

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## PARASHAS BAMIDBAR

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Count the Brachos

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל" (א, ב)

The Rambam says (Tefillah 7, 16) regarding the *takanah* of one hundred *brachos*: "And he counts the *brachos* until he completes one hundred *brachos*." Harav Yitzchak Zev of Brisk, ז"ל, noted that an especially praiseworthy way of fulfilling this *takanah* is to actively count the *brachos* until 100 are reached, and the Brisker Rav would do that.

Teshuvos Vehanagos, Vol. II, 129

According to Rashi in the previous *passuk*: "Because of His love for them, He counts them all the time." Based on what the Brisker Rav said, one can add that just like Hashem commanded Moshe to count Bnei Yisrael to prove His love for them, so, too, counting the *brachos* we utter indicates how much we love them. A *brachah* that is recited with love is undoubtedly valued more by Hashem.

Meir Oz on Mishnah Berurah 46, 3

#### A Source for Various Nuschaos in Tefillah

איש על דגלו באת לבית אבתם יחנו בני ישראל" (ב, ג)

Based on the words of this *passuk*, the Shela (Derech Chaim Tochechas Mussar) in the name of the Ari HaKadosh, brings down a justification for the fact that the communities among Am Yisrael have varying *nuschaos* of *tefillah*: Just like there were four flags beneath which Bnei Yisrael camped, each one under his flag, so, too, there are four groups that Klal Yisrael are divided into: Spain, Ashkenaz, Catalonia and Italy, and each of them has the right to remain under his banner and to act according to his customs, because "eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim Chaim, these and these are the living Words of Hashem."

HaRav Meir Shapiro of Lublin was known to say on this subject: "There are those who recite *Baruch Sheamar* before *Hodu* and some who say *Hodu* before *Baruch Sheamar*, but all of them as one praise and thank Hashem in 'Yehi Chevod Hashem L'Olam...'"

Taam V'Daas

#### Unique Significance to Every Tefillah

Similarly, the Mashgiach of Slabodka, Hagaon Rav Moshe Tikochinsky explained:

Although the *nusach* that we have today was established by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, and we must not alter it, we must still try and daven with vibrancy and an uplifted spirit, and through that, to add *kavanos* and sentiments from deep in our hearts.

He added that one can infer this from the words in this *passuk*: Although *tefillah* was given to us with a *set nusach*, "b'osos lebaish avosam" we must still

adorn it with *kavanos* and emotions, "ish al diglo, each man on his own flag."

Umasok Ha'or

When the Shefa Chaim of Sanz visited America for the first time, he entered Yeshivas Torah Vodaas at a time when the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, was delivering a *shiur* in *biur tefillah* to his students.

The Rebbe saw this and was surprised: How can one teach *biur tefillah*? he queried. Don't the words of davening take on new *kavanos* and new explanations each day, and the *tefillah* of yesterday is not similar to the *tefillah* of today?...These words were so befitting the Sanzer Rebbe, because the emotion and enthusiasm with which he davened was legendary.

Lapid Ha'eish, Vol. II, p. 610.

#### It Should Remind Him of Death

באת לבית אבתם יחנו בני ישראל מנגד סביב לאהל מועד יחנו" (שם)

Rashi explains the words "b'osos lebeish avosam": "With the sign that Yaakov their father gave them

#### In the Presence of the Leaders of Thousands of Bnei Yisrael

אלה קרואי העדה נשיא מטות אבותם ראשי אלפי ישראל" (א, טז)

"Nesiei matos avosam" is an acronym for amen, to hint that one who answers amen has the gates of Gan Eden open to him and merits to bask there in the presence of *tzaddikim*, the leaders of thousands of people in Klal Yisrael.

Chasam Sofer, Kerem D"L

when they carried him out of Mitzrayim." Why were Bnei Yisrael were ordered to arrange the flags specifically in the way that the sons of Yaakov carried their father out of Egypt towards his burial place in Eretz Canaan? What was significant about it?

Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, Av Bais Din of Shamlo, explains:

Maseches Shabbos (153a) says: "Rabi Eliezer says: repent one day before you die. His disciples asked him: Does a person known which day he will die? He replied: On the contrary, he should repent today lest he die tomorrow, and he will thus find himself doing *teshuvah* all his life."

As such, we can explain that that is why Hashem instructed that when the nation was camped, and things were tranquil and routine, they should camp

in the order that the sons of Yaakov stood to carry their father to his burial, and thus they will always remember the day of their death, and will be in a perpetual state of *teshuvah*.

This can be inferred from the end of the *passuk* as well: "Around the Ohel Moed they should camp." A cemetery is called a "bais moed lechol chai" (Iyov 30:23), and from here we learn that the reason that they camped in the order of Yaakov's *levayah* was so that they should always remember the day of their death.

Drashos Lechem Shlomo, p. 275

#### The Severity of Mentioning Hashem's Name Without Kavanah

ושא את מספר שמותם" (ג, ט)

The Tanach uses the word "ושא" in three places; here; in *sefer Devarim* (3:27): "Aleh rosh hapsigah vesa einech...ki lo taavor es HaYarden hazeh, climb to the top of the hill and raise your eyes...because you will not cross this Yarden." And in *Tehillim* (25:18): "Re'eh anyi v'amali vesa lechol chatosai, see my affliction and my toil and forgive all my sins." (Baal Haturim)

The *sefer Yitav Panim* (Tochachas Mussar on the 13 Middos and Yom Kippur) brings a story that Harav Yitzchak Chayut, the Rav of Prague, related about himself that can explain the connection between these three *pesukim*:

During the *gaon's* severe illness, he dreamed about a man that had always been known as a *tzaddik*, and who had recently passed away. The man stood before the Heavenly Court. At first, they opened the *Shulchan Aruch*, and asked him: "Did you fulfill what it says here?" The *tzaddik* immediately responded, "Yes!"

But when they continued to ask him: "Did you not recite Hashem's Name in vain, and did you have *kavanah* to the meaning of the words when you recited them?" he stood silently and did not answer. Immediately, black clad angels came before the Heavenly Court. The *dayanim* said to him: "These are the angels that were created by the Names you uttered without *kavanah*, and now look what you caused with your deeds." Immediately, he was taken Gehinnom.

The *Yitav Panim* concludes: "Therefore, while a person is still alive, he should pay attention to how many times he uttered Hashem's Name in vain, without *kavanah*, and should remember that when he leaves this world, they will say to him...Look, 'vesa es mispar shemosam,' - how many times you mentioned the Name of Hashem without *kavanah*, and 'raise your eyes...that you will not pass' into Gan Eden because of this.

At that time, a person will not have an answer, and will only be able to plead before Hashem: "See my affliction and my toil *vesa lechol chatosai*," look at my difficulties that I had in life and forgive this sin, which was caused by the troubles in my life.

## Anochi Hashem Elokecha – Amen!

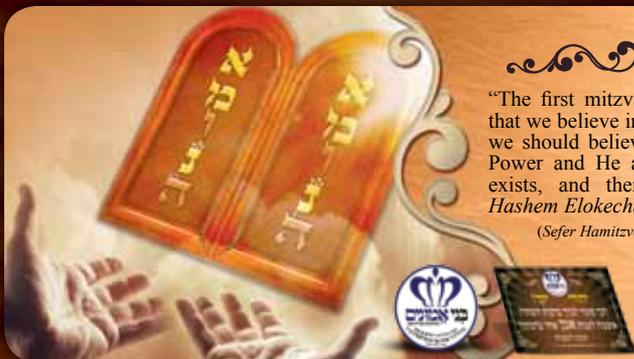
"The first mitzvah is the commandment that we believe in Godliness, and it is that we should believe that there is a Divine Power and He activates everything that exists, and therefore it says "Anochi Hashem Elokecha"

(Sefer Hamitzvos LehaRambam, Mitzvas Aseh 1)

"A person must make sure in davening and when making *brachos* that someone should reply amen—which is a word derived from *emunah*, and anyone whose forbears stood at Har Sinai and received the Torah, which is called *emunah*, and is a descendent of Avraham Avinu, who was the leading person in *emunah*, as it says of him (Bereishis 15:6) "Ve'heemin bah" must concentrate his heart and mind in answering amen."

Kad Hakemach, Emunah

As Zman Mattan Torah nears, let us accept upon ourselves to redouble our efforts to answer amen with *kavanah* after *Birchos Hashachar* and other *brachos* and *tefillos* and thus we will merit to instill *emunah* in our hearts for eternity. Amen.



## L'Olam Yehei Adam (4)

## A Necessary Introduction for Accepting Ol Malchus Shamayim

After clarifying the obligation of a person to always have the fear of Heaven before him (*L'olam yehei adam*), and recognizing the fact that the way to reach this level is realizing his nothingness compared to the greatness of the Creator (*Meh anu mah chayeinu*), the knowledge of what a person's purpose is in this world and the understanding of the essence of true pleasure (*"aval anachnu amcha bnei brisecha"*), we now reach the central part of the *tefillah*, which is accepting *Ol Malchus Shamayim* upon ourselves with love.

Before we do so, we once again express thanks to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and express the conclusion that we reached after all the above introductions: "*Lefichach*, therefore, we have to thank You, praise You and glorify You, and bless and sanctify and give praise and thanks to Your Name. *Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu...* that we rise in the morning, and go to shul and *batei midrash...* and twice a day we recite with love: 'Shema Yisrael.'"

Without the recognition and preparation in all the introductions, we will not be able to say such far reaching words with full *kavanah*: "*Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu...yaffah yerushaseinu*," on a mitzvah that appears to be so simple and routine—that we rise each day to accept *Ol Malchus Shamayim*. Only one who recognizes his nothingness and understands that only because of the *chesed* of Hashem did he merit to be selected from all the creations to serve Hashem and to praise and glorify His Name, can say "*Ashreinu!*" wholeheartedly. (*Sifsei Chaim, Rinas Chaim*)

## Love of Hashem Intensifies Each Day

Another point that we say *Ashreinu* about is for the fact that even though each and every day we accept *Ol Malchus Shamayim* upon ourselves in the morning and the evening, routine does not influence us and the fire and love that burns in our souls to love Hashem with all our hearts and our being, does not cool down or dull. On the contrary, it intensifies and grows stronger each morning anew, and even causes us to rise with alacrity each day in order to accept *Ol Malchus Shamayim*.

Similarly, it says about the Kohein Gadol (*Vayikra* 6:5): "And the fire on the *mizbeach* shall burn on it; it shall not go out. The kohein shall kindle wood upon it every morning." Even though it was possible that the routine of the *avodah* would dull the emotions of the kohein each day, the *passuk* still tells us that each day, more love was added, in the essence of "*uba'ar aleha hakohein eitzim baboker baboker*," and the fire of love within him will never be extinguished. (*Drashos Chasam Sofer* Vol. II, *Shabbos Hagoal* 5595).

## Fortunate Are We Because We Know What to Choose

The *Yalkut Me'am Loez* (*Devarim* 11:26) cites the *meshal* of Rabi Yehoshua ben Karchah: There was once a king who made a big feast for all his ministers and workers. There, as was suitable for a king's table, all kinds of delicacies were prepared in front of the guests; some dishes were more well known, and others less. The crowning glory was a rare dish whose flavor was like the taste of Gan Eden, and which could not be found anywhere in the world. But none of the participants had ever heard of it or seen it.

Near the king sat a man who the king loved dearly. While most of those seated around the table gorged on the familiar foods and ignored the more exotic dishes because they had never tasted their unique flavors, the king revealed to this person that he would be better off tasting all those dishes that no one else had touched. There was nothing like them in all the land, the king said, and he did not desist until he took the hands of his good friend and placed them on that expensive, special delicacy. When the man tasted it and realized how delectable it was, he immediately began to sing praises to the king, who had been so benevolent to him and had introduced him to this delicious food.

The same is true with us. It is incumbent upon us to praise Hashem each day for choosing us from all the other denizens of the earth, and for helping us understand the secret of true happiness and showing us what is worthy to choose from all the pleasures in the world by having merited to be *meyached* His Holy Name twice a day, to feel the sweetness and to accept upon ourselves *Ol Malchus Shamayim* with love.

The *Yalkut Me'am Loez* concludes with a moving story: "There was a group of Chassidim in our generation who were captured by evil people and taken to their camp, where it was known that anyone who reached the camp was burned alive. When they arrived there and saw the brutal soldiers, they began to rejoice in their hearts and danced and sang, saying: "*Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu umah na'im goraleinu* that we merited to reach this level of sanctifying the Name of Hashem in public."

## Accepting Ol Malchus Shamayim

Let us conclude with the wonderful commentary of Harav Shimon Sofer of Krakow on the concept of *Ol Malchus Shamayim*. Why is accepting Hashem's reign upon ourselves called an "*ol*", a burden? The explanation is that when we are in *galus*, we are trapped between our souls that yearn to serve Hashem, and our minds and desires that oppose it. That's why we must make the extra effort to fulfill each *mitzvah* properly, and the heavier the burden of the *mitzvah* is, the more its importance will grow stronger.

However, in the future, when knowledge of Hashem will fill the world, and everyone will see the reasons for the mitzvos, they will no longer be referred to as an "*ol*" a burden. The Ramban explains the words of the Gemara (*Niddah* 61b): "*Mitzvos* that will be null in the future," does not mean that the *mitzvos* will actually be annulled, but rather the *ol*, the burden, of the *mitzvos* will be null. Because everyone will recognize the reasons behind each *mitzvah*, the *mitzvah* will no longer be a burden; on the contrary, people will all long to fulfill them.

This is how the Gaon wondrously explained the Gemara in *Brachos* (13b): "Rav said to Rabi Chiya: I did not see that Rabbeinu HaKadosh accepted upon himself *Ol Malchus Shamayim*. He said to him: when he passes his hand over his face, he accepts *Ol Malchus Shamayim*." Based on this, it is explained that Rebbi, in his great holiness, understood in his time all the reasons for the *mitzvos* and their secrets, and therefore, for him they were not a burden, but when he passed his hands over his face, in other words, when he tried to stop the greatness of his understanding in order to perform the *mitzvos* as an "*ol*" then that was considered for him to be accepting *Ol Malchus Shamayim*. (Introduction, *Chasam Sofer* on *Maseches Chulin*)

## The Guarantor Was Repaid in Full

Like everything in life, the business world is also full of ups and downs. Thus, Mr. L., a seasoned American businessman found himself one day in what appeared to be a dead end. He had taken large loans in order to establish an enterprise that had every reason to succeed, but in reality, it failed, and all the money that had been invested was lost.

In just one day, Mr. L. went from being a respected, wealthy, sought after person to someone who was in a miserable situation and who would go bankrupt as soon as the news spread to people and banks that he had business connections with.

It looked like there was no way out, but he had one hope: If one of his friends would be able to lend him \$250,000 with absolute secrecy, and would not demand that guarantors signed on the loan, then there was a chance he'd be able to pull himself out of the rut.

Where could he find a person that would be willing to put his money at risk like that with no guarantors, especially when there was a significant chance that he would not be able to repay the loans? Mr. L. mulled over these questions until he thought of an old, dear friend, Mr. B., with whom he was very close.

For many years, Mr. B., who was also a well known businessman, had shared a floor in an office in a Manhattan skyscraper with Mr. L. With a heavy heart, Mr. L. decided to ask him with the hope that their deep friendship would withstand this test.

Weak-kneed, Mr. L. knocked at the door of his friend's office. Once inside, he began to share his plight to his friend, how he had invested in a venture that should have succeeded but for unexpected reasons had failed and he had lost all the investment money. "Right now, I'm not only a pauper," Mr. L. said, "I also owe people tremendous amounts of money."

Mr. B. listened to his friend in shock, and then Mr. L. continued. "I haven't lost hope yet, because I have one option to possibly extricate myself from this, but in order to do that I need a loan of a quarter of a million dollars."

"No problem!" Mr. B. replied with a smile, not understanding what the fuss was about. "Just write up a promissory note, bring some guarantors to sign, and I'll transfer the full sum into your account..."

"I can't ask guarantors to sign," Mr. L. replied shamefacedly.

"Why?" Mr. B. asked, and immediately understood, but had to turn his friend down. "I've never lent such a large sum of money without guarantors. I can't do that!"

Mr. L. could almost smell the disappointment; he understood his friend's refusal, but decided to make one last effort: He grasped his friend's hand and led him out onto a dark balcony, where he pointed to the sky and said in a shaky voice: "My friend, I understand your fears. On the other hand, I really cannot bring any guarantors to sign for the loan. But raise your eyes On High, where the best Guarantor in the world resides. Do you agree to put your faith in Him?!"

Mr. B., a devout, G-d fearing Yid, could not stand firm in the face of such raw *emunah*. He felt flooded with emotion, and with a fluttering heart, he shook his friend's hand and said, "Come back in two days; the money will be waiting for you."

A few months passed and Mr. L.'s rehabilitation plan was working out well, *baruch Hashem*. But when the date came to pay back the loan, he did not yet have enough cash. He was quite embarrassed, but hoped to be able to have the money within a few days.

When a few more weeks passed and the money was not yet returned to him, Mr. B. decided innocently to turn to the Guarantor... He stepped out on the same dark balcony and raised his eyes Heavenward as he whispered a prayer: "Hashem, You know how hard it was for me to agree to my friend's request. I agreed only because I relied on You as the best and most reliable Guarantor in the world."

"Several weeks have passed since the date the loan was supposed to be returned. I believe that my friend has not done so intentionally, but because he is ashamed and unable to, but You are the Master of the World..."

Mr. B. paused for a few seconds and then continued, as tears flowed from his eyes: "I'm not asking for a quarter of a million dollars, because that's like nothing in Your eyes. I ask You that instead, you should send a *yeshuah* to my twenty eight year old daughter who has been waiting for a *shidduch* for so many years. I am sure You will not turn a blind eye to my plea!"

Ten days passed and the Guarantor did not disappoint. A *shidduch* suggestion that had been made several years earlier and was rejected for various reasons became relevant once again. The two sides decided to try again and the progress was rapid. Within a few days, the plate was broken.

Mr. B. could not contain his joy. So many years of waiting had come to an abrupt end and his heart overflowed with gratitude to the Ribono Shel Olam for hearing his *tefillah* that had come from the deepest place in his heart.

An unexpected guest turned up at the engagement a few days later—with an envelope in his hand. Mr. L. had come to rejoice with his friend's *simchah*, and at the same time to repay his debt.

"Mazel tov! I'm sorry about the delay, but there's a check in here for a quarter of a million dollars..."

"You don't have to return it to me," Mr. B. replied to his shocked friend. "The Guarantor paid everything, to the last penny."

Mr. L. was puzzled and the *kallah's* father began to explain, but Mr. L. was insistent: "I committed to pay you back and I have to meet that commitment!" he claimed adamantly.

"I won't touch the money," the *kallah's* father replied, but his friend refused to hear anything of it.

This argument could have gone on for a while longer if not for the Rosh Yeshivah who was waiting to read the *Tenaim* who intervened. When he heard what the dispute was about he said, "Mr. L. will return the loan, because the money is not his, but because Mr. B. was repaid by the Guarantor, as he asked, the money should be returned to the Guarantor, in other words, to *tzeddakah*."

A suitable cause was quickly found, an institution that needed a huge sum of money urgently, and the money was returned in full to the Guarantor.

Everyone present saw how Hashgachah had orchestrated events, in the merit of one *tefillah* that came from the bottom of the heart.

Birchas Dovid, Behar