

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS TETZAVEH

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Seventeen Words of Atah Chonen

“ואתה תזכר אל כל חכמי לב אשר מלאתיו רוח חכמה ועשו את בגדי אהרן לקדשו לכהנו לי” (כח, ג)
The *Tor* (*Orach Chaim* 115) writes: This *passuk*, which speaks of the wisdom of the heart, is comprised of seventeen words, and that is why Chazal composed the corresponding *brachah* of *Atah Chonen* with seventeen words as well.

A Good Thought Is Not Considered a Hefsek

“וחשב אפדתו אשר עליו כמעשהו” (כח, ח)
By way of *remez*, **Rabbeinu Ephraim** (cited in *Nachal Kedumim*) explains:

“*Vecheishev afudaso asher alav*” – A Yid who thinks about doing a mitzvah, “*kemaaseihu*” – then the *passuk* considers it as though he carried out the deed, as Chazal say (*Kiddushin* 40a) Hashem appends a good thought to a deed; a bad thought is not appended to a deed.

In his *sefer Ein Eliyahu* (*Shabbos* 151a) **Harav Eliyahu Schorr** cites the ruling of *Rashi* in his commentary on *Maseches Sukkah* (38b *Hu Omer Baruch*), that a person standing in the middle of *Shemoneh Esrei* and hears *Kaddish* or *Kedushah* from the *shaliach tzibbur* should wait quietly and concentrate on what the *shatz* is saying. Through the *din* of *shomea ke'oneh*, one who hears is like he answers, he will fulfill the obligation of *Kedushah* and “*amen yehei Shemei rabbah*”.

The *Baalei Hatosfaos* (*Brachos* 21b beginning with the word “*ad*”) ask regarding the words of *Rashi*: If indeed his *din* is like one who responds, why should this response not be considered a *hefsek* in *Shemoneh Esrei*?

According to this premise, the *Ein Eliyahu* replies: Indeed, with regards to saying things of *kedushah*, his silence is considered a ‘good deed’ that Hashem appends to an action. But with regards to a *hefsek*, which one must not make, it is considered a ‘bad thought’ which is not appended to a deed, and therefore it is not considered a *hefsek*.

Ein Eliyahu, Shabbos 151a

“Shishah Mishmosam” Corresponds to “Shema” and “Baruch Shem”

“ששה משמותם על האבן אחת ואת שמות הששה הנותרים על האבן השנית כתלתם” (כח, י)
The *Baal Haturim* writes: “*Shishah*

mishmosam al” is the acronym for *Shema*. **Rabbeinu Ephraim** of the *Baalei Hatosfaos* added: The Gemara (*Pesachim* 56a) says that before his passing, Yaakov was afraid that perhaps there was a blemish in his children. When his sons stood and declared “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*” he calmed down and replied after them “*Baruch Shem kevod malchuso l'olam va'ed.*”

The Diamond in the Crown

“הטור השני נפך ספיר ויהלם” (כח, יח)

“*Yahalom*” is numerically equivalent to amen, alluding to the words of the holy *Zohar* (*Eikev* 271 1) about the virtue of a *brachah* for which amen is replied. When it rises on High, then all the gates of Heaven are opened before it, and it is announced: This is the gift that Ploni sent to the King! Just like the *yahalom*, the diamond, was set into the *Choshen*, so, too, the amen is a diamond that is set into the crown of *tefillah* that Am Yisrael presents each day before the King of the world.

Shaarei Nissim, Vol. I, p. 281

Amen Helps Tefillos Be Accepted

“והיה על מצחו תמיד תמיד לרצון להם לפני ה'” (כח, לה)

The acronym of “*Ieratzon lahem lifnei Adnai*” is numerically equivalent to amen, alluding to the words of the *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) that when Am Yisrael makes sure to reply amen then their *tefillos* are willingly accepted.

Pe'er Avraham

Both the *passuk* of *Shema Yisrael* and *Baruch Shem* have six words, and corresponding to each one of them Moshe Rabbeinu instructed that the names of the *Shevatim* be written, six on each stone, on order to remind how the *Shevatim* cleaved to their complete *emunah*.

Outreach Through Tefillah

“ונשמע קולו בבאו אל הקדש” (כח, לה)

The *Baal Haturim* notes that there are two other *pesukim* with the word “*venishma*” punctuated like this one: “*Kol asher diber Hashem naaseh*

venishma,” (*ibid* 24:7) and “*Venishma pigmam hamelech*” (*Esther* 1:20).

The **Belzer Rebbe**, *shlita*, adds: This ‘*mesorah*’ can help guide us on the path of *Avodas Hashem*: “*Venishma kolo*” – a person must make sure his voice is heard, both “*bevo'o el hakodesh*” – while davening and in “*naaseh venishma*” – when learning Torah, because through this he will fulfill the *passuk* “*Venishma pigmam hamelech asher yaaseh bechol malchuso*” – all those who see this person will be aroused to learn Torah and daven, and through this they will accept the yoke of Heaven and fulfill the *mitzvos*.

Based on this **Harav Menachem Mendel of Premishlan** explained the words of *Chazal* (see *Krisos* 6b), according to *Seder Hayom Tefillas Haminchah*: “Every *tefillah* that does not have in it from the sinners of Yisrael is not a *tefillah*.” What does this mean? A sincere *tefillah* is one that is said with such enthusiasm and fervency that it can influence even the biggest sinner and get him to join the *tefillah* and through that he will draw close to his Creator.

Kovetz Nesivos, II, p. 368

Reciting Parashas Haketoress as a Tikun for the Soul

“ועשית מזבח מקטר קטר” (ל, א)

The **Kli Yakar** explains that the two *mizbechos* come to rectify the soul of the sinner. The *Mizbeach Hanechoshes*, the copper *mizbeach*, atones for the material and physical aspects, and therefore, animals are sacrificed upon it. The *Mizbeach Hazahav*, the golden *mizbeach*, atones for the lofty aspects of the soul, and therefore, we sacrifice upon it the *Ketoress*, which has a pleasant aroma that gives pleasure to the soul. (See *Brachos* 43b)

This, explained **Harav Moshe Sternbuch**, *shlita*, is the great virtue of reciting *Parashas Haketoress* before davening: One who says *Parashas Haketoress* shows through this that the main objective in his *tefillah* is to do the Will of Heaven and rectify his soul. Therefore he merits to have his *tefillah* accepted.

Taam V'daas

Harav Eliyahu Hakohen of Izmir, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained the *passuk* (*Esther* 2:7) “*Vayehi omen es Hadassah*”:

“When she was a child, Mordechai Hatzaddik would teach Esther to answer amen...because this obligation is incumbent upon the father and other, and Esther did not have a father and mother and Mordechai took her as a daughter, and this obligation remained incumbent on him to teach her to reply amen.”

Minchas Eliyahu (ch. 31)

“קִיְמוּ וְקַבְּלוּ
הַיְהוּדִים עָלֵיהֶם
וְעַל זְרַעֲהֶם...
וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר”

משנכנס אדר מרבין באמן.



Barchu Es Hashem Hamevorach

After concluding *Pesukei Dezimrah* with the *brachah* of *Yishtabach* and the Half *Kaddish* that follows, the *shaliach tzibbur* begins the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* with the recital of *Barchu Es Hashem Hamevorach*.

This *takanah* was established in the early ages, when the *chazzan* would say the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* out loud and the *tzibbur* would be *yotzei* like that. Therefore, he preceded by announcing: "*Barchu es Hashem hamevorach*" – meaning, agree to my reading and my *brachos* and make the *brachah* with me. (*Shu"t Raaba"n* 73).

The Soul Descends to the Body in Barchu

The *Zohar HaKadosh* brings many elevated concepts regarding the virtues of reciting *Barchu*, and what it effects in the Upper Worlds (*Zohar Chadash Ruth* 53 a) from the words of the *passuk*: "*Chidlu lachem min ha'adam asher neshamah b'apo ki bameh nechshav hu.*" (*Yeshayah* 2:22):

What is the "*asher neshamah b'apo*"? Before the soul returns to the person's body in the morning, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says to it: Go and sit in his nose so that he can daven. If he davens and makes *brachos* as he should, the *neshamah* enters his body, and if not, then it rises above and the body is found lacking the holiness of his soul. Because the soul is not resting in his body – what is his great virtue?! It is as though he isn't even in the world! Therefore, a person must not bless his friend until he blesses its Creator with praise and *tefillos*... And when the *chazzan* says "*Barchu es Hashem*," and the person replies "*Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed*" then he is blessing his Creator, and then the holiness of the soul settles over his body.

During his regular *Mishnah Berurah shiur*, *Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zt"l*, once mentioned that a soul leaves its body during sleep and returns in the morning. He then added, "If you want to know exactly when the soul returns in the morning it is when you say *Barchu*."

When the Rav saw that his listeners were marveling at this, he added in surprise: "I see that you are looking at me in surprise. Don't you feel it yourselves?! Isn't the feeling after reciting *Barchu* different than the feeling before it? And don't you feel that you gained something? That something was added to you?! It is a reality, and it is also brought down in *sefarim*!"

Indeed, when *Rav Yaakov* once missed reciting *Barchu*, it was in a place where they did not have the custom to recite *Barchu* after davening, he remarked ruefully to his companion: "Today, we are lacking a 'piece' of the *neshamah*." (*Bemechitzas Rabbeinu Yaakov Kaminetzky*, p. 49)

Reciting Barchu Alone

Another source to the virtue of reciting *Barchu* is brought by the *Midrash (Otzar Hamidrashim – Eisenstein, p. 500, and in Seder 273, Hilchos Krias Shema)*: "Rabi Akiva said: Each and every day, a malach stands in the middle of the Heavens and says: "*Hashem Melech, Hashem Malach, Hashem Yimloch l'olam va'ed.*" And all the Heavenly brigades reply after him, until he reaches *Barchu*. When he reaches *Barchu*, there is one animal named *Yisrael*, and *Yisrael* is etched on its forehead, and of it *Yechezkel* said (10:20) "*Vehachayah asher ra'isi tachas Elokei Yisrael*" and *David Hamelech* said (*Tehillim* 18:11): "*Vayirkav al keruv vaya'of vayede al kanfei ruach.*" This animal carries the chair and stands in the midst of the Heavens, and says loudly: "*Barchu es Hashem Hamevorach.*" And all the Heavenly brigades reply "*Baruch Hashem Hamevorach l'olam va'ed.*"

It's interesting to note here that this *Breisa* is also cited in the writings of the *Chida (Tziporen Shamir 2 26)*, where he writes that someone who is an *oness*, not in control of matters, and needs to daven alone, should recite this *Breisa*, and that will be in the place of reciting *Barchu*.

Hamevorach L'Olam Va'ed

The *Sifri (Parashas Ha'azinu)* cites the words of *Rabi Yosi*: "Where do we learn that when someone in shul recites "*Barchu es Hashem Hamevorach*" we reply after them "*Baruch Hashem Hamevorach l'olam va'ed*"? The *passuk* says (*Devarim* 32:3): "*Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu Godel l'Elokeinu.*" And where do we learn that we recite amen after someone who says a *brachah*? The *passuk* says "*Havu godel l'Elokeinu.*"

According to the *Sifri*, the *Maharal of Prague* explained (*Drashos Maharal Shabbos Teshuvah; Nesivos Olam Nesiv Ha'avodah* 18) the reason why after the *tzibbur* answers *Baruch Hashem Hamevorach*, they add "*l'olam va'ed.*" It is because the one making the *brachah* mentioned the Name of Hashem and thus the *tzibbur* must "*l'havi godel*" add to the praises of Hashem more than the *mevarech* praised Him. If they will just answer what the *chazzan* said, they will be lax in the honor of Hashem. For this reason, *Rabi Yosi* says in *Maseches Brachos* (53b): "The one who answers is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*." The one who makes the *brachah* mentions the Name as it is written (*Havayah*) and one who answers amen also includes in his response the way Hashem's Name is recited (amen is numerically equivalent to both *Havayah* and *Adnus*).

The *Maharal* concludes: "And from here we will also learn the severity of the punishment for someone who does not answer *Baruch Hashem Hamevorach*, from one who didn't answer amen, because how is it possible for someone to hear the Name of Hashem and not praise Him?!"

Chessed and Tefillah Go Hand in Hand

The following story, which beautifully combines *chedsed* and *tefillah*, was heard from *Harav Meshulem Dovid Soloveichik, shlita, from Harav Yechezkel Abramsky, zt"l, who heard the story while he was staying in Slutsk, from the meshamesh of his great grandfather, the Bais Halevi, zy" a, whose name was Reb Shimon.*

After authoring and printing his renowned *sefer*, the *Bais Halevi* wandered, in his great humility, among the communities of *Klal Yisrael* in order to sell it. His habit on these trips was to avoid the wealthy people who wanted to purchase his *sefer* in order to adorn their libraries, and preferred to sell it to poor *bnai Torah* who wanted to bask in the *divrei Torah* that brought them great joy. When those close to him asked him to explain this habit, all he would say was, "Am I not the author of the *sefer*? Therefore, I know who to sell it to."

On one of those trips, the *Bais Halevi* and his escorts came to the large city of *Minsk*, where they remained until *Tishah B'Av*, which fell on Thursday that year. Then, the *Bais Halevi* planned to continue his trip to the city of *Volozhin*, where his son, *Rav Chaim*, lived.

The *Bais Halevi* was careful never to depart for a journey on Friday, so that he would not have any chance of desecrating *Shabbos*. Hence, he left *Minsk* even before *Maariv* on *Motzaei Tishah B'Av*.

After walking for some distance, the *Bais Halevi* turned to his *meshamesh*, *Reb Shimon*, and asked him to look for a house where they could daven *Maariv* in peace and quiet. *Reb Shimon* quickly climbed a tree on the side of the road, and looked out to the horizon. He noticed a house some distance away with a dim light in the window.

The *Bais Halevi* and his loyal attendant hurried towards the house, but when the door opened they realized that it was the home of a gentile. The man did not want to let them in. "You are Jews," he said. "A few houses down lives a Jew who will surely be happy to let you in. Recently he got very sick, and I even heard that he's on his deathbed. If you want, go to his house..."

The door was slammed in their faces and the *Bais Halevi*, without another word, hastened towards the house of the sick person. When they entered the ramshackle structure, they noticed that indeed, as the gentile had said, a pale *Yid* lay on the bed, breathing with effort and groaning in pain.

The tremendous *middah* of *chedsed* that characterized the *Bais Halevi* came to the fore. The *Rav* immediately got to work. First he sent for the doctor of the town, who arrived quickly, examined the patient and offered his diagnosis.

"His condition is grave," the doctor

said, giving the *Rav* a long list of medicine powders that needed to be given to the patient. When the doctor left, the *Bais Halevi* quickly prepared the medicines, and spent the next few hours at the patient's bedside administering them as prescribed, with great devotion.

The *meshamesh* stood on the side, amazed to see how the *Bais Halevi* recited a fervent *tefillah* out loud with each action that he did. "*Yehi ratzon* that this action should be for the healing of the patient *Ploni ben Ploni.*"

"The walls trembled from the *Bais Halevi's kavanah* in these *tefillos*," the *meshamesh* later told *Rav Abramsky*.

When the *Bais Halevi* realized that the patient was so poor he didn't even have a pillow for his head, he unhesitatingly gave him the pillow he carried on his own travels. The many *tefillos* that the *Bais Halevi* offered for the patient, and the medicines and care that he administered, soon bore fruit and a short time before dawn, the patient's condition improved significantly. Only then, did the *Rav* allow himself to leave the patient's bedside for a few minutes to go to the corner of the room and quickly daven *Maariv*.

Again, the greatness of the *Bais Halevi* was apparent when, by direct contrast to his regular habit, and to the way he had davened for the patient, he davened his personal *tefillah* quickly, as he feared leaving the patient unattended for even a few minutes.

Early on Friday morning the doctor was summoned again, and was stunned to see a totally different person...By contrast to the critical condition of the night before, the patient was already able to walk around on his own.

"It is not the medicine that helped," the *meshamesh* said with certainty, "it was the tears that the *Bais Halevi* shed for this patient, who he did not know at all."

Only then, when the *Bais Halevi* was sure that the patient could be left alone, did he allow himself to leave the home and go to *Volozhin*. At the entrance of the city, his son *Rav Chaim* worriedly awaited his father.

At the home of his *mechutan*, the *Netziv of Volozhin*, a hot, nutritious meal was waiting for the *Bais Halevi*. But the *Rav* was in no hurry to eat. "This food would certainly be very beneficial for the patient," he said. Then he asked permission from the master of the house, and quickly dispatched the *meshamesh* to the patient's house, his arms laden with meat and fish, and all kinds of other foods that would help him recover.

On the following Tuesday, the patient arrived in *Volozhin* to return the *Bais Halevi's* pillow and to thank him for his unbelievable devotion that saved his life that crucial night.

Uvdos Vehanhagos Lebeis Brisk, Vol. I, P. 49