

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS Vayakhel

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Hashem Did Not Give It to the Nations

“וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קודש” (שמות לה, ב)

Rabbeinu Yonasan Eibeshitz pointed out a unique fact in his speeches:

By contrast to most of the *mitzvos* in the Torah—which many are observed by the nations of the world as a matter of course—the *mitzvah* of Shabbos is different, because although each nation and people has its day designated of rest, Shabbos was allocated exclusively for Bnei Yisrael.

In fact, the custom of the nations of the world contravenes logic, because aside from the fact that Shabbos is the day that Hashem rested from all His activity, and sanctified and blessed it more than any other day, there is no day better for rest than the last day of the week, after six days of working.

Hashem ordained it to be this way, Rav Yonasan said, so that the non-Jews should have no part in the holy day of Shabbos. Toward this end, He made them go against logic and specifically not select the seventh day on which to rest. We thank Hashem extensively for this benevolence in the Shabbos davening: “*Velo nasato Hashem*, You did not give this day to the nations of the land, and You, our King, did not grant it to the idol worshippers... Rather, it is for Yisrael, Your nation, to whom You gave it with love—*Uzera Yaakov*, for the children of Yaakov that You have chosen.”

Yaros Dvash, 2:3

Learn a Lesson for Yourself

“קחו מאתכם תרומה לה” (לה, ה)

The *passuk* infers that it is incumbent upon every Jew to take for himself a rebuke that will be beneficial for his progress in *avodas Hashem*. Often, a person finds that he is aggravated, and even angry, at his children when they do not do his will; he also gets irritated when his servants do not prepare the food as he wants it. But if a person thinks about it, he will realize that he is also considered a son and a servant before Hashem. How much pain does he cause when he transgresses the Will of Hashem, whether by failing to perform the *mitzvos*, or not having enough *kavanah* while davening.

Thus, the *passuk* hints to us, “*kechu me’itchem*, take from yourselves,” from what happens to you, and use it as a lesson and an awakening that will cause you to make a “*terumah l’Hashem*,” from the same root as *l’hisromem*, to elevate yourself in the service of Hashem.

Korban He’ani

Rachel Established the Tefillah of Rosh Chodesh

“ויבאו האנשים על הנשים כל נדיב לב הביאו חם ונזם וטבעת וכומז” (לה, כב)

The *Daas Zekeinim* of the *Baalei Hatosafos* says that

the women were rewarded for refraining from giving their jewelry for the golden calf—and willingly donating for the *Mishkan*. They received Rosh Chodesh as a special Yom Tov for the women, as it says in *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 417)*, that the women customarily did not do work on Rosh Chodesh.

It is notable that the *Chida (Birchei Yosef Orach Chaim 423:2)* brings down in the name of the *Rishonim* that the *Mussaf* of Rosh Chodesh was compiled by Rachel Imeinu, because she saw in *ruach hakodesh* that this time would be given to women in every generation. Her name is even hinted to at the beginning of the *brachah*: “*Roshei chadashim l’amcha nasata*,” is an acronym for “Rachel.”

Davening at the First Opportunity

“והנשאים הביאו את אבני השהם ואת אבני המלאים לאפוד ולחשן” (לה, כז)

“Why did the Nesiim see it worthy to donate to the *chanukas hamizbeach* right away, while with the *Mishkan*, they did not donate at first? The Nesiim said: let the public give what they give, and we will fill in whatever is missing... Because they were lax at first, a letter was deleted from their name, and it says והנשאים.” (Rashi)

An interesting question was presented to the *Radba”z (Shu”t, Vol. 4, 1:87)* regarding a person who was

An Angel Is Created From Amen

“ויאמר משה אל כל עדת בני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' לאמר” (לה, ד)

The acronym of “*el kol adas*” is equal in numerical value to “*amen*” and the word “*leimor*, saying” is an acronym for “*l’Gavriel, Uriel, Michael, Raphael*”, the names of the four Ministering Angels.

Nachalei Yaakov, Vayakhel, and see there Beshalach

This is very similar to the hint offered by early scholars that *amen* is equal to the numerical value of *malach*, angel, to teach us that every amen creates an angel.

incarcerated in prison. After extensive efforts on his behalf, the man was granted permission to go out to daven with a *minyan* one day a year. Which day should he choose? The *Radva”z* ruled that because “*ein maavirin al hamitzvos*, if we come across a *mitzvah* we must not pass it by”, he should go daven with a *minyan* at the first opportunity possible, even if it was not a particularly noteworthy day.

Evidence of this ruling is cited by Harav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger, author of *Lev Ha’ivri*, from the abovementioned Rashi, that we see that the Nesiim were rebuked for waiting until the rest of Bnei Yisrael made their donations instead of hurrying to donate themselves. Even though their intention was *l’shem Shamayim*, there is a rule that we follow: “*Ein maavirin al hamitzvos*,” and thus they should not have delayed it even if they could have fulfilled it later on with greater *hiddur*.

Tlalei Oros-Shnayim Mikra

Dedicate the First Will to Hashem

“והם הביאו אלינו עוד נדבה בבקר בבקר” (לו, ג)

Why did the Torah emphasize that the donations of Klal Yisrael were brought “in the morning, in the morning”?

The *Sfas Emes* explains: Every morning, a person awakens with a renewed will, and therefore, the Torah taught us that just like *Bnei Yisrael* hurried to donate the *terumah* to Hashem right in the morning, so, too, should every Jew make sure to dedicate his first will in the morning to *avodas Hashem*.

Sfas Emes, Vayakhel 5640

As such we can understand the reason the two requests we recite in the morning are adjacent one to the other. We say, “*Yehi ratzon...shetargileinu besorasecha*” right after the *brachah* of “*Hamaavir sheinah*”. With this we declare that as soon as we awaken, we desire to dedicate our will to learning Torah and doing *mitzvos*.

Siach Yitzchak on the Siddur

A Brachah Before and After

“כרוב אחד מקצה מזה וכרוב אחד מקצה מזה” (לז, ח)

The Sanzer Rebbe, *shlita*, related:

I once accompanied my father, the Shefa Chaim, *zy”a*, when he visited the Bais Yisrael of Ger. When the Rebbe served my father a bit of wine for *l’chaim*, he asked that the Rebbe add a bit more to complete the *shiur* of a *revisit*, emphasizing that he was asking so that he could make a *brachah acharonah*.

As a source for his custom, my father shared an allusion to the above *passuk* with the Rebbe: A person should calculate his food so that there should be “*keruv*, כרוב” (the same letters as ברוך) on one side” meaning enough food for a *brachah rishonah* before eating and a *keruv* on the other side, enough of a *shiur* to be able to make a *brachah* after eating as well.

Betzila Dmeheimnusa, Vayeishev, 5762 p. 6

אני מוסר נפשי!

“Every person in Klal Yisrael is obligated to be *moser nefesh* to answer amen, and every person is obligated to recite *brachos* aloud so that those around him should hear him and be able to reply amen. A sign of this is that amen is an acronym for “*ani moser nafshi*.”

(*Seder Nehora Hashalem*, 16)

Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa – Begin the day with emunah!



The Brachos of Pokeach Ivrim and Malbish Arumim

One of the objectives of the *Birchos Hashachar* is to direct our attention to every detail in our lives and our bodies, details that seem to be routine activities that are done every morning, but in the merit of the *brachos*, we become aware just how miraculous it is that we are able to perform these acts each day anew, a gift that Hashem compassionately grants us.

When we awaken in the morning, our body has emerged from the sleep state [which is one sixtieth of death] that it was in, and returns to action; that is the best time to introspect in the wondrous renewal process that is manifested by every single one of our limbs and in every detail of our needs that are so generously provided to us by Hashem, and to express our deepest gratitude to Hashem.

Hashem Opens the Eyes of the Blind

After thanking Hashem for being created as Jews for whom the Torah and *mitzvos* serve as a guiding light, we continue praising Hashem for the individual kindness that He has bestowed upon us. The first *brachah* in this series of *brachos* is *Pokeach Ivrim*. In this *brachah* we thank Hashem for our renewed sense of sight that we regain each morning after we were blind during our sleep, because while we are asleep, even if our eyes were open, we would not be able to see through them (*Avudraham*).

The Wonders of Sight

Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, *shlita*, relates: While I was learning at Yeshivas Slabodka, I noticed one friend who would wake up extra early each morning. He would leave the yeshiva and return about fifteen minutes later, at which time he recited *Korbanos* and *Pesukei Dezimra*. I was puzzled until I found out the amazing explanation for his behavior: In the guardhouse of the nearby Dubek factory sat a blind man who was in charge of the factory's telephone system. The *bachur* would make the effort every morning to rise early so that he could catch a glimpse of this man and to thus recognize the magnitude of the gift Hashem has given us by restoring our sight. Then he returned to the *bais medrash* to recite the *brachah* of *Pokeach Ivrim* with tremendous *kavannah*. (*Tuvcha Yabiu, Tazria*)

Indeed, in order to properly thank Hashem for our amazing power to see, it is incumbent upon us to think about the essence of sight: Let us begin with the fact that the sense of sight is the broadest of all our senses. The senses of speech, hearing and smell are limited to relatively close proximity, but the eyes can see great distances.

In addition, the sense of sight has tremendous breadth; in a glance that lasts just a few seconds a person can absorb countless details—it would take a few years for the mouth to describe and the ears to hear a full description of what is seen in a short glance. Imagine think how much time it would take us to describe the scene that meets our eyes when we gaze out of a tall tower: the buildings, the trees and the people. (*Nefesh Shimshon, Siddur Hatefillah*)

Everyone Is Considered Blind

The Sfas Emes pointed out a unique thing that we must praise Hashem for in this *brachah*, based on Chazal in the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabba, 53:14)*: “Rabi Binyamin says *hakol bechezkas sumin*, everyone is considered blind, until HaKadosh Baruch Hu illuminates their eyes.” We must know that in the wondrous world that Hashem created for us, He provided everything we need for our lives, but we need Hashem to open our eyes in order for us to see that.

It happens every day—not necessarily to lofty people or those with exceptional bitachon—but to regular people like us, that we lose something or need something urgently and Hashem suddenly opens our eyes and that very thing is revealed to us, much like “*Hashem pokeach ivrim*, opens the eyes of the blind.” (*Likutei Yehudah, Siddur Hatefillah*).

Above all, we must thank Hashem in this *brachah* for illuminating our eyes each day with Torah and wisdom, and helping us understand even the most complex subjects. (*Malbim, Tehillim 146:8, Seforno*)

From Pokeach Ivrim to Malbish Arumim

After Adam and Chava ate from the *etz hadaas*, it says (*Bereishis 3:7*): “The eyes of both were opened and they realized that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves and made for themselves belts.” Therefore, after thanking Hashem in *Pokeach Ivrim* for the vision in our eyes, after which the need for clothing arose, we continue our praise to Hashem in the *brachah* of *Malbish Arumim*, thanking Him for providing us with clothing as per our needs. (*Lechem Rav Hashalem, Birchos Hashachar*)

In order to provide the clothing that will protect and cover our bodies, Hashem created amazing materials that have qualities that enable them to warm and protect, such as wool, cotton and flax. Furthermore, He implanted the wisdom in the mind of man to weave these materials into threads, and then to craft fabrics from them, and from those fabrics, to create clothing. (*Yimalei Pi Tehilasech*)

The Garment Increases a Person's Dignity

Aside for keeping us covered and warm, the garment also increases a person's dignity, as stated in the *Gemara (Shabbos 113a)* that Rabi Yochanan called his clothes “*mechabdosai*, those which dignify me” because the garment adds dignity to the wearer. That is why Chazal said that one should designate honorable clothing for Shabbos.

The *sefer Olas Hatamid* adds: “*Malbish Arumim* is the praise to Hashem for the garments that He provides for a person. And each person should realize on an individual level how Hashem provided every kind of garment that you need, and during the winter, thank Him specifically for the warm clothes and heavy coat that He gave you.”

We have to especially thank Hashem for having enough clothing so that we can change, in addition to special clothing that we can wear on occasions, and that we do not need to be humiliated, like those in the generation of Rabi Yehudah Bar Ilai, when six people would use one *tallis*. (*Nefesh Shimshon—Siddur Hatefillah*)

We will conclude with the words of the *tefillah* of the author of *Seder Hayom*: “And He dressed those who were undressed, and dressed us with *bigdei yeshna*, the faith of our Torah. Thus may it be His will that we should not stray from our faith all our lives, and may He remove from us the soiled clothes—the bad thoughts and sins—and we will walk before Him with suitable garments that will not distance Hashem from us.”

The Shul That Stood Up for Its Honor

This story was heard from Rav Yosef of Mezibuzh in the name of his grandfather, the *Degel Machaneh Ephraim, z"l*:

In the city of Mezibuzh lived a dignified and scholarly man named Reb Berish Bielayos. Reb Berish was an example of a *talmid chacham* who was also extremely wealthy.

Reb Berish's wealth was not the result of his toil, because he never moved out of the *bais medrash*. He had a very intelligent wife who managed their textile business, which garnered a sterling reputation, and brought in a very generous income.

The day came when the Rav of the city of Mezibuzh passed away. In those days, the districts in Poland were controlled by noblemen and landowners who did what they pleased with their subjects. Hence, the local *poritz* set his eyes on the position that had been vacated and decided to put it up for auction and sell it to the highest bidder.

Reb Berish's wife decided that the time had come for her husband to rise in statute. She believed that he was worthy of the position, and when she heard the tempting proposal, she didn't think twice and immediately paid the *poritz* a huge sum of money and asked for a writ of sale for the rav's job. The *poritz* complied.

With the signed and sealed document in her hand, she hurried to the city's *parnassim*, and that's how Reb Berish became the Rav of Mezibuzh.

The *hachatarah* ceremony was held with pomp and ceremony. The new *rav* delivered his first speech, in which he impressed everyone with his depth of knowledge. At the end of the speech he surprised the listeners by announcing that in the very near future, a new shul would be built, donated by his wife, the Rebbetzin. It would replace the old, crumbling shul where Mezibuzh's Yidden had davened for hundreds of years.

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A few months passed, and the construction of the new shul was completed and they began to daven there. But suddenly, Reb Berish fell deathly ill and the doctors despaired of finding a cure.

In desperation, the Rebbetzin contacted the top professors in Poland and paid them huge sums of money to come to her husband's bedside. But they, too, clasped their hands in despair and said there was no hope.

In grief, she set out for Brodt, where the holy Baal Shem Tov resided. His name had begun to spread in the world as a *tzaddik* who effected *yeshuos*.

Reb Berish was not a *chassid*, but because his wife had traveled to Brodt several times on business, she had heard from her acquaintances about the *tzaddik* who lived there. She had already visited his home and received his advice on several matters.

When the Rebbetzin arrived in Brodt, she hastened to the Baal Shem Tov's house, where she placed the money for a *pidyon* on the table, as was customary. Then she began to tearfully describe the calamity that had befallen them, and pleaded with the *tzaddik* to daven for her husband's recovery.

The Baal Shem Tov thought for a few minutes and then said: “I'm am ready to try and advocate for your husband, but in order for that to happen, I will have to come to Mezibuzh myself. Please hire me a special carriage that will take me quickly to your husband, before it is too late to save him.”

When the Baal Shem Tov arrived in Mezibuzh and was about to enter the sick man's house, he was informed that the Rav was literally at death's door. The Baal Shem Tov's face fell when he heard this, but he was not deterred. When he entered, he placed his hand on the *mezuzah* and called to the motionless patient: “Reb Berish, is this how you greet guests? You should be welcoming a guest with a handshake!”

Wondrously enough, the sick man stretched out his right hand and proffered it to the Baal Shem Tov. But the *tzaddik* did not remove his hand from the *mezuzah*, and instead he continued, “While lying? Is it polite to greet someone while lying down?”

Shockingly enough, the dying Reb Berish began to rise until he was able to sit on the bed. Then the Baal Shem Tov removed his hand from the *mezuzah*, took a chair and sat down near the patient's bed.

A few moments passed and then the *tzaddik* opened his mouth and said to the silent patient: “You should know Reb Berish that there are two issues that are hanging over your head, to your detriment. The first is buying the rabbinate with money despite the fact that it was not intended for you—and you can resolve that by giving up on the Rabbinate.”

“But the second issue is more difficult: Through your actions you caused the old shul where the Jews of this city have davened for nearly three hundred years to be abandoned. Even though you built a new one in its place, the old *bais medrash* came with a claim before the *Bais Din Shel Maalah* that it was still able to absorb the *tefillos* of Am Yisrael for many years to come.

“Indeed it is clear that because this *bais medrash* has been elevated over the years through the tens of thousands of *tefillos* and *brachos* that were said inside it, and it has reached a place opposite the *Bais HaMikdash Shel Maalah*, and it is thus worthy that you continue to daven in it.

“I have no other advice for this matter other than to move from my city of Brodt to live here in Mezibuzh in order to resurrect the old shul from its desolation.”

Indeed, that's what happened: Reb Berish gave up the rabbinical position and immediately recovered. The Baal Shem Tov moved to live in Mezibuzh, and from the day he came until his passing he davened in the old shul, which to this day is named “the Baal Shem Tov's *bais medrash*.”

Kovetz Sifsei Tzaddikim, 9, p. 73.