

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS SHEMINI

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Difference Between Yetzer and Yitzreinu

“ויאמר משה זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' תעשו” (ט, ו)

“Moshe said to Yisrael: that *yetzer hara* you should banish from your hearts, and you should all be unified in fear and resolve to serve before Hashem.” (*Safra, Mechilta D'Meluum 6*)

What is “that *yetzer hara*” that Yisrael was instructed to banish from their hearts?

The **Chiddushei Harim** explained: Every person has a certain objective for which he was created. The person also has a special *yetzer hara* that tries to prevent him from realizing that goal. Only the person himself recognizes and knows the nature of “that” personal and unique *yetzer hara*. Therefore, Moshe turned to each one in Am Yisrael and instructed him: “That *yetzer hara* you should banish from your hearts.”

Based on this, **Harav Meir Lerner**, the Rav of Altona, resolved a question that arose in the *nusach* of *Yehi Ratzon* after the *brachah* of *Hamaavir sheinah*. Why at first do we ask “and the *yetzer hara* should not control us,” and right afterwards we use a different term, saying “*vechofes yitzreinu lehishtabed lach*”?

Based on the above, this is now understandable: At first we are asking for the general *yetzer hara* – that he should not control us. Then we ask about “*yitzreinu*” that one which is unique to us, that Hashem should help us overcome him as well.

Imrei Harim, Shu"t Hadar Hacarmel, Yoreh Deah 3

The Tefillah of Kohanim Before They Bless Am Yisrael

“וישא אהרן את ידו אל העם ויברכם” (ט, כב)

The word “*ess*” here seems to be superfluous: it would have been enough to write “*Vayisa Aharon yadav el ha'am*”? **Rav Hillel Lichtenstein** of Kolomaya explained:

As is known, *tefillah* is also called *nesias kapayim*, raising one’s hands, as it says “*Ketzeisi ess ha'ir efros ess kapai el Hashem*.” (*Shemos 9:29*) Therefore, the word “*ess*” here comes to add that this was not only raising the hands for a *brachah*, but also for *tefillah*. As the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim 128 9*) before they bless the nation the Kohanim need to daven: “*Yehi ratzon...that this brachah that You commanded us to bless Your nation Yisrael be a complete brachah,*

and there should be in it no stumbling block or sin from now and forever.”

Mikrei Dardaki

Aharon First Raised “Yado” His Hand, and then “Yadav” His Hands

The **Netziv of Volozhon** explained the two questions on this *passuk*: 1. Why does it say the word “*yadav*” without a *yud*? 2. Why did the Torah use the words “*el ha'am*” and not “*al ha'am*” or “*kenegged ha'am*”?

He explained: The *passuk* alludes here that because according to *halachah*, the nation needs to have *kavanah* for the *brachah* that the Kohanim say (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 128 9*) Aharon first raised a single hand to the nation in order to signal to them to clear out their minds and concentrate their hearts. Only then did he raise *yadav*, his two hands, and blessed them.

Shu"t Meishiv Davar Vol. II, 91

Answering Amen Instills Emunah

“כי היום ה' נראה אליכם” (ט, ד)

“*Ki hayom*” is numerically equivalent to *amen*, to teach us that one who is strict about reciting *amen* instills *emunah* in his heart, with the essence of “*Hashem nirah aleichem*”. One who is not careful about it, harms his *emunah*, *chalilah*.

Yashreish Yaakov, p. 128, and see Mora Mikdash, 8

Praise of Yisrael Whose Tefillos Are Answered Right When They Are Complete

“ותצא אש מפני ה'...וירא כל העם וירגו” (ט, כד)

Onkelos explains: “*Vayaronu*” – “*veshibchu*”. What is the special praise that they offered here?

The **Chasam Sofer** explained: In *Maseches Taanis* (25b) the Gemara writes about *tefillah* of the *tzibbur*: If their prayer is answered right after it is finished, that is a praise for them that HaKadosh Baruch Hu hastened to fulfill their request. But if it was answered even before the *tefillah* was completed, that is not a good sign, because it appears that Hashem does not want to hear their voices.

On the eighth day of the *miluim* after Aharon finished the whole order of *korbanos* that Hashem commanded, the Shechinah was not yet resting in

Yisrael. Then he and Moshe went out and davened for the Shechinah to descend. Right after they finished davening, a fire came out from before Hashem, and the Shechinah rested upon Klal Yisrael.

Therefore, it says: “And the whole nation saw” – when they thought about it, immediately “*vayaronu*” – as **Onkelos** explains, “*veshibchu*.” They realized that it was a praise to Moshe and Aharon and the *tzibbur* that had sent them, because the Shechinah had not rested among them until they davened. Then, right after they davened, their *tefillah* was answered.

L'Chaim When Drinking Wine

“וין ושכר אל תשת” (י ט)

The **Baalei Hatosafos** explain why the Torah forbade Kohanim from drinking wine. It is because drunkenness could bring them to a fault, and even Adam HaRishon sinned with the Eitz Hadaas after he drank from the cup upon which he made the “*Birchas Chassanim*” during his marriage to Chava.

For this reason, we make sure to bless one another with “*l'chaim*” when drinking wine, because Adam HaRishon was sentenced to death after sinning due to wine. Hence we bless each other that this drinking should be for us to life and to peace.

Daas Zekeinim

The Power of One Mitzvah

“להבדיל בין הטמא ובין הטהור ובין החיה הנאכלת ובין החיה אשר לא תאכל” (יא מז)

“Does it need to differentiate between a donkey [which is forbidden to eat] and a cow [which is permitted]? Is it not clearly stated in the *passuk*?” **Rashi** then answers that the *passuk* is referring to a pure animal such as a cow, and the need to differentiate between if it is slaughtered in a way that it is permitted to eat, i.e. *nishchat rubo*, or in a way that makes it forbidden to eat because only half of the necessary parts were slaughtered.

Harav Moshe Schwab, Mashgiach of Gateshead, derived a wonderful piece of *mussar* from this: The difference between “between partially slaughtered and completely slaughtered is a tiny hairsbreadth.” Indeed it is so with all matters of *kedushah*. The power of one easy mitzvah can change the essence of a person from one extreme to the other. The reply of one *amen* can raise the world from the depths to the gates of Gan Eden.

Ma'arechi Lev. Vol. III, p. 97

On Friday, 25 Nissan, is the *yahrtzeit* of the **Divrei Chaim of Sanz**, of whom his grandson the Shefa Chaim, *zt"l*, said in one of his *drashos*:

“My holy grandfather from Sanz, *zy"ra*, had a regular practice, every single day: one and sometimes two or more of his little sons or grandsons would say *Birchos Hashachar* out loud for him and he would reply *amen*.”

Halichos Chaim, Seder Hayom p. 162

Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa – To believe each morning anew

Chok Kavua - Dvar Yom Beyomo



Mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer (1)

Anticipation for Kabbalas
HaTorah

On the holy and awesome night, when we recite the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*, we read about the miracles and the signs that HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed in order to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. However, the whole purpose of emerging from Egypt was so that Bnei Yisrael could receive the Torah. Hence, right after *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Bnei Yisrael was commanded to count forty nine days, in order to increase the anticipation and desire in their hearts for this most important day since Creation: the day of *Kabbalas HaTorah*. The whole *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was in order for us to receive the Torah and serve Hashem. (*Sefer Hachinuch*, 306)

From then until this very day, each and every year, we reawaken that wondrous yearning by performing the *mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer* for forty nine days between Pesach and Shavuus. Rabi Yosef Bechor Shor, one of the *Baalei Hatsofos* (*Vayikra* 23:16) brings a beautiful parable about this. A person was imprisoned for many years. Then a messenger from the king arrived, and informed him that on a certain day, the king would take him out of jail. Fifty days after that, the messenger said, he will give you his daughter in marriage. The man, who had been disappointed so many times, didn't believe the messenger. But when the appointed day arrived and the king set him free, he said: if he fulfilled this promise, he surely will fulfill the second promise and will give me his daughter. In anticipation, he began to count the days until the promised date.

That is how Bnei Yisrael are. In the midst of the slavery, Moshe promised them that Hashem would take them out of Egypt and then give them the Torah. (See *Shemos* 3:12, *Rashi*) They didn't pay that much attention at the time, but when they saw that the first promise had been fulfilled, they immediately began counting the days until the great day when they would merit to receive the holy Torah.

Sefiras HaOmer: Why?

The name of the *mitzvah*, *Sefiras HaOmer*, was set because the day of bringing to *Korban Omer*, on the day after *Yom Tov Rishon* of Pesach, is the day when the Torah established as the first day of doing the *mitzvah*. As it says, "*Usefartem lachem*, you should count...from when you bring the *Omer Hatenufah*, seven complete weeks there should be."

Aside for this, the Rishonim write that the time for bringing the *Omer*

and the *mitzvah* of counting are intertwined. That is because this time of year is the end of the rainy season and beginning of the summer, and those who work the land are very anxious. Perhaps rains will fall and they will lose their crops, or perhaps there will be severe drought that will dry up their fruits. Therefore, Bnei Yisrael were commanded to bring the *Korban Omer*, so that the crops in the fields should be blessed (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a). For the same reason they were commanded to count the *Omer* so that we should remember the pain of the world, and through that, we should repent and plead to Hashem to have mercy on us that there should be good crops. This way we will be able to learn Torah properly, as *Chazal* say (*Avos* 3:17): "If there is no flour, there is no bread." (*Avudraham*, *Tefillos Hapesach*)

The Rishonim further write that because during the *Omer*, between Pesach and Shavuus, everyone is busy harvesting from the fields, they may forget or not notice that the time has come to depart their homes in order to get to Yerushalayim in time for Shavuus. Therefore they were commanded to count the days. This way, they would not forget the time of the *chag*. (ibid)

Another reason, by way of *drush*, is explained by the *Maharsha* (Vol. I, *Rosh Hashanah* 16a, and see *Machshavos Charutz*, 15):

The *Minchas HaOmer*, brought the day after *Yom Tov Rishon* of Pesach, is made of barley, which is donkey's food (*Pesachim* 3b). By contrast, the *Shtei Halechem*, brought on the *chag of Mattan Torah*, is made of wheat, which is the symbol of wisdom. (See *Brachos* 40a: "A tree that Adam HaRishon ate from...Rabi Yehudah says: it was wheat, because a baby doesn't know how to call his father and mother until he tastes the taste of grain.")

When Bnei Yisrael emerged from Egypt, they had not yet received the Torah and *mitzvos*. They were like donkeys. Therefore, the *Minchah* that is brought on Pesach is made of barley. Only when they came to Har Sinai and received the Torah were they considered people, and thus were commanded to bring a *Minchah* from wheat.

Hence, each day of the *sefirah*, we grow more distant from the essence of *Minchas HaOmer*, which is made of animal food, and closer to the *Shtei Halechem*, which is the essence of *daas*, knowledge, and therefore, it is worthy to call these days "*Sefiras HaOmer*."

The Rebbe Left in Time...

The fourth and last visit of Harav Avraham Elimelech of Karlin, ז"ל, to Eretz Yisrael will be forever inscribed on the hearts of his *chassidim* as awe inspiring, solemn and characterized by endless *tefillos* for the *yeshuos* of Kal Yisrael.

It was the summer of 1939, and the winds of war were already howling through Europe. The Nazi beast was constantly spewing its vision of erasing the Jewish nation off the face of the earth. It was closer than ever to realizing this dream, R"l, and the Jewish world was watching tensely and fearfully as things developed.

Six years earlier, when the Nazis rose to power in Germany, the Rebbe Rav Avraham Elimelech, foresaw the calamity that was going to befall the Jewish nation. From then on, he constantly warned his followers about their obligation to plead to the Heavens for the *yeshuah*, because there was an existential danger hovering over their heads.

At the time, not everyone understood the Rebbe. Even in 1939, when the world was roiling in apprehension of the impending war, many thought that he was exaggerating. But the Rebbe was one of the few who clearly saw the worst happening, and he continued to arouse his *chassidim* to daven constantly.

Right after Pesach of 1939, the Rebbe told his confidants that he wished to make an extended visit to his Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael. The goal was clear: to arouse Heavenly mercy at the holy sites, especially the Kosel, to plea that the decree be annulled.

At the end of Iyar, the ship that the Rebbe was traveling on anchored in the newly opened Tel Aviv harbor. Hundreds of Karliner Chassidim waited in great anticipation, and as soon as they caught sight of the Rebbe debarking, they began to sing joyously. But to their surprise, the Rebbe hushed them, and then, in a trembling voice, he began to speak solemnly:

"Yidden! We have not come to Eretz Yisrael for a visit! We have come to arouse Heavenly mercy for our brethren in Poland and the rest of Europe, who are in danger of being annihilated! This is not a time of joy! We have come to cry and plead at the holy sites and at the *kevarim* of *tzaddikim*, for *yeshuos* and mercy for them. Perhaps He will have mercy, *ulai yerachem*..."

The *chassidim* were stunned to hear this. They didn't dream that the situation was so dire. The Rebbe quickly entered the car that would take him to his lodgings in Yerushalayim. From there, he headed straight for the Kosel, where he began to cry and daven fervently.

As expected, from the time the Rebbe came, through the coming days and weeks, the Rebbe went frequently to the Kosel and other holy sites. He never stopped davening and tearing at the Gates of Heaven. Because he was staying in the Old City, each Shabbos, right after *Krias HaTorah*, the Rebbe left the Karliner *bais medrash* and went to the Kosel to daven *Mussaf*.

This was a regular habit during these Shabbosim. Because the Mandate authorities did not allow *sifrei Torah* at the Kosel, the *tzibbur* could not recite the *Shir Hakavod*. Instead, right after *Mussaf*, the Rebbe would turn to the right side of the plaza, towards the entrance gate to the Kosel, and would recite the fifteen *Shir Hamaalos* of *Tehillim* with his Chassidim.

It happened on *Shabbos Kodesh Parashas V'Eschanan - Nachamu*, 13 Av 5699/1939: The Rebbe went down to daven *Mussaf* at the Kosel, as was his habit. But by contrast to previous weeks, as soon as *Kaddish Tiskabel* was over after *Mussaf*, he announced that he wished to continue davening the *bais medrash* in the Old City.

The Chassidim were puzzled at the change, but quickly walked after the Rebbe to the *bais medrash*.

A few minutes later, the great miracle became clear. An explosion was heard from the direction of the Kosel. A Yid who ran breathlessly towards the Rebbe's entourage related excitedly that a bomb that had been placed exactly where the Rebbe would have been standing at that moment had exploded. Miraculously, it caused no damage, because the last of the *misparallelim* had left a few minutes earlier with the Rebbe.

It emerged that the Arab neighbors, who did not like the Jewish presence, which increased when the Rebbe was there, decided to resolve the problem in the typical Ishmaelite fashion, but a miracle prevented their designs from being actualized.

One can imagine what would have happened if the Rebbe would have remained to recite *Tehillim* as he always did. Tremendous *siyata diShmaya* led the Rebbe to decide to forgo this custom, thus preventing a tragedy.

A month later, on 14 Elul, the Rebbe left Eretz Yisrael on the last ship that departed for Europe. Three years later, he was killed with his family and his *chassidim*. *Hashem Yikom damam*.

Gadol B'Yisrael, chapter 13; Zichronam Livrachah, 13 Cheshvan; Yoman Hakosel Hamaaravi, p. 179