

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS EKEV

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Replying Amen Fulfills the Blessing of a Non-Jew

(ברוך תהיה מכל העמים" (ז, ט)

The Yerushalmi (*Brachos* 8, 8) learns from this *passuk*: "Rabi Tanchum says: If a non-Jew blesses you, reply amen, as it says, 'Baruch tihyeh mikol ha'amim, you will be blessed from all the nations.'" The question is asked: Where is amen hinted to in this *passuk*?

Rabbeinu Yitzchak Halevi, one of the great Rishonim, answers in his *sefer Pa'aneach Raza*: From the fact that the *passuk* says: 'Baruch tihyeh mikol ha'amim,' and not 'tisbarach mikol ha'amim,' we learn that the fulfillment of the *brachah* is contingent upon us, who cause it to be fulfilled by replying amen after it.

Based on this, we can understand the words of the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah* 60 13): "Why was Rivka not granted children until Yitzchak davened for her? So that the idol worshippers should not say: Our blessing bore fruit" [= because they blessed her (*Bereishis* 24:60) "Our sister may you become tens of thousands"]. The words of the *Midrash* seem to contradict the *Yerushalmi* that one should reply amen to the *brachah* of a non-Jew. But according to the *Pa'aneach Raza* this can be explained: Because the existence and fulfillment of the non-Jew's *brachah* is contingent on the one being blessed replying amen, and "gadol ha'oneh amen yosef mei'hamevarech, one who replies amen is greater than the one giving the *brachah*," (*Brachos* 53b), then a non-Jew cannot say "my prayer was the one that bore fruit."

A hint to this concept can be derived from the fact that the *passuk* "Baruch tihyeh mikol ha'amim" is very close to "lo yihyeh becha akar v'akarah," to teach us that if we make the blessings of the nations be fulfilled by answering amen, there will be no barren people among us, as happened to Rivka, when Yitzchak had to daven for her so that the non-Jews would not say: "Our prayers bore fruit."

Kesef Nivchar, Nachalas Yaakov Yehoshua

There Will Not Be a Barren Person Among You – Who Never Has a Child

(לא יהיה בר עקר ועקרה ובהמותך" (ז, ט)

It says in *Maseches Yevamos* (64a): "Rabi Yitzchak said: Why were our forefathers barren? Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires the *tefillos* of *tzaddikim*." One may wonder: Were *tzaddikim* not promised in this *passuk* that they would not be barren?

It appears that Rashi seeks to settle this question:

"There will not be an *akar*, a barren person – who does not have children." In other words, there will not be a barren man who does not have children forever, but there will be people barren like our forebears, who, because Hashem sought their *tefillos*, only gave them children after they davened for it.

Yalkut Ha'orim

One Hundred Brachos Spares from Illness

"והסיר ה' ממך כל חלל" (ז, טו)

The *Tur (Orach Chaim* 46) says that David Hamelech established that we recite one hundred *brachos* each day and by this he stopped the plague that was raging at the time, that killed one hundred *bachurim* each day.

A hint to this can be learned from this *passuk*: "And Hashem will remove...all illness" – in the merit of "*mimcha*" (numerically equivalent to 100) *brachos* that you will say before Hashem each day.

Zichron Shmuel

One Hundred Brachos and Amen

"ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שאל מעמו" (י, יב)

In *Maseches Menachos* (43b), Rabi Meir explains that the obligation to recite 100 *brachos* each day is derived from this *passuk* – (*Mah – Meah*.) The holy *sefarim* bring down that only a *brachah* that is answered with an amen is considered a perfect *brachah*. Moreover, it appears that the reply of amen on the *brachos* is also hinted to in this *passuk*, because it is known that amen is numerically equivalent to the Names of Hashem Havayah and Adnus, and one who looks can see these Names written in the *passuk*, "Havayah Elokecha" which join together to the numerical value of amen (with the *kollel*) and from here, that the one who makes the *brachah* must make sure "sheyaanu amen lebirchosav" which is the acronym for "shoel."

Sefer Hagematrios Hayashan, p. 48

One Mitzvah Leads to Another

"כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום תשמרון לעשות" (ה, א)

Harav Mordechai Hakohen of Tzefas, author of *Sifsei Kohein*, writes:

Although we were commanded regarding 613

mitzvos, the Torah states "kol hamitzvah" in the singular, to teach us that HaKadosh Baruch Hu only demands that a person should properly fulfill the *mitzvah* that presents itself to him right now, and through that he is guaranteed that he will fulfill all the other *mitzvos*, as the *chachamim* said (*Avos* 4:2): "Mitzvah goveres mitzvah."

Based upon this, the *Sifsei Kohein* explain the reason that the words "asher kidshanu bemitzvosav" was established as the *nusach* for the *brachos* of *mitzvos*, in the plural tense, even though the *brachah* applies to one *mitzvah*. It is to teach us that one *mitzvah* that is performed properly has the power to bring a person to fulfill all the *mitzvos*.

Receiving the Good Depends on the Brachah

"ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך על הארץ הטבה אשר נתן לך" (ח, ט)

In *Maseches Brachos* (35a) Chazal present a contradiction between two statements: One says (*Tehillim* 24:1): "L'Hashem ha'aretz umeloah" and another *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 115:16) "Veha'aretz nasan livnei adam." They answer that the first *passuk*, that the land and all that is in it belongs to Hashem, is until a person makes a *brachah* on his food. "And the land was given to mankind" applies after he makes a *brachah*.

A hint to this was offered by Rabi Azariya Figu, one of the leading scholars of Italy: If before "v'achalta vesavata" you fulfill "uveirachta es Hashem Elokecha" then you will merit to have "al ha'aretz hatovah asher nasan lach" fulfilled.

Binah L'Itim end of Drush 34

HaKadosh Baruch HaKadosh Baruch Hu's Greatness is Unfathomable

"כי ה' אלקיכם הוא אלקי האלקים ואדני האדונים האל הגדול הגבור והנורא" (ז, יז)

When the *tzaddik* Rav Pinchas of Koritz was lowered into his grave, his son, Rav Moshe of Slavita, began to suddenly weep bitterly. When his brother, Rav Yaakov Shimshon of Zeslav saw this, he wondered why. Rav Moshe told him: 'I am crying from the fear that our father is going to be giving a reckoning before the King of Kings.'

"You are worried about him?!" Rav Yaakov Shimshon exclaimed. "He was a giant among giants!"

"Indeed," Rav Moshe replied. "But HaKadosh Baruch Hu is greater, and how then should I not be fearful?!"

Rabi Pinchas MiKoritz, p. 19

ZakeN Ba Bayamim

Arichus Yamim in the Merit of Amen

A fine Jew lived in the Satmar community in America and he was especially scrupulous about replying amen. He would even stay in shul for hours to answer amen to people's brachos.

When he passed away at the age of 91 (an age then considered extremely old)

the Satmar Rebbe, Rav Yoel, said of him:

You should know that this man lived until the age of 91, numerically equivalent to amen—because he was careful about replying amen. Chazal said (*Brachos* 47a): "Anyone who spends a long time on amen his days and years are also prolonged."

(Told by one of those who heard it)



Mizmor Lesodah

"Mizmor Lesodah should be said in song, because all the *shiros* will be annulled in the future, except for Mizmor Lesodah." (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 51, 9)

Before the recital of *Yehi Kevod*, we say Mizmor Lesodah (Tehillim 100). This Mizmor is attributed to Moshe Rabbeinu, as brought in the *Yerushalmi* (Shavuus 1, 8): Rabi Tanchuma in the name of Reish Lakish said: When HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe "Vehisvadah alav" (Vayikra 16:21) he began and said: "Mizmor Lesodah" [Tadah is a language of *viduy*, and Moshe gave praise and thanks for the fact that Hashem is appeased by *Viduy*. (Pnei Moshe, *ibid*)]

Mizmor Lesodah has forty words, corresponding to the forty *challos* that were brought with the *Korban Todah*. Therefore, it was said only on weekday sand not on Shabbos and Yom Tov, because the *Korban Todah* did not supersede Shabbos and Yom Tov.

For the Korban Todah

The *Levush* (Orach Chaim 51, 7) writes: Mizmor Lesodah should be said in song because it is a nice, pleasant song that was said with all the *Korbanos Todah* that were brought, to give praise and thanks for Hashem for all the good He has bestowed upon us.

Despite the fact that the main principle of reciting Mizmor Lesodah is to correspond to the *Korban Todah*, it was established that we say it each day, even when a person is not obligated to bring a *Korban Todah*. The commentaries offer an explanation for this (*Kav Hayashar* Ch. 8, and see more in the *Avudraham*) that it is like Chazal said (Niddah 31a): "Ein baal ha¹ness makir beniso, one to whom a miracle is done does not recognize the miracle." Each day, we are the beneficiaries of many tremendous miracles which, due to our routines we do not recognize, and for that we must thank Hashem in place of bringing a *Korban Todah* for them.

The *Midrash* says on this matter (*Midrash Tehillim* 106, see there): "This is what the *passuk* said: 'Rabbos asisa Atah Hashem Elokei nofaosecha umachshosevecha eileinu,' (Tehillim 6). What are the many things Hashem has done? Many miracles and wonders that you do for us each day that a person does not even know about."

Serve Hashem with Joy

A significant part of the service of Hashem is the obligation to do it with joy, as the *Rambam* says (*Lulav* 8, 15): "Simchah; that a person should rejoice when doing the *mitzvah* and with the love of Hashem that He instructed them, is a great *avodah*. Anyone who refrains from rejoicing is deserving of punishment, as it says (*Devarim* 28:47): 'Because you did not serve Hashem Elokecha with joy and lightheartedness.'"

Rabbeinu Bechayei writes (*Al HaTorah Parashas Naso*): "Joy in performing *mitzvos* is a *mitzvah* in and of itself, and just like *avodas Hashem* is a *mitzvah* so, too, is the *simchah* on the *emitzvah* called 'avodah,' as the *passuk* says, 'Ivdu es Hashem besimcha.' The joy is the completion of the work. And therefore, there was much signing in the Bais HaMikdash and the *eMiskhan*, also by mouth and also with instruments, because it prepares the person's soul for joy."

There is a wonderful story on this topic told over about Rav Leib of Telz, a lofty *tzaddik* who was a disciple of the Gra, and of whom the Gra said that he was not like a person but more like an angel:

From time to time, army brigades would pass through Telz, and they were used to seeing the residents of the city fleeing from their path so they would not be taken as guides by the soldiers. One time, they soldiers came into the *bais medrash* seeking a guide and found Reb Leib, wrapped in *tallis* and *tefillin* and learning Torah. They took him with them and Reb Leib walked out of the *bais medrash* his *sefer* tucked under his arm; he did not stop learning the whole time.

For many hours, the soldiers followed Reb Leib, and when it came time for *Minchah*, they were surprised

when Reb Leib stepped off the paved road and turned to the trees in the forest. Realizing that he was a holy man, the soldiers followed obediently, and even the army minister who was marching behind them followed them off the road, curious to know what Reb Leib was looking for in the dense forest.

Reb Leib stopped near a spring of water bubbling under a wide tree, washed his hands and then stood beside the tree for an emotional *Minchah*. The soldiers and the minister did not protest; they gazed in awe at Reb Leib, his face a picture of joy at the *mitzvah*, and his body enveloped in the fire of *ahavas Hashem*.

After Reb Leib finished davening, he continued leading the minister and his soldiers to their destination. When they arrived, the minister noticed the respect with which the locals welcomed Reb Leib, and he could not restrain himself and asked those present: "I cannot envy Reb Leib's World to Come, because I know that I will never reach his level of holiness. But I do allow myself to envy his life in this world; I am the army minister, respected and wealthy and in charge of thousands of soldiers. Still, I don't think that even after seventy years of success I will reach the level of sublime joy that he has when he prays, three times each day." (*Aliyos Elyahu*, Levin, 21).

The Order of the Mizmor Is Like the Order of the Tefillah

According to the *Megaleh Amukos* (ofen 239), the order of the *pesukim* of this Mizmor is an indicator of the order of *tefillas Shacharis*. This is a summary of his deep concepts:

"*Hariu l'Hashem kol ha'aretz*": The acronym is '*halachah*' and from here there is a hint to the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 31a) "One should only stand up to daven from learning a *dvar halachah* [as opposed to something more complex that may distract his concentration during davening];" "*ivdu es Hashem besimchah*" – a hint to the service of the *korbanos* done with joy; "*bo'u lefanav b'renanah*" – a hint to *Pesukei DeZimrah* from *Baruch She'amar* until *Yishtabach*.

"*De'u ki Hashem Hu Elokim*" – is a hint to the first *parashah* of *Krias Shema* in which we declare the singularity of Hashem; "*Hu usanu veLo anachnu*" – is a hint to the 248 words that are in *Krias Shema*, which hint to the fact that Hashem's statement "*Naaseh adam betzalmeintu*" (*Bereishis* 1: 26) applies to Yisrael which are called 'Adam' because they control their 248 limbs and organs (by contrast to the idol worshippers, who are led only by 243 of their own organs, see *Nedarim* 32b); "*amo vetzon mariso*" – hints to the *mesirus nefesh* that a person should accept on himself during *Krias Shema*, to fulfill the words (*Tehillim* 43:23): "*Ki alecha horagnu kol hayom nechshavnu katzon tivchah*."

"*Bo'u shearav besodah*" – corresponds to the *Shaar Hatefillah*, meaning the three first *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, in which we precede with praise and gratitude to Hashem; "*chatzrosav b'tehillah*" – corresponding to the 13 middle *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, for the 13 breaches that the Greeks made in the fence of the courtyard of the *Mikdash* (See *Middos* 82, 2); "*Hodu Lo barchu Shemo*" – corresponds of the *brachah* of "*Hamachazir Shechinaso leTzion*," that the return of the *Shechinah* to *Tzion* will be done by the *yichud* of the *Shem Havayah* (*Lo*) and *Adnus* (*Shemo*); "*Ki tov Hashem l'olam chasdo*" – for the *brachah* of *Modim* in which we thank Hashem "for the miracles that are with us each day"; "*V'ad dor vador emunaso*" – for the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom* (see there what he says.)

It is fitting to cite here what Harav Avraham Palagi wrote (*Padah Es Avraham Maareches Tav*) regarding the words of the *Megaleh Amukos*:

"Why is Mizmor Lesodah different, in that we say it aloud and sing it more than other passages...that are before the *Amidah*...And I said briefly according to what the *Megaleh Amukos* writes that it hints to all the *Tefillah* from beginning to end in this Mizmor, and therefore, it is fitting and nice for this Mizmor to be said aloud and in song by the *tzibbur*."

A Tefillah Fulfilled After 28 Years

It was winter 5746/1986. There was no way for anyone to know that the phone call to Rabbi S. in Brooklyn that night would alter the future of a Jewish family.

Rabbi S.'s friend was on the line: "In the building across the street from me lives a young couple, the Ps," he began. "They are very nice people and seem to have grown up very distant from Torah. Based on what I have heard, they are supposed to be moving to your neighborhood soon. Perhaps you can make a connection with them and reach out to draw them closer to Torah and *mitzvos*?!"

Rabbi S. was used to such calls. He was a longtime *kiruv* activist with much success. Now, too, he agreed, and the first time he noticed Mr. P. in the neighborhood, he quickly engaged him in conversation. By the end of their little chat, the Ps had been invited to the S. family for a Shabbos meal.

The invitation was accepted on the spot. For some time already, the Ps had wanted to taste the flavor of a genuine Shabbos.

On Friday night, the couple arrived at the home of Rabbi S., clearly very excited to be taking part in this experience. During the *seudah*, Rabbi S. learned that they were extremely fine people with deep Jewish emotions and a thirst to learn more. Slowly, the S. and P. families became good friends, and the younger couple often visited the S. family.

During one of those visits, Rabbi S. made a suggestion to the couple: 'How would you like to take a vacation for a few days, at a special camp held by Yeshivas Ohr Sameach in Monsey, New York?! This is a yeshiva for people who don't have much background in Jewish knowledge, and I'm sure that the lectures and the atmosphere there will be suited to you and will greatly enrich your spiritual wellsprings.'

The couple agreed right away.

The lovely week passed quickly and left an indelible impression on the couple. They felt like the gates of wisdom and knowledge had been opened to them, and on the way home, they resolved to return to the warm confines of Ohr Sameach for a longer period of time. A short time later, Mr. P. informed his employer that he was taking leave from his job for an indeterminate period of time. Within a short time, the couple moved to Monsey, where they quickly settled into the local community. Mark P. became a full time student at Ohr Sameach, and began going by the name he was given at his *bris milah*, Moshe David. His wife took on the Jewish name that she had been given, after a grandmother.

*

Two years later, Moshe Dovid knocked at the door of Rabbi S.'s home in Brooklyn and asked to speak to him:

"As the Rav knows, my parents, who came from an Orthodox background, wanted to erase any trace of their past. That's why, from when I was very young, they tried to give me the impression that their siblings, my extended family, were weird creatures. That's how I was raised unwillingly in an atmosphere that was hostile towards my Jewish relatives, who I didn't even know.

"Today, after rediscovering my Jewish faith, I would like to find some of these relatives, but I have no idea who they are and where they live. All I know is that one of them is a respected Rebbe who lives in Boro Park and his name is...? Would you be able to introduce me to him?!"

As always, Rabbi S. was happy to help. Right then and there, he called the elderly Rebbe, who expressed a willingness to receive the young couple in his home, even though he did not fully grasp the details of the relation between them.

On Chol Hamoed Succos the couple was invited to the Rebbe's home. As expected, the meeting was an emotional one. The Rebbe was happy to hear that his distant relatives had returned to Yiddishkeit, and the couple was very moved at their relation to such a unique and clearly lofty personality.

During the conversation, the Rebbe told Moshe Dovid about his family roots, which stemmed from Hungary, from a prominent rabbinical family. Suddenly, in mid conversation, Reb Moshe Dovid noticed that the Rebbe became very thoughtful, as tears flowed from his eyes and onto his white beard. The heavy silence in the room was broken after a few minutes, when suddenly, the Rebbe shook himself and asked excitedly: 'Are you Moshe Dovid who was born in the Bronx?'

"Yes," the guest replied, surprised. He had no idea where the question came from.

All at once, the Rebbe was carried back years in time, and the fragments of the picture suddenly came together to form a full story. This is what he related:

"On the night before your *bris*, your father called me and asked me to be the *sandak*. At the time, no one I the family had any connection with your father, who was very far from the world of Torah. None of us were even invited to his wedding. Therefore, when I received the surprising call, my first instinct was to refuse. What purpose would my presence there have..."

"But then I thought to myself that even if the father of the baby was not worth my effort, I would go for the sake of the baby. Who knew? Perhaps the *tefillah* I would offer on his behalf, while he lay on my lap during the *bris*, would help that in the future, he would become a good Jew.

"That's what I did. I went for you, Moshe Dovid. And when I held you in my arms, I could not restrain my emotions: My eyes flowed with tears and I davened for you with all my heart that you should grow up to be a kosher, upstanding Jew.

"Years have passed. I had already forgotten the story, but then you arrived here, as though from a dream. As soon as you introduced yourself as Moshe Dovid, something began to tickle my memory, and slowly it emerged that you are the child I davened so fervently for twenty eight years ago."

As he spoke, the Rebbe stood up and went over to the bookcase. He took out an old volume of *Gemara Maseches Shabbos*, leafed through the pages and began to read to Moshe Dovid from the annotations of Harav Elyahu Gutmacher of Greiditz (*Shabbos* 130a):

First, Harav Gumacher brings the wonderful *segulah* of the *Olelos Ephraim* (415) that if a person present at a *bris* thinks about his problems and daven for a *yeshuah* when the baby cries from the pain of the *milah*—that pure cry rises straight to Shamayim with no obstructions, and his *tefillah* will go up with the baby's cry with no obstructions and will be accepted.

Later, the Rav of Greiditz brings a hint to this from the *pesukim* of the Mizmor said about *bris milah* (*Tehillim* 6, 9-10): "Because Hashem heard the sound of my cries, Hashem heard my pleas, Hashem took my prayers." When Hashem hears the crying of the baby, he also hears the *tefillas* of those who are present and listens to them.

"For twenty eight years, this *tefillah* waited Above," the Rebbe concluded emotionally, "until today, when I merited to see the fulfillment of that *tefillah*, as that child stands before me today as a *ben Torah* with a beautiful Jewish family."

Lemaalah Min Hashemesh, 22, p. 17.