

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## PARASHAS NITZAVIM

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Tefillah of Shemoneh Esrei Protects Against Curses

אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם" (כט, ט)

Why is the *parashah* of *Atem Nitzavim* written right after the curses? Because Am Yisrael heard the 100 curses minus two, in addition to the 49 in *Bechukosai*, and their faces went white, and they said, who can withstand this?! Moshe began to appease them, "*Atem nitzavim hayom* – you have angered Hashem many times, and He did not annihilate you, and you are still standing in existence before Him." (Rashi, *passuk* 12 in the name of *Midrash Aggadah*)

**Harav Shmuel Feivish Hakohen**, a grandson of the Sm" a added to the words of Rashi: When Moshe saw Bnei Yisrael trembling in fear of the Name of Hashem mentioned in the rebuke of *Parashas Ki Savo* twenty six times, he said to them: "*Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem lifnei Hashem*," each day, you stand before Hashem in *Tefillas Shemoneh Esrei*, where Hashem's Name is also mentioned 26 times. These 26 mentions should protect you from the 26 mentions in the *Tochachah*, the rebuke.

Drush Shmuel

#### Serving Hashem With Stability and Regularity

There's a powerful concept in *Avodas Hashem* that the *mashgiach*, **Harav Shraga Grossbard**, learned from this *passuk*:

There are many people who pledge to strengthen themselves in *tefillah* and *avodas Hashem*. At first, they indeed are able to do so, but after a time, they return to their original state. For example, sometimes they try to concentrate and have *kavanah* in *Krias Shema* and *Shemoneh Esrei*, and after a time, they forget and get distracted.

That is why the Torah warns us: "You are standing...before Hashem." *Avodas Hashem* requires stability and continuity and that is the only way a person can rise from one level to the next in the service of Hashem.

Similarly, **Harav Yisrael Salanter** would advise anyone seeking to increase their *Avodas Hashem* to accept a small *kabbalah* that is easy to keep to, because stability and regularity are the secret to *Avodas Hashem*.

Daas Shraga

As an example, one can consider the *mitzvah*

of answering amen. This *mitzvah* is very easy and readily available, but the effect of strengthening oneself is invaluable, both in *tefillah* and in other matters of *Avodas Hashem*.

#### Observance of Halachah – Even for Experts in Secrets of Torah

"לנסתרות לה' אלקינו והנגלת... לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת" (כט, כח)

We learn piercing *mussar* from this *passuk*: Even someone who has merited to rise to great heights and to have *kavanah* in his every action according to *Toras Hanistar* should not think that that exempts him from observing the *halachos*, such as missing the times for *Krias Shema* and *tefillah*. He must be strict to observe the *halachos* "haniglos", that are visible, "*laasos es kol divrei haTorah hazos*," to observe all the *halachos* such as the rulings of the *Shulchan Aruch* and the like.

Chayei Tzvi

#### Attaining Ahavas Hashem Through Amen

"זמל ה' אלקיך את לבך ואת לבב זרעך לאהבה את ה'" (ל, ה) The acronym of "*umal Hashem Elokecha es levavcha v'es levav zarecha*" is numerically equivalent to amen, alluding to the tremendous power of amen to infuse pure *emunah* in Hashem in the heart of a person, to the point that he reaches the level of "*I'ahavah es Hashem... bechol levavcha uvechol nafshecha*."

This is the place to add the well known acronym: "*es levavcha v'es levav*" is Elul, and this may come to teach us that in the month of Elul, when we prepare for the Day of Judgment, it is worthy that we should strengthen our answering of amen, as it is a *segulah* to tear up a decree against a person.

Betzel Yehudah, Rosh Hashanah

#### One Hundred Brachos Are Made Into a Crown for the King

"ושבת עד ה' אלקיך" (ל, ב)

**Rabbeinu Ephraim** explains: "*Ad Havaya*" is numerically equivalent to 100. From here we learn that when one recites one hundred *brachos* a day with *kavanah*, his *brachos* reach the Kisei

HaKavod and are converted into a crown for the Shechinah.

Kisei David, Drush 20 for Shabbos Teshuvah

#### The Right Way to Do Teshuvah

"ושבת עד ה' אלקיך... ככל אשר אנכי מצוך היום" (ל, ב) Regarding the order of *teshuvah*, the **Kolbo** writes: (67) "On that day, a person should cast off all the sins he has committed and he should make himself as though he was born today and he has neither merits nor flaws... And this *middah* will bring him to do complete *teshuvah*."

**Harav Alexander Sender of Komarna** explained how this *halachah* is alluded to in the *passuk*:

"*Veshavta ad Hashem Elokecha*," when you come to do complete *teshuvah*, you must do it "*kechol asher Anochi metzavcha hayom*." Your heart should not fall from your bad deeds of the past. Instead, see yourself as a newborn baby, as though today you were commanded to fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Torah.

Zichron Devarim Maamar Hateshuvah

#### The Greatness of One Who Repents Out of Love

"והביאך ה' אלקיך אל הארץ אשר ירשו אבותיך וירשתה והטיבך וזרביך מאבותיך" (ל, ה)

Why did Am Yisrael merit the *brachah* of "*veheitivcha vehirbecha mei'avosecha*"? Are we better than our forbears?

The **Chasam Sofer** explained: This *parashah* speaks of the *teshuvah* that Am Yisrael is destined to do in the End of Days, as it says above (*passuk* 2): "*Veshavta ad Hashem Elokecha... bechol levavcha uvechol nafshecha*." Those who repent from love are promised that their sins will be turned to merits (*Yoma* 86b), and it further says (*Brachos* 34b): "in a place where *baalei teshuvah* stand – *tzaddikim gemurim* do not stand." Hence, at that time, their level will exceed that of their forbears, and we can understand why their rewards will be greater than their forbears.

Aataros Sofrim p. 79

#### May the New Year and Its Blessings Begin

"ואתה תשוב ושמעת בקול ה' ועשית את כל מצותיו" (ל, ח)

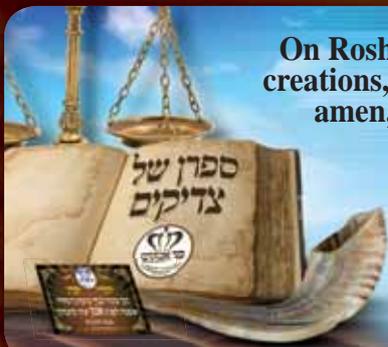
"*Tashuv*" is an acronym for "*tachel shanah ubirchoseha*" to teach us that one who repents completely merits a good, sweet year.

Pnei Menachem (5753)

On Rosh Hashanah, when we crown Hashem as King over all the creations, it is most worthy that we strengthen ourselves in replying amen, whose essence is the declaration to all that Hashem is

### K-el Melech Ne'eman

dluohs ew tirem siht ni taht lliw siH eb ti yaM ,doog rof delaes dna nettirw eb tnmegduJ fo yaD eht no sevil gnol !nemA ,raey wen teews a evah eb ew yam dna



מלך על כל העולם כלו בכבודך

## Unesaneh Tokef

One of most moving moments during the *tefillos* of the Days of Judgment is the recital of *Unesaneh Tokef*. With his awe inspiring words and unique style, this *piyut* can awaken deeply held emotions in the heart of every person of Am Yisrael even on regular days, how much more so on this holiest of days of judgment.

## Rav Amnon of Mainz

One of the main reasons for the deep emotion that accompanies the recital of this *piyut* is the story that is associated with it, printed in most *machzorim*, about its composer, Harav Amnon of Mainz. After being sentenced to die for refusing to renounce his religion, the *tzaddik* accepted the decree. Laying in a tortured state on his bed, he asked to be taken to the shul, where he sanctified the Name of Hashem and said: “*Uvechen Lecha taaleh Kedushah,*” and then continued with the *piyut*: “*Unesaneh Tokef,*” until he passed from this world in his great suffering.

The *sefer Korei Hadoros* by Rav David Conforti (Pietrkov edition p. 38) added in the name of “*Yesh Omrim*” that after Rav Amnon finished the *Kedushah* that he composed, “He disappeared from the view of the crowd and could not be seen by anyone, and they did not see him anymore because the Ministering Angels led him to the Kisei Hakavod and he was summoned to Olam Haba in the company of the ten Harugei Malchus, with Rabi Akiva and his fellow martyrs.”

## Order of the Piyut

This *piyut* is part of the *Kedushah tefillah* of the day, and it speaks of the significance of the Yamim Noraim among the denizens of this world and the world Above. The first part of the *piyut*, “*Unesaneh Tokef Kedushas Hayom...uvo sinasei malchusecha*” until “*Vesichtov es gezar dinam*” describes the essence of Rosh Hashanah as a day when we coronate Hashem is and during which all the creations on the world are judged. It continues, “*Berosh Hashanah Yikaseivun...*” until “*Mi yishafel umi yarum*”, which explains the judgment and the reality that *teshuvah* can overturn a decree, as it says “*uteshuvah utefillah utzeddakah maavirin es roa hazezeirah.*”

The conclusion of the *piyut*, “*Emes ki Atah Hu yotzram*” explains the nothingness of a person who “is made from earth and will return to be earth” by contrast to Hashem “*Melech Kel Chai Vekayam.*”

## Umei'elav Yikara

The Shefa Chaim of Sanz was known for his remarkable *avodas hatefillah*, which intensified manifold during the Yamim Noraim. He was especially emotional when reciting the *piyut* of “*Unesaneh Tokef,*” when he sobbed loudly and shed copious tears. When he reached the words “*umei'elav yikarei*” he would

raise his voice and cry “*umei'elav yakara*”.

During one of his *sichos* he explained: “If you explain the words “*umei'elav yikarei*” in the simple form, then it wouldn't make much of a difference. But it needs to be explained that in the *mitzvos* of the Torah there are things that a person does himself, and there are things that are done of their own accord, like those *mitzvos* that others were awakened to do in his merit, sometimes without the person even knowing. These *mitzvos* are credited to the person who caused the awakening as though he had actually performed them. That is why we say the double language in the *piyut*: “*Vesiftach es Sefer Hazichronos*” where all the *mitzvos* and good deeds that a person did himself are recorded, and then in addition “*umei'elav yikarei*” all those things that other people did, but are revealed before Hashem, Who sees everything, that they did in his merit. With the merit of these *mitzvos*—the ones that are passively credited to him—the person's decree should be torn up. (*Yatziv Pisgam, Yamim Noraim* p. 30)

## A Person Comes from Dirt...And With His Soul He Brings His Bread

Harav Yechezkel Abramzky, *zt"l*, would cry when he said the words “*benafsho yavi lachmo*”. He once explained: Many people cry when they say “*Adam yesodo mei'afar vesofu l'afar.*” But I don't cry there. It's a normal thing that a person comes from dirt and will return to dirt. I cry when I reach the words “*benafsho yavi lachmo,*” over the fact that usually, in order to obtain *parnassah*, a person has to forego some of his *ruchniyus*. Therefore, it really is worthy to cry. (*Delasecha Dafaknu*, p. 7)

By contrast, it is brought down in the name of Rav Meir of Dzikov, *zy"l*, who explained: “*Benafsho yavi lachmo,*” when Klal Yisrael is judged for the status of their souls, and how much they damaged their *ruchniyus, chalilah*, that's when they will bring “*lachmam*” the difficulties of *parnassah* that they deal with every day, and claim that because they were busy trying to obtain food for their families they did not have enough time to pay attention to the needs of their souls. (*Imrei Noam, Erev Yom Kippur*)

The Chiddushei Hari”m explained that the reason we cry when saying “*adam yesodo mei'afar vesofu l'afar*” is that it is not anything new that dirt goes back to its original form. If it was regular earth, then there would indeed be no reason to cry. But we as Jews know that this is earth from which gold could be derived, and how great, therefore, is the cry for the fact that due to our negligence, the body will return to the earth without us having rectified what needed correcting, turning the dirt to gold. (*Imrei Hari”m, Bereishis*)

## A Surprising Yeshuah After 28 Years

Twenty seven years of waiting; can anyone imagine withstanding that?

For the M. Family it was a reality of their lives. The twenty seven difficult years that they'd waited for a *yeshuah* were made up of countless months, days, hours and minutes that were too hard to bear, replete with hopes and disappointments, constant running and research, *segulos* and every effort possible...but there was no *yeshuah*.

But if anyone expected that after so long, signs of despair would be apparent, they were disappointed. The M. family never stopped hoping and praying that their *yeshuah* would come.

It was the end of *bein hazemanim*, Av 5760/2000. In most homes, parents were busy filling up their children's days with activities to pass the last few days of vacation, but the quiet that had taken up residence for the past few decades in the M. home was not disturbed for even a moment.

Towards lunchtime, Rabbi M. left the house and headed for the bus stop. He was en route to the Kosel to pour his heart out to Hashem. It wasn't a short trip; he needed to take a bus from the intersection closest to the *moshav* where he lived to the nearest city, and from there, a bus to the Jerusalem Central Bus Station and then a third bus to the Kosel.

Rabbi M. was carrying a heavy tote bag with several dozen laminated cards with *Asher Yatzar* printed on them in large letters. Beneath the *brachah* was a request to mention him and his family for a *yeshuah*. He planned to distribute the cards to people at the Kosel, where he would be beginning another series of forty days of consecutive davening.

The long trip came to an end. Rabbi M. alit form the bus and turned to the office of the Rav in charge of the Kosel affairs to receive permission to distribute his *Asher Yatzar* cards. The secretary greeted him kindly, listened to his request, and when he heard that he hadn't had children for twenty seven years, he said suddenly in a quiet tone:

“My oldest daughter has also been waiting many years for children. My son-in-law comes here each day to daven, but thankfully, he does not have to travel far as he lives nearby.”

“I'd be happy to hear when there's good news,” the secretary added.

“So would I,” Rabbi M. replied, and hurried to his regular corner under the Wilson Arch, where he always davened when he came to the Kosel.

Out of the corner of his eye, Rabbi M. noticed a bent over figure standing on the opposite side of the room. He was a middle aged man who was also deeply engrossed in his *Tehillim*, as tears poured down his cheeks.

For the next few hours, the two were busy pouring their hearts out to their compassionate Father, Whose Shechinah never leaves this holy site. When Rabbi M. concluded his *tefillos*, he decided to wait a bit longer. He didn't know why, but he felt a sublime connection to the man next to him and wanted to exchange a few words with him.

A few minutes later the other man finished davening, and warmly kissed his *Tehillim*. As he turned to go, their eyes met.

In the short conversation that they had on the way to the bus, Rabbi M. found out that his fellow davener was none other than the son-in-law of the secretary he'd spoken to earlier. The thought of the shared fate moved them both and they parted with tears in their eyes, of a trouble—and a hope—shared.

Upon returning home, Rabbi M. and his wife felt a new hope in their hearts, and they went through the month of Elul enveloped in fervent *tefillos* at the Kosel.

The M. family spent Rosh Hashanah in Yerushalayim, near the Kosel, so that Rabbi M. could complete the forty days he had undertaken. At *Shacharis* on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, he shed copious tears, the pinnacle of which was after *Krias HaTorah*, with the *Haftarah* of *Tefillas Chana*.

On both sides of the *mechitzah*, tears flowed like water in heartrending *tefillah*, with hearts beating with deep hope that the *yeshuah* was anent.

The forty days finished but the *tefillos* did not cease for even a moment. The next few months were one solid entity of *tefillah* for the M.s. At the Kosel, at *kivrei tzaddikim* and at the homes of *Gedolei Yisrael*, they felt that their hearts were opened in a way they never had been. And the *yeshuah* was not long in coming.

During that special time, Rabbi M. did not forget his fellow Jews in the same situation who he had gotten to know over the years, especially his new friend from the Kosel. In each of his *tefillos* Rabbi M. made sure to mention their names as well.

And the *yeshuah* was not long in coming.

As Chazal say (*Bava Kama* 92a): “One who davens for his friend and he needs the same thing, he is answered first.” After twenty eight years of waiting, in Av of 5761, the M. family was blessed with a precious daughter. It was exactly a year after that unforgettable *tefillah* at the Kosel.

Two weeks later, the phone rang at the offices of the Kosel and a familiar voice answered. It was the secretary. In an emotional voice, Rabbi M. told him about their *yeshuah*.

His news was met with a stunned silence, and then the secretary exclaimed: “You won't believe this but my daughter became a mother a few days ago as well!”

Rabbi M. was astonished by the tremendous *Hashgachah* he was so clearly witnessing. But his shock was even greater when, over the next few months, several of his friends who he had davened for over the past year also saw *yeshuos*.

To this day, the M. family never tires of telling their friends and acquaintances of their tremendous miracle, which is a valuable lesson for all those waiting for *yeshuos*: daven, plead with tears and don't ever give up! We have a loving Father above who gathers those tears and puts them in His treasury until the right moment when the gates are opened for a *yeshuah*.

Marveh Latzamei, Yisro 5774