

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS BEHAALOSECHA

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Aharon Didn't Alter Anything - Despite His Status

"ייעש כן אהרן" (ה, ג)

Rashi explains: "This comes to praise Aharon for not changing anything." The question is self understood: Why is this praise of Aharon? Would one think that he changed something he had heard directly from Hashem?

The **Shefa Chaim** of Sanz explains:

The Yerushalmi (*Brachos* 2 4) says that a Rabi Matanya said: I am grateful to my head for bending forward by itself when I recite *Modim*. This seems difficult to understand: is it possible that this *tzaddik* did not have *kavanah* when davening? The explanation is that when davening, Rabi Matnya reached such a high level that he disconnected from his body and rose to the Heavens, and thus, it seems apt for him to be grateful that despite him really being in upper spheres, his head bowed by *Modim*.

Similarly, with Aharon, the *passuk* is praising him that despite reaching such lofty levels in the service of the Mishkan and the mitzvah of lighting the Menorah, and he no longer had any connection with his body, he still did not change anything that was done when lighting the Menorah.

Beitzila Demeheimnusa, Nitzavim Vayeilech 5766

Tefillah and Fasting on the Yahrzeit

"קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהרת אתם" (ה, ו)

Why did the Leviim need special purification?

The **Panim Yafos** explains: The *passuk* in *Tehillim* (50:3) says, "*Uvsevivav nisharah me'od*." *Chazal* say (*Baba Kama* 50a) that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is strict with *tzaddikim* like a hairsbreadth, and therefore, the as a person's level rises, so, too, does the strictness with which he is regarded. Even actions that were previously not considered sins for him, will be judged again in a stricter manner when he reaches a greater level.

When Moshe Rabbeinu set apart the members of Shevet Levi for service in the Mishkan, they needed atonement and purification for those same actions that they were not judged for in the past, and that is the atonement mentioned here.

The **Panim Yafos** thus explained a reason for the custom in Am Yisrael to fast on the day of a parent's *yahrzeit*. Because the *neshamah* rises higher in the Upper World each year, it is judged again even for actions in the past that they were not taken to task for. That is why *tefillah* and

fasting of the descendents of the deceased on the *yahrzeit* are beneficial.

Vehu Rachum on Motzai Yom Kippur

This helps us understand the reason that we recite "*Vehu Rachum yechaper avon velo yashchis*," immediately after *Ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur, before *Maariv*, even though we have just spent the entire day atoning for our sins and have been promised (*Vayikra*, 16:30) "*Ki bayom hazeh, on this day, yechaper aleichem letaher eschem, you will atone and be purified from your sins.*"

Hence, on the contrary, because our sins were atoned on this day, and we have been elevated to a higher level, we need a new atonement for those sins that were not considered sins earlier. Therefore we begin by saying: "*Vehu rachum yechaper avon.*"

Telalei Oros—Shnayim Mikra

There Is Nothing Greater Than Amen

"והקרבת את הלויים לפני אהל מועד והקוללת את כל עדת בני ישראל" (ה, ט)

"*Haleviim*" is numerically equivalent to amen, and the acronym "*es kol adas*" is also numerically equivalent to amen. From here we see that the leaders of the community have to gather Am Yisrael and awaken them to the importance of responding amen, of which *Chazal* said (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 a) "There is nothing greater before Hashem than amen answered by Am Yisrael."

Ohr Simchah Nitzavim

Reciting Vezos HaTorah When Raising the Torah

"על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו את משמרת ה' שמרו על פי ה' ביד משה" (ט, כג)

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 134b) rules that when raising the *sefer Torah* in shul, this *passuk* (*Devarim* 4:44) should be recited: "*Vezos haTorah asher sam Moshe lifnei Bnei Yisrael.*"

There is a widespread custom in Klal Yisrael to conclude with the end of our *passuk*: "*al pi Hashem beyad Moshe,*" as it is printed in most *Siddurim*. But **Harav Chaim of Volozhin** is quoted as saying (*Kol Hakasuv L'Chaim* p. 157)

that this is a distorted custom, because it is a clear Gemara (*Taanis* 27b): "Any *passuk* in the Torah that was not divided by Moshe Rabbeinu, we have no right to divide."

Indeed, the *Gra siddur* says that after saying "*Vezos HaTorah,*" the entire *passuk* from this *parashah* should be recited: "*Al pi Hashem yachanu v'al pi Hashem yisa'u...al pi Hashem beyad Moshe.*"

When the Sefer Torah is Taken Out, Harmful Forces Awaken

"ייהי בנסע הארץ ויאמרו משה קומה ה' ויפצו איביך וינסו משנאיך מפניך" (י, לה)

A wonderful reason for the custom of saying this *passuk* when taking the *sefer Torah* out to read (see *Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim* 134 4) was offered by the Rav of Yerushalayim, **Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, in a speech he gave at the *Chanukas Habayis* for Yeshivas Sfas Emes in Tammuz 5686/1926.

It is well known that the more the force of *kedushah* is aroused, the more negative forces arise to try and prevent the *kedushah* from taking effect. The holy *Zohar* (*Vayikra* 26 a) says that when the *sefer Torah* is taken out of the *aron kodesh*, the Gates of Mercy are opened, and therefore, we hurry to ask, "*Kumah Hashem, and may Your enemies be scattered, and those who hate You should flee from before You,*" so that those negative evil forces that are awakened by the taking out of the *sefer Torah* should be neutralized.

Chochmas Chaim

What Did Am Yisrael Complain About?

"ועתה נפשנו יבשה אין כל בלתי את המן עינינו" (יא, א)

Why did Am Yisrael say "our hearts are dry" and not "our bodies are dry", which seems to make more sense in the context of their complaint of a lack of food?

The **Tchebiner Rav, zt"l**, explains: When they said this, Bnei Yisrael were not complaining that they did not enjoy the *mann* enough. On the contrary, they could taste any flavor in the *mann* without any effort. Their complaint was that their spiritual soul was being starved, because they made only one *brachah* on the *mann* (the *poskim* are divided as to which *brachah* it was) and thus their souls were lacking the many *brachos* that they would have been reciting if they would have had all kinds of food.

Kovetz Kol HaTorah 47



Bais Aharon Borchu Es Hashem

The words and custom of the Bais Aharon of Karlin regarding the custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*:

... Each person should hear each *brachah* from a friend so that he can answer amen. Because it says in the writings of the Ari, z"l, that he would hear *Birchos Hashachar* even from one hundred people, even though at that moment he could have been *meyached* all the worlds, he did not watch the time and was not lazy to hear even one hundred times *Hanosen Lasechvi Binah* and all the other *brachos*.

Bais Aharon, *Seder Hayom V'Azharos Kodesh*

Reb Yom Tov Simchah, the Bais Aharon of Karlin's attendant, would enter his Rebbe's room each morning in order to recite the *brachos* so that he could answer amen after them.

Otzarei Yisrael p. 92

I am also strengthening myself like a lion each day to say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.



L'Olam Yehei Adam (5)

After accepting *Ol Malchus Shamayim*, we conclude the *tefillah* of *L'Olam Yehei Adam* with a unique and detailed pledge of *emunah*, which includes praise and a request:

“אתה הוא עד שלא נברא העולם, אתה הוא משנברא העולם, אתה הוא בעולם הזה, ואתה הוא לעולם הבא, קדש את שמך על מקדישי שמך, וקדש את שמך בעולמך, ובישועתך תרום ותגביה קרננו למעלה, והושיענו בקרוב למען שמך, ברוך המקדש שמו ברבים”

You Are the One As Long As the World Was Not Created

In this world, one can see and feel the *Hashgachah* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu every step of the way, if we only open our eyes and look – both in the way Hashem leads His creations, and in the wonderful processes of nature and creation. There are several *pesukim* in *Tanach* that refer to this matter, such as: ‘Raise your eyes upwards and see Who created this’ (*Yeshayah* 40:26); ‘And from my flesh I will see Hashem’ (*Iyov* 19:26) and others.

This *emunah* is very fitting and important in the practical part of our faith, but the fundamental basis of our *emunah* must not be contingent on anything – *emunah* that even before the world was created, HaKadosh Baruch Hu existed with the same force that He revealed to us after it was created. The fact that the wonderful world around us exists and is renewed each day, does not add to or detract from the greatness and power of Hashem, as we are supposed to have in mind when mentioning Hashem’s Name (see *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 5 1) that He is “*Hayah, Hoveh Veyehiyeh*.”

This basic knowledge can strengthen every person, especially when he experiences difficult crises, because even when a detail in the way creation is managed does not sit well with us, our *emunah* must not weaken even one iota. In order to do that, we must ingrain this knowledge in our hearts, and thus we will be able to get through any event with pure faith that Hashem’s *Hashgachah* continues to guide our every step even if some of the things transpiring around us do not seem to be going well. (The Mashgiach Harav Yeruchem of Mir, *Daas Torah*, Vol. VI, *Maamarim*, p. 148, and the basis is in *Nefesh Hachaim, Shaar Gimel, Perek Dalet*)

Just like before the Creation of the world, it is simple to us that “You are He” and “There is no other besides Him”, because besides Hashem, nothing existed at the time, so, too, after the world was Created we must believe that nothing has changed in the way the world is controlled, and that today, too, “*ein old milvado*” (**Tuv Daas, Malchiyos*, p. 195)

“Sanctify Your Name on Those Who Sanctify Your Name”

“Because Yisrael enter the *batei knessios* in the morning and are *meyached* His Name and say *Shema Yisrael*, all the ministering angels gather before Hashem and say before Him: ‘You are He until the world was created and You are He since the world was created, You are in this world and You are in the Next World, sanctify Your Name on those who sanctify Your Name.’ Immediately, Hashem is calmed and He does not destroy the world, and reconsiders for the sake of Am Yisrael.” (*Yalkut Shimoni, V’eschanan*, 836)

After saying such lofty things about the nothingness of a person and the greatness of the Creator, especially after declaring that the crux of our good fortune is the merit to say *Shema Yisrael* morning and evening, how can we then continue to make personal requests for material matters?! Therefore, we precede by saying, “*Ribbono shel Olam*, sanctify Your Name on those who sanctify Your Name! Because what will people say when they see You sons that sanctify Your Name each day being crushed under the burden of *parnassah*? Out of respect to You, it is worthy to have mercy on them and grant them salvation, And with Your salvation, You will raise our stature.” (*Toras Moshe [Chasam Sofer] V’Eschanan*).

Towards the end of his life, Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz, *rosh yeshiva* of Mir, lay in hospital in serious condition. When things got so bad that the doctors gave up on his life, his *talmid*, Harav Zev Chechik, ז”ל, began to daven tearfully, while explaining to his son: “Do you know what *tefillah* I am now davening? I am asking Hashem to ‘sanctify Your Name on those who sanctify Your Name!’”

“Despite the doctors’ predictions, Hashem, in His great mercy, could make the *rosh yeshiva* get up tomorrow morning and come deliver a *shiur* in yeshiva. Imagine, what a great *Kiddush Hashem* it would be if things would take a turn for the better against the doctors’ predictions.” (*Peninei Toras Zev*, p. 6: 46)

The Niggun of the Ger Tzedek

When the righteous convert, the Graf Potocki was taken to be burned at the stake on the second day of Shavuos 5509/1749, he walked to the guillotine his face glowing with joy over the merit that he had to die *al Kiddush Hashem*. On the way, he sang the words of the *tefillah*: ‘*Aval anachnu amcha bnei brisecha*, the sons of Avraham who loved You, and to whom You pledged at Har Hamoriah...’ He concluded with the *brachah* of “*Baruch Hamekadesh Shemo Berabbim*.”

The only person who was present when the *ger tzedek* was actually executed was Rav Alexander Ziskind, the Baal Yesod Veshoresh Ha’avodah, he was *moser nefesh* to get there to hear the Ger’s *brachah* and be able to reply amen. The Chafetz Chaim said that it was passed down to him in the name of the Gra that if ten kosher Jews would have been present at the killing of the *ger tzedek*, and they would have said amen after his *brachah* of “*Hamekadesh Shemo Berabbim*” then Mashiach would have arrived right away.

To this day, the moving *ninggun* that the *ger* sang as he walked towards his death, with the words “*aval anachnu amcha*” was preserved and *Gedolei Yisrael* would often sing it to strengthen their spiritual state.

It was also said that when Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer wanted to encourage a Jew from Slutsk who had experienced many bitter troubles in his life, he would enter his home and dance with him with this *niggun*. He would tell the Yid that if the Graf Potocki’s suffering did not prevent him from rejoicing, because of the knowledge that “we are Your Nation and the children of your covenant,” and he knew that just a short time later he would stand before the *Kisei Hakavod*, how can a Yid, despite all his suffering, not rejoice over the fact that he is a Jew?! (*Shimush Chachamim*, p. 51, *Aromimcha*, Sivan 5760)

Asher Yatzar and the Miraculous Recovery

This story was told by Rabbi Dr. Menachem Brayer, the deputy director of Maayanei Hayeshuah Hospital in Bnei Brak, who witnessed it from beginning to end. After he related it to *Gedolei Yisrael*, they instructed him to publicize it wherever he could.

Reb Yosef was almost ninety years old when he was admitted to the hospital, on his own two feet. “He’s been very weak for some time,” the relatives who accompanied him related. “We’ve now seen a serious deterioration in his condition so we hurried to bring him to the hospital.”

He was sent for routine tests, which confirmed that indeed, his systems were in a state of decline. After consultations, the doctors decided to connect him to a respirator, but his condition continued to deteriorate rapidly and one by one, his systems were shutting down. In a short time, his kidneys more or less stopped functioning, and the damage seemed irreversible.

At a hospital not managed according to Torah law, he would have been written off for dead. It’s hard to say it, but the universal medical theory is that it’s a shame to invest money in expensive treatments for a patient whose physical state is so poor, and who will not live too much longer in any case.

By contrast, Maayanei Hayeshuah Hospital operates according to halachah, and Dr. Brayer decided to take on this case personally. He resolved not to withhold any treatment, and despite his terrible physical state, his mind was still functioning well.

On Sunday, the situation became dangerous and the patient was transferred to the intensive care unit, under sedation and on a respirator. His kidneys hadn’t been working for several days, making dialysis necessary, but his low blood pressure precluded the doctors from actually carrying out the procedure.

“I knew,” Dr. Brayer said, “that medically, if the treatment would not be carried out within a few hours, there would be no hope for the patient, and even the best doctors that we consulted agreed with this. There was nothing left to do... except to daven to the Healer of all flesh. I left the patient’s room and turned to his son who was sitting in the hallway. I explained the situation and did not hide from him the fact that as doctors, there was nothing left for us to do except daven!”

When the son heard this, he began to suddenly think out loud: “You said that only *tefillah* can help... Maybe I also need to make a *hishtadlus* for my father.” As he spoke, he took out a notepad from his pocket, took his telephone and said, “As part of my job as a lecturer at a *kiruv* organization, I’ve been in contact with dozens of secular families, some of whom have already significantly grown more religious, while others just became closer. I would never have thought to do this, but for my father, I think I must. I will ask my secular acquaintances to strengthen themselves in reciting the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*. This *brachah* is known to effect miracles and there’s no doubt that this can help my father’s recovery.”

For the next hour, the son began to make phone calls to all those families from the *kiruv* organization, and asked them to concentrate more when reciting *Asher Yatzar* as a *zechus* for a *refuah* for his father. The responses were very enthusiastic, and they complied above and beyond what he could have expected.

At the same time, the son called his friend and partner in *kiruv*, who was leading a tour of youths right near the Kosel. Reb Yosef’s son was supposed to have spoken for them, but he had cancelled his appearance because of his father’s condition. Now he informed his friend that he was going to come after all, and could they please wait for him.

With a heavy heart, the son parted from his father, knowing full well that it could be the last time they would be seeing each other. He then got into his car and set out for Yerushalayim.

When he arrived, breathless, the youths were already waiting impatiently. Now, in the Kosel Tunnels, near to the *Kodesh Hakodashim*, he began to speak emotionally, moving many of them literally to tears. He described his father’s heroic life, how he was saved from the ovens, and how he fought for Hashem and His Torah his whole life. Then he detailed his father’s critical condition.

“You should know, young men, that the Creator waited for you for years, hoping and yearning that you return to Him. Now that you have merited to draw closer to his *mitzvos*, your prayers will certainly be willingly accepted by Him. Who knows, perhaps you will be the emissaries of Hashgachah to save my father. I ask you to take upon yourselves one *kabbalah* in his merit: to take care to recite *Asher Yatzar* with *kavanah*, and the *zechus* of your prayers and your *kabbalah* will surely help towards his recovery.”

The speech lasted a bit longer, and left a deep impression on the listeners. Towards the end, the youths said several *perakim* of *Tehillim* for Reb Yosef’s recovery.

As soon as the speech was over, the son hurriedly called the hospital. Deep down, he was expecting the worst news, but to his shock, the response was excited: “It’s unbelievable! His kidneys began functioning again!” The son drove back to Bnei Brak quickly, where he met the most senior doctors who had come to see for themselves what had happened. They did not recall another such case where kidneys that were considered “dead” returned to function fully.

It was an unbelievable miracle, and even those among them who were not *mitzvah* observant could not explain it any other way.

There was no other explanation for the amazing occurrence aside from the *kabbalos* that Yidden who had just drawn closer to Hashem had made with *mesirus nefesh*.

Reb Yosef’s condition began to steadily improve. The doctors administered the best treatment available, and after a short time, he was released, healthier than ever.

The son concluded the story with an emotional anecdote: “At another lecture that I delivered some time after the story, one of those youths from the tour was present and he asked to speak. This is what he said: ‘One day after that unforgettable lecture at the Kosel Tunnels, I went out for some fun, as I often did. After a time, I suddenly remembered my *kabbalah* to recite *Asher Yatzar* aloud with *kavanah*. Because the place where I was did not seem suited for it, I went out to make the *brachah*. Then I mused to myself that it wasn’t for naught that Hashem had orchestrated it that I should remember about the *brachah* specifically where I was. I felt like He was calling me to leave that place forever. I couldn’t ignore this direct sign from Heaven, and from there, it was a short path to changing my entire life, and I am now here, a Torah observant Jew.’”

Shabbos Supplement, Succos 5775