

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## PARASHAS ACHAREIMOS

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

### Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Don't Make Service of Hashem Habitual

"אָל יְאַבֵּכְלָת עַת אֶל הַקָּדֵשׁ" (ט, ז)

"Because I am always visible there with My pillars of the cloud, and because my Shechinah is revealed there, he should be careful that he should not come regularly." (Rashi)

From Rashi's words we can learn about the drawbacks of the force of habit; even Aharon HaKohein needed a special warning not to come to the Kodesh at all times, so that the habit should not make him lax, *chalilah*, in preserving that the sanctity of the place properly.

**Harav Chaim Shmulevitz, zt"l.** (*Sichos Mussar, Maamar 66*) cites the explanation of the **Chassid Yaavetz** (*Avos 1:4*) on the *passuk* in *Yechizkel* (46:9) "But when the people of the land come before Hashem at the times fixed for meeting, he who enters by way of the north gate to prostrate himself shall go out by way of the south gate, and he that enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate; he shall not return by way of the gate whereby he came in, but he shall go out by that which is opposite it." Hashem wanted to make sure that the person should not see the gatee twice, lest it become comparable in his eyes to the gate of his house and the walls to the walls of his house...And that was the sin of the Golden Calf, because the *Ohel Moed* stood amidst them until they were repulsed by it... Moshe Rabbeinu, *a"h*, sensed this and therefore, he later erected the *Ohel Moed* outside the camp, far from the camp.

Harav Chaim said about this: "Habit is the biggest enemy of any feeling of holiness and elevation. When a person is standing before the elevated and the holy, and in his heart, there are sparks of a holy fear, habit comes and puts them out one after another, until the fire is entirely extinguished."

How pleasant are these words for he who said them, because it is known that Rav Chaim deeply treasured davening at the Kosel, and whenever he came there, many gathered round him to witness his deeply emotional tefillah for *yeshuos* for the *klal* and individuals. Nevertheless, he would often warn his students that they should not come there too frequently, reminding them the words of the Chassid Yaavetz above, from which we can learn that frequently going to holy sites such as these might cause a person to become tired of them, and then to *chalilah* treat them with disdain and not with the respect they deserve. (*Bishvilei Haminhag*, Vol. 2, p. 311)

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Harav Yoel of Satmar, zt"l, was once at a wedding and the *badchan* asked him permission to imitate him before the guests. When he modestly replied in the affirmative, the man chose to imitate the Rebbe's davening, which he did with masterful talent. But suddenly, he noticed the Rebbe weeping bitterly. He thought he had gone too far and had violated the Rebbe's respect, so he immediately got off the stage and came to ask the Rebbe for forgiveness,

murmuring, "But I received permission..."

But the Rebbe soothed him: "You have nothing to worry about. I didn't cry because you offended me. But when I saw how you were imitating my motions when I daven and serve Hashem in such an exact manner, then I wondered—perhaps I am imitating myself...Perhaps because I have become so used to davening, I no longer serve Hashem with renewal every day, but rather like an imitator who does it as lip service--and that's why I cried."

*Lekach Tov, Chaim Shel Torah, Vol. II, 54*

#### Fast, Voice and Money

"בְּגָתָת יְבָא אֲחֹרֶן אֶל הַקָּדֵשׁ" (ט, ז)

Three things can help annul a decree – this is what the sages established: (*Yerushalmi Taanis 2a*): *kol (tefillah)*, fast (*teshuvah*) and money (*tzedakah*). The numerical value of each of these three things is 136, and together, they amount to 308, which is the equivalent of "zos."

Therefore we can explain the *passuk* according to *remez*: "Bezos yavo Aharon, with this Aharon will come to the *kodesh*," with the power of these three things hinted to in the word "zos" Aharon can come to the Kodesh to atone for Bnei Yisrael on Yom Kippur.

*Nachal Kedumim, Chomas Anach, Chida*

#### Amen Atones for a Sin

"וּנְשָׂא הַשְׁעִיר עַלְיִ אֶת כָּל הַוָּנָם אֶל אָרֶץ גּוֹדוֹה" (טז, כב)

The acronym of "es kol avonosam" and of "kol avonosam el" are numerically equivalent to 91, or amen, and from here we learn that in the merit of answering amen, a person achieves forgiveness and atonement.

Perhaps that is why in the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, in the brachah where we plead for atonement with the words "*selach lanu Avinu*", the acronym is also numerically equivalent to 91.

*Shaarei Nissim, p. 82*

#### The Sins of the Tongue Hinder the Tefillos

"חַנְתָּת בְּדַ קְדֵשׁ לִבְשׁ וּמְכַנֵּסִי בְּדַ יְיָה עַל בָּשָׂר וּבוֹנְגָט בְּדַ יְנָגָה"

"וּבְמַצְפָּנָת בְּדַ יְצָף בְּגָדִ קְדֵשׁ הַם וּרוֹחֵץ בְּמִים אֶת בָּשָׂר וּלְבָשָׂם" (טז, ד)

Rashi explains that we learn from this *passuk* that the Kohein does not perform the service of Yom Kippur conducted inside with the eight garments that he wears when doing the services outside, because these clothes include gold that is reminiscent of the *Cheit Ha'eigel* and we know the rule of "*ein kateigor naaseh saneigor*", the prosecutor cannot become the

defendant." (*Rosh Hashanah 26a*)

The **Bais Halevi** writes: From here we can learn how great the obligation of a person is to guard his tongue from forbidden speech, because tefillah is considered the service performed inside, as Chazal say that a *mispar* must direct his heart towards the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (*Tanchuma Vayishlach 21* and see *Brachos 30a*) and if his mouth is defiled with forbidden speech, how will he use it for the service of tefillah, when "*ein kateigor naaseh saneigor*?"!

*Shu"t Bais Halevi, vol. II, Drush 15*

#### Who Does the Kohein Daven For in the Kodesh HaKodashim?

"כָּל אָדָם לֹא הָיָה בַּאֲהָל מוֹעֵד בְּבָאוֹ לְכַפֵּר בְּקָדְשׁ עַד צָהָר" (טז, ז)

Chazal say (*Yoma 25b*) that when he emerged from the *Kodesh HaKodashim*, the Kohein Gadol would offer a short prayer: "May it be Your will Hashem that this should be a rainy year...and Your nation Yisrael should not need to be supported one by another, and You should not listen to the *tefilos* of travelers [who pray for the rain to stop]."

When **Harav Yoel of Satmar** visited Eretz Yisrael in 5692/1932, he entered the room of the elder *mekubal* of Yerushalayim, **Harav Chaim Shaul Dweck HaKohen** and said to him impressed:

From the words of the *Midrash* (*Vayikra Rabba 21:12*) it is explained that when he enters the *Kodesh HaKodashim* the Kohein Gadol was completely disconnected from materialism, but still, what did he daven for? The rain that Am Yisrael needs!

We learn from here how great is the obligation of a tzaddik, despite his lofty stature, not to forget in his prayers his oppressed brethren who need to deal with the "simple" problems in their lives.

*Amirah Yafah, 249*

#### Hashem is Close...To He Who Calls to Him Sincerely

Many asked: Why did the Kohein Gadol need to daven in the Kodesh HaKodashim that the prayers of the travelers to stop the rain not be accepted? Would it enter the mind that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would turn away from the distress of most people and stop the blessing of rain because of the desire of a few travelers?

The **Brisker Rav** explained: Because the *tefilos* of the travelers were offered from the depths of their broken hearts, therefore their importance is invaluable. It is a clear *passuk* in *Tehillim* (145:18): "*Karov Hashem*, Hashem is close to all those who call to Him, to all who call to Him sincerely." Therefore, in order to overcome that power—for the benefit of the *klal*, the Kohein Gadol needed to daven for that on Yom Kippur in the *Kodesh HaKodashim*.

*Shai LaTorah, vol. I, p.*

Amen –  
the Seal  
of the King!

The legendary gaon Harav Yaakov Emden, the Yaavetz, zt"l, wrote:  
(Passed away 30 Nissan, 5436/1676):

**Replying amen is the seal and existence of the brachah, and it is like the seal of the King - the King of the world – Who fulfills all the words of tefillah and requests.**

*Siddur Amudei Shamayim, Introduction, 3*

**"Because a letter written in the name of the king and signed with the ring of the king – cannot be retracted!" (Esther 8:8)**

## Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the Seder Hatefillah

### Yehi Ratzon At Conclusion of Birchos Hashachar

#### Why It Is Said At the Beginning of the Day

"Rebbi said after his davening the following *tefillah*: "Yehi ratzon milfanechecha Hashem...that You save us from impudence and insolence, from a bad person or a bad occurrence, from the *yetzer hara*, from a bad friend, a bad neighbor, the destructive Satan, and from difficult judgment and one who brings difficult judgment, whether he is a Jew or he is not a Jew." (*Brachos* 16b)

This special *tefillah*, which the holy Rebbi would recite at the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*, was established by the Rishonim to recite at the end of *Birchos Hashachar* (*Seder Rav Amram, Machzor Vitri*, and *Avudraham*).

In *Likutei Mahari* ch (*Seder Birchos Hashachar*) explained the *takanah* of the Rishonim according to the Shelah in *Emek Brachah*, that the eighteen *Birchos Hashachar* were established to correspond to the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, and when we say this *tefillah* after concluding *Birchos Hashachar*, it is as though he recited it after *Shemoneh Esrei* like Rebbi.

There are some who explained that this *Yehi Ratzon* was placed after the *Yehi Ratzon* following *Hamaavir Sheinah* because first we asked Hashem to save us from spiritual dangers, that we not be tempted to sin and be attracted to sinners, and here we are also asking that He save us from physical and financial damage. (*Siddur Iyun Tefillah*)

The need for this *tefillah* was explained by the Ra'sh of Germeiza in his *siddur*: Being that a person goes through the day among people, and deals with them, and among them there are certainly many dishonest ones, therefore, he needs to ask Hashem for mercy that He protect him from deception and from being drawn to sin, *chalilah*. This *tefillah* is the continuation of the *brachah* of *Hamaavir Sheinah*, in which we asked "and grant us charm and *chessed* and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us."

#### The Lowness of the Middah of Azus

At the beginning of the *Yehi Ratzon* we ask Hashem to save us "*mei'azei panim umei'azus panim*". The commentators explain: the *middah* of *azus*, impudence, is the worst, to the point that Chazal said (*Avos* 5:20): "*Az panim l'Gehinnom*", someone who is affected by pride and impudence can quickly deteriorate to the worst sins whose punishment is Gehinnom, because this *middah* is so terrible that it destroys even the good traits in a person and turns them to bad ones. (*Siach Yitzchak*)

The *Orchos Tzaddikim* (*Shaar Ha'azus*) wrote: "One who is impudent with others will not flee from discord, hate and envy. Someone who is an *az panim* denies the Oneness of Hashem, and will not respect an older or greater person, and all the sins in the Torah are easy in his eyes to transgress—all because of his great *azus*."

Therefore, at the beginning of the day we request from Hashem to spare us from "*azei panim*," that they should not ruin our path, and from being afflicted with "*azus panim*" the actual *middah*.

#### Protection from a "Bad Friend"

Further on we ask: "And distance us from a bad person and from a bad friend." That is the order: first we ask Hashem to distance us from a bad person, people who by nature are bad and their actions cause damage to others, and then we continue to ask that He distance us also from a bad friend, someone who can be called a "friend" with regard to his *midos bein adam lechaveiro*, but on matters of *bein adam laMakom* he is terrible. Such a person is sometimes worse than a bad person, because he looks like a friend, and thus his influence is more negative. As the Gra says in his commentary on *Mishlei* (11:9), most heretics and sinners *bein adam laMakom* look to be good by nature, and that is one of the tricks that the Yetzer Hara uses to trap people and cause them to stray. He persuades them to befriend these people because of their positive traits, and then they will follow them to violate the Torah. (*Siach Yitzchak*)

Harav Aharon of Belz would say: Even though we have already davened in the prior *Yehi Ratzon* "distance us from a bad person and a bad friend" we repeat here "save me... from a bad friend." Earlier, we davened for those whose evilness is apparent to all. About them it is sufficient to ask only "*veharchikeinu*," distance us. But here we ask about those whose wickedness is not apparent to all; about them we need a special request, "*shetazlani, save me.*" (*Pshat V'Iyun, Brachos* 16b)

The *Divrei Yechezkel* of Shneiva added: There are many people who by nature are good people, and they may even have lofty spiritual *middos*, but every person must examine himself to see if his nature and his *middos* are suited for him to befriend a certain person, or if such a friendship would be harmful. This is especially relevant for the youth: not every youth is suited to befriend another boy. Sometimes they are like "meat and milk" where each in his own right is good, but when they join together, they become *assur*. (*Divrei Yechezkel Hachadash*, p. 318; *Kovetz Eitz Chaim*, 6, p. 410).

It is also apt here to cite the words of the *Sifsei Kohein* (Re'e) that the words "*mei'adam ra*" are an acronym of the six synonyms of poverty: "*mach, evyon, dal, misken, rash, ani*." We recite this as a request that Hashem spare us from reaching the point of poverty, *chalilah*. (*Telalei Oros*, in the name of the *Kitzur Hashalah*)

#### The Yetzer Hara Destroys the Path of a Person

The request "*umisatan hamashchis*," the Rokeach explained: When HaKadosh Baruch Hu seeks to do good for a person, the Satan stands before Him and says: Ribbo shel Olam, why would You do him a *chessed* for no reason, without testing him? Upon receiving permission, the Satan goes and takes the keys of desire, and misleads the person so that he should destroy his way, until he sins and loses that benefit. Therefore, we ask Hashem to save us from the Satan that causes us to destroy our path. (*Peirush Hatefillah LaRokeach*)

Why is the Satan called a *mashchis*? Was he not created for this purpose, to test the person? However, the Baal Shem Tov clarified the explanation of the *Tosafos* on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 75a): A *shochet* is guilty because of *tzovea*, dyeing. The Baal Shem Tov says that the *Tosafos* meant the *yetzer hara*, which is also called a *shochet*, and his guilt is because of "*tzovea*," that although he was sent to tempt a person to transgress sins, of his own accord he changes and "colors" the *aveiros* so that they appear to be *mitzvos*, and he will be found guilty of that in the World to Come.

Therefore, we call him "*mashchis*," because he destroys the mission that Hashem appointed him to, and instead, tricks those people and portrays *aveiros* as *mitzvos*. (*Chiddushei Binyan Tzvi*, p. 35)

## A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About Amen and Tefillah

#### One Who Seeks to Do Teshuvah. Amen.

It was 3:20 in the morning. Reb Dovid, a regular *kollet ayreich*, and father of a large family, opened his eyes and felt the burning sensation of thirst.

He sat up, still somewhat sleepy, washed his hands and did what every person would do in such a case: he walked to the kitchen, opened the refrigerator, poured a cup of cold water, and, just before he began to make the *brachah*, he remembered...

A few days earlier, Reb Dovid had made a special pledge: he would not make a *brachah* if there was no one present to answer amen. Right now, there was no one there to do this for him, but he didn't consider even for a moment to violate his *kabbalah*.

The thirst tickled at his throat, he just *had* to drink, but what was he to do? Everyone was sleeping; who would reply amen??!

Reb Dovid's throat was almost rasping from thirst when he suddenly had an idea:

He knew that the customer service department of a certain company was open 24 hours a day; why shouldn't he call and ask one of the operators to reply amen??

Reb Dovid dialed and was immediately answered by a courteous operator: "Sorry to bother," Reb Dovid began. He took a deep breath and tried to explain in simple terms his very strange request: "I have undertaken not to make a *brachah* if there is no one to reply amen after me. Right now I am very thirsty, and I have no one to reply. Perhaps you can do it for me??"

Reb Dovid's voice sounded hesitant, but apparently he sounded sincere and honest and that touched the heart of the operator, who agreed.

Reb Dovid quickly made the *brachah* aloud, with *kavanah*: "Baruch Atah Hashem...Shehakol..." On the other end of the line, in who knows where, the secular operator replied, "Amen!"

It was the first time in his life that the man had uttered the word.

After sipping from his cup, Reb Dovid warmly thanked the operator, but the latter was in no hurry to hang up the phone. He asked about the significance of the short word, and why it was so important to Reb Dovid to call about it in the middle of the night?

Reb Dovid was happy to explain patiently but briefly, as best as possible, and the conversation came to an end, but not before Reb Dovid gave the operator the *zechus* to recite another amen after he made a *Borei Nefashos*. Reb Dovid blessed him that in the power of amen he should merit all kinds of salvation.

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Apparently amen does have power...

Several hours passed and towards the end of the night shift, the operator remembered the strange call he'd had a few hours earlier, and something awakened inside him. He went over to the water cooler, poured a cup of cold water, and decided to make a *brachah* and ask one of his friends to answer amen. But suddenly he froze: Make a *brachah*? How? He didn't know how to make a *brachah*!

With unexplained determination, he went over to the desk where he'd just handed in the list of calls from the whole night. It wasn't hard to identify the caller he was looking for; it was the longest call he'd had all night, and perhaps the longest he'd had since he began to work here.

The operator dialed from his personal phone, and a surprised voice answered the phone. In the background, he heard the clamor of children. He glanced at the clock: ten to eight, the busiest hour in homes in Israel...He thought of hanging up and forgetting about the whole idea, but the voice on the other side of the line asked: "Good morning? Who's calling?"

This time it was his turn to be uneasy: "Hello," he said hesitantly. "I'm the operator from the middle of the night..."

A short, stunned silence and then Reb Dovid recovered: he thanked him again for his middle of the night favor and then asked, "What can I do for you?"

Instead of an answer, he heard noises on the other side of the line; the operator walked over to his friend with the cup of water, and briefly explained what he wanted. Then he went back to Reb Dovid: "I want to make a *brachah* on a cup of water. How do I do it?"

Reb Dovid was shocked, but he didn't hesitate: He also poured himself a cup of water, and his children, who were experienced, gathered around him as he made a *brachah* loudly and clearly, with the person on the other end of the line repeating word by word: "Baruch Atah Hashem...Shehakol Nihiyah Bidvaro!"

The resounding amen of his children did not prevent him from also hearing the broken amen on the other side of the line.

"Thanks a lot, we'll be in touch."

They conversation came to an end.

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However, the story was not over, and like an avalanche, it quickly developed into a major story, with a stunning ending beyond anything imaginable:

The operator's friend, who was by nature a curious type, wanted to understand what had happened here. He asked his friend, but because the original operator could not answer all the questions, the two once again dialed Reb Dovid's number, just to find out more. Reb Dovid wasn't quick to respond; wisely he said: "It's not for the phone." He invited them to come to his home where, over a cup of coffee and a plate of homemade cookies, the first conversation between them began. It was a pleasant, productive conversation, the first of several similar ones that ultimately morphed into a regular *shuir*.

The Jewish spark that was kindled inside them quickly turned into an ember that grew stronger and ignited the hearts of the two operators to their Father in heaven. The process was neither easy nor short, but slowly and surely they progressed, step by step towards *mitzvah* observance.

A few years later, they both married and established Torah homes, homes of *emunah*-homes of amen. And all because of the power of one amen that was recited in the middle of the night.

Tocho Ratzuf Ahavah, p. 430