

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS TZAV

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah Without Kavanah Is Like a Korban Minchah

"וזאת תורת המנחה הקרב אתה...ריח ניחוח אזכרתה לה" (ז, ה-ז)

A common refrain among all (see *Chovos Halevavos Shaar Ches*, chapter 3) is "tefillah without kavanah is like a body without a soul." One can wonder if this means that each tefillah that is recited without kavanah is not valid. It is very common that we daven without kavanah. According to the Chazal that the tefillos were established to correspond to the korbanos (*Brachos* 26b), the Gra explains: Even a tefillah recited without kavanah has value, because like there are several types of korbanos there are several types of tefillos. When a person davens with kavanah, then his tefillah rises up. On High like a korban that is brought with an animal that has a nefesh, a soul. But when he davens without kavanah, a person's tefillah is similar to a *Korban Minchah*, which is brought with inanimate components, whose level is inferior to that of a korban brought with an animal, because it has no nefesh. Nevertheless, it rises up as a *re'ach nichoach*, a pleasant aroma, to Hashem. (*Keser Rosh*, 22)

A Shiur from Moshe Rabbeinu

"הכתן המוטט אתה יאכלנה במקום קדש תאכל בחצר אהל מועד" (ז, ט)

Each morning, before Shacharis, we customarily recite the chapter of *Eizehu Mekoman* from *Maseches Zevachim*. The Ritva writes (*Avodah Zara* 18b) "And the reason they chose the chapter of *Eizehu Mekoman* above other chapters is, as my rebbi said: Because it is completely without any *machlokess*, disagreement. The Gra explains that the reason that there is no disagreement on this segment is because it was studied throughout the generations in the same language that was given over by Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, without any changes. (*Peninim Mishulchan HaGra*, 144)

As proof of this, the Tiferes Yisrael (*Zevachim* 85:24) notes the words of the *Mishnah* in the passage, where the *korbanos* are referred to as "v'neechalim lifanai min hakelaim," even though when the *Mishnah* was written the *Bais HaMikdash* was already standing and there were no "kelaim." That is because this chapter was preserved in the language Moshe Rabbeinu used in the *Midbar*, during the time of the *Mishkan*, when there were *kelaim*.

This should cause us great introspection, says Harav Ahron Leib Steinman, *shlita*. Each day, we review the *shiur* that Moshe Rabbeinu said to Bnei Yisrael, verbatim! As the Chafetz Chaim, *zy" a*, says, if we

would be given the first fruit that Hashem created in this world, how we would value the moment that it came into our hands! Similarly, how much must we value and treasure the privilege we have to review the words of Moshe Rabbeinu each day, in the exact language that they were given!

Mizkeinim Esbonan, vol. 3, 147

The Brachah of HaGomel

"אם על תודה יקריבנו" (ז, י)

"Im al todah—if for thanks for a miracle that was done to him, like crossing the sea or the desert or emerging from prison or being healed from sickness." (*Rashi*, according to *Brachos* 54b)

Today, when we don't have the *Bais HaMikdash*, the *Rishonim* (*Rosh Brachos* 9, 3 and more) write that we were given *Birchas HaGomel* to recite instead of a *Korban Todah*. The *Tor* (*Orach Chaim* 219) inferred this from the words of the tefillah of *Modim*: "Vechol yoducha sela," the word *chaim* is an acronym for *chavush* (in jail), *yissurim* (someone who was sick) *yam* (someone who crossed the sea) and *midbar* (crossed the desert.)

Replying Amen Is an Entire Olah

"וכל מנחת כהן כליל תהיה לא תאכל" (ז, כא)

"Kalil" is the numerical equivalent of 91 (with the *kollel*), which hints to the concept that the *yichud* that is carried out by reciting "amen" rises entirely like a *Minchah* On High, and transforms the person's decree into good, as the *Tikkunei Zohar* says (40, 1) that one who replies amen with all his might has seventy years of decrees torn up.

The Shevet Halevi, *zt"l*, said that the word "im" that the *passuk* uses here despite it being an obligation (not an "if" as the word "im" implies) comes to teach us that although the Torah details the circumstances under which a person is obligated to give thanks, it does not "force" him to do it, because thanks that is said under coercion is not thanks.

On the same subject, the Shevet Halevi added an explanation for the redundant language: "הגומל: להיבים טובות שגמלני כל טוב אדם יום יום, אבל הוא לא זמן לחשוב, הוא לא זמן לחשוב עד כדי כך שיש לו זמן לחשוב על כל אחד מהם בנפרד. לכן הוא עושה ברכה על כל אחד מהם בנפרד. וכן הוא עושה ברכה על כל אחד מהם בנפרד. וכן הוא עושה ברכה על כל אחד מהם בנפרד." Indeed, when he encounters a miracle that he has to express gratitude for, it is enough for him to add

"shegemalani kol tov" even if he does not feel it.

Ezri Me'im Hashem

Saying Mizmor LeSodah

The Rema rules (*Orach Chaim* 51, 9) that the recital of *Mizmor Lesodah* is like bringing the *Korban Todah*, and therefore, on Shabbos, Yom Tov and Erev Pesach, when the *Korban Todah* was not sacrificed, we do not recite this tefillah. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (14, 4) says that this *mizmor* is recited while standing because a *korban* is brought when standing.

There was once a man who brought "tikkun" (refreshments) to shul on a random day. When he was asked what the *simchah* was, he replied, "Last night, when I crossed the street, I was hit by a car. Baruch Hashem, I emerged safe and sound and I want to express gratitude for that."

The next day after *Shacharis*, the worshippers were surprised once again to find *tikkun*, this time from a different congregant. "So, did you also get hit by a car?" they asked. "No!" he replied. "I want to thank Hashem that last night I crossed the street and I wasn't hit by a car...!"

Harav Chaim Kanievesky, *shlita*, thus explains the words of David Hamelech in *Tehillim* (100:1): "Mizmor lesodah hariu l'Hashem kol ha'aretz." One might wonder why it has to say that "kol ha'aretz, the whole land" needs to thank Hashem? Only four people need to bring a *Korban Todah*. The reason is that these four need to actively thank Hashem for the miracle that happened to them, but "the whole land" needs to thank Hashem that their lives run smoothly without them needing a miracle in the first place.

Umasok Ha'or

Why is the Korban Todah Only Eaten for One Day?

"ובשר זבח תודת שלמי ביום קרבנו יאכל לא יניח ממנו עד בקר" (ז, טו)

The Imrei Emes of Ger said that even though the *Korban Todah* is considered a *shelamin*, which is eaten for two days, the Torah commanded that the *Todah* is only eaten for a day and a night. That is because it is bought for miracle and each day, we experience new miracles as we say in *Modim*: *Al nisechah shebechol yom imanu*. Therefore, it should not be eaten a day after it is sacrificed, because by then there are new miracles.

Imrei Shammai



Amen in the World to Come!

Rabi Yehudah Bar Gadia said: Anyone who answers in this world merits to answer amen in the World to Come!

How do we know this? It says (*Tehillim* 41:14):

Baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael meiha'olam v'ad ha'olam amen v'amen.

Why does it say amen v'amen? Amen in this world and amen in the World to Come!

(*Midrash Tanchuma*, *Tzav*, 9)

Responding amen – the key to life in the World to Come!



The Brachos of Ozer Yisrael Bigevurah and Oter Yisrael Besifarah**Brachos on Yiras Shamayim**

“Who is strong? One who captures his yetzer! As it says (*Mishlei* 16:32) “*tov erech apayim migibor umoshel berucho miloched ir*, one who is slow to anger is better than a strong person, and one who controls his spirit is better than one who conquers a city.” (*Avos* 4:4)

By contrast to the nations of the world, where strength is symbolized by exceptional physical power, among Jews, strength is symbolized by spiritual power that is given to a person by Hashem so that he can capture his *yetzer hara*, which works against him all day. As Chazal say (*Sotah* 52b): “Rabi Shimon ben Lakish said, the *yetzer* of a person overpowers him each day and seeks to put him to death...and if not for Hashem helping him, the person would not be able to prevail.”

Therefore, by contrast to the other *brachos*, in which we thank Hashem for the pleasures of this world that are given equally to all denizens of this earth, these two *brachos*, *Ozer Yisrael Bigevurah* and *Oter Yisrael Besifarah*, we mention the word “*Yisrael*” because with them we thank for the special tools that were given to us by Hashem, as Yidden, and which we use to accept upon ourselves the Yoke of His rule and to protect ourselves from sin.

Even though we already thanked Hashem before, in *Malbish Arumim*, for the clothing that we were given, we add an additional thank you for two special garments that were given to Jews in order to increase *kedushah* and to separate us from the other nations: the belt, which separates the *lev* from the *ervah*, and the hat, which fosters *Yiras Shamayim* and which we do not walk four cubits without (*Bach, Orach Chaim*, 46:4)

Ozer Yisrael Bigevurah

In the first of these *brachos*, *Ozer Yisrael Bigevurah*, we thank Hashem for the belt. By contrast to a non Jew who uses a belt for his physical needs, such as holding up his trousers, or to hang his tools of war (*Avudraham*) and so that he can hurry, run and move with strength, and at the same time preserve his inner organs from being harmed by his movements [similar to what it says of Eliyahu HaNavi (*Melachim* I 18:46): “*Vayeshanes masnav vayaratz*] the Jew uses it to separate between the spiritual upper part of his body [the heart] and the physical lower part of his body, and thus to sanctify himself to serve Hashem. (*Siddur Yaavetz*, 16, *Orach Chaim* 46, 2)

Likewise, the simple act of putting on a belt evokes a person to put on his inner war tools that he will use to banish physical desires from his heart and to overpower his *yetzer hara*.

A person needs special *siyata diShmaya* to wage his inner battle, because in a war against a physical enemy, a person needs primarily to overcome his fear. If he has the right tools, the power and the true drive to win, then his victory is guaranteed. However, in a war against desires, a person has been trained from an early age to go after his desires, and he does not have any weapons that can help him, except for that help that Hashem sends him from Above. However, in order to merit that assistance he must strengthen his *Yiras Shamayim* as much as he can, and when he will make every effort on his part, then Hashem will send him assistance and will stand at his side.

We thank Hashem for this Divine assistance, that He alone can gird Am Yisrael with the tremendous strength they need to subdue the *yetzer hara*. (*Iyun Tefillah* by the author of *Haksav Vehakabbalah*)

Oter Yisrael Besifarah

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 156b) brings a story about the mother of Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak. As the stargazers had predicted that her young son was destined to become a thief when he grew up, she would always remind him, “Cover your head so that you’ll have fear of Heaven.” Rav Nachman, who was a child at the time, did not understand what his mother was saying. When he once sat and learned under the palm tree and his head covering suddenly fell off, his *yetzer hara* suddenly overcame him and tempted him to raise his eyes to the top of the palm, where he saw a delicious looking cluster of dates. Lacking the necessary *Yiras Shamayim* to refrain from touching something that was no this, he climbed onto the tree and cut the cluster with his teeth.

That’s when Rav Nachman understood his mother’s words, that as long as his head was covered, it brought upon him *Yiras Shamayim*, and the *yetzer hara* was unable to persuade him to steal. The moment the covering fell off, the *yetzer hara* immediately overpowered him.

A Head Covering Leads to Solemnity

The head is the highest place on the person’s body, and is the home of his mind and insight, through which a person attains wisdom and merits to be crowned with the crown of Torah. His brain controls all the powers in the body, and if we preserve its purity as necessary, then the entire body is subservient to Hashem.

The constant head covering brings a person to submit his brain to Hashem, as it says “*da mah lemaalah mimecha*, know what is above you,” and thus to draw closer to true *shleimus*, to be a servant of Hashem with all his being. (*Iyun Tefillah* by the author of *Haksav Vehakabbalah*)

Rabbeinu Asher of Lunel, author of *Sefer Haminhagos*, adds that for this reason, Hashem tied two crowns to Yisrael at Har Sinai (*Kiddushin* 31a), because it is impossible for the Shechinah to dwell among them while their heads were exposed.

In the *brachah* of *Oter Yisrael Besifarah*, we thank Hashem for crowning us with the hat called “*Pe’er*” (*Shemos* 39:28; *Yechezkel* 24:17) so that it will help evoke *Ol Malchus Shamayim* upon us.

Fear Dissipates

“The special one among the giants of our generation, Tana Yerushalma, the Sar Ha Torah... Saba Kadisha... tremendous Gaon...” These effusive accolades were among those used by the *Sdei Chemed* to describe the brilliant *gaon*, Harav Mordechai Gimpel Yaffe, ז”ל, known in his youth as the Illui of Utena, and later as the Ruzhany Gaon. He was similarly admired by all the giants of his generation, who praised his exemplary brilliance and phenomenal memory.

As a youth Rav Mordechai Gimpel learned at the famed Volozhin Yeshivah, where he became close to the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Itzele of Volozhin, ז”ל, and from whom he acquired his way of learning and of leading.

An example of his brilliance is evident from the following story: There was an ancient custom in the yeshivah in Volozhin to appoint one of the elder, sharp *talmidim* as Purim Rav. As part of this job, the Purim Rav had to prepare a “*pilpul*” on matters relevant to the day, and to include *halachah, aggadah* and jokes to uplift the listeners.

One year, Reb Mordechai Gimpel was given this task. The yeshivah expected—justifiably so—a special *drashah*. Reb Mordechai Gimpel would surely bring joy with his Purim speech, they thought to themselves. But when the brilliant *bachur* began to speak, everyone was very disappointed when he launched into a deep *pilpul* on *halachah* from the words of the *Rambam*, in an effort to resolve it with the words of the *Yerushalmi*, which seem to be contradictory.

For an hour, the *bachur* stood on the improvised stage weaving *halachos* and *aggados* from all of *Shas*, into the words of the *Rambam* and *Shulchan Aruch*. Towards the end, he wove all his different thoughts into a magnificent tapestry that resolved the question in a beautifully clear fashion.

The day after Purim, his friends brought him to a *din Torah* before the Rosh Yeshivah, with the complaint that Reb Mordechai Gimpel did not fulfill a basic condition of his appointment. “His *drashah* was too serious and heavy,” they claimed with disappointment. “Did we ask him to give a *shiur klali* or a *shiur* for Purim?!”

But Reb Itzele smiled and replied: It is true that the *pilpul* on the words of the *Rambam* was very deep, but not one of you noticed that the words of the *Yerushalmi* that this brilliant *talmid* cited on the *Rambam* do not exist, and the words of the *Rambam* that he asked about from the words of *Yerushalmi* do not appear in all of *Yad Hachazakah*...

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Another story took place around Purim time indicating Reb Mordechai Gimpel’s tremendous *Yiras Shamayim*: He would drink a lot of wine on Purim in order to fulfill the mitzvah of the day in the amount that Chazal stipulated: “*Ad delo yada bein arur Haman leBaruch Mordechai*.”

One year, when Reb Mordechai Gimpel drank a bit more than usual, his head was spinning and he announced to his family that he was going to rest for a short time in order to alleviate the effects of the wine.

The short time passed, and the family, which was waiting to go *Minchah* and then hold the Purim *seudah*, were surprised when their father did not awake from his sleep. Fearing for him, they went to his room and knocked on the closed door, but there was no response. The family tried to knock louder and faster, but nothing helped. Their fears grew and they decided to open the door. They glanced inside and saw their father on the bed, unmoving, his face pale. He seemed to be in a deep faint.

When the cries of his children, and the sounds of furniture being moved in the room did not wake him up, they quickly summoned a doctor.

The sun was nearly setting by the time the doctor came in. With a self important look he donned his gold glasses, took out his instruments and began to check the rav carefully.

“His breathing is normal!” he reassured the worried family. Then he listened to the rav’s lungs, which were also functioning fine.

Suddenly a *talmid* entered the room. He had not been aware of what was happening in the house. He had waited in the *Bais Medrash* for the rav to come to *Minchah*, and when he didn’t arrive, he realized the rav had fallen asleep and he came to wake him up.

“Rebbi!” the *talmid* screamed into the *gaon*’s ears. “It’s time for *Tefillah Minchah*! Soon it will be too late!”

Wonder of wonders, the rav heard the word “*tefillah*” and immediately awoke with a start from his faint. He opened his eyes, glanced at the clock, and when he saw how late it was, he jumped up.

He donned his coat, ignoring the people in the room, and dashed out of the house.

At the shul, they were preparing for *Minchah*. The rav stood in his place, no longer affected by the wine, and when the *chazzan* finished reciting *Kaddish*, he immediately began davening *Shemoneh Esrei* with deep emotion, as usual.

All those present were reminded of the words of Chazal (*Bava Basra* 10a): “Deep fear is dissipated by wine; wine is powerful – and sleep neutralizes its effects.” Apparently with Rabbeinu, the *talmidim* muted, the fear of not missing *Minchah* made the wine and the sleep dissipate at once.

(*The Rav From Yehud*, p. 72, *Shabbos Supplement Tetzaveh*, 5758)