

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## PARASHAS LECHA LECHA

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Renewed Fervor in Tefillah Every Day

לך לך מארצך וממולדתך" (יב, א)

Harav Eliyahu of Wiskitki, a *talmid* of the Kotzker Rebbe, explained:

When a person prepares to daven, he is instructed to "lech lecha mei'artzecha umimoladetecha" – emerge from and rise above your earthly nature that causes you to daven to Hashem as lip service and as "mitzvas anashim melumadah", habit, which is derived from the word "mimoladetecha." Instead, daven from the depths of your heart, with *kavanah* and deep emotion, and with renewed fervor each day, and this way you are guaranteed that your *tefillas* will bear fruit.

Eizor Eliyahu

#### Elokei Yaakov and Not Elokei Yisrael

ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך" (יב, ב)

The question is well known: Why do we mention in *Shemoneh Esrei* "Elokei Yaakov" and not "Elokei Yisrael". Does it not say (*Bereishis* 35:10) "Your name will no longer be called Yaakov, but rather Yisrael"?

Harav Shimshon of Ostropolia explained: If we join the names of the *avos* and *imahos* together, we will find that there are twenty six letters, the same as the numerical value of the *Shem Havayah* (26). But if he would have been called Yisrael and not Yaakov, there would be one additional letter in this count.

Thus, Rav Shimshon explained what Rashi says on this *parashah* in the *brachah* given to Avraham: "V'agadlah shemecha" – "that is that we say *Elokei Yaakov*" because had Avram's name not being changed to Avraham (with an extra letter), then Yaakov could have been called Yisrael. But because another letter was added to his name, Yisrael needed to be continued to be called Yaakov, so that there would not be more than 26 letters in the names of the *avos* and *imahos*.

Nitzotzei Shimshon

An allusion to this wonderful explanation is added by Harav Yeshaya Muskat of Praga, derived from the words of *Tehillim* (124:1): "Lulei Hashem shehayah lanu yomar na Yisrael." If not for the need to reach the number 26 with the letters of the *avos* and *imahos*, we would have used the name Yisrael in the first *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*.

Roshi BaShamayim

#### Avraham Avinu Completes a Minyan for the "Chasimah"

"יהיה ברכה" (יב, ב)

"Veheyey brachah – becha chosmin velo bahem" (Rashi) In the *sefer Emek Hamelech* (introduction 3, 10) there is a wondrous story that took place in Chevron hundreds of years ago:

Several hundred years ago, just a few Chassidim and holy souls dwelled in Chevron. In order for them to have a *minyan* for Shabbos and Yamim Tovim, members of neighboring villages came to complete the *minyan*.

#### Amen for Generations

"והאמין בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה" (טו, ו)

With the word "he'emin" the *passuk* alludes that after Hashem blessed him with children, Avraham Avinu replied "amen" in order to fulfill the *brachah*, and with that "he'emin" (the letters of amen), meaning he instilled in his children the *mitzvah* of replying amen, in whose merit the *brachah* is fulfilled.

Bais Avraham | By Rav A. Y. Sherman

#### Amen Ketufah

"ודור רביעי ישובו הנה כי לא שלם עון האמרי עד הנה" (טו, טז)

There is a well known *halachah* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 124 8 ---) that amen that is answered without one of its letters is considered an *amen ketufah*, and it is a sin to answer it. A hint to this *halachah* can be found with the words of the *passuk* "lo shalem avon", the final letters of each word makes "amen" to teach you that an amen that is not complete is considered a sin to the one who says it.

Chelek Yaakov

One Erev Yom Kippur, the *mispallelim* arrived at the shul and found, to their dismay, that the residents of the other villages hadn't come as expected. This caused them great distress. Suddenly, an elderly Jew with a glowing countenance entered the shul, and without saying a word he joined them for davening. He did not leave until after *Neilah* the following evening, when he disappeared without a trace. After some time, he came to them in a dream

and revealed that the old man was none other than Avraham Avinu, who had mercy on his children who lived in Chevron, and came down from Above to complete the *minyan* for them.

In his commentary, the *Tiferes Shlomo* brings this story and concluded that this is what Rashi was referring to when he said "becha chosmin," that Avraham was granted permission to go down to this world to daven with the *tzibbur* until *Neilah*, the time of the *chasimah*, the sealing of the decrees.

#### Two Kohanim Make the Brachah

"ואברהם מברכין ומקללך אהר" (יב, ג)

"V'avarchah mevarachecha" is numerically equivalent to "kohanim hamevarchim banecha", and because according to the Torah, it is necessary to have two Kohanim present in order to make the *brachah*, it says "mevarachecha", in the plural. On the other hand it says "mekallelcha" he who curses you, in the singular. (*Baal Haturim*)

Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky added to the words of the *Baal Haturim* and said: One who is careful will notice that the numerical value of "v'avarcha mevarachecha" is two more than the value of "Kohanim hamevarchim banecha." It can be said that this is another way the Torah alluded to the fact that two Kohanim "who bless your children" are necessary to make a *brachah*.

Emes L'Yaakov

#### Brachah of "She'asah Li Kol Tzarki" on Shoes

"אם מחוט ועד שרוך נעל ואם אקה כל אשר לך ולא תאמר אני העשרתי את אברם" (יד, כג)

And if Avraham would have taken a shoelace would the king of Sodom have been able to claim that he enriched Avraham?

However, we find that *Chazal* established (*Brachos* 60b) that we make the *brachah* of "She'asah li kol tzarki" in gratitude for our shoes and the reason is that because when a person has shoes he can go out of his house and do everything he needs.

As such, we can understand the words of the king of Sodom, that if Avraham Avinu would take a shoelace from him, he would be instrumental in Avraham being able to carry out his needs and becoming wealthy. As such, the king could rightfully claim that he enriched Avraham.

Hamaor ShebaTorah in the name of Zevach Tzedek

## sdloW eht lLA gninehtgnertS dna gniniatsus

"Kano kineisi l'Hashem, I have taken on the battle in the Name of Hashem against those people who stand in shuls and make *brachos* next to other people, but they do not take care to have compassion for the honor of their Creator, and do not pay attention to whether someone is replying amen... and they make mistakes and are lax and fail in the faith of amen... and they do not know that the word amen is the sustainment and strengthening of all the worlds. The upper worlds and lower ones are included in amen, because it is the beginning of the praise and source of all *brachos*..."

Iggers Hata'amim by the Mekubal Rabi Aharon son of Rabi Baruch of Kardina, author of *Sefer Karnayim* (he lived some 400 years ago)

I also say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*. Bnei Emunim.



## Hallelu Kel Bekadsho

The series of *Halleukah* passages we say in *Pesukei Dezimrah* conclude with the chapter that is the last one in *Sefer Tehillim*, *Halleluka Hallelu Kel Bekodsho*. In this passage, which is comprised of six *pesukim*, we find no less than thirteen words of “*hillul*”, extolment, and the Radak explains that with each one, we are thanking for one of the thirteen *Middos* of *Rachamim* with which Hashem runs the world.

## Several Types of Song

In the passage, several types of instruments are mentioned that can be used to praise Hashem. The mention of these instruments is very significant according to *Toras Hasod*, but even according to *Toras Hanigleh* there is an explanation for why each specific is used. The Shelah explains in his *Siddur*: As we know, there are several types of song in music. There are those that arouse a person to joy and happiness and others that evoke tears and pain. Among instruments as well, there are those whose notes are ominous and sorrowful, while there are others whose notes are cheerful and upbeat.

When a person approaches his service of Hashem, he needs both these aspects. On the one hand, he needs song and happiness, especially when davening and making requests, in order to awaken his emotions to perform “*Yidus Hashem besimchah*.” (*Tehillim* 100:2). But on the other hand, we have to make sure to maintain the necessary solemnity so as not to get to the point of lightheadedness. This combination is what David Hamelech was referring to when he said (*Tehillim* 2:11), “*Yidu Es Hashem beyirah vegilu bir'adah*.”

Therefore, When David Hamelech describes the way one must sing before Hashem, he begins first with *teka shofar*, which arouses joy, then *minim ve'ugav*, which are instruments that have mournful sounds, and then *tzilzelei shama*, the trumpets that bring joy, and *tzilzelei seruah*, which sound like a moan or a wail (*Rosh Hashanah* 33b), and with the combination of all these instruments together, “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*,” the entire soul will serve Hashem.

## Kol Haneshamah Tehallel Kah

The biggest praise of all that a person can offer to his Creator is the praise of the soul, because it is a “*chelek Eloka mima'al*”, and elevated above the body so it can recognize the depth of the goodness of Hashem even while it is still in the body. Therefore, the passage concludes with the *passuk* “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah Hallelukah*.” (*Radak*)

Another explanation: In the physical world, we need our mouths and the instruments to arouse us to sing, but in the world of souls, the soul itself is the one that will praise Hashem. (*Me'am Loetz*)

## For Each and Every Breath

The *passuk* “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah Hallelukah*” is explained by Chazal (*Bereishis Rabbah* 14 9): “For every *neshimah* and *neshimah* (breath) that a person breathes he needs to praise Hashem.”

The Baal Hafla'ah explains this (*Panim*

*Yafos Shemos* 20:21): Because the holy *neshamah* and the physical body are two innate opposites, therefore with each breath, the soul seeks to leave the body and return to its pure Source. If not for the *chesed* of Hashem, Who instructs it to remain in the body, the soul would not remain there. We have to recognize and thank for this great *chesed* that is performed for us each and every minute, and how much more so not to mistakenly think that the process of breathing is natural and self understood.

The *Toras Chaim* (*Bava Kama* 16a) explains: It should have been that a person would have to praise and bless his Creator each and every minute, from morning to night, for every movement that he makes and for every breath that he takes, so that it would not be considered *chalilah*, like he is ungrateful for the *chesed* of Hashem, and that he is like a thief enjoying this world without a *brachah*. But because most people would not have been able meet these requirements, because they are busy with the burdens of this world, the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah established a special *brachah* of gratitude in the three *tefillos* we recite daily—the *brachah* of *Modim*, in which a person includes all the tens of thousands of *chassadim* and miracles that Hashem does with him each and every minute: “*Al chayeinu*, for our lives that are entrusted to Your hands, and for our souls that are deposited with You, and for the miracles that are with us each day.”

## Kol Haneshamah-Twice

The reason that we recite the last *passuk*, “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*” twice is explained by the *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 51 7). It is because this *passuk* concludes *Pesukei Dezimrah*, and similarly, we say twice at the end of *Az Yashir* “*Hashem yimloch l'olam va'ed*.”

Harav Shlomo Zalman Zalaznik, Rosh Yeshivas Eitz Chaim, explained that we do this to show how much we want to sing and praise Hashem, and because we have a hard time parting from the *pesukim* of praise, we double the last *passuk*, “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*.” (*Zera Yaakov Orach Chaim* 51)

In conclusion we will bring what Rav Yehoshua Pollak, Rav of Hermanstadt, writes as the reason that we say the praise “*Baruch Hashem l'olam amen v'amen*” right after “*kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*.”

In the *sefarim* of the *mekubalim* it is explained that the names of the three people who will herald the *Geulah* are Eliyahu Hanavi, Menachem ben Amiel (Mashiach ben David) and Nechemiah ben Mochiel (Mashiach ben Yosef.) As we ask in *Selichos* (third day of *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*): “*Temaher Tishbi Menachem veNechemiah*.” The acronym of their names are “amen.” Therefore, after we mention the song of the *Geulah* that will come, “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*” we continue to say “*Baruch Hashem l'olam amen v'amen*.” Because in the time that “*Kol haneshamah tehallel Kah*” when the three Redeemers hinted in amen will come, then Hashem's Name will be glorified and everyone will recognize that He is “*Kel Melech ne'eman*.” (*Chashavei Machshavos* 59)

## And I Will Bless Those Who Bless You

It was the end of 5761/2001, in Boro Park, Brooklyn. After long months of planning and feverish activity, running from one office to another, inquiring about contractors, choosing flooring and all that, construction had finally begun in the Brinn home.

The Brinn family's old house desperately needed a complete overhaul, and when construction began, the family had to move for a few months to a rented apartment. They only found something in neighboring Flatbush, which was a bit far, and quite different, from their Boro Park residence. But the family consoled themselves that it was just a stop on the way to a beautiful, spacious new home that they had been waiting to have for so long.

It was agreed that on the first day of construction, Rabbi Brinn would deliver a payment of \$20,000 to the contractor. He had been saving for a long time for this expense, and it had been deposited in a Gemach near their home until the renovation would begin. Now Rabbi Brinn asked his wife to go to the Gemach to withdraw the sum.

Early in the morning, Mrs. Brinn arrived at the office. After receiving the sum, she put it in a white envelope and stuck it deep into her pocketbook. She decided to use the opportunity of being in the neighborhood to make some purchases for their temporary apartment.

Late in the afternoon, Mrs. Brinn returned home. Her husband was already waiting impatiently for the envelope that he was supposed to have given to the contractor in the morning already. But as soon as she arrived, he realized that something bad had happened. Pale-faced, his wife relate that she had no idea when and how it had happened, but somehow, she noticed that during the course of her shopping her pocketbook had disappeared—and with it, the precious envelope.

She tried in vain to recall where exactly it had happened. The family went out to search the area but found nothing. They needed a miracle for the pocketbook to be returned, and so, the entire family sat down and fervently began to recite *Tehillim*.

A long while passed as they sat, tensely, and then, the miracle happened! The phone rang, and a clearly non-Jewish person named William identified himself. He said he had found a pocketbook on the street with documents that had their name on it and he wanted to return it.

Excitedly, the family provided their address and thanked him profusely, although deep down they were afraid that the man had not withstood the temptation and had taken the money for himself. He said he would come late in the evening, and until then they had no choice but to bite their nails anxiously and wait.

At eleven o'clock there was a knock at the door. Standing in the entrance was a tall black man with the familiar pocketbook in hand. Mrs. Brinn excused herself for a minute, took the bag and hurried to the bedroom

where she rapidly counted the bills in the envelope. She was overjoyed to discover that not a cent was missing, and she hurried back to the door to gratefully thank the man.

“How can we repay you for your kindness?” Mrs. Brinn asked, and the man surprised her by saying that he wanted no repayment for his find, but rather... a blessing for health and success. He then offered an explanation: “My mother would always tell me that the blessing of a Jew has a special value...”

Of course the entire family blessed him profusely with all good things that a non-Jew is happy to be blessed with. The man thanked them emotionally and turned to go.

But...

When he arrived home, William excitedly told his wife what had happened that day, but instead of being happy about the blessings he had received, she was derisive and scornful.

Late that night, William awoke from his sleep clutching his stomach, which was cramping terribly. Suddenly, his wife's scorn turned into anger and even hatred: “Look what those Jews' blessings did to you,” she hissed at him. But as he doubled over in pain, he shouted at her, “My mother was never wrong, and she's not wrong this time either...”

He called the medical clinic and asked for a doctor to come urgently, but he was told that because of numerous emergencies he would have to wait until the morning. Meanwhile, he was advised to take painkillers once an hour to ease his suffering.

At first light, William called his boss at work and told him that he would not be able to come to work that day. Then he brooded over the fact that he was also in pain and also would have to miss a day of work, but deep down he hoped that he would soon see the fulfillment of the Jewish blessings.

When another hour passed and no doctor had arrived, he anxiously called the clinic again. But he was surprised that there was no answer.

He hadn't yet figured out what had happened when his phone rang. It was his sister, and she was shrieking hysterically, asking how he was. When she heard his voice, she calmed down.

It was that infamous morning that will never be forgotten in American history—9/11, the day the Twin Towers fell, crushing beneath them thousands of employees in the buildings.

William's office was on the 89<sup>th</sup> floor of one of those offices.

Trembling and exited, William quickly called the Brinns to thank them warmly for the stomachaches that had prevented him from going to work...in the merit of their blessings.

“Now I know,” he concluded, “that blessings form the Jews are worth much more than money—they are worth life!”

*Niflaosecha Asicha, Lech Lecha*