

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS PEKUDEI

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Returning the Security Depends on Tefillah

אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדה (לח, כא)

Rashi explains that the Torah writes the word "Mishkan" twice in order to hint to the *Bais HaMikdash*, which was *memushkan*, given as a security, twice, in the days of *Bayis Rishon* and *Bayis Sheini*, because of Klal Yisrael's sins.

Harav Yehoshua of Ostrova asks: How is it possible that Hashem gave the *Bais HaMikdash*, the dearest thing to us, and which our lives depended on, away as a security because of our sins. After all, the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 24:6) "lo yachabol reichayim varachev ki nefesh hu chovel, don't take as a security the mortar and pestle because that is his lifeline." This teaches us that a lender is not allowed to take as a security things that the borrower's life is dependent on, or "ochel nefesh, things that he uses to prepare food." (See Rashi there)

However, if indeed we would have felt that we could not live without the *Bais HaMikdash*, then HaKadosh Baruch Hu would have quickly returned our security to us. But as long as our *tefillos* for the Redemption are said without sincerity, and we do not fully sense the void as we should, the Redemption is delayed. The more we internalize the void and sense of loss, and daven from the bottom of our hearts to Hashem to restore the *avodah* to Zion quickly, then Hashem will have mercy on us and will quickly return to us the security that He took in exchange for our sins.

Toldos Adam

Tefillah in the Homes of Tzaddikim

אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדה אשר פקד על פי משה (לח, כא)

In his *sefer Divrei Mahary"a* on this *parashah*, Harav Yehudah Assad cites the Midrash: Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem, if the *Bais HaMikdash* would be destroyed, where would the Shechinah rest? Hashem replied: on 36 *tzaddikim*.

According to this, the *Mahary"a* explains in a way of *remez*: "Eileh," these, is numerically equivalent to 36, meaning that the Shechinah would rest on the 36 *tzaddikim* when "pekudei hamishkan mishkan ha'eidus", when *chalilah*, the *mishkan* would be given away as a security during the *Churban* of the *Bais HaMikdash*.

Similarly, the *Drashos HaRa"n* (eighth *drush*) says: "There is no doubt that it is worthy for us to believe that during the time of the *Bais HaMikdash*, it was the holy place where HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestowed prophecy and wisdom, and through this place, abundance was bestowed on all of Klal Yisrael. The same with the *Neviim* and wise

sages in each generation, who are like the holy *Mikdash*."

Harav Yosef Buchsbaum, *zt"l*, founder of *Machon Yerushalayim*, related: "After my marriage, I lived in a building that belonged to my parents, and where the holy Tchebener Rav, *zt"l*, also lived. It was 5726/1966, a short time after his passing, when I noticed the *tzaddik* Harav Aryeh Levin, *zt"l*, standing at the doorway to our home with a *Sefer Tehillim* in his hand, weeping copiously.

"I asked him what the matter was and he explained: "Someone I know is very sick and needs a *yeshuah*. I sought a place where I could pour my heart out in *tefillah*, and because we are not allowed to daven at the *Kosel*, I decided that here, near this home from which Torah was disseminated to Klal Yisrael, and where the heartbroken and needy found solace—that is the worthiest place to daven."

Chashukei Chemed, *Bechoros 5a*

One Hundred Brachos to Strengthen Emunah

ואת אדני הפרכת מאת אדנים (לח, כז)

The *Baal Haturim* writes: Chazal established that we should say one hundred *brachos* a day corresponding to the one hundred *adanim* in the *Mishkan*, as inferred from the *passuk* (*Shir Hashirim* 5:15), "meyusadim al adnei paz, founded upon sockets of fine gold." The word *al*

The Avodas Hayichud

עבודת הלוים (לח, כא)

The word "haleviim" has the numerical value of 91, equivalent to the value of "amen." This can be explained that through the service of the *Leviim* performed in the *Bais HaMikdash*, the *Yichud Hashem* was achieved, similar to the *Yichud* that is achieved when responding "amen", which is numerically equivalent to the Names of Hashem, *Havayah* and *Adona-i*.

Bas Ayin, *Pekudei*

in *Lashon Kodesh* has the numerical value of one hundred.

The *Chiddushei Hari"m* adds that the word "adan" hints to the *brachah*, whose objective is to infuse us with the basic knowledge that Hashem is "Adon Lakol," the Master of everything, and just like the *adanim* strengthened the *Mishkan* and served as its foundation, so, too, the one hundred *brachos*

strengthen the *emunah* in the heart of each person.

Imrei Hari"m

Concentrate on Davening As Hashem Commanded

"ויעשו את בנדי הקדש אשר לאהרן כאשר צוה ה' את משה" (ל"ט, א) Chazal say (*Yerushalmi, Brachos* 4, 3) that the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* was compiled by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* to correspond to the eighteen times that the Torah mentions the words "kaasher tzivah Hashem es Moshe, as Hashem commanded Moshe" during the construction of the *Mishkan*.

The *Maggid*, Harav Reuven Karelinstein, *zt"l*, explained: Chazal says that Betzalel, who was tasked with building the *Mishkan* (*Brachos* 55a) knew how to inscribe the letters that the Heavens and earth were created with—in other words, all the secrets of the Torah were known to him. As such, it's likely that Betzalel knew, when building the *Mishkan*, how to perfectly construct and place each component and vessel of the *Mishkan*.

If so, it would be expected that a person of such stature should have input into the details of the work of the *Mishkan*, but the Torah stresses to us eighteen times that everything was done only "the way Hashem instructed Moshe" without any personal input at all.

That being the case, the link to *Shemoneh Esrei* is also clearer. In this *tefillah* we are asking various requests that are relevant to our needs, but we have to learn from Betzalel, and with each request, we must be modest, and minimize ourselves, and concentrate to ensure that it should all be for the sake of Heaven, that we should be able to serve Hashem properly.

Yechi Reuven

And Moshe Could Not Come

"וכבוד ה' מלא את המשכן. ולא יכל משה לבוא אל אהל מועד" (מ, לד-לה)

The *Mahara"tz Chayut* was once walking past a Reform temple in Vienna when he noticed an inscription over the door of the building: "Ukavod Hashem malei es hamishkan, the Honor of Hashem filled the *Mishkan*." Wittily he remarked, "It would seem more apt if they would have quoted the subsequent *passuk*, "Velo yachol Moshe lavo el ohel moed, Moshe could not come into the *Mishkan*."

Fun Unzer Alten Otzar

A Story from the Baal Halevushim

This coming Sunday is the *yahrtzeit*

of Harav Mordechai Yaffeh, *zt"l*, the author of *Levushim* (d. 3 Adar II, 5372/1612)

There is a famous story that happened to him when he was learning with the *Chacham Abovhav*. By mistake, he did not respond *amen* after a small child recited a *brachah*, and the *Chacham* excommunicated him in order to spare him from death. The *Chacham* did not annul the excommunication until the *Baal Halevushim* took upon himself to speak wherever he went and teach his children about the importance of answering *amen*, and the tremendous punishment for one who is not careful about it.

This story is cited at length in the preface to his *sefer Levush Hatecheiles*, and at the conclusion he writes:

"Therefore, one who fears the Word of Hashem should read this story once a month, and should inform his family of the punishment for those who do not reply *amen*..."

I also recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.



The Brachos of Matir Assurim – Roka Haaretz Al Hamayim

When we are deeply asleep at night, all our limbs and organs, from the brain to the soles of our feet, are like prisoners who are shackled and cannot move.

In the morning, when we arise from our sleep, it is like we are emerging from prison. This is an opportune time for us to introspect into the good that Hashem has done to us by giving us the ability to move our limbs whenever we want. If we think about it, we will find that there are many people who, tragically, do not have this wondrous ability, and even when they awaken from their sleep, they remain like prisoners, bedridden, without the ability to move a muscle.

The *brachah* of *Matir Assurim* is a way for us to thank our Creator for this ability, and as the author of the *Sefer Chassidim* wrote (155): “*Ubeposeach einecha, tasim al levavcha*, when you open your eyes, take note:

Think about how much one who emerges from prison is obligated to thank Hashem—and you have no greater form of imprisonment than sleep—and thus one who arises must thank Hashem for having the ability to do something he could not do earlier—control his body. The *brachah* is for each and every limb that was in bondage and was now released to be able to carry out the person’s needs with them.”

Chazal have further written that the meaning of “*assurim*” also includes not only those specifically in prison, but even those who have something impeding them in their day to day routines. Therefore, in this *brachah* we must thank even for the fact that in every generation Hashem helps Am Yisrael who are shackled in the bonds of exile to face the challenges of their times (*Radak, Tehillim*, 146:7, *Siddur Yaavetz*), and for all those whom Hashem rescues from the troubled situations in which they find themselves mired (*Toras Emes- Shabbos Zachor* 5628).

Zokef Kefufim

At the beginning of *Chumash Bereishis* (1:26), we read about how before creating man, HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to the angels, “*Naaseh adam betzalmeinu kidmuseinu*, let us make man, in our image and like our visage.” Indeed, the creation called man differed from the other creatures, because man walks upright, while the rest of the animals walk on all fours. The reason is because a person has an elevated *neshamah*, a lofty soul, that is concealed beneath the *Kisei HaKavod*, and that’s why it always strives to make his body rise higher, as naturally, it has a pull towards the place from where it was taken—because the nature of a thing is to be attracted to its source. (*Sefer Hayashar* --- Chapter 1)

We thank Hashem for this *chessed* that Hashem performed with us—elevating us above the rest of the creatures and creating us to stand so that we should always strive higher, spiritually and so that our pure souls should aspire to control our bodies and not the opposite, in the *brachah* of *Zokef Kefufim* (See *Yafeh Lalev*, 46:10, *Drashos Maharim*” at).

The Piaseczne Rebbe added: When a person recites the *brachah* of *Zokef Kefufim*, one should add in his heart a request: “*Ribbono shel Olam*, I am subservient, both in matters of body and in matters of soul, to the burden of materialism and the *yetzer hara*; You are the *Zokef Kefufim*—please, make me rise and stand straight!” (*Derech Hamelech, Beshalach*.)

Roka Haaretz Al Hamayim

The land upon which we dwell stands entirely on water, as it says in *Tehillim* (24:2): “*Ki hu al yamim yesadah v'al neharos yechoneneha*, for He founded it upon seas and established it upon rivers.” Chazal add (*Midrash Tehillim* 93): “The land is spread over the water like a ship floating at sea.”

According to natural laws of gravity, the ground on this world should have been so heavy it should have sunk into the sea—how much more so is it miraculous that it carries the gargantuan load of billions of people, heavy buildings and so much more—and yet, it floats.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu in His mercy performed a miracle within a miracle for us. Despite surrounding the world with the water necessary for it to survive and sustain the creatures that live in it, He decreed that the water should gather to one place and should never cover the dry land and its inhabitants. (*Avudraham*.)

We must recognize and sense the magnitude of the benevolence here: Hashem makes the land miraculously float in the water, and it does not move even one inch. It also carries the burden of all the people and the structures that live on it, and does not move or sink. Furthermore, the nature of water that Hashem created is that all solid objects placed in it dissolve and crumble, especially when that object is dirt. If you place clumps of dirt into water, they will dissolve and become part of the water. Yet, this earth stands on the water and is surrounded by water, but it remains firm and strong, as Hashem wills it to. (*Olas Tamid*)

The Parable of the Artist

There is a famed parable about a talented artist who invested a lot of effort in painting a horse. But because the painting appeared so lifelike, no one even glanced at it. When the artist once complained about this to a wise sage, the sage advised him to cut the painting into two pieces. The artist was taken aback, but complied, and wonder of wonders, the compliments began to flow...As long as the picture was whole, the horse looked to be living and breathing, and no one was impressed. But as soon as passersby noticed half a horse, it caught their attention.

Sometimes, it appears to us that the fact that we are walking on firm, stable ground is simple and self understood. But when he hear about earthquakes or volcano eruptions, we realize how desperately we need a miracle to enable us to continue to stand on terra firma, and then we will certainly be able to thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu from the depths of our hearts.

Miracle in Beit Horon

This amazing story was submitted to Bnei Emunim by a resident of the *yishuv Beit Horon*, in the eastern Binyamin region. This quiet, pastoral settlement recently made headlines because of a murderous terror attack that took place when two terrorists penetrated the town and killed one of its residents, Hy”d.

What many don’t know is that numerous open miracles occurred that day. And that’s what this story is about:

Tu Bishevat is marked all over Klal Yisrael by eating fruits from the Shivas Haminim and other fruits that Eretz Yisrael has been blessed with.

The kindergartens in Beit Horon are used to marking Tu Bishevat by eating various fruits, holding workshops and doing crafts in the spirit of the day.

This year, something happened. One of the teachers, on advice from a friend, presented a new idea: instead of activities, they would hold a *Seudas Amenim* for all the preschool classes. This way, in addition to the fulfilling the custom of eating fruits, they would imbue the children with a healthy sense of faith and collect many *zechusim* and pure angels from the many amens that would be said, as a *zechus* for the town and for Am Yisrael.

The days prior to Tu Bishevat were spent teaching the children about the *mitzvah* of answering amen. The teachers explained in a simple form that when they reply amen it completes the *brachah*, and that a pure angel is created from every amen that is uttered.

Likewise, the teachers read to the children words of Chazal in praise of answering amen, and the wondrous rewards that are guaranteed to a person who is careful about it: “The gates of Gan Eden are opened for him,” it says.

When the day arrived the children were ready to perform the *mitzvah*. All the preschool classes gathered together for the *Seudas Amenim*. They joyfully recited *brachos* on the many fruits that were served, and replied amen out loud to each other’s *brachos*.

A short time later, it emerged that the holy angels created by those amens recited by the pure, innocent children served as a *zechus* for the entire *yishuv*, and the protected the residents from terrible calamity.

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At 4:30 in the afternoon, the last of the children left for home, happy for the many *mitzvos* and *zechusim* they had accrued by answering amen.

As the meteorologists were predicting snow in the coming days, some of the parents who picked up their children from kindergarten hurried to the local grocery, located next door to the kindergarten, to purchase some staples in case of a storm.

It was 4:45, and while the children and parents browsed through the store, two Arabs took advantage of the inclement weather to cut the gate that surrounds the town. They were carrying various weapons, from sharp knives to small explosive devices. With murder in their eyes, they advanced towards the preschool building and the grocery next door.

En route, they murdered a young lady they encountered, and then turned back to their primary target: the grocery store. There, they planned to execute extensive carnage.

A moment before they entered the store, an older woman emerged laden with bags. These Arabs began stabbing her, but miraculously, despite being injured and bleeding, she managed to escape and enter a car that was passing on the road whose driver had realized what was transpiring. She fled from the scene, but not before the terrorists tossed an incendiary device at her; it shattered the car’s windows, but miraculously did not explode.

It’s remarkable to note that this woman was none other than one of the kindergarten teachers who had been a full partner to the moving *Seudas Amenim* earlier in the day. She clearly sensed the angels created by amen surrounding her and protecting her.

From there, the terrorist turned back to the grocery, which was packed with customers at the time. First they threw explosive devices at it, but miraculously, they did not explode. Then they tried to enter the store to harm patrons, but the owner was able to repel them with nothing more lethal than a shopping cart—a miracle in its own right.

Even after the town’s security guard finally arrived to kill the terrorist, they tried to harm him with another weapon they had. But they failed and they dropped into a pool of their own blood.

We do not presume to understand the depth of the intentions of our Creator, but we cannot ignore the *Hashgachah* that was clearly displayed, when a *Seudas Amenim* that generated so many *zechusim* was held the very same day that the Arabs wanted to harm as many people in the town as they could, and saved them in miraculous ways.

“*Yodu l’Hashem chasdo, we thank Hashem for His chessed and the miracles He performs for mankind!*”

The letter writer concludes with a plea to Klal Yisrael:

Dear Brothers! You have a wonderful opportunity every single day, in every single home, to merit protection by being careful about answering amen to every single *brachah*: from the uplifting *Birchos Hashachar* with which we begin our day, to the *brachos* we make on food and the many other *brachos* that we encounter during the day. Let us make our *brachos* aloud, and provide those around us with the merit of answering amen, and then our “sack of defense” will be full of pure angels that will protect us from all harm, amen.