

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS VAYETZEI

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Daven in a Suitable Place

“ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה: ויפגע במקום” (כח, י-יא)

Chazal explain (*Chulin* 91b): When Yaakov reached Charan he said: Is it possible that I passed the place where my forebears prayed (Har Hamoriah) and did not daven? He decided to rectify this and to go back. Immediately, a miracle was performed and the way was shortened.

A community in America once found that its shul was too small to accommodate the many *misपालेलים* who sought to daven there during the Yamim Nora'im. They decided to rent a spacious hall nearby and to conduct the *tefillah* there. But because the hall served a whole year as a venue for immodest, wild parties, they asked the Tchebiner Rav, *zt"l*, to ask if they were allowed to daven there.

In his response, the Tchebiner Rav cited the words of the Gemara above, from which we can learn how important it is to choose a place worthy of *tefillah*. Yaakov could have davened wherever he was, yet, he resolved to retrace his steps, a great distance, to daven in the place where his fathers had davened. From Above, this was endorsed, proven by the fact that the path was shortened. This teaches us how much the holiness of the place adds to the *tefillah*, and how much more so should one certainly not pray in a place that serves immodest and unsavory purposes.

Yeshurun, Vol. 13, p. 270

Tefillas Arvis is Optional

“ויפגע במקום וילך שם כי בא השמש” (כח, יא)

“Vayifga” – Chazal explain this mean *tefillah*... and we learn that he composed *Tefillas Arvis*.” (*Rashi*)

In *Maseches Brachos* (27b), the Gemara cites the opinion of Rabi Yehoshua, who holds that by contrast to the *tefillah* of *Shacharis* and *Minchah*, which are obligatory, *Tefillas Arvis* is optional. Many wonder why this *tefillah* is different than the others?

Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lvov explains:

In principle, Yaakov did not seek to establish a new *tefillah*. His intention was to daven *Minchah*, which was established by his father, but because the sun set before its time, he found himself davening *Arvis*. As such, it was established that forever, an additional *tefillah* would be added to the two that existed until then. In any case, because Yaakov did not intend it, this *tefillah* was determined to be optional and not obligatory.

Divrei Shaul

The Power of a Promise in a Time of Trouble

“וידר יעקב נדר לאמור” (כח, כ)

“Leimor” – for generations, so that they would make promises in a time of trouble.” (*Bereishis Rabba* 70 1)

A terrible tragedy occurred three hundred years ago in the city of Lvov. A warehouse of explosives that suddenly exploded caused many homes in the Jewish quarter to collapse, with their occupants still inside. Many of the Jews of Lvov were killed in the incident, among them the wife and young daughter of the **Pnei Yehoshua, zy”a**. The Pnei Yehoshua himself was also buried under the rubble and trapped there. In the depths of his anguish, he followed the ways of Yaakov Avinu and promised a *neder* to Hashem, as he wrote in his introduction to *Seder Nashim*:

“Then I said, I am still in the midst of the wave; if Hashem will be with me and will take me out of this place safely, and will build for me a home so that I can teach my students, I will not keep myself away from the *Bais Medrash* and will study in the depth the *sugyos* of *Shas* and *poskim* and *halachah*...I did not even finish saying the words in my heart, and

Amen from Two People

“ויעקב הלך לדרוכו ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלקים” (לב, ב)

The **Rema MiPano** writes:

“*Malach Elokim*” is numerically equivalent to twice “amen”. Yaakov is numerically equivalent to twice amen as well. We learn from here that preferably, a person should try to make a *brachah* before two listeners who can then reply amen.

Asarah Maamaros [Rema MiPano] Maamar Chikur Din 2 15

Hashem heard my plea and forged what seemed to be a path just for me out of the rubble, and I emerged safely, without any harm...Then I knew with great faith that it was all from Hashem.”

Being Careful to say “Im Yirtzeh Hashem”

“וידר יעקב נדר לאמור אם יהיה אלקים עמדי” (שם)

One of the Chassidim of the **Toras Chaim of Kossov** came to bid his Rebbe farewell after he had spent some time there. He related that he planned to travel to the town of Zablato, but uncharacteristically that Rebbe did not bless him for the journey. Nevertheless, the man left, but quickly had to return because the bridge that he was supposed to use to

cross the river collapsed and the road was blocked.

When the man returned to Kossov, he expressed his surprise to the Rebbe: “Why was the Rebbe quiet when I asked him about my trip and didn’t tell me that I shouldn’t travel now to Zablato?”

“I’m like you; I didn’t know what would happen,” the Rebbe replied. “But when you told me about your plans to leave, without adding the words that are expected of an *ehrllicher Yid*, ‘*Im Yirtzeh Hashem*’ I realized that you would not succeed and that’s why I did not bless you to have a good journey.”

The Rebbe then added: “I learned something from Yaakov Avinu, a”h, that can shed some light on the words that the Torah said of him: ‘*Vayidor Yaakov neder leimor*’ – Yaakov made a *neder* that before each action he would say ‘*Im yihiyeh Elokim imadi*.’”

Sarfei Kodesh p. 449

Leah’s Unique Admission

“ותאמר הפעם אודה את ה’ על כן קראה שמו יהודה” (כט, לה)

It is puzzling: Until now, did Leah not thank for the three *shevatim* that she had merited to bring to Klal Yisrael?

The **Mahara”m Shick** explains: Certainly Leah thanked Hashem at the earlier births, but now that she had merited to receive more than her share and gave birth to a fourth son for Yaakov, she wondered: And is it only ‘*hapa’am*’ this time of the birth, ‘*odeh es Hashem*’ that I thank Hashem? Do I not need to praise Him for every single moment of my life?!” Therefore she named him “Yehudah” – so that she should remember to always praise Hashem. As David Hamelech said in *Tehillim* (34:2): “*Avorchah es Hashem bechol eis tamid tehillaso befi*, I will bless Hashem at all times, His praise is always in my mouth.”

Based on the this concept, the **Daas Sofer** of Pressburg explained the words of Rabi Yochanan in the name of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai (*Brachos* 7b): “From the day that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world there wasn’t a person who thanked Hashem until Leah came thanked Him as it says, ‘*Hapaam odeh es Hashem*.’”

This seems puzzling: Can it be that until Leah came no one thanked Hashem? Did the holy Avos not thank Hashem for the miracles performed for them? Do we not find in the sources that they did? As such, it can be explained: Indeed, the Avos thanked Hashem when miracles were performed for them, but Leah was the first who made herself a sign to remember to repeatedly thank Hashem for His *chassadim* each and every day of her life.



The Divrei Yisrael of Modzhitz (passed away 13 Kislev 5681) explained the words we recite in *Birchas Hamazon*:

“*Kein yevarech osanu bivrachah sheleimah venomar amen.*”

There is an allusion here to the words of the **Zohar** (*Vayeilech* 285 2) that one who is careful about replying amen brings upon himself an abundance – “so He should bless us with the complete blessings” in the merit of “*venomar amen.*”

Amen. Answer and be blessed.

Vayevarech David Part I

Vayevarech David

In preparation for the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, we recite the *pesukim* of *Vayevarech David* and *Shiras Hayam*, according to which the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* formulated the fifteen praises mentioned in *Yishtabach* (*Tur, Orach Chaim* 51). According to the *Orchos Chaim*, this part of the *tefillah* begins with *Vayevarech David es Hashem* because all the praises mentioned until now were from David Hamelech's songs.

The first four *pesukim* of *Vayevarech David* (until '*L'Shem tifartecha*') are a quote from the *brachah* that David Hamelech blessed Hashem after Am Yisrael acceded to his request to donate their money and gold to build the House of Hashem. (*Divrei Hayanim* 129:10-13) These are followed by six *pesukim* from *Sefer Nechemiah* (9, 6-11) that express the gratitude of Bnei Yisrael to Hashem when they merited to be separated from among the other nations that they dwelled among during the exile of Bavel, and ascended to the holy city and the *Mikdash*.

Although this *brachah* is a quote from David Hamelech that was said for its time, the person davening needs to feel while reciting the words, especially the words: '*V'Atah Elokeinu modim anachnu Lach umehallelim l'Shem tifartechah*,' that we are also thanking and praising Hashem for each and every detail of the tens of thousands of *chassadim* and good things that He bestows upon us every minute of our lives. HaKadosh Baruch Hu raised us and sustained us, blessed us with *ruchniyus* and material comforts, and even when we seemed ready to fall, He immediately gave us strength and pulled us back from the depths. For all these we must praise and thank Him, glorify Him and extol Him, from the depths of our heart, each and every day, with joy. (*Olas Tamid*, ch. 17)

To the Eyes of the Assembled, David Said

The Rebbe Reb Baruch of Mezhibuzh would often say: the people of the world do not understand the depths of the conversations of *tzaddikim*. It looks like they are "telling stories" but really, these stories contain the deepest and most lofty secrets, which the *tzaddikim* choose to conceal in a story or remark. He then explained the *passuk* in this *tefillah*: "*Vayevarech David es Hashem*" – David blessed HaKadosh Baruch Hu with all the hidden intentions, but "*l'einei kol hakahal vayomer David*" – to the crowd that was listening, it appeared as though he was telling a story of some kind. (*Toldos Adam, Parashas Vayeishev*)

Ki Kol BaShamayim U'vaaretz

When attempting to praise Hashem, we may actually desist and recoil when we realize the magnitude of it all: how can a physical being understand even the tiniest fraction of the greatness of Hashem in order to be able to thank Him for his endless *chesed*?! Indeed, this consoles us in our times of trouble that although we have no grasp of what Hashem really is, still, we were put into this lowly world, which is the "*nigleh*", the revealed part of creation, and from the details that our eyes can see, we can only fathom about the greatness that we cannot see, of which there is no limit and no quantification.

This can be compared to a person who never tasted honey in his life. In an effort to demonstrate the power of the sweetness of honey, he is served a dish that is flavored with honey. Even after he tastes this dish, he still has no idea as to the essence of honey itself. Still, he would get an idea, an inkling of some kind

as to the extent of honey's sweetness, which he could not do before tasting the flavoring.

That is what we are saying here: "*Lecha Hashem hagedulah vehagevurah...ki chol baShamayim u'vaaretz*." It is not in our hands to understand the greatness of His miracles and loftiness as He is in the Heavens above, and hence, we cannot thank for them in detail. However, from the greatness that we do see in this world, we can understand what tremendous power and greatness must exist in the Heavens, and therefore we must thank Hashem wholeheartedly. (*Bais David* [Rav Dovid Tevel of Minsk] *Drush* 5)

Giving Tzedakah at 'V'Atah Moshel Bakol'

The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Orach Chaim* 51 19) writes that the Arizal would give *tzedakah* while saying "*V'Atah moshel bakol*". Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky explains that this custom is the reason that we stand during *Vayevarech David*, as brought in the *Tur* (*Yoreh Deah* 361), that one should stand while doing a *mitzvah* (*Telalei Oros*).

The *sefer Noheg Katzon Yosef* (11) adds that in the Rema's shul in Krakow, there was a box permanently affixed into the wall near the place where the Rema stood, into which the *gaon* would put *tzedakah* while reciting *Vayomer David*.

In his *sefer Be'er Moshe* (*Terumah*), the Rav of Ozherov explains this custom according to the words of Chazal in *Maseches Avos* (3:7): "*Ten Lo mishelo, give Him of His, because you and yours – are His*." We learn from these words that the basis of the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* is the *emunah* that a person is only a *shomer*, a keeper, of the money that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has placed in his hands, and it is his obligation to deduct from the money that he has for the poor, as Hashem has commanded. That is also what HaKadosh Baruch Hu praised Avraham Avinu for in the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 18:19): "*Ki yedativ lemaan asher yetzaveh es banav v'es beiso acharav veshamru derech Hashem laasos tzedakah umishpat*." *Laasos tzedakah*, which is given on the side of *din*, is like "*mishpat*", and not "*lifnim mishuras hadin*," beyond the call of duty. Therefore, it is worthy that at the same time that a person testifies that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is "*moshel bakol*" and everything that the person has belongs to Hashem, he should actively fulfill His words and give *tzedakah* to the poor.

Later, the *Be'er Moshe* cites the *sefer Imrei Pinchas* (*Shaar Seder Hayom* 79) in the name of Rav Pinchas of Koritz that when reciting "*V'Atah moshel bakol*" one needs to give three coins for *tzedakah* (see *Ben Ish Chai*, Year 1, *Vayigash* 13, who cites the correct order according to *Sod* in giving these three coins), and if all of Klal Yisrael would understand the greatness of this custom and would give three coins to *tzedakah* when reciting "*V'Atah moshel bakol*" *Mashiach* would come right away.

A Segulah for the Barren

In the *sefer Olas Tamid* (ch. 17), author Rav Shmuel Hominer, *zt"l*, says according to the words of *Rashi* (*Divrei Hayanim* I, 3:11) that the *pesukim* of praise: "*Baruch Atah Hashem Elokei Yisrael*" until "*Ubevadcha legadel ulechazek hakol*" contain thirty eight words of praise, and reciting these praises with *kavanah* is a *segulah* for salvation for those who do not have children. Rav Shmuel then concludes: "Although it is simple that one needs to have *Shem Shamayim* in mind, and Hashem will do His part and have mercy on the person for the sake of His great Name."

A Trap Set by Amen

This story first appeared in the *Kol Beramah* pamphlet, printed for the Ramat Elchanan neighborhood of Bnei Brak, and then repeated by the people it happened to, expounding on the tremendous miracle that a family from Rechasim experienced in the merit of their scrupulous observance of the *mitzvah* of *amen*:

The story begins about one and a half years ago, when the well known pediatrician Rabbi Dr. Yerucham Bental, *zt"l*, passed away.

Dr. Bental, who served in his final years as the director of the neonatal unit in Laniado Hospital in Netanya and Maayani Hayeshuah Hospital in Bnei Brak, was known as a scholarly and G-d fearing man.

Aside for his unique professional skills, Dr. Bental was known for his exceptional *Yiras Shamayim*. Despite his extensive knowledge in the medical field, he would constantly consult his *rabbanim*, and they, in turn, treated him with great warmth and respect and trusted him with crucial questions that were presented to them.

There are many babies who owe their lives to Dr. Bental, among them those born with very low birth weights. With his expertise, he treated them professionally, until they could go home, hale and healthy.

In the last period of his life, the doctor fell ill with the dreaded disease. He suffered greatly, but he never stopped working devotedly to save as many babies as he could and to help parents bring children into the world.

During those few difficult months, his family and friends tried to take upon themselves different *kabbalos* as a *zechus* for his recovery. Most notable among them was a special campaign that his family launched to strengthen their answering of *amen*. Replying *amen* is known to be an easy *mitzvah*, but on the other hand, because the principle of its greatness depends on the intentions when replying *amen*, it needs thought and a serious approach.

Toward this end they prepared a large placard with a mosaic of small boxes numbered with digits ranging from 1 through 4. At the top of the sheet were four groups of *brachos*, and each category was marked with a different number and color.

Each of the family members who made a *brachah* put a sticker with the color corresponding to the *brachah* he made on the placard. Slowly, it filled with colorful stickers. In order to make it more exciting, the *brachos* were arranged in a way that with the right color stickers, words and sentences relating to *amen* would appear. This made it more

challenging and effective.

As expected, the contest galvanized the children to be very careful about reciting *brachos* aloud and responding *amen* afterwards with *kavanah*. Even when a short time later, tragically, the family patriarch passed away, the children redoubled their efforts to fill out their placards. They felt in their hearts that they were bringing *nachas* to their grandfather and that it was an *aliyah* for his *neshamah*. This gave them a sense of purpose.

They enthusiastically told their friends about the contest, and it slowly became the talk of the day among Rechasim's children. Many wanted to take part, so the family printed a few dozen copies of the placard and sold it for a nominal fee to cover their expenses.

One Motzaei Shabbos a short time later, the phone in the Bental home rang. On the other line was the excited voice of a woman who identified herself as the mother of a family who lived in their neighborhood. She told Mrs. Bental that about two weeks earlier she had acquired the special *amen* placard. They used a wide strip of tape to affix it to the wall in the children's room, and over the past few weeks, it had been halfway filled with stickers, and some of the words "hiding" in the mosaic had been revealed.

She then added: Early on Shabbos morning, the family awoke to the shrieks of one of the children. The parents quickly ran to the room and noticed the horrified child pointing at the placard on the wall. It took just a glance to see what he was screaming about: Stuck to one of the pieces of tape that held the placard to the wall was a dead snake. Apparently, the snake's head had gotten stuck to the tape and he could not release himself—wonder of wonders.

They called in a neighbor who was experienced with snakes and he marveled at the scene: "It's a dangerous poisonous snake," he noted. "I can't explain how he failed to pull himself free from the piece of tape, and why he didn't harm one of your children before it even reached the placard. This was clearly an open miracle!" he added and left the house. The door closed behind him, leaving the parents and the children astounded at the miracle that had happened to them. They did not need any further explanations. They were sure beyond doubt that the *zechus* that had protected them from the fearsome snake was the colorful placard that was partly filled in and now torn on the top corner.

The angels created by the *amens* that had filled the house over the past two weeks had literally stopped the snake in its path and saved the children from its dangerous bite.