

And All Believe



A Weekly Leaflet from the House of "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS BO

IN THE PATHWAYS OF EMUNIM

From the Sources in the Parasha Concerning 'Amen' and Tefilla

THE GLORY OF THE KING IS IN NUMBERS

"And Moshe said: We will go with our youth and our elders: And he said to them... Not so, go the menfolk and serve Hashem" (11-9:01).

We find a penetrating argument between the wicked Pharaoh, ruler of a degenerate kingdom, and - lehavdil a thousandfold - Moshe Rabbenu, the epitome of sanctity and purity. On the one hand, Pharaoh argues that he is willing to release the Jews to go worship in the desert. Let them do what they want, but why must I send them all? Isn't it enough for the men to go and worship in solitude, away from the masses?

This outlook was not only Pharaoh's view but that of all the great philosophers of the world at large, who used to meditate in seclusion by fleeing to the forests and hiding in caves in order to worship their gods as they saw fit, without intrusion.

That is not the way of the Torah. On the contrary, the more people gather to worship Hashem, the greater and more exalted is His honor in the world. Chazal say *iasokuhceB "minahoK saroT"* (8 that there is no comparison to a mitzvah performed by a single person and one performed by many. That is why Moshe answered Pharaoh, "We will go with our youth and our elders!" And not only the men but also the old and young folk, children and women too, for only thus can we serve Hashem fittingly, for Hashem's glory lies in the greater numbers! *b17 mihcaseP "refoS masahC"* (mimayaH ierviD).

HASHEM DESIRES THE PRAYERS OF MANY

This idea corresponds very closely to the well known words of the Ramban at the end of this parsha (61:31): "And the A-mighty does not desire anything from this lower world aside from man's knowing and acknowledging the G-d Who created him, and the reason for raising one's voice in the Houses of Prayer in cognizance and affirmation, and the merit of prayer in public is **so that people will have a place to congregate and thank the One Who created them, and will publicize this and say before Him: we are Your creations.**"

We can learn from the words of the Ramban that there is a tremendous different between prayer

said in seclusion or even in a scant minyan as compared to one said with a large public. Aside from the advantage of the prayer itself, there is an additional benefit of Kiddush Shem Shamayim, sanctification of Hashem's Name in public, as the Ramban writes, that this is the main purpose of our worship - gathering together to clearly declare before all that "We are Your creations" (464 .p .I .JoV "rassuM sevehshcaM").

The Mabit, in his work "Beis Elokim" (1 .P allifetaH raahS), writes along similar lines: "It seems that there is a great gain in the prayer of one hundred gathered in one place over ten gathered elsewhere, for each one of the hundred has the added gain of his prayer being joined to the entire group of one hundred, while one out of ten only has his prayer joined to the whole of ten, no more. As for the responses of kedusha, there is no

difference between ten or one hundred thousand, but as for the prayer being received, the prayer of a multitude is more readily received, since the glory of a king is in numbers."

THE PRAYER OF A PUBLIC

It seems that a large public wields more power and impact regarding the service of Tefilla, for the difference between the prayer of a public and that of individuals is vast in every aspect, as the Zohar writes (b761 hcalhsiyaV): R' Shimon said: The prayer of many rises up before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and He crowns Himself (erew ti sa) with this prayer since it rises before Him in various ways and is included from various sides, and because of this, it becomes a crown laid upon the head of the 'Tzaddik Chai haOlamim', the Righteous Eternal One. But the prayer of an individual is not inclusive, but merely one sided, and therefore, it cannot be accepted like the prayer of a public.

The Midrash Eicha (3 kereP ,abbaR) brings an illustrative parable of people who formed a crown for their king. Along came a poor man and added his puny share. Said the King: Shall I refuse this crown only because of the [negligible] part of the poor man? Thereupon, he accepted it and placed it on his head. The same applies to prayer: if an entire congregation stands in prayer, and there is a wicked man amongst them, shall Hashem re-

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MOSHE TOOK WITH HIM THE POWERS OF KEDUSHA

"And he turned and took leave of Pharaoh" (10:6).

"ויפן ויצא מועם" - the end letters spell out 'AMEN'. From here we learn that when Moshe left Pharaoh's palace, he removed from Egypt all of the powers of Kedusha which are hinted at in the word 'AMEN', whose gematriya is made up of the two names of Hashem - as it is written and as it is pronounced ("Lev Sameyach' Bo; "Vayikach Moshe"; "Yoshia Zion" Bo).

SAVED FROM DARKNESS AND DUSK

"צא - Leave, you and all the people that follow you..." (11:8). The first word has the gematriya of 'Amen'. This pasuk was said after the plague of darkness to suggest to us that by answering 'Amen' with concentration, a person is saved from the darkness and obscurity which is brought upon one who is negligent in answering 'Amen', as brought in the Zohar (Vayelech 285-6) and in "Pri Etz Chaim" (Shaar Kavonas Amen Chap. 3) ("Imrei Noam" Bo).

AMEN AN UNPARALLELED DECLARATION OF EMUNA

Sunday, the 5th of Shevat, is the *yahrzeit* of the saintly Sfas Emes of Ger zy'o

WORDS ON THE ADVANTAGE OF ANSWERING 'AMEN' FROM HIS SEFER, PARASHAS KI SAVO (61):

Answering 'Amen' expresses a complete emuna in the Ribono shel Olam, an emuna implanted in us from many generations back which is beyond human understanding. Such faith and trust is very dear to Hashem, as Chazal said (Makos 24a): "Along came Chavakuk and incorporated them into one - the tzaddik lives with his emuna." This is the source of the greatness in answering 'Amen'.

DEAR FELLOW JEWS! WE ARE BELIEVERS, SONS OF BELIEVERS! AT EVERY GIVEN HOUR WE ARE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO LINK INTO THE CHAIN OF GENERATIONS WHICH BEGINS WITH OUR AVOS, THE SAINTLY FIGURES, BY ANSWERING 'AMEN'. SHALL WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO MISS OUT ON EVEN ONE SUCH OPPORTUNITY?!



HEAVENLY TESTIMONY FOR THE POWER OF PUBLIC PRAYER

The following amazing story about the power of public prayer was told many years ago during the shiva-week of a special Bnei Brak Jew, a great scholar by the name of Rav Ezriel D. who put much effort in outreach work with Jewish children and who died at a young age.

"About half a year ago," the mourners related, "our father suffered a severe heart attack and was taken to the U.S. for a complicated operation to hopefully save his life. However, right after the surgery, he suffered another critical heart attack which reduced him to a very precarious condition. The doctors despaired of his recovery.

"Our father lay in critical condition for several days. Meanwhile, in Bnei Brak, many prayer sessions were organized for his recovery. And indeed, a miracle took place. Against all odds and all medical predictions, the patient's condition showed a marked improvement.

"As soon as our father opened his eyes, he gave a cry, 'I shall not die, for I shall live!' He then told the family standing around his bedside what had happened to him during the hours in which he had lain in grave condition, which the doctors had even defined as clinical death.

"At first,' Rav Ezriel said, 'I felt a tremendous glowing and pleasant light enveloping me. Afterwards I felt my soul departing my body while I drifted above the physical body lying on the operating table and you, my dear family, dreading the worst.

"I then found myself led before the Heavenly Court. I was asked incisive questions about my deeds in this lower world. I begged for mercy on my soul, for mercy for my wife and children whom I was leaving forever, but my plea was rejected. I felt desperate.

"At one point I was informed that during those very hours, hundreds of people in this world were praying for my recovery and had even given me an additional name. I decided to try again. I promised the Heavenly Court to make a greater effort to spread Torah and inculcate yiras shomayim and do everything in my power to increase Hashem's glory in this world.

"Suddenly, a sentence was announced that in the merit of the prayers of so many people, and in the merit of my promise, I would be given additional years of life. This is when I opened my eyes and shouted with great fervor, 'I shall not die for I shall live,' as you yourselves witnessed just now."

Upon his return to this world, and with his recovery, Rav kept his word; he wrote his story and distributed it to the public for all to read and internalize its message. This letter did, indeed, impress many, many of his friends, neighbors and others, and earned for him additional years of life

(*"Leshichno Tidreshu"* Vol. I, p. 49; *"Halggud"* 12th year, Issue 32).

FERVENT AND RAPTUROUS PRAYER

"Do not eat of it raw... only roasted" (Shemos 12:9).

The word צלי, roasted, also denotes prayer in Aramaic, as we say in the Kaddish: "תתקבל צלותהון". By hidden reference we can say that the above pasuk shows how one must pray - not dry and unemotional but with flame and fire ("Noam Elimelech")

We can add to this: The initial letters of "צלי אש" add up to the gematriya of `Amen' = 91 to teach us that `Amen' should also be said with enthusiasm and arousal, as part of one's prayer, as Chazal said: "Whoever answers `Amen' with all his might has the gates of Gan Eden opened before him."

We find a reference to this in the Shabbos Chanuka zemira by the Ibn Ezra: "Succulent and good and fat, roast and matzos, answer and say `Amen' and eat heartily."

CONTINUATION OF THE BLESSING OF GEULA

"And He will not allow the destroyer to come to your houses to strike you" (12:23).

R' Yochanan is quoted in Berachos 4b: "Who is a guaranteed candidate for Olam Haba? One who joins Geula to Tefilla (the blessing for the Redemption to the Shemone Esrei)." The gemara asks: Why then in Maariv did they institute a break between the blessing of 'Go'al Yisrael' and `Hashkiveinu'? It answers: The blessing of `Hashkiveinu' is considered a direct continuation of the blessing of Geula so that it is not considered an interruption between Geula and Shemone Esrei.

Rabbenu Yona (Berachos ibid) deals with the connection between the blessing of Hashkiveinu and Geula: On the eve of the 15th of Nissan when Hashem smote every firstborn Egyptian, despite the fact that the Jews were promised by Hashem that He "would not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike", nevertheless, they were afraid of being sinful, in which case the Destroyer would not skip over their homes. They therefore stood in prayer before Hashem, asking that He save them from all harm on that night. The blessing of Hashkiveinu was instituted on the basis of that prayer and in it, we pray that Hashem will likewise save us from all trouble and suffering. This is why it is considered an integral part of the blessing of "Go-al Yisrael".

CONTINUATION IN THE PATHWAYS OF `EMUNIM'

fuse to accept the prayer because of him?

In the prayer of Nishmas we say: "And in the choruses of tens of thousands of Your people, the House of Israel, Your name, Our King, shall be glorified in song in every generation, for this is the duty of all creations before You Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers..." The Mashgiach R' Yerucham Halevi of Mir zt"l explained that the advantage of prayer said by a community is not only expressed by the fact that it evokes an external emotion, but even internally, it lifts a person from his spiritual level and brings him to acknowledge and confirm the veracity of Hashem's rule (83 yassE, I. loV "rassumU amhcohC saaD").

PRAYER IN PUBLIC AS A MEANS OF ATTAINING EMUNA

There is an additional gain in the prayer of a group of people in that they answer `Amen' to the blessings of one another. This increases, as well, the glory of Heaven, as it publicizes their emuna at large sohsarD") (341 hsurD ,II. loV "kcihcS marahaM. This refers to prayer in general, but specifically refers to the bircos hashachar, the morning blessings, with which we begin the day with the declaration that "We are Your creations," by specifically stating all the kindnesses which we merited as a gift from Hashem's bountiful open hand. For if these are said in public in a way that others respond `Amen', as was the practice of Gedolei Yisrael dating back to early times, the glory of Heaven is increased and elevated by us all the more.

FROM THE TABLE OF EMUNIM

PEARLS FROM TABLES OF GEDOLEI
YISRAEL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
ANSWERING `AMEN'

Chazal said (Berachos 53b) "One who answers `Amen' is greater than the one who says the blessing." The commentators were puzzled: How can this be? To all appearances, the initiator of the `Amen' is the one who says the bracha itself. Without his utterance, there would be no cause to respond with `Amen'.

This week we will bring the explanation of R' Yaakov Baal HaTurim:

`Amen' has the numerical value of 91, which equals Hashem's Name both as it is written and as is actually pronounced. A blessing, however, only has the form of Adnus (the form we use to pronounce His Name); therefore the one who responds is greater than the one who said the blessing (Baal HaTurim" Devarim 27:26).

While the one who says the blessing intends to absolve his obligation, however, the one who answers is equal to the one who said the beracha to begin with, according to the rule that `Hearing is like responding.' But he is actually greater, because the blesser cannot answer `Amen' after his own beracha, while the listener can ("Responsa Hamabit" Vol. I, siman 117.)