

# And All Believe

A Weekly Leaflet from the House of "Bnei Emunim"



## PARASHAS Mishpatim

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF EMUNIM

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

### The Power of the Poor Man's Prayer

"You hear the poor man's outcry and save him" (Nishmas)

And it will come to pass that when he cries out to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious (Shemos 22:26).

Why is the poor man's prayer so powerful that Hashem listens to his appeal? The Ramban writes in our parshah (22:22), that unlike most who believe that there are people available to help and support them in their hour of need, the poor man knows well that there is no one to help or support except Hashem. Therefore, when he suffers tribulation, he places all his trust in praying to Hashem, and in response, Hashem stands at his right side and saves him.

The same idea is indicated in the following midrash (Osiyos deRabbi Akivav 4): The Holy One said: Because people hate the poor man and no one loves the poor man except Myself... the sound of their words is more pleasant to Me than of all the people beneath the heavens.

#### The Poor Man's Prayers Uplift All the Tefillos of Klal Yisroel

The holy Zohar (Balak 195a, and see Tikunei Zohar 31) discusses the tremendous loftiness of the poor man's prayer. When he prays, the Zohar says, his prayers throw open the gates of heaven and his prayers are accepted prior to the prayers of all Klal Yisroel rising upwards. Furthermore, the prayers of the entire world are kept waiting and are not accepted until the poor man's prayer arrives and opens the gates before them. This is testified in the words of the posuk, A prayer of the poor man when he delays (ya'atof) other people prayers from rising up until he has prayed. [The Zohar interprets ya'atof as delay, similar to the possuk (Bereishis 30:42), And when the flock delayed (ube'ha'atif)].

The Chida (Kunterus Safa Achas, at end) learns this same concept from the double wording of the verse in our parshah: When he cries out strongly (tza'ok tza'ak) to me, I will surely hear (shamo'a eshma) his outcry. The double expression, shamo'a eshma, indicates that the Holy One hastens to answer the poor man's prayer before he answers other people's prayers.

#### The Poor Man Prayer for His Benefactor

It is a special segulah for a poor man to pray for his benefactor. This is indicated in our parshah which speaks of the mitzvah of returning a pledge to a needy borrower (22:25-26): If you take the garment of your friend as a pledge, return it to him by sundown. For this is his only cover, his garment for his skin, with what shall he lie down? And it will come to pass when he cries out to Me that I will hear, for I am

gracious.

What is the poor man's prayer which Hashem answers? Some Rishonim explain that he cries out in bitterness against the rich person who did not return his pledge when he needed it.

"He cries out to Me complaining: Did You not create me the same as him? Yet he lies comfortably on his bed while I have nothing to lie on."

On the other hand, the Ba'alei Tosfos explain that the poor man's cry corresponds to the command of the previous verse: Return it to him by sundown. The Torah is telling us that if the rich man heeds the command and returns the poor man's pledge when he needs it, the poor man will gratefully cry out to Hashem and ask Him to repay the benefactor's favor. When this happens, the verse tells us, Hashem will hear his cry. For just as the rich man had mercy upon him and returned his pledge beyond the letter of the law, so the Holy One will have mercy upon the rich man and bless everything he does. (Da'as Zekeinim)

#### The Receiver Must Pray for His Benefactor

Chazal (Sifri, Devorim, parsha 277) comment on the verse in parshas Ki Seitzei (Devorim 24:13), And he will lie in his garment and bless you, that it is a mitzvah for the poor person to bless the rich person for benefitting him and returning his pledge by nightfall beyond the letter of the law. It appears that the poor man is especially obligated to do this because of the loftiness and effectiveness of his prayer.

However, Rabbi Yehuda Hachossid writes in Sefer Chassidim (Tehillim 72:15) that the obligation to pray for a benefactor applies to everyone: "Someone who benefits from people must pray for them for the verse says [of a person who

helped the poor], And may the gold of Sheva be given to him, and may he be prayed for continually, blessed the whole day (Tehillim 72:15), and it is written, And he will lie in his garment and bless you."

Commenting on Chazal's statement (Vayikra Raba 34:8) that, "More than the householder does for the poor man, the poor man does for the householder," Rabbi Chaim b'R. Betzalel, a brother of the Maharal of Prague, writes in Sefer Hachaim (ch. 5) that the poor benefit the rich in two ways. First, the rich man benefits from the portion the poor man was supposed to receive in this world. As it were, Hashem takes the poor man's portion and transfers it to the rich man.

In addition, Rav Chaim writes, the poor man benefits the rich man by praying before Hashem for his success, for through his prayer Hashem indeed gives the rich man blessing as the Torah testifies (Devorim

#### The Orphaned Amen (Amen Yesomah)

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan, (Kol almonah veyasom lo se'anun (22:21

The last letters of veyasom lo se'anun (m, alef, nun) are the letters of the word amen. This hints at the prohibition against orphaning an amen by waiting too long after a person said a brochoh before answering.

(Parpara'os LaTorah, parshas Mishpatim, cited from an old manuscript in Kovetz Pa'amei Yaakov, page 52)

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#### Dear Jew!

When you hear a brochoh, listen carefully and be careful to answer amen immediately at its conclusion. By doing this, you will answer amen properly and not, chas veshalom, transgress the prohibition of saying an "orphaned amen."

#### אני מאמין באמונה שלימה... Did you know?!

Answering amen is an inseparable part of a brochoh and must therefore be said immediately after the brochoh.

#### Laws of the "Orphaned Amen"

- One may not answer amen unless one knows what brochoh was just said.
- What may not answer amen if the time of toch kedei dibur (the time it takes to say: Shalom aleichem mori ve'rabbi) passed since the brochoh was recited.

(Shulchan Aruch and Remo, Orach Chaim 124:8)

## MAASE EMUNIM

A WEEKLY STORY ON  
'AMEN' AND TEFILLA

### The Poor Man's Prayer Tears an Evil Decree

Every morning, two talmidim of Rabbi Chanina would walk to the forest for hours of backbreaking work. They hewed down trees, broke them into sticks, lashed the sticks together, and sold them in town. The work was harsh and its remuneration pathetic. But all this was worthwhile for what followed - idyllic hours when they thirstily gulped their teacher's endless ocean of Torah wisdom.

One morning, the two made their way to their toil with some morsels of bread to tide them over the next few hours. Their hearts and souls were more invigorated by the Torah their lips uttered. As they left town, the piercing eyes of a local astrologer glanced pityingly after them. For shortly before he had forecast: "The two will leave town alive but return as corpses." The talmidim went on oblivious to their fate.

Suddenly, they noticed an old man at the side of the path, his sunken eyes appealing for help. He had put nothing in his mouth for three days. Immediately, they seized their bread, tore it in two, and gave half to the old man to satisfy his hunger. They would make do with what was left.

After completing his humble repast, the old man raised his eyes heavenwards and uttered a sincere prayer: "Just as you kept my soul alive this day, so may your souls live this day."

At the day's end when the two men returned, the astrologer's friends were amazed that they had survived.

"You liar!" they said. "Did you not tell us this morning that these woodcutters would not return home alive?"

"I have nothing to say," he admitted. "If I was wrong, I admit that the whole science of astrology is nonsense. But glance into their loads. Perhaps you'll find something that explains the mystery."

Throwing their loads of sticks onto the ground, the two talmidim were shocked to discover a lethal snake cut into two, half of it in one load and half in the other. When the astrologer heard what had happened on their way to work, he said: "These two men were indeed destined for certain death, but what can I do if their G-d made peace with them due to half a loaf of bread!"

(Yerushalmi, Shabbos 6:9)

CONTINUATION IN THE PATHWAYS OF 'EMUNIM'

15:10), You shall surely give to him [the poor man]... for because of this word [the poor man's prayer], Hashem your G-d will bless you in all your deeds and in all the work of your hands. On the other hand, when someone closes his hand from giving charity the verse says (ibid 15:9), Be careful lest there be a word in your heart... and your heart is stingy to your poor brother and you do not give to him, and he calls against you to Hashem.

## FROM THE TABLE OF EMUNIM

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

### Great Is Humility

Chazal say: "Greater (gadol) is the one who answers than the one who surfs the berochah." There are many explanations of this surprising statement. Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov explained as follows:

Spelling out the letters of amen in full (alef, mem, nun) gives us the gematriah of 297, the same as the gematriah of neder gadol (a great vow). The principle words of a berochah, Boruch ata Hashem, (leaving out ata because that is just to make the sentence grammatical) have the gematriah of 254, the same as the gematriah of neder (vow). Thus, the difference between the two gematriyos is 43, the gematriah of gadol.

Now we can understand what Chazal mean: The difference between the one who answers amen and the one who recited the berochah is the word gadol.

(Regel Yeshorah authored by Rav Tzvi Elimelech,  
ma'areches Alef, section 98)

## PEARLS OF 'EMUNIM'

FROM THE TREASURES OF OUR  
RABBINIM ON 'AMEN' AND PRAYER

### How to Reach the Love of Hashem.

And if the slave says, I love my master... And he shall serve him forever (21:5-6).

The Sefas Emes derived a wonderful lesson from this possuk: If the slave of a flesh and blood master shall serve him forever merely by declaring, I love my master, how much more will this be achieved by those who serve Hashem. By wholeheartedly declaring every day, You shall love Hashem your G-d, he will forge an everlasting bond with his Creator.

(Sefas Emes, 5645)

### The Doctor Has no Permission to Despair

Only, he must pay for his loss of time and have him thoroughly healed.

Chazal (Berachos 60a) state: "And have him thoroughly healed - from here [we learn] that permission is given to a doctor to heal." The holy Rav of Lublin said of this: A person is sometimes faced with doctors who despair of his life. They claim that by natural means, there is no cure to his disease, chas veshalom. The patient must realize that Chazal said, "Permission is given to a doctor to heal" - but not to despair! Even if, chas veshalom, a sharp sword is placed upon one's neck, one must never despair of Hashem's mercy but rather pray even more, for life is exclusively in His hands.

(Avnei Zikaron, page 188)

### The Prayer of a Day or Two

But if he continue (ya'amod) a day or two he shall not be avenged (lo ya'amod), for he is his money (21:21).

Rav Yosef of Pozen, son-in-law of the Noda BiYehuda said: If a person prays hurriedly and hastily the whole year, but then ceases (ya'amod) his haste a day or two, praying with devotion on Yom Kippur and the two days of Rosh Hashana, it will not prevail (lo yakum). Even his patient prayer will not prevail, for it is his money. His past behavior proved that even when he does spend time praying, his intent is not for the honor of heaven but for the sake of his own glory and to increase his silver and gold.

(Nachal Kidumim of the Chida)

### Beware of Provoking the Poor

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict them at all, for if they cry out at all to Me, I will surely hear his cry. And My wrath will burn and I will kill you... (22:21-23)

The despots of Yerushalayim once imposed a heavy tax upon the city's Jews, placing them in terrible straits. In desperation, a member of the kehillah advised the community leaders to stop paying widows and orphans their stipends. This would induce them to cry out to Hashem in pain and their prayers would surely be answered, as our verse says. When the leaders unwisely accepted his plan, the tactic not only failed to save the kehillah from the tax, but was followed by a terrible plague.

Then, the Turkish chacham Rav Shmuel Yehuda Primo rose up and expounded our verse as follows: If you afflict them in order that (ki) they should cry out to Me, be assured that I will surely hear their cry, but this will be to your disadvantage: My wrath will burn and I will kill you, chas veshalom.

(Sha'ar Bas Rabim)

### The Prohibition against Eating Before Tefillah

And you shall serve Hashem your G-d, and He will bless your bread (23:25).

In his famous Igeres Hateshuvah (section 20), Rabeinu Yonah derives from this verse a hint that when a Jew begins his day, the first thing to do is, And you shall serve Hashem your G-d with prayer. Afterwards, when it is time to consider your bodily needs, He will bless your bread.