

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## PARASHAS VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

### IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

#### 'Panim Chadashos' on Shabbos

זיקה ל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל" (לה, א)

The Baal Haturim explains why *Parashas Vayakhel* comes right after *Ki Sisa*: *Parashas Ki Sisa* concludes with a description of the light that shone from Moshe Rabbeinu's face, and *Parashas Vayakhel* begins with the commandment about Shabbos. *Chazal* said (*Bereishis Rabba* 11 2): "The light of a person's face all week cannot be compared to the light of his face on Shabbos." If so, on Shabbos, each Jew merits to have the essence of the light that shone from Moshe's face and that is why the two *parshiyos* are connected.

Based on this, **Harav Nosson Gestetner**, zt"l, explained the accepted *halachah* that at a *Sheva Brachos* on Shabbos, one can recite *Sheva Brachos* even without 'panim chadashos,' literally a new face (See *Shulchan Aruch Even Ezra* 62 8): Because on Shabbos each Jew merits a special light to his face, all the participants are considered a *panim chadashos*, as we say on Friday night in *Azamer Bishvachim*, "Beram anpin chadetin."

Lehoros Nosson, Moadim, Vol. IV, p. 164

#### In Memory of Creation

"אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתם" (לה, א)

In *Maseches Shabbos* (70a), *Chazal* say that he words "eileh hadevarim" allude to the thirty nine *melachos* that are prohibited on Shabbos: The word "eileh" is numerically equivalent to 36; the word *devarim* (the minimal that can be plural is two) indicates two additional *melachos*, and the letter *hei*, the *hei hayediah*, the specific article at the beginning of the word, is an allusion to the 39<sup>th</sup> *melachah*.

The **Gra** offered a beautiful elucidation to this concept:

In the *yotzros* of *Parashas Shekalim*, there is a list of thirty nine different words used to describe the process of creation:

"Az ra'isa vesiparta. Veheichanta vechkarata. Madadeta vechalta veshakalta.....and you answered and you said and you spoke..."

The reason for this list of thirty nine words of action is to teach us that they correspond to the thirty nine *melachos* of creation that Hashem rested from on Shabbos. Thus we were commanded to refrain from performing thirty nine different *malachos*

on Shabbos, as it is "zecher l'maaseh bereishis," in memory of Creation.

Pe'as HaShulchan, Introduction

#### As Though He Built a Mishkan

"זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' לאמר" (לה, ד)

In the commandment of resting on Shabbos, the Torah (*ibid passuk aleph*) used the language of "asher tzivah Hashem la'asos". Why did the *passuk* switch here to the word "asher tzivah Hashem leinor"?

**Harav Menachem Mendel of Riminov** explains: Here, the *passuk* reveals to us the unique virtue of reciting the *Parashas Hamishkan*, because anyone who says it before davening is considered to have built a *mishkan*.

Menachem Tzion, Metzora

#### The Great Avodah of Replying Amen

"אשר פקד על פי משה עבדת הלוים" (לה, כא)

"Haleviim" is numerically equivalent to "amen." Just like the word "haleviim" indicates connection and joining, as it says (*Bereishis* 29:34) "Hapa'am yilaveh ishi eilai", so, too, the matter of amen is also a connection and joining of the Names of Hashem (amen is numerically equivalent to the Names Havayah and Adnus). That is what the *passuk* is alluding to here: "Asher pukad al pi Moshe" on "avodas haleviim" – the great *avodah* that is the replying of 'amen, which should be done with the *kavanah* of joining the Holy Names.

Bas Ayin

#### The Men Rose Higher Than the Women

"ויבאו האנשים על הנשים" (לה, כב)

The **Chiddushei Hari"m** offers a beautiful explanation for this *passuk* in his final words before his passing (23 Adar):

The *Yerushalmi* (*Shekalim* 1 1) says that by giving to the *Mishkan*, Klal Yisrael atoned for the sin of the *Eigel*. However, we know that only the men sinned with the *Eigel*, while the women remained righteous. If so, now that they atoned for the act of the *Eigel*, the men rose above the women, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 34a) "In a place where

baalei teshuvah stand – absolute *tzaddikim* cannot stand, and therefore the *passuk* says "And the men came al, higher than, the women."

Sfas Emes, 5635, Bais Yisrael 5717

#### The Alter's Last Tefillah

"והנשואם הביאור" (לה, כז)

"Because they were lazy at first, their name is written lacking letters והנשואם" (*Rashi*)

It is told that the Alter of Kelm feared the *middah* of laziness all his life, even in his final moments, in spite of his debilitating weakness. When time came to daven, his gentle soul was afraid that perhaps there was laziness involved and it was not genuine weakness that was preventing him from *avodas Hashem*. Because of this fear, he made the effort to get out of his bed to daven. When he finished davening, he returned to his bed, and was so weak he could not even take off his second shoe before his soul departed with purity.

Tenuas Hamussar p. 82

#### To Establish Bais Chayeinu

"אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדת" (לה, כא)

"*Hamishkan mishkan*" it is said twice to allude to the *Mikdash* that was *nimashken*, pawned so to speak, twice, because of the sins of Yisrael." (*Rashi*)

**Harav Avraham Gurewicz**, Rosh Yeshivah of Gateshead, explained this *Rashi*:

When a lender comes to take a security from the borrower, he usually takes something that the owner needs. If HaKadosh Baruch Hu chose to take from us the Bais HaMikdash as a security for our sins, then it is clear to us how much we needed this closeness of Hashem that we merited when the Bais HaMikdash was standing.

Another manifestation of this is found in the wording of the *tefillah* that we recite on Monday and Thursday: "May it be Your Will or Father in Heaven to establish *bais chayeinu*...the home of our life...venomar amen." It is not for naught that the *Mikdash* is called *Bais Chayeinu*, but to teach us that our lives are really not lives without it.

Ve'anafcha Arzei Kel



### "החדש אשר ישועות בו מקיפות"

The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk (*yahrtzeit* 29 Adar 5626) said:

"Kaasher yisa ha'omen es hayonek" (*Bamidbar* 11:12): Omen is written the same way as amen, and this alludes to the tremendous abundance that is influenced in the merit of replying amen with *kavanah*. Thus, a person merits to nurture from Above much abundance and *yeshuos* for himself and for all of Am Yisrael

Tiferes Shlomo, Yisro

Hachodesh Haze...Rishon hu lachem  
the acronym of the final letters of each word is 'amen.'

## The Brachah of Yotzer Ohr (2)

After beginning with praising HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the Creator of light and of dark, we continue to detail the great benefits that Hashem in His great mercy bestows upon us each and every day, so that we can serve Him in peace and tranquility.

## Hame'ir La'aretz Veladarim Aleha Berachamim

We express gratitude for the fact that Hashem illuminates His light on us with *chessed* and compassion in a way that will benefit "la'aretz, the land" because the sun is what helps the plants grow, sweetens the fruits and enriches the ore that is extracted from the earth. It also benefits "ladarim aleha" those that dwell on the land, illuminating during the day so that they can take care of their affairs, and will not stumble on stones. (Avudraham)

Another facet that we thank for is explained by the *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 8b): In *asid lavo*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will take the *chamah*, the sun, out of its hiding place. The *tzaddikim* will be healed from it and the evil people will be judged by it. According to the *Gemara*, the power of the sun is so intense and if not for the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu makes it shine upon us with compassion, we would not be able to withstand its heat. That is why we praise Hashem for placing the heavenly bodies exactly how He did, with compassion, limiting the power of the sun to the daytime hours, and placing it at the exact distance so that it can benefit and give pleasure to those dwelling on earth, without being harmed by its heat. (Commentary on *tefillah* by Harav Avraham the son of the Gra, *Iyun Tefillah*)

Harav Yaakov Neiman, *zt"l*, related in the name of his Rebbi, Harav Moshe Rosenstein, *zt"l*, the Mashgiach of Lomza, that often, Harav Yisrael Salantar would stand facing east during sunrise, to gaze at the rising sun and to express the gratitude that he felt in his heart for this remarkable creation that is invaluable to us—the sun.

The Mashgiach of Lomza added: This concept seems far from our understanding, but the difference between us and Rav Yisrael is: our physical souls have become accustomed to thinking and thanking only for the pleasures that we have but others do not. However, only Rav Yisrael Salanter, who worked on rectifying his *middos* until he loved every person like himself, could really feel the pleasure of all the inhabitants of the world derive from the sun, and through that, his gratitude burst forth from the depths of his soul. (*Darhei Mussar*, *Shemos* 1:20)

## Hame'ir—He and No Other

Harav Yeruchem Levovitz, *zt"l*, the Mashgiach of Mir, explained the wonderful feeling in this *tefillah*:

In the Torah it says (see *Rashi Bereishis* 1:14) that even though the heavenly bodies were created on the fourth day, the light was created on the first day. The *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabba* 3 4) explains that the source of light is not the sun, but rather HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself was enveloped in it and shone His light from one end of the world to the other, as it says (*Tehillim* 104 2): "Oteh ohr kesalmah, He dons the light like a dress."

When we bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu "who illuminates the land and those who dwell in it" we are expressing the secret of the lights that are suspended in the Heavens: They are only tools intended to convey the tremendous light of the Creator, in a way that we can withstand it. Thus, the sun is like an electric bulb connected to a power station that has no power to generate light itself, but rather it is a conduit through which the power of electricity can emit its light.

If a person would introspect to recognize this fact, he will certainly be very careful not to use the light of the day for things that contravene the Will of Hashem, because how can one use the light of the Creator Himself for a different purpose? (*Daas Torah*, *Bereishis* 1:14)

## A Train of Miracles

Harav Moshe Chevroni, *zt"l*, the Rosh Yeshivah of Chevron, was renowned among Torah scholars. In his short life, he accomplished a great deal, including establishing the bastion of Torah, Yeshivas Knesses Yisrael-Chevron, Yerushalayim, and many basked in the light of his Torah.

What many don't know is that Rav Moshe's early years were fraught with trials and tribulations. As he himself related later in life:

As a child, I lived in the town of Szumiacz, deep in Russia. I was about ten years old, orphaned of my father, when World War One broke out. It was the height of the Communist movement in Russia and the winds of heresy hung over the Jewish world. They did not pass over our small town, and my mother, who was raising me alone, feared for my future.

One day, our town merited to welcome very revered guests: the yeshivah of the Chafetz Chaim, which needed to leave Radin because of the war. It temporarily took up residence in our town.

As most children my age, I studied secular studies at the time, and the Russian language in the non-Jewish school in Szumiacz, and I succeeded in my studies. Yet deep inside, I heard a voice inside telling me: "Moshe, Moshe this is not your place. Your place is in yeshivah, among those learning Torah, because that is what you were created for."

My soul found no peace until one day, I left school, not intending to return. I had decided to join the Radin Yeshivah, which was scheduled to leave our town to return home in the near future.

My mother, *a"h*, who was descended from pious people, immediately agreed to my request and appealed to Rav Tzvi Hirsch Levison, the son-in-law of the Chafetz Chaim, who served as the *mashgiach ruchani* of the yeshivah, to accept me. At first, Rav Tzvi Hirsch refused to accept such a young boy to yeshivah, but the Chafetz Chaim instructed him to consult the rav of the town, Harav Yerachmiel Gershon Edelstein, *zt"l*, who knew my family well. The Rav decided that I should be accepted, but set down a condition: I had to start laying *tefillin* immediately, even though it was still two years to my bar mitzvah. I joined the yeshivah, but almost right away I fell ill with typhus and needed to stop at one of the towns on the way. At first, the yeshivah stopped with me, but as time passed and I didn't recover, they had to leave me alone. That is when the Rav's wisdom became apparent, because only the *tefillin* that I lay each day protected me from the negative winds that enveloped the youth around me, and isolated me from their ruinous company.

When I returned to my strength, I hurried to board a cart of a burly farmer, en route to the district town, from where I hoped to catch a train to Radin. But in the middle of the way we were stopped by a band of marauders who robbed the bit of money and clothes that I had and left me only with my life.

I arrived at an inn near the train station, a small child with nothing. Standing in the inn was a Russian commissar who glared menacingly at each person who entered. His eyes scanned every corner, but for some reason, it seemed to me that he was fixing his eyes on me more than all the others. I recoiled in fear that he might summon me for interrogation—I had no documents. But fortunately, he didn't come over to me and didn't say a word to me.

Suddenly, a loud horn blared. Panic ensued

in the inn. Some people ran to buy tickets to travel and others, who already had tickets, pushed each other to catch a place on the coveted train. I also ran to the train, forging a path between the crowds, my heart filled with hope that Hashem would have mercy on me and lead me to my destination in peace.

Only after I was sitting on my seat did I realize that I was sitting right across from that surly commissar with the piercing eyes. I was horrified to discover that the ticket that my mother had purchased for me with her last few pennies had disappeared from my pocket. I curled up in my seat and avoided the commissar's gaze. In my heart, I hoped for the best.

A few minutes after the train departed, the commissar stood up and began walking though the train car, demanding that every passenger show him their ticket and their papers. The screams and the orders that flew through the air were still not as loud as the hammering of my heart.

As my turn grew closer, my fear mounted. Suddenly I burst into sobs, releasing all the pent up emotion that had accumulated during the travails of the past few weeks. As the tears poured from my eyes, I davened to Hashem and said, "Ribono shel Olam, please, have mercy on me! I have no documents, no clothes, no money and I am starving for a piece of bread. But all that I really want to do is learn Your holy Torah in the yeshivah of the Chafetz Chaim. How can I fulfill this wish if I am going to fall into the clutches of this commissar, who will surely turn me in to the authorities? What will be my fate?"

My lips were still whispering the *tefillah* when a miracle happened: I felt a soft hand on my shoulder. When I raised my eyes, I was stunned to see the commissar bending towards me and saying kindly: "Little boy, I've been looking at you for a long time. It is clear from your eyes that you have been through a lot of troubles, and that you cry over them each day. You probably have no mother or father and are very poor."

Then he handed me a red ticket and said: "Take this; this is the ticket that was for me. I don't need it, but you will probably benefit from it. There's nothing to worry about with this ticket. Have a safe trip and be successful!"

With these words, the commissar parted and turned to get off the train. Only when I saw his figure growing distant in the snowy horizon did I relax. My path to the yeshivah was now open and I headed to Radin, where I would spend the next years making great strides in my learning.

To this day, I do not know who that commissar was and what he wanted. Why was he so cruel to everyone else and was only kind to me?! These questions will remain unanswered forever, but I have no doubt that he was sent from Abvoe as an answer to my fervent *tefillah*, to help a Jewish boy who decided to leave everything behind him and devote his years to Torah.

Shabbos Supplement, Nitzavim 5773, Bereishis 5771