

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS NOACH

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

How Children Benefit Their Parents

“אלה תולדות נח נח איש צדיק” (ו, ט)

Harav Rachamim Melamed Hakohen, the Rav of the Persian community in Yerushalayim, explains:

“Eileh toldos Noach” – if the children (the *toldos*) want to give their parents respite from the judgment of Gehinnom, they have to make sure each day to say “*ish tzaddik*”: 1: to answer “*amen yehei Shmei rabba*” – as the Zohar in this *parashah* (62 1) explains that each time Am Yisrael answers ‘*amen yehei Shmei rabba mevarach*’ aloud, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is filled with mercy and hints to the supervising angel to cool the fire of Gehinnom for the evil for a short time. 2: To meet the quota that Chazal established (*Tikkunei Zohar* 18, p. 33 1) for the four holy things indicated by the word *tzaddik*: *tzaddik* (90) ameins; *dalet* (4) *kedushos*; *yud* (10) *Kaddishes* and *kuf* (100) *brachos*.

Kisei Rachamim

The Land And All In It Belongs to Hashem

“כי מלאה הארץ חסם מפניהם” (ו, יג)

In *Maseches Brachos* (36b) the Gemara asks about a contradiction between two *pesukim* in *Sefer Tehillim*. One says (24:1): “*L’Hashem ha’aretz umeloah*” and the other says (115:16): “*Veha’aretz nasan livnei adam*, and He gave the land to mankind”. The Gemara explains: before the *brachah*, the land belongs to Hashem, but after the *brachah*, He gave it to mankind. From here Chazal learn that one who benefits from this world without a *brachah* is considered a thief.

Based on this the *Ohev Yisrael* of Apta explains this *passuk* to mean that because the people of the generation of the *Mabul* benefited from this world without making *brachos*, therefore, “*mal’ah ha’aretz chamas*” from them, because every single moment that they benefited from “*ha’aretz*, the land” without a *brachah*, it was considered theft and robbery.

Maggid Tehillos

Illuminate the Words of Tefillah

“צהר תעשה לתבה” (ו, טז)

The *Maggid of Mezeritsch* said on this *passuk*: *Tefillah* without *kavanah* is like a dark prayer with no depth or significance. Therefore, the *passuk* instructs us: “*tzohar taa’sseh lateivah*” make sure to concentrate on every single word, and this

way, you will cause your *tefillah* to be illuminated and willingly accepted On High.

Turei Zahav

Anyone Who Has Mercy Is Treated Mercifully

“ויזכר אלקים את נח ואת כל החיה ואת כל הבהמה אשר אתו בתבה” (ח, א)

The words of this *passuk* are explained by Harav Moshe Sternbuch:

Before the flood, Noach was saved because he was considered a *tzaddik* compared to his generation (Rashi’s second explanation at the beginning of the *parashah*). But now that the entire universe was erased, and he was no longer considered a *tzaddik*, why did Hashem remember him for good? In the merit of the *chesed* he performed for the animals that were with him in the *teivah*.

A Brachah Aloud Before Every Food

“ואתה קח לך מכל מאכל אשר יאכל” (ו, כא)

“*V’atah kach lecha*” is an acronym for “*kol*”. The acronym of *mikol ma’achal asher yochal* has the same numerical value (91) as *amen*. This hints that before eating “any food” one should make a *brachah* aloud so that those around him can say *amen* to his *brachah*.

Betzel Yehudah p. 118

As such, we can explain what we say in the *brachah* of *Zichronos* in *Mussaf* of Rosh Hashanah: “*Vegam es Noach b’ahavah zacharta vatifkedehu bifekudas yeshuah verachamim*” – just like You remembered Noach and had compassion on him when he emerged from the *teivah*, in the merit of this *middas harachamim* that he employed towards the animals that were with him, so, too, You should remember us and act toward us with *rachamim*.

Taam V’daas

And the Dove Found Peace

“ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה” (ח, יא)

In the well known *piyut* “*Yom Shabason Ein Lishkoach*” that we sing on Shabbos morning, we say “*Yona motza bo manoach*, the dove finds peace

on it [Shabbos]” and the commentaries wonder, where do we see that the dove keeps Shabbos?

Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson cites the *Yaavetz* that indeed, the dove keeps Shabbos and therefore, on this day, it does not tear off what is connected (to the tree). He explained that we can find an allusion to this from the fact that the Torah emphasized here that the dove came “towards evening” to teach us that the dove waited until the shadows would become long, and Shabbos was going out, and only then did it grasp the olive branch in its mouth to bring it to Noach.

The Intention of “L’Maan Yirbu”

“את קשתי נתתי בענן והיתה לאות ברית ביני ובין הארץ” (ט, יג)

“HaKadosh Baruch Hu spread out His right Hand and swore to Noach that He would not bring another flood upon the land...and thus Chazal established that one should mention the promise to Noach each and every day, as it says (*Devarim* 11:21) “*L’maan yirbu yemeichem v’yemei beneichem...kimei hashamayim al ha’aretz.*” (*Pirkei DeRabi Eliezer*, 23)

Based on this, the *sefer Olas Tamid* (20) writes that when one says the *passuk* “*L’Maan yirbu yemeichem*” each day, aside for the simple meaning one should also have in mind the oath that Hashem promised Noach not to bring another *mabul* on the world, as Chazal established in the *Pirkei DeRabi Eliezer*.

Brachah of Meshaneh Habriyos

“ויפץ ה’ אתם משם על פני כל הארץ” (יא, ה)

In *Maseches Sanhedrin* (109a) Chazal said that some of the members of the *Dor Haftagah* were punished by being turned into monkeys, and in the *Seder Hadoros* (*aleph* 873) he adds that some were turned into elephants. According to this, Rabi Shlomo Ha’edni explained in the name of the *mekubal* Rabi Meshulam the *halachah* in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 225 8 according to *Gemara Brachos* 58b) that one who sees an elephant and a monkey makes the *brachah* of *Baruch Meshaneh Habriyos*, because although all animals are different one to another, these creatures were altered from their original form, as at first, they were created as humans, and then they became elephants and monkeys, and that is why we make a *brachah* on them.

Melech Shlomo Kilayim 88, 6

“נתתי לטרף ארצכם”

דבר בעתו מה טוב: בשבוע הבא עלינו לטובה מתחילים בני ארץ ישראל לשאול על הגשמים. הבה נתחזק בעניינת אמן המורידה שפע לעולם (זוהר וילך קיט ב), ואף גשמי הברכה יורדים בזכותה, כמאמר חכמינו זיכרונם לברכה (תענית ח א): “אין גשמים יורדים אלא בשביל בעלי אפנה.”

לברכה ולא לקללה, אמן.



Shiru L'Hashem Shir Chadash

"This entire *mizmor* was said on the language of the *Geulah*, and the *segulah* of the chosen Nation, and the fact that it is a special *segulah* for Hashem. And he said: 'Shiru L'Hashem Shir Chadash,' because that time will be called 'chadash' in miracles and in the display of strength and power of His actions towards His nation. And He says 'Tehilasi bikehal chassidim' because then the whole land will be filled with knowledge of Hashem like the water covers the sea (*Yeshaya* 11:9) and the entire nation will be called *chassidim*.'" (*Me'iri* on *Tehillim*)

Yismach Yisrael B'Osav

Chazal have already concluded that it would be better for a person had he not been created, because he is destined to sin (*Eiruvin* 13b), but in the World To Come, when Hashem will renew His world and we will merit to see the resurrection of the dead, in His great mercy, they will no longer say that it is better for a person not to have been created. Because at that time, a person will no longer sin, and he will be like the *Nezer Habriah*, the way man was before the sin. Therefore, "Yismach Yisrael B'Osav", we will have to sing a new song for our creation and formation. (*Tefillah Yesharah - Keser Nehora*)

This is the place to note the wondrous things cited in the *Zohar HaKadosh* (*Pinchas* 219 2): Rabi Abba said: How beloved are Yisrael before HaKadosh Baruch Hu, that their joy and praise is only for Him, as we learn: All joy in Am Yisrael that does not include Hashem is not real joy, as it says, "Yismach Yisrael b'Osav" that joy that Am Yisrael feels is only because of its Creator.

Furthermore: Why does it say "osav" in the plural and not "b'Oso" in singular? To teach us that when a person includes Hashem in his *simchah*, Hashem brings his mother and father from Gan Eden to take part in his joy.

Torah Protects and Saves A Person

Chazal explain the *pasuk* "Romemos Kel bigronam vecherev pipiyos beyadam" (See *Midrash Tehillim*) that when Yisrael utter words of Torah and are not lax in being involved in Torah, then they win over their enemies, as Chazal said (*Bereishis Rabba* 65 20) on the *pasuk* "Hakol kol Yaakov vheyadayim yedei Eisav" that as long as the voice of Yaakov is heard in shuls and *batei medrash*, the sword of Eisav cannot harm them.

Chazal further said (*Pesikta Derav Kahana* 12) that that same "cherev pipiyos" that Yisrael grasps and through which it overpowers its enemies is the Torah, which is divided into two parts, the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. That is why it is called a "cherev pipiyos" – a sword with two blades.

Someone once asked the Chazon Ish: Why do we not merit to see open miracles in our days? The Chazon Ish replied, casually: "And why not? I'll tell you that on the day that I finished writing my work on *Maseches Eiruvin* after years of toil and hard work, it was the middle of World War One. I was in the shul in Minsk, and suddenly someone entered the shul and shouted that a brigade of soldiers was roaming around seeking those suspected of being spies.

"Because I had no ID papers on me, I knew that if I would be caught by the soldiers, I would be suspected as a spy, and who knew what my fate would

be. Therefore, I hurried, with a few other Yidden, to run away to the thick forest and to hide there until the danger would pass. But when I arrived in the forest, I realized, to my horror, that I was surrounded with rows of soldiers carrying weapons, waiting with their commanders to enter the city.

"I had no choice but to walk between the rows of soldiers with my writings in hand. Wondrously, despite this being the purpose of their arrival in the city, no one looked at me. I passed through them as though I could see them but remained unseen until I reached safety.

"I have no doubt," the Chazon Ish concluded, "that this miracle happened in the merit of the study of *Maseches Eiruvin*, because "Torah magna umatzla" and as for you," he said to the petitioner, "you also saw a major miracle that happened in our day, and anyone who delves into it can see miracles of some type all the time." (*Vedibarta Bam*, p. 341)

Laasos Bahem Mishpat Kasuv

Many have wondered what the words "mishpat kasuv, a written trial" mean. What is this trial that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will judge the non-Jews in the World to Come?

The Chafetz Chaim explained this with a parable:

There was a prince who strayed in a thick forest and fell into the hands of cruel, heartless bandits, who would torture their prey extensively until they would succumb to their wounds. When the prince fell into their hands, he tried to warn them that he was a prince and that they would be better off being merciful to him, because ultimately they would be caught and punished. But this words had no influence on them and they began to torture him the same way they tortured their other victims.

In the meantime, the king and his many soldiers spread all over the kingdom searching for the lost prince. After a few days they found him in the hands of the bandits, on the verge of death. When the king sentenced the bandits to death, they fell before him pleadingly, claiming that they did not deserve to die because ultimately, the prince remained alive. But the king said to them: I know very well that your plan was to kill my son, and if not for the fact that I was able to rescue him from your clutches in the nick of time you would have carried out your plans. Now I will do to you what you wanted to do to him.

In the World to Come, when Hashem will punish the nations of the world, they will try to claim that they do not deserve to be punished, because ultimately, Klal Yisrael survived. But Hashem will reply to them that the miracle of Am Yisrael's salvation was because of Him, and that He would judge them "kemishpat kasuv" the way they had written and planned to decimate Am Yisrael, even though they failed. (*Telalei Oros*)

Let us conclude with a well known *vort* from Rav Naftali of Ropschitz, ז"ל: Chazal said (*Chagigah* 9b) that poverty is like a *keser hadar*, an elegant crown, on the heads of Am Yisrael, and here we are asking that in the World to Come, when Hashem will elevate Klal Yisrael over all the nations, and he'll then give the non-Jews what Chazal write is a *hadar lechol chassidav*—in other words, poverty.

Three Wishes That Came True

It was in the middle of World War Two. Hundreds of members of the *Mirrer Yeshivah* in exile in Shanghai were enveloped in the world of Torah, while their father and Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz, ז"ל, was busy worrying about how to sustain them.

Rav Chaim, who served as the yeshivah's liaison with the Japanese authorities, was under constant and close surveillance by the Japanese secret police, which could not figure out the secret of the material survival of hundreds of yeshivah *bachurim* who did nothing towards earning a livelihood.

It was clear to the authorities that the yeshivah subsisted on external aid sources, but woe to the heads of the yeshivah if the police would discover the tens of thousands of American dollars sent each month in convoluted ways from the American aid institutions and the *Vaad Hayedidim* in America.

It's important to remember that at this time, the fighting between Japan and America had reached a peak, and American currency was considered contraband in the eyes of the authorities. Dealing in the currency was considered a crime of collaborating with the enemy. But there was no other source of income for the yeshivah, and thus, Rav Chaim had to put himself at risk time after time and to use the underhanded methods to transfer the funds.

Rav Chaim communicated with the institutions that supported him through secret codes which were primarily comprised of various halachic concepts, sources, *gematrios* and nicknames that were brilliantly planted in the extensive Torah correspondence that was carried out each day through the mail and the telegram services via neutral countries such as Uruguay, Sweden and Switzerland, from where the messages were conveyed to America, and then back.

Obviously, the Japanese police scanned each and every word in these letters, hoping to find answers to their questions. But *baruch Hashem*, they found nothing. Despite the danger, Rav Chaim's activities continued, but beneath the veneer of calm, he was constantly worried that the authorities may discover his secrets. Compassion was not the Japanese's strong trait, indicated by the fact that during that time, every average Japanese citizen would quake in fright if he would only hear the name "Gendarmerie" the notorious Japanese secret police.

Hair raising stories were told over among Japanese citizens about the bitter end met by those imprisoned in the dungeons of the secret police. This meant that no Japanese person wanted any connection, no matter how indirect, to any action that could have aroused the ire of the secret police. Rav Chaim worked tirelessly to find a bank that would agree to conduct the dangerous transfers for him. When, after extensive efforts, he reached an agreement with a bank manager to do these transfers, it was nothing short of a miracle.

Often, the Rosh Yeshivah was summoned to the secret police department for interrogation. He was forced to answer questions posed by

a commander named Joya, a cruel, sly fiend who behaved outwardly cordially, but inside, did everything possible to trip Rav Chaim up and have him fall prey to the secret police.

Usually Rav Chaim was able to evade the penetrating questions, one way or another. But one morning, it appeared as though the ties between Rav Chaim and the secret police had taken a turn for the worse. The latter had managed to obtain several incriminating documents which described in detail certain financial transactions made for the yeshivah.

Rav Chaim was hastily taken to the dungeon of the secret police. He knew that there was a good chance that this time, the interrogation could conclude with a significant punishment and that his life was in danger.

His lips murmured the words of *Viduy* as his eyes were raised Heavenward in prayer that Hashem should put the right words in his mouth and let him find favor in the eyes of the interrogators. "Ribbono shel Olam," Rav Chaim asked, "I wasn't born as a yeshivah director, and I don't want to die as one. I ask of You to give me more years of life so that I can teach Torah, which is my dearest wish."

Many years later, during the wedding of his younger daughter, Rav Chaim related some of what happened that day:

"I knew very well what the Japanese secret police wanted. For a long time they were trying to figure out the source of funding for the 350 *bachurim* under my auspices, and now they had found grounds for their suspicion..."

"My friends had warned me that no one gets out alive from the dungeons, but because I knew that when a person's life is in danger and with the fear of death, he can ask Hashem more than always, I decided to use those hours to daven from the depths of my heart, and this is what I asked: 'Ribbono shel Olam, if You chose me as a sacrifice, I will go with joy...but if You want to leave me alive, I ask of You three things: My first request is that when I finally merit to get to safe shores with the yeshivah, I will no longer need to bear the financial burden and will be able to sit and learn undisturbed. The second, that I merit to raise sons who are *talmidei chachamim*, and third, that I merit to marry off my daughters to Torah scholars.' I cannot speak of the tremendous miracles I saw that day but I can say that *bechasdei Shamayim* I emerged from there alive. And the requests I made during those difficult moments were fulfilled, one by one. Baruch Hashem I was relieved for the financial burden of the yeshivah as soon as I arrived in Eretz Yisrael; I merited sons who are *talmidei chachamim*, and tonight, I am meriting to see my youngest daughter marrying a true *talmid chacham*."

Sefer Hazikaron Lemaran Hagra"ch Shmuelevitz, p. 68