

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS KISAVO

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Teshuvah and Tefillah in Parashas HaBikkurim

(והיה כי תבוא אל הארץ" (כו, א)

Harav Yosef Bloch, a *talmid* of the Maggid of Mezeritsch, wrote:

The words "ki savo" are an acronym for "kulam yaasu teshuvah bechodesh yav (the sixth month) Elul."

Because the primary objective of *teshuvah* in Elul is so that a person can daven before HaKadosh Baruch Hu on the Yamim Nora'im with pure *kavanah*, the Torah hinted it here specifically at the beginning of the *parashah* of *Bikkurim*, because *tefillah* is also called "Bikkurim", as it is the first in the order of the service of the day. As Chazal said, a person must not go about his affairs before praying.

Ginzei Yosef

Submission – Preparation for Tefillah

"וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך" (כו, ה)

By way of *remez*, Harav Yaakov Tzvi Yalish, author of *Malei Haro'im*, explains: "Ve'anisa," is a language of submission, as it says (*Shemos* 10:3) "Ad masai mei'anta la'anos befanai." That is what is hinted to here: "ve'anisa – v'amarta", before a person begins reciting the *tefillah*, he must prepare himself by submitting himself.

Kol Yaakov

The Reason for the L'Shem Yichud Before a Mitzvah

"וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך" (כו, ה)

There is a widespread custom to recite *L'Shem Yichud* before performing a *mitzvah*.

The Maharsham of Brezen brings a *mashal* in the name of Harav Shlomo Kluger that explains this concept.

A person once needed to transport expensive merchandise through a thick forest that was teeming with bandits and wild animals. Fearing for his merchandise, the man stood at the entrance to the forest helplessly, wondering how he would be able to get his goods through safely.

Suddenly, a wise man passed him, and when he heard the merchant's problem, he suggested he hang a big sign on his wagon stating that the merchandise belonged to the king, and thus, he would be guaranteed that the bandits would not dare touch it.

So, too, before a person begins to perform a

mitzvah, there are many harmful elements and prosecuting angels that try to grab it from him and distort his intentions so that his deeds will not have the desired intent. Therefore, it's a good idea to begin with a *tefillah* declaring that his actions are sanctified for Hashem, and through that, no one will be able to grab the actions away from him. The Maharsham added that that is what David Hamelech intended with the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (45:2): "Rachash libi davar tov, omer ani ma'asai lamelech."

Here, the *passuk* hints to a person about to perform the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim*: Before you do the *mitzvah*, "v'anisa v'amarta – lifnei Hashem Elokecha" – precede by declaring that your intention with this *mitzvah* is "before Hashem", *l'Shem Shamayim*, and thus you will be guaranteed to be able to perform it in its entirety.

Techeiles Mordechai

One Who Asks in Merit of Others Is Answered in His Own Merit

"ונצעק את ה' אלקי אבותינו וישמע ה' אך קלטנו" (כו, ז)

Chazal teach us a wonderful concept in *Maseches Brachos* (10b): Anyone who asks that his *tefillah*

The Gates of Gan Eden

"ועמך כולם צדיקים לעולם יירשו ארץ נצור מטעי מעשה ידי להתפאר" (מתוך הפטרת השבוע, ישעיה ס, כא)

Aretz Netzer Mata'ai—the first letter of each word form "amen" and the last letter of each word spell "yetzer." From here we learn that in the merit of being careful to reply amen, a person merits to overcome his *yetzer hara*, and thus he becomes a *tzaddik* and merits to enter Gan Eden. As Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b): "One who answers amen with all his might has the gates of Gan Eden opened before him."

See Shaarei Teshuvah (Rabi Yaakov Abuchatzzeira) Ofen 22

should be accepted in the merit of others, then Above, his *tefillah* is attributed to his own merits. By contrast, one who asks that his *tefillah* should be accepted in the merit of his actions, the *tefillah* is accepted in the merit of others.

We find a hint to this in this *passuk*: "And we screamed to Hashem the G-d of our fathers" –

when we asked that our *tefillah* be accepted in the merit of our forebears, we merited "And Hashem heard our voices" – Hashem accepted our *tefillas* in our own merit.

Chida, Zeraa Yamin, Haggadah Shel Pesach beginning with Vanitzak el Hashem

A Crown of Glory – for One Who Refrains from Speaking During Davening

"ולתתך עליון על כל הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת" (כו, יט)

Rabbeinu Yaakov Baal Haturim writes on this *passuk*:

When a person davens as he should, he ties a crown of glory onto HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and in the World to Come, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will adorn his head with it. But one must know that this privilege will happen to those who daven properly. However, someone who speaks idly in the shul during davening, will not only not merit this, he will even be punished, and he will be crowned with a crown of thorns.

Silence During Davening Is Praiseworthy

"הסתב ושמו ישראל" (כו, ט)

In the words "*haskes ushema*" Rabi Saadya Gaon hints to the times when one should be quiet and listen with concentration and *kavanah*: the recitation of *Hallel*; reading in a *Sefer Torah*; *Birchas Kohanim*, *Hanachas Tefillin*; *Viduy*; hearing the *Shofar*; recitation of the *Megillah*; and *Sefiras haOmer*.

Commentary of Rav Saadya Gaon on the Torah

Amen After Birchas Kohanim

"וענו כל העם ואמרו אמן" (כו, טו)

In *Maseches Sotah* (38a), Chazal taught us the *halachah* that *Birchas Kohanim* must be recited in *Lashon HaKodesh* while standing, as a *gezeirah shavah* to the *brachah* on Mount Grizim, which was also said while standing and in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

In light of the fact that one does not explain only a half a *gezeirah shavah* (see *Zevachim* 48a), the renowned *posek*, Rav Yosef Steinhart of Furth added a practical *halachah*:

Just like at Har Grizim it says "v'anu kol ha'am v'amru amen" so, too, with *Birchas Kohanim*, it is an obligation from the Torah for the *tzibbur* to hear the *brachah* and to reply amen.

Shu"t Zichron Yosef 13

וענו כל העם ואמרו אמן!

The Midrash in this parashah (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1)

"There is nothing greater before Hashem than the amens that Am Yisrael reply."

Dear Yidden!

As the new year approaches, acquire for yourselves a defense and strengthen your answering of amen according to halachah

May it be Hashem's will that through this we will merit to have :the words of Chazal in this parashah fulfilled .Uba'u alecha kol habrachos ha'eleh vehisgucha... Amen"



Halleluka Ki Tov Zamrah Elokeinu

"All the *pesukim* of this *mizmor* are adorned with golden doves, how beautiful are the rhythm of its words, how sweet to my palate are its sayings. Anyone who has a palate – should come and taste the honey, the pleasant sayings, which are sweet for the soul and a balm for the broken bones, from the metal hackles of the exile and from the depths of the anguish and sighing, to bring news to the humble ones and they will continue to Hashem with joy. In place of a dark wind – a mantle of glory, and from pain and suffering – salvation and relief." (From the words of the Yaavetz in his *Siddur* about the *mizmor* of "Ki Tov Zamrah.")

As the Yaavetz did, anyone who peruses the words of this wondrous *mizmor* will see that its *pesukim* and words are all saturated with comfort and consolation for the broken souls in this exile who are so despondent, and are also combined with words of *mussar* on several subjects that are a fundamental part of our faith, such as *Hashgachas Hashem*. Creation of the world, reward and punishment, faith in the arrival of Moshach and more.

The Best Thing – To Sing to Our G-d

It appears that the central point of this *mizmor* is conveyed in its opening line: "Hallelukah – ki tov zamrah Elokeinu!" These simple clear words are how David Hamelech defines the central reason for which we need to sing and praise HaKadosh Baruch Hu: "Ki tov, because it is good!" David Hamelech said the same thing in a different *passuk* (*Tehillim* 92:2): "Tov l'hodos l'Hashem ulezamer leShimcha Elyon." Standing in praise and song before our G-d in Heaven is the only thing that can be defined as "tov", and the *passuk* adds that this is not part of a "debt" that we need to repay, but rather it is also pleasant: "ki na'im navah tehillah." (*Shaarei Orah*, Vol. I, p. 116)

This is very important to know with regards to this passage, whose *pesukim* speak about the period of exile, in which Hashem bandages our wounds and heals our ailments. One might mistakenly think that it is not proper to praise Hashem in such hard times, but that is what David Hamelech is telling us here: the praise to Hashem is not contingent on one kind of situation or another; it is a "davar tov", a good thing in and of itself. (*Lechem Rav* according to the *Alshich*)

The *Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah* writes (*Shaar Hashiv*) in his deeply emotional language: "It is worthy for a person to rejoice tremendous *simchah* and to deeply thank Hashem in his heart for also giving him the privilege of praising and singing to Hashem."

Harav Yehonosan Eibeshitz, ז"ל, said of himself in a letter describing his order of *tefillah* (printed at the beginning of *sefer Ohr Hashanim*): "...that for the most, the *tzibbur* says *Kaddish* and *Aleinu*, and I am still in the *Amidah* – this is *tefillah* and if the youngsters will laugh at me and deride me, I am offended and this is my part of my toil, the time that I stand before He Who hears all prayers..."

Boneh Yerushalayim Hashem

As stated, the songs and praise is something worthy and important in and of itself, but from perusing the commentaries we will find that on the contrary, during the exiles, we should

increase our praise and song, and it can even help hasten the Redemption, as the *Midrash* explains (*Shochar Tov Tehillim* 147) on the *passuk* "Boneh Yerushalayim Hashem." It says "Just like Hashem is the King of *hallel* and *zemiros*, so too, Yerushalayim is only built with *hallel* and *zemiros*."

The *Yearos Dvash* (Vol. I, 15) writes a further *chiddush*; apparently it is the *galus* itself that might cause us to sing, because in this chapter it says "Zamru l'Elokeinu *bechinor*," and it is not for naught that the word "kinor" was used. It is to teach us that just like a knor, the more you pluck its chords the sweeter its song, so too, Yisrael, the more they are pressed and tired in the exile, the more their eyes are raised to the Creator, and their song and praise to Hashem increases.

Furthermore, the *Siach Yitzchak* (in *siddur Ishei Yisrael*) explains the well known question: Why does the *passuk* begin in the present tense: "Boneh Yerushalayim Hashem," and conclude in the future tense: "Nidchei Yisrael yechaness"?

The *Siach Yitzchak* explains: This *passuk* is in response to those people who have given up on awaiting the Redemption, seeing that the harvest season has passed and the summer has ended and we have still not been redeemed. Of them the *passuk* says: "Boneh Yerushalayim Hashem." Know that not only in the future, but even in the present, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is always busy building Yerushalayim, because anyone who looks into all the events that happen to us day in and day out will notice that they are all intended for one purpose and goal: to hasten the Redemption and the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. We must believe that when the right time comes, then we will all witness the realization of the *passuk*: "Nidchei Yisrael yechaness."

He Who Gives Snow Like Wool...

Harav Yechezkel Abramsky, ז"ל, told a remarkable story about his exile in frozen Siberia:

When we arrived in Siberia my captors dressed me in thin, lightweight clothes, as if it wasn't a place where the temperatures sometimes plunged as low as minus forty degrees below zero. If that wasn't enough, they ordered me and the other 'criminals' who were with me to run each morning barefoot on the ice.

Many around me died like flies because they could not bear the frigid cold. I also thought I would break, but then I raised my eyes Heavenwards and said: Ribbono shel Olam, I know that everything is in the Hands of Heaven except for cold and heat (*Avodah Zarah* 3b), but on the other hand You know that all this only applies to someone who is able to protect himself from it. In this situation, I cannot protect myself and therefore the obligation of protection reverts once again to You. Ribbono Shel Olam, I ask You to protect me with Your Mercy that I should not die from the cold.

Wonder of wonders, Rav Yechezkel concluded his story, even though I was by nature weak and sickly, and often fell ill several times each winter from the cold, I did not get sick in Siberia even once. I felt like Hashem was enveloping me in compassionate warmth under all that freezing snow. (*Pirkei Chaim* – Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, p. 23).

Boneh Yerushalayim Hashem, Nidchei Yisrael Yechaness

The year is 5657/1897. A few days before Pesach, there was a knock at the door of Reb Leib Cohen, one of the *gabbaim* of Kollel Minsk in Yerushalayim. At the door was a postman holding an urgent telegram for him. As telegrams are wont to be, the message was terse: Baruch Zelidowitz of Minsk asks: daven for bochur Eliyahu Baruch ben Mushka."

The wealthy Reb Baruch Zelidowitz, president of Kollel Minsk, was no stranger to Reb Leib, but who was the Eliyahu Baruch he was asking them to daven for? It was safe to assume it was not the wealthy man's son, but the son of someone who he was close to or related to. Reb Leib was curious to know more.

Let us note that in those days, the subsistence of the residents of Yerushalayim was largely dependent on the generosity of wealthy Jews from abroad, such as Reb Boruch, and many others, who saw it as an honor and privilege to be partners in supporting Torah and its scholars in the holy Land.

The money was distributed by entities such as Kollel Minsk, Kollel Chabad, Kollel Galicia, Kollel Ungarin and more, and the actual distribution was carried out by dedicated *gabbaim* who took great care to ensure that each penny would reach its designated destination.

Feeling a sense of characteristic responsibility, Reb Leib hurried to the home of his friend and partner in managing the Kollel, Reb Naftali Porush. Within a short time, they arranged a *minyán* and went to the place where the Shechinah never departs, the Kosel. It was already nearly midnight then their fervent *tefillah* came to an end for the young Eliyahu Boruch ben Muska, without knowing who and why, and the participants dispersed to their homes, confident in their hearts that a *yeshuah* was near.

A few days later, a thank you telegram arrived informing Reb Leib that the *tefillas* had been answered and the anonymous young man was out of danger. The short, relieving telegram generated even more curiosity. Deep down, Reb Leib wanted to understand the problem and its resolution, and from his experience, he knew that he would get answers in due time.

Some two weeks later, the long awaited letter arrived. In flowery language and at great length, Reb Naftali, the *gabbai* of the Kollel, was able to glean the whole story without missing a single detail:

Reb Boruch Zelidowitz had a relative named Reb Tzvi Hirsh Zelidowitz. Reb Tzvi was a wealthy man in his own right and he fell ill a few months earlier with severe pneumonia, which tragically, he succumbed to. He left behind a wife and an only son, Eliyahu Boruch, who suddenly found himself in control of huge assets.

Apparently, the young Eliyahu Boruch was dizzied by his newfound wealth, and on the advice of his friends, he began to waste it on trivialities. While his mother the widow feared tearfully for his future and pleaded with him not to stray from the path, her only son turned his back on her. Within a short time, Eliyahu left the house and went to live in one of the elegant apartments he had inherited from his father, where he partied constantly with the fringe youth of the city.

Eliyahu very quickly declined from

one low to another, and a few days before Pesach, he announced to his family that he planned to spend the holiday in a gentele hotel with his friends. The family thought they could bear no more pain and appealed, through their relative Reb Baruch, to the Bnei Yerushalayim to daven for their lost son at the Kosel.

The unbelievable happened. On the eve of *Bedikas Chametz*, a night after the *tefillah* at the Kosel, the turnabout happened. In the middle of the night, weak knocking was heard at the door of the grieving widow's home. When the curtain was pulled aside, she was stunned to discover her son.

"Please, Mother, forgive me," he pleaded before daring to step over the threshold. Speechless, his mother opened the door wide and welcomed her son inside; he fell upon her shoulder and sobbed like a baby.

A few long minutes passed until he calmed down enough to share his story:

Last night, as every night, after partying with his friends all day, he returned home drunk and collapsed on his bed and fell asleep in his clothes. But then, his recently departed father appeared to him in a dream. Reb Hirsch's face was solemn as he called to his son in a plea: "Eliyahu Boruch, my son, Eliyahu Boruch, return! Return before it will be too late!"

Eliyahu awoke with a start and tried to replay the dream in his mind. But then his exhaustion overtook him and he fell asleep again. But not for long... Again, his father appeared to him in a dream calling to him clearly: "Eliyahu Boruch, leave your bad ways and return to your home and the Jewish way of life!" This time, again, Eliyahu Boruch fell asleep again, but then the third time, when his father appeared to him, he was screaming in a stern tone: "Eliyahu Boruch this is the last time I am warning you: get up, abandon your errant path and return to your mother's house, because if not, I am warning you that your fate will be very bitter!"

This time, Eliyahu Boruch could not fall asleep again. He rose in panic, donned his overcoat and ran all the way home to his mother. And the rest is known.

Eliyahu Boruch's return to his mother and his faith became the talk of the town in Minsk. The story of the telegram began to spread and made waves. Everyone realized that the prayers of the Bnei Yerushalayim at the Kosel was what opened the gates of *teshuvah* before Eliyahu.

That very day, several dignitaries in the city, headed by the Zelidowitz family, conducted an appeal for the poor of Yerushalayim. For some time already they had been trying to raise public awareness to the housing crisis that threatened the existence of the *yishuv* outside the walls. Now, a huge sum was collected and sent to Yerushalayim. It was to purchase a large plot of land between the Knesses Yisrael neighborhood and Betzalel Street. The Batei Minsk houses were built there and many eminent members of the city lived there.

(*Sheloshah Doros BiYerushalayim* p. 65)