

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS MIKEITZ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Yosef's Brothers Davened with a *Minyan*

“וירדו אחי יוסף עשרה לשבר בר מצרים” (מב ג)

Why were they called “the brothers of Yosef” here, and not “the sons of Yaakov”?

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains: At the time that the brothers went down to Egypt, they regretted selling Yosef and resolved in their hearts to make every effort to return him to his father. Because they were already committed to treating him better, the Torah called them “the brothers of Yosef.” For this reason, the ten brothers also made the effort to descend to Egypt together, because they recognized the great power of *tefillah betzibbur*, and wanted to daven together that they would find him in Egypt.

The Rebbe, **Harav Yisrael of Modzitz**, added that the words of Rabbeinu Bechaye are very accurate, because of the fact that the Torah used the word “*vayerdu*”, and they descended. That is because during *tefillah betzibbur*, the *shaliach tzibbur* is “*yored*,” goes down before the *amud* (see *Brachos* 16a and others). There is a directive here for future generations, that when it comes to matters of *parnassah*, such as “*lishbor bar*”, the main effort, the main *hishtadlus*, is to ask for mercy (*Kiddushin* 82a), especially during *tefillah betzibbur*. As *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 8a), “When is it an auspicious time – when the *tzibbur* is davening.”

Divrei Yisrael

The Real Intention of “*Chey Pharaoh*”

“בזאת תבחנו חי פרעה...ואם לא חי פרעה כי מרגלים אתם” (מב טו-טז)

Harav Chaim of Volozhin asks: At the end of *Baruch She'amar* and at the end of the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is called “*Chey Olamim*.” This special Name indicates that Hashem is eternal, unlike the rest of the creations. How, then, did Yosef use this same language with regard to Pharaoh?

He explains that when Yosef was forced to swear for naught, he used the words “*Chey Pharaoh*”, and those who heard him thought he was swearing in the name of Pharaoh as he considered him a god. But Yosef actually meant the opposite: just like the term “*chey*” is absolutely inapplicable

to Pharaoh, so, too his words “*Ki meraglim atem*” are also groundless.

Beer Chaim [Harav D.B. Lipschutz] on the Siddur, p. 82

Amen – The Key to Abundance

“ויוסף הוא השליט על הארץ הוא המשביר לכל עם הארץ” (מב ו)

The acronym of “*Veyosef Hu Hashalit Al Ha'aretz*” is numerically equivalent to “amen,” to teach us that in the merit of replying amen “*Hu hamashbir lechol am ha'aretz*” – as the *Zohar Hakaodsh* says (*Vayeilech* 285 20): “When Yisrael answers amen with *kavanah* in this world, how many openings of *brachah* are opened Above, and how much good is dispensed from all the worlds...”

Ma'amar Mordechai, Chanukah

When Does *Tefillah* Save from Enemies?

“יקח מאתם את שמעון ויאסר אתו לעיניהם” (מב ז)

The *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni* end of *remez* 148) offers a wondrous description of what happened at that time:

“Yosef sent a message to Pharaoh and said: Send seventy strongmen, as I have found people and I want to put them in prison. When they came, he said to them: take these chains and put them on his neck... When they approached Shimon, he raised his voice at them and they all fell before him and their teeth broke. Menashe stood beside his father and he said to him: take that chain and put it over his neck, and he gave him one blow and put it upon him. Said Shimon: This is a blow from the house of my father!”

A beautiful lesson for future generations is derived from this *Midrash* by **Harav Yosef Patzenovsky**: Yisrael among the seventy nations of the world is like a lamb among seventy wolves, as they are always seeking to annihilate us. But as we have been promised, “when the voice of Yaakov is in the shuls – the hands of Eisav cannot prevail.” (*Bereishis Rabbah* 65 20. When we daven before HaKadosh Baruch Hu to spare us from their hands, then they fall at our feet (like Shimon who felled

Pharaoh's seventy strongmen by ‘raising his voice at them.’)

This is all the case when the trouble arises from the nations of the world, but when *chalilah*, it comes from among us, then we have to be very afraid of it (like Menashe, who felled Shimon with one blow). As the *passuk* says (*Yeshayah* 49:17): “*Meharsayich umachrivayich mimech yetze'iu*, your destroyers and destructors will come from you.”

Pardes Yosef

“*Chassadim Tovim*” That are Not Hidden

“וא-ל ש-די יתן לכם רחמים לפני האיט” (מג יד)

“The *Midrash* says: He Who said to His universe, ‘Enough!’ may He say to my troubles ‘Enough!’” (*Rashi*)

When the **Damesek Eliezer** was sick with his final illness, he made the request that we say in *Shemoneh Esrei* of Shabbos and Yom Tov: “*sabeinu mituvecha*”. Although we are believers the sons of believers that Hashem's *chesed* is concealed even within suffering, as long as the *chesed* is enveloped in suffering, we cannot “*lisboa*,” be satiated from it. As *Chazal* said (*Yoma* 74b), a blind person is never satiated by his food because he does not see it.

Our request of Hashem is: “*Sabeinu mituvecha*” – please, bestow upon us the abundance of Your goodness in a way that we can be satiated from it, and not when it is concealed inside the suffering—and because we cannot see the *chesed* we cannot be satiated from them.

Mima'ayanos Hanetzach, Vol. I, p. 190

Teshuvah Transforms a Person Into “Someone Else”

“וישלה לכם את אחיכם אחר ואת בנימין” (מג יד)

“The fact that he did not mention Shimon by name apparently is because he was not wanted to his father because of Shechem.” (*Rabbeinu Bechaye*)

Harav Zalman Sorotzkin added: Yaakov called Shimon “Acher” because he believed that while he was in prison, in distress, his heart would awaken to do *teshuvah* over the incident with Shechem. And upon repenting, he would be transformed to a different – “acher” – person.

Oznayim LaTorah

To Make them Forget Your *Emunah*

The first tactic the Greeks employed in order to “make them forget Your Torah” was to prevent bnei Yisrael from davening properly, because if *tefillah* is not the way it should be, it is impossible to learn Torah. Only through proper *tefillah* can one be a *ben Torah*, but if the *tefillah* is lacking, and even if only one amen is missing, that is already an obstacle to learning Torah.

Shefa Chaim Rava Deravin, Vol. 1, Parashas Toldos, Maamar 2 letter 5

Amen.
Small word,
tremendous
merit.



“Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L’Olam Va’ed”**Source of the Praise**

Although in *Parashas V’Eschanan* (*Devarim* 6 5-9), the *passuk* “*Shema Yisrael*” is immediately followed by the passage of “*V’ahavta*” our custom is to stop between them to recite “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L’Olam Va’ed*.”

The source of this practice is the words of the Gemara (*Pesachim* 56a): “Rabi Shimon ben Lakish says: Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal to his sons the end of days, and the Shechinah left him. He said: Perhaps there is a flaw in my bed [progeny], like Avraham, from whom Yishmael emerged, and Yitzchak, from whom Eisav emerged?! His sons said to him: “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*” – just like there is only One in your heart, there is only One in our heart. At that moment, Yaakov Avinu said, “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L’Olam Va’ed*.”

The *Rambam* (*Krias Shema* 1 4) cited this Gemara and concludes: “Therefore, all of Yisrael recited the praise that the elder recited after this *passuk*.”

The Essence and Reason for Saying It

The *Bais Yosef* (beginning of *siman* 66) wrote that this *passuk* is also a *Yichud* of Hashem said in *Krias Shema*. Therefore, one should not stop before reciting it. Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer explained that it is a form of replying “amen” and adds credence to our acceptance of the Yoke of Heaven of *Krias Shema*.

Harav Pinchas of Koritz explained: Whenever reciting something holy, one should combine the Written Torah with the Oral Torah. Therefore, after we say the *parshiyos* of the *Korbanos*, we add the chapter of *Eizehu Mekoman*. For the *Ketores* we say *Parashas Haketores*, as written in the Torah, and then add “*Tanu Rabbanan*.” The same is true for *Krias Shema*. After we recite “*Shema Yisrael*” we say “*Baruch Shem*” whose source is the Oral Torah. (*Imrei Pinchas, Shavuos*)

Reason for Saying It Quietly

The Gemara there later says: “The Rabbanim said: How should we do it? Should we say it—Moshe didn’t say it? Should we not say it – but Yaakov Avinu did say it! So it was established that we recite it in a whisper.”

Another reason for saying it quietly is cited in the *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 2 36): “When Moshe rose On High, he heard the Ministering Angels saying to HaKadosh Baruch Hu “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L’Olam Va’ed*”, and he then brought it down to Yisrael. Why don’t Yisrael say it publicly? Rabi Asi said: What can this be compared to? To someone who stole a piece of jewelry from the king’s palace, and gave it to his wife, and said, don’t wear it in public, only at home. But on Yom Kippur, when they are cleansed like the Ministering Angels, they would recite it aloud.”

Saying It Is Like Saying “Yehei Shemei Rabba”

The *Targum Yerushalmi* (*Bereishis* 49:1)

explains the words of the *Midrash* we began with as follows: “Yaakov replied, *Yehei Shemei rabba mevarach l’olmei olmin*.” Meaning that the praise of “*Yehei Shemei rabba*” recited in *Kaddish* is a translation of the praise that Yaakov said: “*Baruch Shem Kevod*...” The connection between the two needs to be explained:

The *sefer Kesef Nivchar* (*Vayechi*) explains this according to the Gemara (*Yoma* 37a) that in the *Mikdash* they did not reply “amen” but rather “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso l’olam va’ed*.” According to this, we can explain that that is what we ask for in *Kaddish*: That the *Bais Hamikdash* should be rebuilt “*be’agalah ubizman kariv*” and then “*nomar amen*” the way they used to say it in the *Mikdash* – “*Yehei Shemei Rabba*”, meaning “*Baruch Shem*...” This explains why *Kaddish* is said in the words of the *Targum*—because a person should say *Yehei Shemei Rabba* with all his might, and without *Targum* we cannot say it aloud (for the reasons explained above). Therefore we say it out loud, in the words of the *Targum*.

Harav Yaakov Kamintezky, *zt”l*, added that the translation of the words “*Kevod Malchuso*” are not said in “*Yehei Shemei Rabba*” because this praise was only composed after the *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed, and then, the *Kevod Malchuso* of Hashem is not revealed to us like it was in the time of the *Mikdash*. Therefore, these words are omitted. (*Lekach Tov Ha’azinu*).

Indeed, the *Gra* says that each one of the six wings of the angels had one word of *Baruch Shem* written on it. When the *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed, the two middle wings were taken from the angels—the wings that said “*Kevod Malchuso*.” Therefore, we ask in *Mussaf* of Yom Tov: “*Galeh Kevod Malchuscha aleinu meheirah*.” (*Siddur HaGra, Avnei Eliyahu, Mussaf* for Yom Tov.)

The *Chiddushei Harim* would say that we ask for this on *Shabbos*: “*Veyechezelon sisrei d’isamar bilchisha*,” meaning that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will be revealed to us in all His Glory and then we will not have to say *Baruch Shem* in a whisper. (*Imrei Harim, Shabbos*)

Reciting It After Mentioning Hashem’s Name in Vain by Mistake

We will conclude with a well known *halachah* that someone who mistakenly mentions Hashem’s Name in vain is supposed to say “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L’Olam Va’ed*.” This *halachah* is brought down in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 206 6) and the source is the words of the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 6, 1): “One must say ‘*Baruch Shem*...’ so as not to have mentioned the Name of Hashem in vain.”

This is the place to bring the words of the *Eshel Avraham* of *Butchatch*, that someone who mistakenly answered an orphaned amen, and the like, should rectify it by saying “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso l’olam va’ed*.” Because one who replies amen in vain is like one who makes a *brachah* in vain. (*Mili Dechassidusa on Sefer Chassidim*, Friedman edition, p. 32)

Amen Saves Lives

This remarkable story was heard from the person it happened to, the *Gaavad* of *Liezh, London, shlita*. It was shared in public with his permission by the renowned *mashpia* Harav Avraham Elimelech Biderman, *shlita*, during his speech at the *Shachar Akadmecha* convention for *Bnei Emunim coordinators* in the *yeshivos*, which took place at the end of *Tishrei* this year.

“If you want to hear about a form of ‘*techiyas hameisim*’ that was done in the merit of answering amen,” Rav Biderman began, “listen to this story that took place not long ago, on 13 Elul this past year, the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Chaim Ben Tzion Marmorstein, *zt”l*, father of Rav Yaakov Dov, *ybl”c*, in whose memory *Bnei Emunim* began.”

Harav Yehoshua Zev Meizlish, *shlita*, the *Av Bais Din* of *Liezh* and president of the *Toras Chaim Institutions* of *London*, is one of the eminent *talmidim* of Harav Yoel of *Satmar, zy”a*. Already as a young man, he was one of the select few who received a *heter hora’ah* from his Rebbe.

The Rebbe of *Liezh’s* home, located in the *Stamford Hill* neighborhood of *London*, has been known as a place where anyone can turn to for help. The Rebbe’s actions are a combination of the three pillars of the world: *Torah, avodah* and *gemilus chassadim*, and many poor and indigent people stay in his home, benefiting from his largesse.

Among her many good deeds, the *Rebbetzin* of *Liezh, tlita*, has a long standing practice of reciting *Birchos Hashachar* in front of someone who can answer amen. Toward that end, she waits each morning for her husband to return from *shul*, and then she says *brachos* and he answers amen.

This year, on 13 Elul, the *Rebbetzin* was in the kitchen preparing food for her many guests expected that day. At the same time, she waited for her husband to return from *shul* so that she could say *Birchos Hashachar* for him.

That day, there was a lot of work. She was in the midst of cooking when the Rebbe returned home and entered his study. At first thought, she wondered if she should leave what she was doing to go say *brachos*, as was her custom, or perhaps it would be better to first finish some urgent tasks, after which she could say *brachos* calmly.

But then she remembered the words of *Chazal* that “when a *mitzvah* comes to your hand, don’t let it get away” and decided not to push it off. The *mitzvah* of amen needs to be done right away, the *Rebbetzin* decided. “I must continue to do it as early as possible and not slack off, because the slightest laxity can

lead to more of a decline...”

She decisively abandoned her bubbling pots, washed her hands and hurried to the Rebbe’s study.

She took her *Siddur* in hand and began to say the *brachos* with great *kavanah*. “*Baruch Atah Hashem... Hanosen lasechvi binah...*” The Rebbe replied “amen” fervently. She continued, *brachah* by *brachah*, until she reached the *Yehi Ratzon*.

The *Rebbetzin* concluded with “*Hagomel Chassadim Tovim l’Amo Yisrael*,” and waited to hear the “amen” but then, her breath caught in her throat, as there was only silence.

A quick glance at the Rebbe’s face made it clear: he was pale as plaster, his eyes were closed and his head was slumped towards his chest...

“A heart attack!” she gasped, and didn’t wait another second---

The *Rebbetzin* dashed to the phone and called an ambulance, which screeched up to the door a mere two minutes later. Two paramedics ran inside and began resuscitating the Rebbe. After several long moments of effort, with *siyata diShmaya* the pulse was restored and some color came back to the Rebbe’s face. He was taken to the hospital, where the doctors continued to treat him. Just a few days later, he was able to return home.

“It was a remarkable miracle and there is no other way to explain it besides that special *siyata diShmaya* reserved for those who are scrupulous about saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each morning, without missing a single day,” the Rebbe, *shlita*, concluded.

If the *Rebbetzin* would have lingered in the kitchen for just a few more minutes to finish her cooking, then she would not have seen what had happened to the Rebbe. Who knows what the outcome could have been....

“When *Chazal* pointed out the reward of one who replies “amen” --that ‘his days and his years are extended’, they certainly meant this as well,” Rav Biderman concluded the story, and then added a call to the *bnei yeshiva* participating at the conference:

“You have to internalize and realize that amen is the source of *brachah*, and when you are careful about a holy thing, regularly, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sends special *siyata diShmaya*.

“If you recognize the great value of this *mitzvah* it will be much easier for you to do the holy work you are busy with. The *bachurim* that you speak to will also recognize the value of it, and will strengthen themselves to observe it.”