

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## PARASHAS VAYEISHEV

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### Hashem Accedes to the Will of His Adherents

“וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען” (לז, א)

“Yaakov wanted to dwell in tranquility, and the issue of Yosef suddenly rose upon him; *tzaddikim* seek to dwell in tranquility and Hashem says: is it not enough for the *tzaddikim* what awaits them in Olam Haba—they want to dwell in tranquility in this world as well?!” (*Rashi, Bereishis Rabbah* 84 3)

This is puzzling and needs to be clarified: We know it says (*Tehillim* 145:19): “*Retzon yereiav yaaseh*, the will of His adherents He will do.” Why should the *tzaddikim*'s request to dwell in tranquility in this world not be acceded to?

**Harav Avraham Dov of Avritch** explains: Of course Hashem fulfills the will of *tzaddikim*, but here, Yaakov knew that “He was worthy...of going to Egypt in shackles of iron” (*Yalkut Shimoni Vayeishev* 145). Therefore, he asked to merit “to dwell in tranquility” and therefore, Hashem accepted his tefillah. Instead of descending in shackles of steel “*kafatz alav rogzo shel Yosef*” and he merited to go down to Egypt with the honor preserved for the king's father.

Now Rashi's words can be easily understood: “Hashem said, it is not enough for *tzaddikim* what awaits them in the next world, but [I will also fulfill their will and add to them what] they seek to dwell in tranquility in this world!”

Bas Ayin

#### Ki L'Hashem Hameluchah Umoshel Bagoyin

“המלך תמלך עלינו אם מושל תמשל בנו” (לז, ה)

In his commentary on *Mishlei* (27:27) the **Vilna Gaon** explains: a “*melech*,” a king, is one whose nation has anointed him to reign over them willingly. A “*moshel*,” a ruler, is one who has imposed his power over a nation without their agreement. These two essences are both manifested in Yosef's dream (*ibid* 7): On the one hand it says “*vehinei kamah alumasi vegam nitzvah*,” my bundle rose and stood up, of its own accord, like a ruler. On the other hand it says “*Vehinei tesubenah alumoseichem vatishtachavena l'alumasi*,” all your bundles surrounded mine and bowed to it, willingly, like a king. Therefore, the brothers used double language in their reaction: “*Hamaloch timloch...in mashol timshol banu*.”

Based on this the Gra explains the reason that

we add in *Tefillas Shacharis*, after *Az Yashir*, the *pesukim* “*Ki l'Hashem hameluchah umoshel bagoyim*,” (*Tehillim* 22:29), and “*v'alu moshi'im beHar Tzion lisphot...vehaysah l'Hashem hameluchah*,” (*Ovadiah* 1:21). At this time, we accept the reign of Hashem willingly, while He rules over the nations of the world by force. But in the future, when all the nations of the world will accept Hashem's rule willingly, then “*Vehaysah L'Hashem hameluchah*,” He will be willingly accepted as a King on the whole world.

#### Hagida Na Li: Amen

“ויאמר את אחי אנכי מבקש הגידה נא לי” (לז, טז)

The **Rema MiPano** writes (*Asarah Maamaros, Maamar Chikur Din*, Vol. II 15): “It is good for every person to have two friends who listen and answer amen after his *brachos*.” A hint to this can be derived from this *pasuk*: “*Vayomer*” before I make a *brachah*, “*es achai ani mevakesh, hagida na li*” I ask my brothers, please say. “*Na li*” is numerically equivalent to “amen”.

Betzel Yehudah

#### The Sin Damages the Yichud of Amen

“וימאן” (לז, ח)

As **Chazal** explain (*Beitzah* 16a) the word “*Vayinafash*” (*Shemos* 31:17) means “*vei aveidah nefesh*”, woe, a soul is lost. Here, too, we can say “*vayema'en*” is “*vei amen*.” That is what Yosef said: If I stumble and sin, *chalilah*, I will harm the *Yichud* of the holy Names that are hinted to in the word “amen.”

Even Shlomo

#### The Brachah of Shehecheyanu on Shoes

“וימכרו את יוסף לישמעאלים בעשרים כסף” (לז, כה)

The **Pirkei Derabi Eliezer** (38) says that the brothers each took two silver dinars from the money they received from the sale of Yosef and purchased shoes for himself. That is what the *Navi* is referring to in the *haftarah* of this week (*Amos* 2:6): “*Al michram bakessef tzaddik v'evyon ba'avur naalayim*,” they sold the *tzaddik*...for money in order to buy shoes.”

**Rav Chaim Segal Horowitz** explains in his

*sefer Mayim Chayim Sheini*: The Gemara (*Bava Kama* 94a) explains from the words of *Tehillim* (10:3): “*Ubotzea bereich ni'etz Hashem*,” that one who makes a *brachah* on a stolen item is not making a *brachah*, he is being “*mena'etz*,” he is cursing. Therefore, the brothers chose to purchase shoes with the money they made for selling Yosef, because we do not make the *brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* (as brought down in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 223 6) on shoes. That is by contrast to a vessel or garment that we do make the *brachah* on, or a food item that we recite *birchas hanehenin* for.

#### Never Forget Hashem's Chessed

“ויהי ה' את יוסף ויהי איש מצליח” (לז, ב)

**Harav Simcha Bunim Sofer**, the rav of Pressburg, explained: The way of the world is that when success shines upon a person, he forgets his Creator and says “my strength and the power of my hand have made this success for me.” That is not what Yosef did: even when he became an “*ish matzliach*”, a successful person, it was still “*Vayehi Hashem es Yosef*,” – *Shem Shamayim* was always on his lips. He never forgot, even for a moment, that Hashem is the One giving him all the power and success.

The **Chafetz Chaim** would thus explain the reason that we ask in *Birchas Hachodesh* twice: “And give us...a life of *Yiras Shamayim*...a life of wealth and honor...a life where we have a love of Torah and *Yiras Shamayim*.” After we ask for *Yiras Shamayim*, we then ask for wealth and honor, therefore, it is worthy to repeat our request for *Yiras Shamayim*, so that we will not be the fulfillment of the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 32:15) “*Vayishman yeshurun* – and he grew fat and kicked...and abandoned Hashem Who made him.”

**Harav Hillel Lichtenstein of Kolomaya**, a disciple of the Chasam Sofer, was once invited to Frankfurt as the guest of honor at the home of the righteous Baron Shimon Rothschild. During the visit, the Baron showed Rav Shimon his beautiful estate, and asked the Rav to rebuke him if he saw anything amiss. When Rav Hillel finished his tour, he turned to the Baron and said, I have been through your home and see that all the laws of the Torah are scrupulously upheld, except for one *pasuk*: “*Vayishman yeshurun vayivat*...”

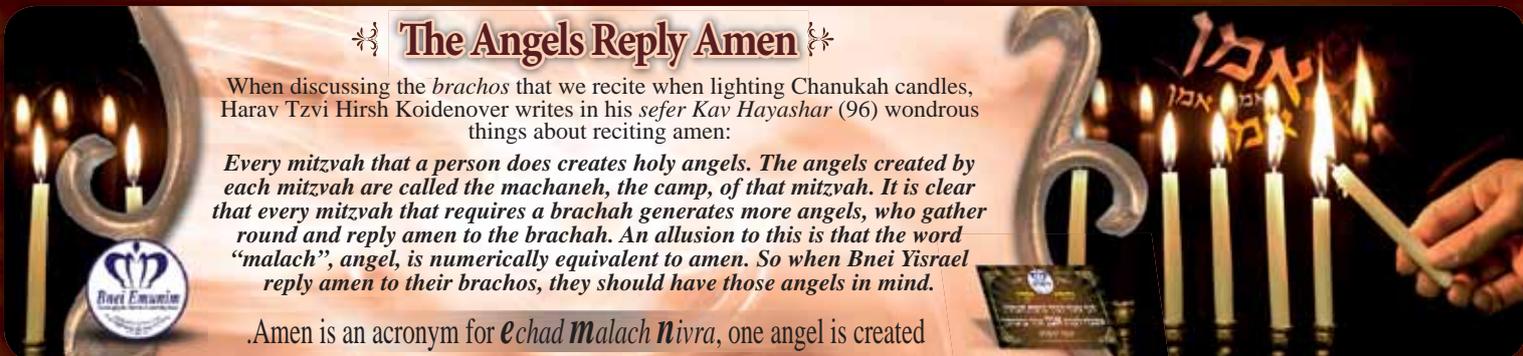
Shaarei Simchah; Likutei Tzvi

### The Angels Reply Amen

When discussing the *brachos* that we recite when lighting Chanukah candles, **Harav Tzvi Hirsh Koidenover** writes in his *sefer Kav Hayashar* (96) wondrous things about reciting amen:

Every mitzvah that a person does creates holy angels. The angels created by each mitzvah are called the machaneh, the camp, of that mitzvah. It is clear that every mitzvah that requires a brachah generates more angels, who gather round and reply amen to the brachah. An allusion to this is that the word “malach”, angel, is numerically equivalent to amen. So when Bnei Yisrael reply amen to their brachos, they should have those angels in mind.

Amen is an acronym for *echad Malach Nivra*, one angel is created



## Al Hanissim

Who Composed the Tefillah  
of Al Hanissim?

The *Orchos Chaim* (Rav Aharon of Lunel, *Chanukah* 22) writes that Yochanan Kohen Gadol is the one who wrote the *tefillah* of *Al Hanissim* of Chanukah. His name is hinted to by the fact that there are 124 words, equivalent to the value of "Yochanan." The *Sefer Harokeach* (225) says that *Tefillas Al Hanissim* was composed by Yochanan Kohen Gadol, but he writes that the *tefillah* has 125 words, equivalent to the value of "*Kohanim*," through which the miracle happened. Because of the sins of Yochanan, he chose to conceal his name, and to add another word to make it equivalent to *Kohanim* instead of his own name.

(It should be noted that the *nusach* of *Al Hanissim* that we have has only 108 words, but in the *Siddurin* of the Rokeach, Rav Saadya Gaon, Rav Amram and others, there is a longer version than what we have. The additional words are "*keshem she'asisa lahem nes ugevuross bayamin haheem ubzman hazeh, kein aseh imanu Hashem Elokeinu pele venissim b'eis hazos.*" See more in the *Siddur Hayaavetz* and *Bnei Yissaschar*, Kislev and Teves, *Maamar* 4, 2, where they explain the *nusach* that we have by way of *remez*.)

Who is the Yochanan  
Mentioned in Al Hanissim?

In his introduction to his commentary on *Mishnayos*, the Rambam writes that Yochanan Kohen Gadol, who ended his days as a Sadducee (*Brachos* 29a) was the Yochanan mentioned in the *Al Hanissim* of Chanukah (see *Seder Hadoros*, 3642-3647 who cites this in a different way.)

The *sefer Butzina D'Nehora* (Chanukah) brings in the name of Harav Baruch of Mezhibuz, who asked, how can we mentioned him among the righteous Chashmonaim in the story of the miracle, if he became a Sadducee in his later days?

He replied: When *chalilah*, a person transgresses a sin and seeks to repent, his *teshuvah* is not complete until the same situation crosses his path again and he overcomes the temptation and does not sin again. (See *Yoma* 86b) As Yochanan Kohein Gadol became a Sadducee, he explained the *passuk* of the *Avodah* of Yom Kippur (*Vayikra* 16b): "*Ki be'anan Era'eh al hakapores*" the way the Sadducees explained it: that one must bring a fire from outside into the *Kodesh Hakodashim*. His sin was rectified when the Chashmonaim, who were his descendants, lit the lights of Chanukah from the pure oil that they found in the *Azarah*, which was sealed with the seal of Yochanan Kohen Gadol. (See *Kolbo*)

This is alluded to in the words of the *Mishnah* (*Shabbos* 21b) regarding a camel that was loaded with flax and the flax was ignited with a candle that was in the store, and that set the house above it on fire: "If a storekeeper put his candle outside, he is guilty." Storekeeper, *chenvani*, has the same letters as "Yochanan" and this hints to the fact that Yochanan was guilty in his sin of bringing an outside fire. Then the *Mishnah* adds: "Rabi Yehudah says: with the light of Chanukah, he is exempt." This hints to the rectification of the Chanukah candles had on the sin of Rabi Yochanan and he was exempt from judgment.

Why Do We Thank for the  
Wars?

Many have asked: Why in the *tefillah* of *Al Hanissim* do we thank Hashem "for the wars that You did for our fathers"? Are we people who like war and strife? This is especially the case, after we were blessed (*Vayikra* 26:6) "And a sword will not pass in your land," and *Chazal* said (*Taanis* 22a): "Even a sword of peace."

There are several answers to this:

1. The *Drashos Hachasam Sofer* (*Chanukah*) answered this according to the words of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 118:21): "*Odecha ki anisani vatehi li liyeshuah*" from which we learn that we don't have to thank so much for the *yeshuah*, because Hashem is always good and does good, and His will is to do good for his creations. But in reality of the way the world is led, it is not worthy for a person to receive something good before he first suffers. That's the way it was with the exile of Egypt, through which Am Yisrael earned the merit to receive the Torah. The same is with the tribulations of the Greeks, after which they merited tranquility during the Second Bais Hamikdash. In *Asid Lavo* as well, we will merit Redemption because of the suffering of the exile. Therefore, our praise in the *passuk* is "*ki inisani*", that You tortured me, and we, too, must thank specifically for those wars that caused the miracles afterwards.

2. In a *drashah* delivered on Chanukah, Harav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, founder and Rosh Yeshivah of Ponevezh, answered this question. The war with the Greeks was a spiritual war, and regretfully, it is not yet over. The victory will only come with the arrival of Mashiach, may it be speedily in our day. Meanwhile, we have to thank "for the wars," for the fact that we are battling and are not giving up in despair, because if we would not continue fighting, then our spiritual situation would be in perilous decline.

The Rav offered a parable to explain this: There was a wealthy man who was invited to watch an exercise by an elite army unit. The man observed the soldiers who had to scale a canal, jump over gates, crawl under barbed wire and climb steep hills. He had compassion for the exhausted soldiers, and went over to the commander and offered to hire a bulldozer to flatten the training field, remove all the obstacles and fill the dangerous pits...

The commander smiled at him and said, "My friend, as you are ready to pay for the rectification of these obstacles; instead you should want to pay the expense of creating them...Our goal is not to make life easy for the soldiers. We need to train them and teach them so they can face challenges and overcome any obstacle." (*Shalmei Moshe*, Vol. III, P. 245).

3. Rav Chaim Zeitchik, ז"ל, a *talmid* of Novhardok, explained, that by mentioning the wars, we thank Hashem for the wars that passed us by and we remained safe. In the history of Am Yisrael there are many wars that took the lives of multitudes of people. Here, we thank Hashem for those wars that ended only with fear, and not loss of life, such as the war of the Greeks, and the war of Mordechai and Esther. (*V'Ani Tefillah*, Vol. IV, p. 47)

## She'asah Nissim" in on the English Channel"

It was the third day of Chanukah, 5735/1974. The Rebbe, Harav Yitzchak of Bohush entered his *Bais Medrash* after Shacharis and was surprised to see the Chassidim sitting at elegantly laid tables for a "*Kiddush*", even though it was the middle of the week.

The Rebbe asked what the occasion was and the Chassidim pointed to the *gvir*, Reb Mordechai Kleiman of Zurich, who was in Eretz Yisrael for business at the time. Reb Mordechai was seated at the head of the table, an expensive bottle of wine at his side, and surrounded by trays laden with all kinds of delicacies.

"What is the *simchah*?" the Rebbe inquired, and the chassid replied that this was a *seudas hoda'ah* for a wondrous story that happened to him on the third day of Chanukah exactly 12 years earlier. Usually, he held the "*kiddush*" in the shul near his home, but now he was in the Holy Land and chose to do it in the Bohusher Rebbe's *Bais Medrash*.

The Rebbe asked what happened, and Reb Mordechai began to relate:

When this story happened, I lived in London. My business spanned the entire European continent, and I often had to cross the English Channel, connecting Britain with France, and the rest of mainland Europe.

Usually, the Channel's waters were placid and still, but from time to time, the water suddenly became very choppy, with high, dangerous waves, not unlike the ocean during stormy weather.

Early in the afternoon of the second day of Chanukah, I got off the train that had taken me from Paris to the station near the Channel. I intended to cross the Channel by ferry, as most people do, but as soon as I got off the train I saw that it would not be so simple.

The winds blowing on the shore told me that a severe storm was in progress in the area, which made crossing the Channel very dangerous. The ferry operators, who usually sought passengers out, did not want to take the risk, and decided to sit out the storm.

The hundreds of passengers waiting on the banks of the Channel realized that it was better for them to wait patiently until the waters calmed down. But a few dozen people could not postpone the trip, among them me and another Yid, who wanted to return home so we could light the Chanukah candles. We decided to take the risk and boarded a ferry whose owner agreed, for a huge sum of money, to cross us.

Because of the storm, the captain sternly ordered us to remain in the underbelly of the ferry and not to come up on deck at all. We sat down in the downstairs passenger compartment and the ferry set out.

About half hour into the journey, we realized that the risk we had taken was real and threatening. The storm seemed to have grown fiercer and the small ferry began to rock from side to side. We gripped our seats with all our might, and from the windows we could see the crew of the boat slowly losing their composure.

As we were inside, we couldn't forge any contact with them to find out what was going on, which made us even more nervous. We could only figure out from the thick darkness outside that a long time had passed since we'd boarded the ferry and we should have long arrived at our destination.

One of the passengers dared go up to the deck and found it flooded; he retreated back into our compartment, terror stricken. The sailors explained to

him that the compass that was supposed to guide them had broken and was unusable. That's why the ferry was just going round and round itself without any way to emerge from the eye of the storm. In addition, they told him that they had registered a call for help from a ferry that was approaching from the other side of the Channel, and it said that some of their people had been tossed off the deck into the water, and they could not be found.

We all fell silent, wrapped in our own thoughts. Then the Yid who sat next to me stood up and began to cry aloud: "*Bitchu b'Hashem*, have faith in Hashem and He will help! It is Chanukah today and we are sure that He One who performed the miracles for our forefathers will continue to do so for us as well, and He will take us from darkness to light!"

As he spoke, the man took four small candles out of his back, affixed them to one of the chairs, and in front of the shocked eyes of the passengers, he began to make the *brachah* of "*L'Hadlik Ner Shel Chanukah*" with great *kavanah*. When he made the *brachah* of "*She'asah Nissim*" his voice broke and he recited it tearfully. Even the non-Jewish passengers found themselves crying with him.

When he finished lighting the candles, the Yid burst into a rendition of *Maos Tzur*. By this time, I joined him, forgetting where I was and what was going on. We finished singing, and immediately that same Yid took a *sefer Tehillim* out of his pocket, and with me, began to recite *passuk* by *passuk*. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed the passengers staring at us in disbelief. One of them was a Catholic priest who marveled at the fact that two lone Jews could block out their dire state and cast their fates to the Hand of their Creator to save them.

This situation could have continued for a long time, if not for the door suddenly opening. The captain entered. We all turned to look at him hopefully, and indeed, we were relieved to see a tired smile on his face.

"I feel that the danger is behind us," he said with satisfaction. "The storm has calmed and let us hope we can find our way quickly and get to Dover, our destination."

Encouraged by the good news, we continued reciting *Tehillim* fervently, and soon enough, the captain burst in again and said, "Thank G-d! We see the lights of Dover in the distance. We're nearly there."

You cannot imagine the joy that we felt at that moment, as the tension we had been enveloped in suddenly dissipated. We burst into a joyous dance, and most of the passengers quickly joined along—soon joined by the crew who hurried to see what the noise was all about.

When we arrived in Dover, a medical team awaited us—they had been alerted to our plight and were concerned. We got off the ship, some of us bruised from the turbulence, but all in good health. The priest that led the procession could not stop pointing to my friend and saying, "This Jew saved us all!"

Only once I was sitting on the train to London was I able to reflect on what had just happened. I felt that we had experienced a tremendous miracle, and I had no doubt that the *tefillah* had been the reason for our salvation.

I made a pledge right then and there to celebrate the third day of Chanukah for as long as I live, to praise Hashem in public for the miracle that happened to me.

*Maaseh Hagedolim, Ki Sisa 19*