

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS YISRO

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Fortunate Is He Who Has the G-d of Yaakov Helping Him

"שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכריה. ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלקי אבי בעזרו" (יה ג-ד)

Why did the Torah not say "ki amar," because he said, with relation to Eliezer, the way it says by Gershom?

Rabbeinu Yitzchak ben Asher Halevi, one of the Baalei Hatosafos, explains:

Moshe said the sentence "Ger hayisi b'erezt nachriah," I was a stranger in a foreign land, only at that time when he was naming his son. However, the words "Elokei avi b'ezri" were on his lips all the time, and were not only said for that time. Therefore, it would not be apt to write "ki amar" with relation to Eliezer.

Peirush Hariv" a al HaTorah

Bnei Yisrael Answered Amen after the Brachos of Yisro

"ויאמר יתרו ברוך ה' אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים ומיד פרעה" (יה י)

"It is an embarrassment for Moshe and the six hundred thousand that they didn't say 'Baruch' until Yisro came and said 'Baruch Hashem'." (Sanhedrin 94a)

From the words of the Gemara it sounds like after Yisro said 'baruch,' Bnei Yisrael also said 'baruch.' When did that happen?

Harav Avraham Chaim Schorr explained: We have to assume that when Yisro blessed Hashem, Bnei Yisrael had in mind to be *yotzei* with the *brachah*. This would be following the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 219 4)*, that when one experiences a miracle, he can be *yotzei Birchas Hagomel* with a *brachah* that his friend makes for him. As such, they had to answer amen after his *brachah*, as it says "One who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*." Thus it is as though they all said 'baruch' themselves."

Toras Chaim, Sanhedrin 94a

Teshuvah Precedes Torah

"ויסעו מרפידיים ויבאו מדבר סיני" (יט ב)

"To compare their travel from Refidim to their arrival in the Sinai Desert; just like they came to the Sinai Desert in *teshuvah*, they traveled from

Refidim in *teshuvah* as well." (Rashi)

From the fact that Bnei Yisrael repented before *Kabbalas HaTorah*, the **Shela HaKadosh (Derech Chaim – Tochachas Mussar 37)** understands the words of the *mekubalim* that the reason a person sometimes has trouble understanding his Torah learning is because of his sins, and therefore one should repent before learning. For this reason, the *brachah* of *Hashiveinu* is said right after *Atah Chonen*, to teach us that that *Atah Chonen* is dependent on the *brachah* of *Hashiveinu*.

In *sefer Amud Eish* (p. 34) a *talmid* of the **Maharil Diskin** testifies what he witnessed frequently while learning with his *rebbe*: When the Mahariel

Bnei Yisrael Answered Amen after the Aseres Hadibros

"ויענו כל העם יחדו ואמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה" (יט ה)

The acronym of "Vayomru kol asher diber Hashem naaseh" is numerically equivalent to "amen." This alludes to the words of the early Sages who say that after each of the *dibros*, Am Yisrael answered amen.

Ame" n Veame" n Remez 130

would encounter a part of the *sugya* that he could not resolve, he would ask the disciple sitting with him to read aloud the words of the Gemara, word for word. In the meantime, he would pace up and down the room, deep in thought, until tears would begin to flow from his eyes. Then he would step into a corner and daven with a broken heart to Hashem to illuminate his eyes with the light of the Torah. After he would say *Viduy* and give *tzedakah*, Hashem would immediately illuminate his eyes and the *sugya* would become clear to him.

Before They Cry, I Will Answer

"כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה" (יט ה)

"Amar Rabi Chama BaRabi Chanina: What does it mean (*Shir Hashirim 2:3*): 'Like an apple in the trees of the forest so is my beloved among the sons.' Why is Yisrael compared to an apple? To tell us: Just like this apple came before its leaves, so too, Yisrael said first *naaseh* and then *nishma*." (*Shabbos 88a*)

The *Tosafos* (ibid starting with *piryo*) asks: The *passuk* does not compare Yisrael to an apple; it compares HaKadosh Baruch Hu to the apple, as it says "Kein Dodi bein habanim"?

Harav Yehoshua of Belz offers a beautiful answer:

By declaring "*naaseh venishma*", Bnei Yisrael followed the path of Hashem, because He answered Yisrael (=naaseh) before they even davened to Him (=nishma) as it says (*Yeshayah 65:24*): "And it will be before they call, I will answer." Therefore, *Chazal* said, when the *passuk* compared HaKadosh Baruch Hu to an apple, whose fruit comes before its leaves, He included in this praise Yisrael also, who followed in this path. Thus the *passuk* says, "Kein Dodi" – HaKadosh Baruch Hu, "bein habanim" – with Yisrael.

Based on this, the *Rebbe, zt"l*, explained the words we recite in *Zemiros* of Shabbos: "Uba'u kulam bivris yachad naaseh venishma amru k'echad" – Bnei Yisrael said *naaseh venishma* as the "Echad" the One in the world, said, as He also preceded *naaseh* to *nishma*.

Yeshurun, Vol. II, p. 190

Shabbos Hi Milizok, Urefuah Kerovah Lavo

"משה ידבר והאלקים יענו בקול" (יט ט)

The **Chozeh of Lublin** derived from this *passuk* an allusion to the *halachah* in *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 287 1)* that one who visits a sick person on Shabbos should say to him: "Shabbos hi milizok urefuah kerovah lavo."

"Moshe is an acronym for *Shabbos Hi Milizok*, and when a person *yedaber*, says this before a sick person, then "Hashem will answer" with "kol" which is an acronym for "*urefuah kerovah lavo*."

Shu"t Arugos Habosem Orach Chaim 23

On the same subject, the *Siddur Lev Sameach* (printed 5633, p. 96) brings an allusion to the *brachos*: "*Shabbos hi milizok*" – on Shabbos when we do not cry out in the *brachos* of *bakashah*, the middle *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we can effect *yeshuos* in "*refuah kerovah lavo*" in the second *brachah* (=which is *kerovah*, closer in the order of *Shemoneh Esrei*) in which we mention the praise of Hashem as "*Rofeh Cholim*."



Brachos Without Amen – Are Like Half a Body

Erev Shabbos *Parashas Yisro* (21 Shevat) is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav **Yechiel Yehoshua** of Biala, *zy" a*, who was very scrupulous about reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, as cited in the *sefer* of his *hanhagos (Seder Hayom 50)*:

"...and to say *Birchos Hashachar* in front of people so they will reply amen, as it is known from holy sages that a *brachah* without amen is literally half a body."

In his holy *sefer Chelkas Yehoshua (Ha'azinu)* he adds:

Aside for the fact that reciting *brachos* aloud intensifies the *kavanah* of the one making the *brachah*, it also causes others to merit answer amen after it. In this merit, the *tefillah* of the one making the *brachah* is received in *Shamayim*. An allusion to this can be found in the words: "*Ha'azinu Hashamayim v'adaberah*" – when does *Shamayim* listen to the *tefillah* of a person? When he makes a *brachah* aloud in a way that "*vatishma ha'aretz imrei fi*."

..... Amen. Answer and be answered.

Shiras Hayam – continued (3)

Mi Kamochah Ba'eilim Hashem

The *passuk* “*Mi kamocha ba'eilim Hashem*” is explained by Chazal (*Gittin* 56b): “*Mi kamocha ba'ilim* (mute) *Hashem*” that Hashem hears the curses of the evil people and is silent.

The *Kli Yakar* explains (*Beshalach*) according to the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 19:2): “*Hashamayim mesaprim kevod Kel umaaseh yadav maggid harakia*.” The praise of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is not expressed only through humans who merited the power of speech. Even the inanimate parts of creation praise Hashem, because the constant and perfectly coordinated systems of the body are testimony to leadership of Hashem and His tremendous power and strength.

The *Kli Yakar* adds a parable cited in the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabba* 5 1): There was a king who built a huge, magnificent palace. At first, he placed mute people there and each day they would rise and ask about the king's welfare as best they could. Then he placed clever people there, and they rebelled against him. So the king returned the palace to its previous state. So, too, it is with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. At the beginning of the world, the main praise came from the water, as it says (*Tehillim* 93:4): “*Mikolos mayim rabbim adirim mishberei yam adir bamaron Hashem*.” Then people began to Praise Him, but when the Egyptians rebelled against Him, He went back to being praised by revealing the power of the water.

Three Pillars of the World

Rabbeinu Bechaye in his commentary on the Torah (*Shemos* 15:13) says that Bnei Yisrael were taken out of Egypt in the merit of three things: Torah, *avodah*, and *gemilus chassadim*. In the *Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba* 12 12) Chazal say: “On three things the world stands, on Torah, on *avodah* and on *gemilus chassadim* and all three were mentioned by Moshe in one *passuk*: “*Nachisa bechasedcha am zu ga'alta*” is *chessed*; “*nehalta be'azcha*” is Torah (see *Zevachim* 115a) and “*el neveh Kodshecha*” is the *avodah* of the *Mishkan* and the *Mikdash*.”

The *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* says (*Rabba* 23): “Even Dovid Hamalech would praise those that emerged from Egypt... as they gathered and sat until they were all united and forged a pact that they would do *chessed* one with another...”

**The Tactic of the Yetzer Hara:
Achalek Shalal**

In order to enable the Schach to learn with a clear, calm mind, his father-in-law, Rav Binyamin Wolf Taub, would put a plate filled with golden dinars on the table where he was learning. One day, the father-in-law entered the room when the Schach was sitting and writing *chiddushim* and took two gold coins for the bowl. He said to his son-in-law, I realize that your success in learning is far beyond average. I want to see if you can succeed in business

like that. Go out to the market and try to make some deals with these coins.

The Schach complied with his father-in-law's request and went to the market. As expected, his talents shone here, too, and within a short time he found good merchandise at an excellent price. He sold it and purchased even better merchandise, and so it went. After a few hours he returned to his father-in-law's home with a bundle of coins, the profits of his dealings. When his father-in-law came to him the second day and suggested that he repeat the success of the day before, the Schach was ready with an answer: “I think this is what the *passuk* intended when saying: “*Amar oyev*,” the enemy, the *satán*, seeks to make a person sin, so he says “*Erdof asig*” – if I want to trap a person in the net of sins, then “*achalek shalal*” I will cause him to profit more than normal, so that he will forget his learning. Then I will be pleased when “*timla'eimo nafshi*” – his brain will be empty of *divrei Torah* and will be full of idle things.

“But notice, my dear father-in-law, the end of the *passuk* as well: “*Arik charbi torisheimo yadi*” – after the *satán* will finish his work, he immediately robs the person of his money as well, so the poor man is left bare on all fronts, no Torah and no money.

The Schach's winning answer impressed his father-in-law a great deal, and as a result we have the Schach's remarkable compilations and *Sefarim*, which illuminate our lives to this day. (*Sefer Halichos Hayom* p. 184)

**Ki L'Hashem Hameluchah
Umoshel Bagoyim**

In his commentary on *Mishlei* (27 27) the **Vilna Gaon** explains: There is a difference between the *Melech* and the *Moshel*. *Melech* is someone who is coronated by his nation willingly. A *Moshel* is one who imposes his rule forcefully without the acquiescence of the nation. These two essences are manifested in the dream of Yosef Hatzaddik (*ibid* 7): On the one hand it says: “*Vehinei kamah alumasi vegam nitzyah*,” of its own accord, like a *Moshel*. On the other hand it says “*Vehinei tesubenah alumoseichem vatishtachavena l'alumasi*” -- of their own will, like a king. Therefore, his brothers used both languages in their response: “*Hamaloch timloch aleinu im mashol timshol banu*.”

Based on the this, the Gaon explains why we recite the *pesukim* of the *Geulah* during Shacharis after *Az Yashir*: “*Ki l'Hashem hameluchah umoshel bagoyim*” (*Tehillim* 22:29), and “*V'alu moshim beHar Tzion lisphot es Har Eisav vehaysah l'Hashem hameluchah*” (*Ovadiah* 1: 21). This is to teach us that in our times, we accept the Will of Hashem willingly, but the nations of the world are ruled by force. However, in the End of Days, when all the denizens of the world will accept His rule, then “*Vehaysah l'Hashem hameluchah*” – His *malchus* will reign the world over.

If You Value the Mitzvos As Much As Money

Many among us, especially those whose *parnassah* necessitates that they spend time among people who are not *mitzvah* observant, or those with insufficient *Yiras Shamayim*, find themselves facing challenges in their commitment to *mitzvos*. Sometimes they have to struggle over matters of *kedushah*, and sometimes the challenges even involve matters that, when among *Yarei Hashem*, they consider very easy to do.

This story, which has a wonderful lesson, was told over by Harav Ben Tzion Lopez:

There was a Jew who served as the bank manager in his city for many years. Over time, he unfortunately drifted far from the path of Torah and *mitzvos*. But when he reached middle age, he suddenly became more aware of where he was up to in life and began to strengthen his observance. After some time in this stage, he resolved to become a complete *baal teshuvah* and commit to the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Each morning he would get up, put on *tefillin* and daven. Then he would eat breakfast, taking care to perform all the necessary *mitzvos* such as washing, making *brachos* and *bentsching*. When he finished he went to work.

Although the man grew stronger in his observance each day, he still kept the *mitzvos* only within the privacy of his own home. He was quite embarrassed by it all, and unfortunately, on the outside, he continued to pretend that he was living as he always had. He did not transgress any *mitzvos*, but on the other hand, while among people, he did not perform any *mitzvos* either.

On normal days, he was able to withstand the challenges. But when it came to having meetings, either with employees or clients, and refreshments were served, he found the situation very awkward. On the one hand, he didn't want to eat without a *brachah* and on the other, he was ashamed to make *brachos* in front of other people.

Had he decided to refrain from eating at those meetings, or would decide to make the *brachos* on the food, he was sure he would become a laughingstock in the eyes of his workers. He could not imagine doing such a thing; it was too much for him to overcome.

One day, one of his main clients, a very wealthy, dignified man who exuded nobility and power, arrived at his office. He was holding a huge wad of bills that he wanted to deposit into his account.

The manager invited the client into his office, and an employee placed a steaming jug of coffee on the table along with a tray full of confections. The challenge was about to rear its head once again; would the manager be able to withstand it?!

While he stood there, deliberating between his *yetzer tov* and *yetzer hara*, he heard a thump.

When he looked to see what happened, he saw that the huge wad of bills had fallen out of the client's hand. Bills scattered every which way, both in the office and even out to the hallway. The client let out a cry of alarm and the manager hastened to press the emergency button, and ordered his staff to lock the doors of the bank. Together with the workers, they began to collect the money that had scattered. When he finished collecting all that he could see, he stood up and was most surprised by the scene that met his eyes:

The dignified man was sprawled on the floor of the room; his suit was dusty and he was scrabbling around in the corners

of the room; he was even reaching under the sofa to see if any bills had strayed there. He seemed not to care about his immaculate, tailored suit, nor his dignified bearing as he lay on all fours in search of the money.

Apparently, the manager realized, that when it came to loss of money, the man did not care about his expensive clothes or what he would look like crawling on the floor.

Moreover, the clerks and bank personnel standing on the side and observing him did not laugh or mock his behavior. On the contrary, it appeared that they were no less distraught than he was about what happened.

Suddenly, the dreaded understanding dawned on him: Why were the clerks not laughing at the wealthy man? Why were they not even scolding him in their hearts? It was only because they, too, displayed tremendous respect for money, and as such, they realized that when there was a fear of losing it, they needed to put all the trappings of honor aside and try to save what was possible.

Why, then, the bank manager wondered, am I afraid for my honor and stature when it comes to the loss of *brachos*, which I know are more valuable than silver or gold? Why do I have to feel ashamed when I do something that is so precious and important in my eyes?!

At that moment, he decided that from that day on, he would not forego reciting even one *brachah* wholeheartedly. People may be curious and surprised, but am I any less honorable and dignified than this wealthy man?! he thought to himself.

As soon as things in the room calmed down a bit, he quickly took a slice of cake from the desk, covered his head and made the *brachah*. Upon finishing the cake, he made a *brachah acharonah*.

Out of the corner of his eye he realized a few of the clerks raising an eyebrow, and even snickering a little, but he saw no reason to apologize and he stood tall and proud of what he was doing.

As expected, after a day or two, his employees got used to his behavior and stopped raising their eyebrows when they saw him making a *brachah*. Whenever anyone asked a question, he provided a detailed answer, and it seemed to him that this got made them respect him even more.

If that was not enough, this renewed determination infused him with the strength to progress even further in his *avodas Hashem*, and to strengthen his observance of *mitzvos*. Within a short time, he became a fully observant Jew who adhered to every detail of *halachah* both at home and outside his house.

From this wonderful story we can learn an excellent piece of advice for anyone who wants to serve his creator with his whole heart, but is ashamed to do so. He should remind himself over and over that the value of *mitzvos* is no less than the value of gold and silver and if for those, people are ready to embarrass themselves, how much more so should one be ready to do so for Torah and *mitzvos*.

The more a person recognizes this fact, the more he will grow and take his place among the *bnei aliya*, and from there, he will be able to constantly rise higher in his quest to acquire Torah and *mitzvos*.

Umasok Ha'or, Eikev