

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS BEREISHIS

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

A Partner in Creation

בראשית ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ (א, א)
This *passuk* is comprised of seven words and twenty eight letter. The lofty praise we recite, "Yehei Shmei Rabba mevarach l'olam ul'olmei olmaya" also has seven words and twenty eight letters. From here, Chazal explain that anyone who replies "amen yehei Shmei Rabba" with *kavanah* is considered to be a partner with Hashem in the Creation of the world.

Chazal also meant this when they said (*Shabbos* 119b): "Anyone who answers *Amen yehei Shmei Rabba* "bechol kocho" (*koach* being 28) with all his might his decree is torn up," meaning that one who concentrates carefully on all twenty eight letters in it merits to be a "ben olam haba."

Kolbo, 7

Torah and Tefillah Are Pillars of the World

The *Baal Haturim* writes that the word "Bereishis" is an acronym for "Barishonah ra'ah Elokim sheyikablu Yisrael Torah."

Harav Pinchas of Kantikova added in his *sefer Avodas Yitzchak*:

Torah and *tefillah* are the pillars of the world (*Avos* 1:2), and indeed, we can see that in addition to alluding to the pillar of Torah in the word "bereishis," *tefillah* is also alluded to with the acronym: "Barishonah ra'ah Elokim sheyispallelu Yisrael tefillos."

Vekeravtanu LeShimcha Hagadol

In *Maseches Chulin* (91b) Chazal effusively praised Yisrael as being even more beloved than the ministering angels, because Yisrael mentions Hashem after two words when reciting "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad," while the angels mention Hashem only after three words, as it says (*Yeshayahu* 3) "Vekara zeh el zeh v'amar Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh Hashem."

The *Vilna Gaon* brings a beautiful idea on this concept:

There are four places in the Torah and in davening where we find that Yisrael mentions Hashem after two words:

1. The *passuk* that begins the Torah, "Bereishis bara Elokim."
2. In the *passuk* symbolizing the singularity of Hashem (*Devarim* 6:4): "Shema Yisrael

Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad."

3. The *passuk* following that, which speaks of the love of Hashem: "V'ahavta es Hashem."

4. In all the *brachos* that begin with the words "Baruch Atah Hashem."

These four things are alluded to in the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabba*: "V'keravtanu (Malkeinu) leShimcha Hagadol..." You brought us closer to mentioning "Your Great Name" more than the angels, because we mention Your Name after two words, "b'emes" –at the beginning of the Torah, which is called "emes" [*Emes* is also an acronym, with its final letters, of "Bereishis bara Elokim"], "Phodos Lechah" with *brachos*, "uleyachedcha" with *Shema Yisrael*, "b'ahavah" in the *parashah* of *V'ahavta*.

Pardes Yosef

Replying Amen - A Declaration of Emunah

"Bereishis Bara Elokim"

Bereishis – *Bekol Ram Tevarech Hashem Sheyaanu Amen*" and therefore the Torah hinted here that by replying amen after a *brachah* we declare and affirm our *emunah* in the words of the *brachah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the Melech Ha'Olam and *Shehakol Nihiyeh Bidvaro*.

Libi Er

She'asani Kirtzono

"יאמר אלוקים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו" (א, כו)

"Let us make man – even though they did not help Him in the creation...the *passuk* did not refrain from teaching us *derech erez* and the *middah* of humility that a greater person should consult with and receive permission from the smaller person." (*Rashi Bereishis Rabba* 1:8)

According to this *Rashi*, *Harav Yaakov Meshulem Orenstein* of *L'vov* gives a reason why every woman makes the *brachah* of "She'asani kirtzono" each morning. Only in the Creation of man do we find that Hashem consulted the angels, saying "Naaseh adam." But when it came to the woman, it says "kirtzono—as was His will" as the

passuk says (2:18): "E'eseh lo ezer kenegdo."

Yeshuos Yaakov Orach Chaim 46 5

Sichah Is Tefillah

"וכל שיח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ...ואדם אין לעבד את האדמה" (ב, ה)

"What is the reason for "lo himtir", He did not bring down rain? Because "adam ayin la'avod es ha'adamah," there was no man to work the land, and to recognize the benefit of the rain. When man came and saw that it is a vital need for the world, he davened for rain and it came down, and the trees and grasses grew." (*Rashi*)

We see from this *passuk* that from the beginning of Creation it was already determined that *parnassah* would only come through *tefillah*, and for this reason, *tefillah* is called "avodah." It is a condition for the success of a person's work and his *parnassah*.

This is alluded to in the beginning of the *passuk*: "Vechol siach hasadeh terem yihiyeh b'aretz – bechol eisev hasadeh terem yitzmach." Because the *siach hasadeh*, the *tefillah*, was not yet in the land (see *Gemara [Avodah Zarah* 6b] that explained from the *passuk [Bereishis* 24:63]: "Vayeitzei Yitzchak lasuach basadeh" – "ein sichah elah tefillah") therefore, "eisev hasadeh terem yitzmach," the grass did not yet grow.

Haamek Davar

The Most Difficult Curse - Absence of Tefillah

"ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך" (ג, יד)

Rav Bunim of Peshischa was known to say (*Matzmiach Yeshuos* p. 27) that the curse of "v'afar tochal", and dirt you shall eat, could be interpreted as a blessing for the snake, because he is guaranteed that he will have food in abundance his whole life. Nevertheless, it is truly a curse, because through this curse, HaKadosh Baruch Hu cut the snake off from Him (see *Yoma* 76a), that because he will always have food he will not need to pray for it, and *tefillah* is the chord that connects Hashem to His creations.

Rabi Yaakov Abadi explained according to this concept the *brachah* of "Borei Nefashos Rabbos V'chesronan": despite the lacks, we have to thank Hashem because it is due to those very lacks that we merit to be close and connect to our Father in Heaven, with our *tefillos*.

Emes L'Yaakov



A new year, a new beginning,
is a time to join the revolution in *emunah* and bring the *Geulah* closer:
Bekol Ram Avarech Shem Hashem Tamid – Bekol Ram Amen
(*Nachal Kedumim, Chida*)

In the year 5777 we will all strengthen ourselves by reciting *Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa*:
Let us begin the day with a declaration of *emunah* in Hashem's Kingship and His *Hashgachah Pratis* on every creation. Through this we will merit all the wonderful *brachos* that Chazal have promised to those who are careful about amen.

Hallelu Es Hashem Min HaShamayim

"This *mizmor* is very reverent and contains deep secrets, and it begins to speak about two worlds, one the Upper World, which is the broad, large world, and the other is the lowly world, which is like a dot on a complex tapestry..." (Ibn Ezra in the introduction to the *mizmor*)

This passage is so important that there are some who named it the "ikkar" the main point of *Pesukei Dezimrah*. (See *Rashi Shabbos* 118b.) After it alludes to upper, esoteric worlds that we cannot comprehend, it is as though we mortals turn to them in their greatness and instruct them: 'Hallelu es Hashem, praise Hashem.' (*Yeshod Veshoresh Ha'avodah, Shaar Hashir*)

The *Rokeach* writes that this passage contains wondrous secrets that are concealed from humans, and the *Reishis Chochmah* writes (*Totzaos Chaim* 163) adds that one must be very careful in the intentions of this passage, because it includes all the forms of praise and extolment of the creations.

Some explain that the objective of this passage is to arouse the person to separate himself from all matters of this world, and to cleave his soul to the Creator to the point that all his feelings should be solely spiritual, as though he has no body, and he is one of an army of angels that serve Hashem On High. (*Nefesh Hachaim, Shaar Beis, 15*)

Contrasting Reasons for Songs of Angels and Songs of Humans

When reciting the *pesukim* in this passage we need to explain something: When stating the reason that the Heavenly angels sing, we say, "Halleluhu Shemei Hashamayim vehamayim asher me'al hashamayim. Yehallelu es Shem Hashem Ki Hu tzivah venivra'u". When referring to the praise of humans we say "Bachurim vegam besulos zekeinim im ne'arim. Yehallelu es Shem Hashem ki nisgav Shemo levado." Why is there a difference?

A very insightful answer is offered by Harav Tzvi Pesach Frank, *zt"l*, based on the *Gemara* (*Eiruvin* 13b) that at first, Bais Hillel and Bais Shammai differed as to whether it would be preferable for a person not to have been created, or if it was better for him to have been created. But ultimately everyone agreed that it would have been more comfortable for man not to have been created.

Now it is understood why the Heavenly Army is said to be reciting praise to Hashem because "Hu tzivah venivra'u, He commanded and they were created." Because they have no *yetzer hara* that persuades them to sin, it is certainly comfortable for them to have been created, and they should praise for that. But regarding the denizens of this world, who do have a *yetzer hara* and may easily sin, the *passuk* explains that the reason for their praise is "ki nisgav Shemo levado", not for the

fact that they were created, but for the greatness and loftiness of Hashem and His compassion. (*Telalei Oros*)

The Difference Between Man and Animal

From the order of the *pesukim* we can learn about the different levels of creations: First, the "harim vechol gevaos" – the inanimate objects, and then "eitzi pri vechol arazim," plant life, and then "hachayah vechol beheimah remess vetzipor kanaf" – animal life, and then the highest level of all, which is "medaber," the human who has the power of speech. That is expressed by "malchei erez vechol le'umim, sarim vechol shoftei aretz, bachurim vegam besulos, zekeinim im ne'arim," who all together "yehallelu es Shem Hashem." (*Panim Yafos Vayeira*)

The *Pri Migadim* brings a beautiful story about this concept in one of his *drashos*:

The *Vilna Gaon* once traveled on a ship and on the same ship was a renowned heretic from Kenigsburg. During the trip, the difference between the *Gaon*, who was immersed in spiritual worlds, and the heretic who was busy with frivolities, was brutally apparent.

One morning, the *Gaon* woke up early, washed his hands and began to daven. When he finished, he began along study session until nearly lunchtime, at which time, he was served a cup of coffee to refresh himself.

Throughout the time, the heretic was deeply asleep, and when he woke up, the sun was already high in the sky. As soon as he awoke, before even putting his feet on the floor, he cried out coarsely: "Bring me a cup of strong wine to revive me, quickly!"

When the *Gaon* heard this he turned to the heretic and rebuked him tersely: "See the difference between you and a Torah observant Jew." But foolishly, the heretic answered back, "Didn't the sages of Israel say 'Rachmana liba ba'i', don't estimate me by my external behavior, but by my pure and clean soul. I'm religious in my heart..."

But *Gaon* had a winning answer for this as well: "If your words are true then it would have been better for you to have been created as a heart, because in the *pesukim* of *Hallelu es Hashem Min Hashamayim* in *Tehillim*, David *Hamelech* listed in ascending order all the kinds of creations that praise Hashem. First is the inanimate object, then the plants and the animals and the human is above them all. I believe, of myself, that I have an advantage in the fact that a person is created as a *medaber*, and it's obvious why his status is higher than that of other creations. But for you, who claim that your intentions of your heart are sufficient, then a dog also serves Hashem by singing in his heart; why then were you created as a human..." (*Sefer Hamaggid*, Vol. III, p. 274)

Shalom Aleichem, I Am Also a Jew

This remarkable story regarding the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Levanah*, which is alluded to in this *parashah* in the *passuk* "Vehayu l'osos ulemoadim uleyamim veshanim", is told about Harav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman of *Ponevezh, zt"l*:

It was a few short years after the Holocaust. Harav Kahaneman was extremely busy rehabilitating the Torah world that had been decimated by building his famed *yeshiva* and establishing other institutions for young refugees.

In order for his urgent work to succeed, the Rav required tremendous resources that he did not have. Reluctantly, he had to travel to Jewish communities abroad in an effort to solicit some much needed financial support.

But it wasn't so easy. In those days, the wealthy Jews did not yet understand the value of giving towards the support of Torah and its scholars. They were far from the Torah world and needed a lot of persuasion to support its learners.

On one of these trips, Rav Kahaneman traveled to South Africa, where there was an affluent Jewish community. But to his deep disappointment, even before his arrival, several local upstarts who opposed his arrival launched a campaign against him in the local Jewish newspaper media. The objective was to persuade the *gabbaim* and *mispallelim* of the shuls not to allow Rav Kahaneman to get inside and certainly not to speak publicly in the shuls.

Hence, when the Rav entered one of the main shuls in Johannesburg on Friday night and ask to speak to the assemblage, the *gabbaim* told him that a decision had been made in the upper hierarchy not to allow him to speak.

The initial shock did not prevent the Rav from finding a brilliant solution. He asked the head *gabbai* that, due to the fact that he had come from so far, could he allow him to speak to the *mispallelim* for no longer than three minutes.

The *gabbai* could not refuse this request, and deep down, thought the Rav was quite foolish. He knew his community and was sure that there was no way the Rav would get any of them to give him even a penny in such a short time. After warning the Rav not to exceed the three minute limit, he called him up to speak.

With a spring in his step, the Rav approached the *aron kodesh*, kissed the *paroches*, and gazed at the crowd with his loving eyes: "Rabbosai, today is a historic day, because today, 275 years ago, the first white person stepped onto South African soil. Today after 275 years, things have changed, and now I stand before you, the first "black" person among the white natives of Johannesburg..."

The tension that had been in the room dissipated at once as the crowd tittered. They waited expectantly for the Rav to continue, but they were surprised when he began to walk down the stairs of the *bimah*. Three minutes were almost up...

The crowd was not ready to forgo a good speech and people began to demand that the *gabbaim* allow the Rav to complete his speech. They had no choice but to comply.

Rav Kahaneman stood back up and began to speak about *Birchas Halevanah*, the blessing we make upon seeing the moon. He asked a question: "Perhaps you can help me Rabbosai, with a question that is bothering me: Why, in *Kiddush Levanah* did the sages tell us right after "Tipol aleihem eimasah vapachad" to offer the warm greeting of "Shalom Aleichem," to which the other person replies "Aleichem shalom"?"

The crowd was quiet and the Rav continued to explain this according to the situation he found himself in then: "It is possible that you once heard news of a strange guest visiting your area. That rumor made sure that "tipol aleichem eimasah vapachad" that you would be overcome with fear of this person, but when you gave him the chance to get a bit closer, you suddenly realized that he is your brother and kin, and you cry out "Shalom Aleichem! Aleichem Shalom!"

Again, the audience smiled and listened attentively. The Rav utilized the opportunity to expound on the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Levanah*: "Over the years of exile that our brethren have experienced, there have been many decrees forbidding them from performing the *mitzvos* upon penalty of death. Most *mitzvos* could be observed secretly, but *Kiddush Levanah*, a *mitzvah* that was so dear to them, had to be carried out openly. So what did they do?"

"They found a solution: They would go out for an "innocent" walk to the fields outside the city, where, in the thicket of trees, they would gaze at the dark sky and as soon as they saw the moon they began to recite the *brachah*.

"Because they feared the enemies who were looking for them, they agreed on a secret code: 'David Melech Yisrael – Chai Vekayam.' Thus, when one would meet a figure in the darkness, he would begin with *David Melech Yisrael*. If the person responded with *Chai Vekayam*, then he would breathe a sigh of relief, offer his hand and say 'Shalom Aleichem, I am also a Yid. *Besiman tov ubemazel tov*, we can begin the *mitzvah*.'"

The crowd was transfixed as the Rav concluded his *drashah* with a passionate plea:

"Shalom Aleichem rabbosai, you are Jews and I am a Yid like you! We have a shared heart, and I am appealing to it. Give me the strength to raise more generations of Yidden to fulfill the *mitzvos* with *mesirus nefesh*!"

Needless to say, the response to his plea was beyond expectations. The passionate *drashah* left an indelible impression on the audience and right after Shabbos they opened their hearts and pockets to Torah and its scholars.

Umasok Ha'or