

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## PARASHAS BO

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### The Tefillah of a Tzaddik Leaves an Impression

“ואחריו לא יהיה כן” (י, יד)

The Ramban, in the name of Rabbeinu Chananel, brings a beautiful *chiddush*: From the time that Moshe Rabbeinu davened to remove the locusts from Egypt, until this day, locusts cannot cause damage in Egypt.

Harav Chaim Zeitchik, one of the great Novhardok *talmidim*, added:

This teaches us how great the power of *tefillah* is, especially the *tefillah* of a *tzaddik*. Although Moshe Rabbeinu only davened for that time, his *tefillah* was effective for generations to come, and its impression is extant to this day.

Ohr Hanefesh

#### Pharaoh's Korbanos

“גם אתה תתן בידנו זבחים ועלת ועשינו לה' אלקינו” (י, כה)

Moshe's words were certainly not uttered for naught (see *Ramban*), however, where do we find that Pharaoh gave cattle and sheep to Am Yisrael to sacrifice on his behalf?

Rabi Yehudah Assad explains:

The *Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 21 5)* explains from the *passuk (Shemos 14:10)*: “And Pharaoh *hikriv*, drew near” – “that he brought Yisrael closer to *teshuvah*...because they [Egyptians] chased them and they very grew very fearful and turned their eyes Heavenward and repented and prayed.” The *Gemara* says (*Sotah 5b*): “One who thinks very modestly of himself, the *passuk* considers it as though he brought all the *korbanos*, as it says, (*Tehillim, 51:19*) ‘*Zivchei Elokim ruach nishbarah*.’”

Now we can explain what Moshe's words to Pharaoh meant: “You will also give in our hands *zevachim* and *olos*” – with your pursuit of them, you are destined to break their hearts for their Father in Heaven, and thus it will be considered as though they sacrificed all the *korbanos*.

Divrei Maharya

#### Birchas HaChodesh is Like Kabbalas Pnei HaShechinah

“החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים” (יב, ב)

“Anyone who makes the blessing on the month [*Kiddush Levanah*] on time – it is as though he is welcoming the Shechinah, as it says, ‘*Hachodesh hazeh*.’ Later it says (15:2): ‘*Zeh Keli v'anveihu*.’” (*Sanhedrin 42a*)

Where do we find in the *brachah* on the *levanah* any expression of *Kabbalas Pnei Hashechnah*?

The Be'er Moshe of Ozherov explained:

We refer in *Kiddush Levanah* to the Heavenly bodies, and say: “*Chok vezman nasan lahem shelo yeshanu es tafkidam*.” This testifies to our absolute conviction that even those things that appear ‘natural’ including the renewal of the moon each month, are under the full control of Hashem, and He is activating them every single

#### The Secret of Answering Amen Will Be Revealed in Upper Worlds

“ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעבד את ה' עד באנו שמה” (י, כו)

The *mitzvah* of answering amen appears to simple people to be an easy, minor *mitzvah*. But in the World to Come, everyone will recognize its greatness, and as *Chazal* promised us (*Shabbos 119b*), one who answers amen with all his might will merit to have the gates of Gan Eden open before him.

A hint to this can be found in this *passuk*: “*V'anachnu*” – we simple people, “do not know what we will serve Hashem” – do not understand in this world the depths of the significance of the *mitzvah* of amen (the acronym of *mah naavod es*) “until we arrive there” to the Upper World, when the gates of Gan Eden will open before us and we will merit to see the greatness of its reward.

See *Birchas Yitzchak (Melitz) Parashas Eikev*

minute. That is why *Chazal* say that this *brachah* is considered to be welcoming the Shechinah as they did at *Krias Yam Suf*, when Am Yisrael saw the secrets of Hashem's leadership of the world in the most tangible way, until they pointed with their finger and said: ‘*Zeh Keli v'anveihu*.’”

Be'er Moshe, Parashas Bo, p. 271

#### Segulah for a Toothache

The Siddur *Bais Yaakov* by the Yaavetz (*Birchas Halevanah*) cites a *segulah* for healing a toothache (also brought down in *Taamei Haminhagim*, in the comment on letter 460, in the name of Rav Yisrael

of Ruzhin): When reciting *Kiddush Levanah*, after the words “*kach lo yachlu oyvai lingoa bi lera'ah*” – on should add the words “*velo yihiyeh li k'ev shinayim*, and I should not have toothaches.”

It is told that the *Kehillos Yaakov, zt"l*, would say this each month during *Kiddush Levanah*. His son, Harav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, related in the name of his mother, *a"h*, that when she was once suffering from a toothache, the *Kehillos Yaakov* mentioned her during *Kiddush Levanah* and as soon as he finished the *brachah*, her pain disappeared.

Orchos Rabbeinu, Vol. I, p. 289

#### Eating In Order to Make a Brachah

“שבעת ימים תאכל מצות...מצות יאכל את שבעת הימים” (יג, ז-י)

There was once a chassid who traveled with his son to spend Shabbos with his Rebbe. During the Friday night *seudah*, the child noticed the Rebbe holding red apple, making a *brachah* fervently and eating it. As they returned to their lodgings, the child expressed his surprise to his father: “Until now, I thought the Rebbe avoids the material desires of this world, and eats just one slice of *challah* to be able to survive. Now I saw that he enjoys eating apples, just like me...” But his father corrected him and explained: “There is a very big difference between you and the Rebbe. You saw a nice apple on the table and wanted to eat it, but because one must not benefit from this world without a *brachah* you had to make a *brachah* first. By contrast, the Rebbe felt a deep desire to make a *brachah*, but because one must not make a *brachah* for no reason, he had to eat an apple so there would be what to make a *brachah* on...”

Harav Eizik Ausband, Rosh Yeshivah of Telshe, Cleveland, explained the seemingly repetitive words in the *passuk*: “*Tochal matzos...matzos ye'achel*.” The first phrase relates to a person who eats *matzah* on Pesach to satiate his hunger. For him the *passuk* preceded the word “*tochal*”, you should eat, to the word *matzah*. But the second phrase refers to a person who is on a higher level, and the only reason he wants to eat *matzah* is so that he can do Hashem's *mitzvah*; for him it says “*matzos*” first and then “*ye'achel*.”

Lekach Daas

## Tzei = Amen

After the plague of darkness it says (*Shemos 11:8*): “*Veyardu kol avadecha eileh Eilai vehishtachavu li laimor tzei atah vechol ha'am asher beraglecha*.” *Tzei* is numerically equivalent to amen, because in the midst of replying amen with *kavanah* Am Yisrael merits to be redeemed from darkness.”

Imrei Noam, Bo



Amen. From darkness to light.



## Shiras Hayam

Reciting Shiras  
Hayam Each Day

The source for the practice of reciting *Shiras Hayam* every day is according to Chazal (*Yerushalmi Sotah* 5 4) from the *passuk* said at the beginning of the *shirah*: “*Vayomru leimor*” – *leimor*, it is said for generations. The *Korban Ha'eidah* explains there: “That they should always mention this *shirah*.”

In early times, the *shirah* was not recited as part of the *tefillah* each day, as the Rokeach writes (*Perush Hatefillah, Veyaverach Dovid*): “In early days, when they reached the words ‘*Leshem tifartecha*’ the *shaliach tizbbur* would immediately recite ‘*Yishtabach*.’” When the Gaon Harav Moshe of Luka the son of Harav Kalonymus came in the days of the King Carlo of Maintz, he would instruct the members of his generation to say from now on until “*Ushemo Echad*.”

Why Before *Yishtabach*?

The reason the early sages established the recital of *Shiras Hayam* after *Pesukei Dezimrah* before *Yishtabach* is explained by the *Rishonim* (*Tur Orach Chaim* 51). They say that all fifteen words of praise mentioned in *Yishtabach* were derived by Chazal from the *Shiras Hayam* and *Veyavarech Dovid*. That means Chazal learned the right way to praise and glorify Hashem from the praise that Bnei Yisrael offered with the *Shiras Hayam*. Therefore, reciting these *pesukim* has the power to arouse our hearts to praise and glorify Hashem in the most worthy fashion.

## A Segulah for Forgiveness of Sins

Rabi Elazar Azkari writes in *Sefer Chareidim* (73):

“While reciting *Shiras Hayam* each day, one should have in mind to recite it aloud and with great joy, as though he just emerged from Egypt then. The *Midrash* says (*Yalkut Shimoni Beshalach* 254): “*Vayisa Moshe es Yisrael miYam Suf*” (*Shemos* 15:22) – that he guided them away from their sins, which were forgiven through the song that they said. Any person who experiences a miracle and says the *shirah* has all his sins forgiven.”

The words of the *Chareidim* are cited by the *Mishnah Berurah* as a *halachah* (51, 17): “And one should say *Shiras Hayam* with joy and should imagine that he just crossed the sea and one who says it with joy has all his sins forgiven.”

The Mashgiach Harav Yechezkel Levinstein added: From the words of the *Chareidim* it appears that one's sins are forgiven specifically if he pays attention to what he is saying and introspects into *Hashgachas Hashem* that is manifested in every single detail of *Krias Yam Suf*, which was diametric

opposite of nature. Among those details are the fact that the depths froze and remained at the bottom of the sea, even though ice usually floats upwards, and the fact that some of the Egyptians drowned like stone even though people who drown usually float to the surface. If a person says the *shirah* in such a way then his soul will surely cleave to Hashem until all his sins are forgiven. (*Tefillas Chana*)

These words are very similar to those of his rebbi, the Alter of Kelm, who would often say: “What's the difference between a *tzaddik* and a *rasha*? The power of imagination!” There is a renowned story told by one of the *talmidim* of the Mashgiach, *zt"l*: he once entered the Mashgiach's room early one morning after hearing noises of things being dragged across the floor. He saw the elderly Mashgiach arranging two rows of chairs and passing between them. When the *talmid* appeared puzzled, the Mashgiach explained that he was doing so to prepare himself to recite *Shiras Hayam* with the feeling as though he was actually walking through the sea. (*Shaarei Derech, Acharei Mos*)

There is another story about Harav Elimelech of Lizhesnk, who once davened at the *Bais Medrash* of Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg. When Rav Shmelke reached the recital of *Shiras Hayam*, he said it with such great fervor and enthusiasm, that he swept up the *mispallelim* with him. They so tangibly felt that they were coming walking into the sea that they lifted up their hems so they should not get wet...When this was told over to the *Divrei Chaim* he remarked: If they really would have felt that they were passing through the sea with Bnei Yisrael, they would not have had the presence of mind to worry about whether their clothes were getting wet... (*Toldos Shmuel*, p. 48, comment there.)

## Praise of the First Degree

Indeed, we find in the words of Chazal that with the recital of *Shiras Hayam*, Klal Yisrael reached great heights in closeness to Hashem, something that even the giants that preceded them did not achieve. As the *Midrash* says (*Shemos Rabba* 23 4):

“From the day HaKadosh Baruch Hu created the world until Am Yisrael stood at the Red Sea, we did not find that anyone recited *shirah* to Hashem, except Yisrael. He created Adam Harishon and he did not recite *shirah*; He spared Avraham from the furnaces and from the kings, but he did not recite *shirah*. When Am Yisrael came to the sea and it was split for them, they immediately recited *shirah* before HaKadosh Baruch Hu.”

## Amen Suspended in the Air...

It was early morning in one of Jerusalem's northern neighborhoods. The windows of the homes were tightly shut because of the freezing weather outside, and that's why no one heard the cries from the roof of the M. family. No one noticed the perilous situation of little Avreimy.

The M. family children were all very lively and rambunctious, but Avreimy seemed to surpass them all. The family was used to all kinds of shenanigans, but what he did that morning exceeded anything they could have ever imagined.

A short before this story happened, the high school that the M.'s oldest daughter attended held a contest to strengthen the recital of *brachos*. The girls were asked to pledge to strengthen a certain aspect of *brachos* and the relevant *halachos*.

As expected, the girls were very enthusiastic about the contest, and each girl undertook to strengthen herself in an area she felt she could do better in. Many girls, including the oldest M. daughter, undertook not to make a *brachah* unless there was someone to reply amen after it. Before she did this, the daughter thought it over and discussed it with her parents. It was not an easy pledge to stick to, but with her parents' support she decided to go for it.

Over the next few days, the whole family tried to help her with her pledge. Most of the time, it was relatively easy. Mornings posed the biggest challenge, because her school was some distance away and she left the house very early, before the rest of the family had even woken up.

It was then that little Avreimy's high strung nature came into good use. He arose very early every morning, and when he heard his sister's request, he was proud and happy to help her out.

Over the next few days they settled into a routine. Each morning, Avreimy would wait in the kitchen for his sister to prepare herself something to drink. He would listen carefully to the *brachah*, recite amen and then go back to playing.

That morning, Avreimy woke up even earlier than usual. The rest of his family was still sleeping and no one noticed him slip out of the window that led from his room to the adjacent roof.

A few minutes later, the oldest daughter woke up and quickly got ready to leave for school. When she entered the kitchen she was surprised to see that Avreimy wasn't waiting for her as usual. She prepared her drink, but before making a *brachah*, she went to find Avreimy.

She expected to find him in the living room, hard at play, but he was not there “Maybe he's still sleeping,” she thought. But his bed was empty.

When she didn't find him anywhere else in the house, she began to worry. She quickly went down to the building's yard, where he sometimes played. But Avreimy wasn't there either.

Now she began to really fret. Where could the little boy be?

Suddenly she remembered: the roof! She'd noticed that the empty area of the roof near the second floor of their house had captured Avreimy's interest. Yesterday evening she'd seen her mother pull him back from the window into his room, after he'd climbed out when no one was looking...

Dreadful thoughts began running through her mind as she dashed towards the window and climbed out. She looked around, but when she didn't see Avreimy she began to call in alarm: “Avreimy, where are you?” Suddenly she heard a faint voice from the corner: “I'm here!”

Terrified, she ran towards the voice. To her horror, as she neared the railing, she saw a pair of hands gripping it tightly.

In a flash she registered what kind of mortal danger Avreimy was in. He was standing on the outside of the railing, clinging onto the metal bars; his feet were just barely resting a peg that protruded from the wall beneath the railing. His eyes were open wide in terror.

Drawing on strength she had no idea she had, she reached over the railing and pulled her brother back onto the roof. Only once his he was standing safely back on firm ground did she begin to process what had just happened.

It took her a few minutes to regain her composure. She dared not think of what could have happened if she would have arrived even a moment later. Standing beside her was Avreimy, his eyes lowered. He realized he'd crossed the line and he felt very bad. Seeking to compensate her for the fright he'd caused, he hurried into the house.

He quickly came back with the hot drink in his hand. “Make a *brachah* and I'll say amen,” he said and was gratified to see a tired smile spread across her lips.

“*Baruch Atah... shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro*.” The *brachah* was now much more meaningful as Avreimy answered a fervent amen.

(Heard from the person it happened to)