, when Harav Yechezkel Landau, the *Noda B'Yehudah*, became the Rav, the heads of the community asked him to continue this custom.

However, while the new Rav was gifted in many ways, and he was renowned as a *posek* and *gaon*, he was not a particularly good singer. Thus, when one day in the month of Elul the first year of his tenure, a delegation of community leaders knocked at his door to inform him of the custom in their community, they were surprised when the Rav refused. He noted that he never intended to become a *chazzan*, and that they would be better off finding someone more suitable for this particular task...

The delegation was sure that the Rav's refusal was due to his deep humility, so they pleaded with him and urged him to do it, even noting that the community would be distraught over the forfeiture of this custom.

Thus, having no choice, the *Noda B'Yehudah* assented.

Aside for his reasons relating to the honor of his community, there was another reason for the Rav's acquiescence to follow the custom. It was the dawn of the *Haskalah* movement, and its imprint was beginning to be made on the Torah community. At the time, the *Maskilim* were people who looked G-d fearing on the outside, and who ostensibly only wanted to "make minor corrections" to the customs of Klal Yisrael that they perceived as old fashioned and not suited to current realities. *Gedolei Yisrael*, the leaders of the community, with their great foresight, understood the inherent danger in the *modus operandi* of these *Maskilim*, and rose up against them. As part of their battle, the invested energy and resources in order to endear and firmly entrench the ancient customs of Am Yisrael so that they could continue to stand as a firm wall that would protect Torah true *Yiddishkeit*.

The *gedolim* especially focused their efforts on the simpler people, those who had trouble intellectually understanding the importance of those ancient customs. There was a fear that these people would become lax in the slightest *minhag*, and that would quickly lead to a deterioration under which they would begin transgressing serious *halachos*, until they would entirely throw off the yoke. Tragically, this happened to so many of that generation, who assimilated and lost all Jewish identity.

This was one of the concerns of the *Noda B'Yehudah* when he agreed to the community's request to daven for the *amud* for *Ne'ilah*.

As the sun dipped behind the trees on Yom Kippur day the *Noda B'Yehudah* approached the *amud* for *Ne'ilah*. He made the best effort to include passages of song in the *tefillah*, as was the custom, but his signing was flat. If not for the respect that they all felt for the

Rav, and the solemnity of the hour, it is likely that the congregation would have been overcome with titters, if not outright laughter, at the performance.

Seated in his seat on the side of the shul was Yankel the Beggar, who was following the Rav's *tefillah* like everyone else. He also suppressed his laughter, but in his mind, an excellent financial plan began to take form...

Yankel was destitute and lived hand to mouth, but he had one outstanding ability: mimicry. He would go from one wealthy man's home to another, bringing them joy with his entertaining imitations, for which he received a few pennies.

Now Yankel realized the tremendous opportunity being presented to him. He closely followed the Rav's singing and tried to store every detail in his memory.

The best days for Yankel were between Yom Kippur and Succos of that year. He went from one wealthy home in Prague to the next, and repeated the Rav's "*Mechalkel Chaim*," mimicking every note and movement.

The perfect imitation had his listeners holding their sides with mirth, and they generously remunerated the performer. Thus, within a short time, Yankel was able to collect enough money to support his family for the entire month of Tishrei, with the *chagim*. His heart was filled with praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for "blessing" the Rav with such talent...

As Chol Hamoed approached, Yankel wanted to make another round of performances. But by then, the heads of the community had grown irritated with him for making a mockery of their revered Rav.

Yankel, who feared that his source of livelihood was about to go up in smoke, quickly headed for the home of the *Noda B'Yehudah* in order to share his fears. In his naiveté, he related to the Rav in detail that his family would have starved if Hashem would not have sent the Rav's "*Mechalkel Chaim*". Now, the community leaders wanted to cut off his source of sustenance...

The Rav listened patiently to the unusual request, and then took out a piece of paper from his pocket, wrote a few words down and gave it to Yankel. He instructed Yankel to present the slip of paper wherever he went to perform his "*Mechalkel Chaim*."

"This paper," the Rav explained, "is your 'license' to continue to sing my *Mechalkel Chaim* wherever you desire, and for as long as you want."

Yankel thanked the Rav profusely. On his way out, he glanced at the paper, curious to see what was written there.

There were just seven words: "*Yachol Yankel lechalkel chayav baMechalkel Chaim sheli.*" Yankel is permitted to support his life with my *Mechalkel Chaim*..."

Mekor Baruch [Harav B. Epstein] Vol. III, Ch. 22