

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS ACHAREIMOS - KEDOSHIM

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Birchas Hagomel for the Kohein Gadol

“דבר אל אהרן אחיך ואל יבא בכל עת אל הקדש...ולא ימות” (טז ב)

“When the Kohein entered on Yom Kippur; if he merited, he emerged safely; if he did not merit – then a flame emerged from between the two *Keruvim* and he was burned from inside and died.” (*Zohar Chadash*, Vol. I 6 1)

In his compilation, *Machazik Brachah* on the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 219 1-2), the Chida asks: Did the Kohein Gadol need to make the *brachah* of *Hagomel* after he emerged safely from the *Kodesh HaKodashim* on Yom Kippur, because there were other Kohanim who did not merit to do so and died?

He explains that *Hagomel* is intended for someone who found himself in a place of danger and was spared. The *Kodesh HaKodashim* – the dwelling place of the Shechinah – is certainly not classified as a ‘place of danger.’ Being that it is dependent only on the essence of the Kohein Gadol himself, and whether he is deserving or not, then if he emerged in peace, he never actually entered a place of danger.

Yehei Rava Kamai Deyishrei Al Amei

“השכן אתם בתוך טמאתם” (טז טז)

Harav Meir Yechiel, the Saraf of Mogelnitza, says:

Although it was promised to us that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would dwell with us even in our impurity, we must always strive to sanctify and purify ourselves, so that He should have *nachas ruach* when dwelling among us. Therefore, we recite in the *zemiros* of Friday night: “*Yehei rava kamai deishrei al amei*—may it be His will that HaKadosh Baruch Hu rest His Shechinah upon us, and He should have enjoyment and joy from this.”

Nitzotzei Oros, Tetzaveh, 5763 p. 4

Tefillah in Aramaic

“וכל אדם לא יהיה באהל מועד בבאו לכפר בקדש עד צאתו” (טז ז)

Chazal in the *Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* 1 5) explained on this *passuk* that even the angels, of whom it is said, (*Yechezkel* 1:10) “And the image of their faces is like a person,” were not in the Mishkan when the Kohein Gadol entered the *Kodesh HaKodashim*.

Thus Harav Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson,

the Rav of Plonsk, answered the question of the commentators: Why did the Kohein Gadol conclude his *tefillah* in the *Kodesh HaKodashim* with the Aramaic words: “*Lo ya’adei avid sholtan midebeis Yehudah*” (*Yoma* 53b), and not with the words of the *passuk* in Bereiishis (49:10): “*Lo yassur shevet miYehudah*”?

According to the Yerushalmi it is explained: by praying in Aramaic the Kohein Gadol showed that the angels are not in the *Kodesh HaKodashim* when he was there, because *Chazal* said (*Shabbos* 12b): “Anyone who asks for his needs in Aramaic, the ministering angels do not need him, because the ministering angels do not understand the Aramaic language.”

Shu”t Tirosh Veyitzhar 121

Amen as a Sacrifice

“בזאת יבוא אהרן אל הקדש בפר בן בקר לחטאת ואל לעלה” (טז ג)

The acronym of this *passuk* is numerically equivalent to 91, the same as the word *amen*. We can learn an allusion from this to what the *Mekubalim* wrote: with the power of replying *amen*, a person can bring down abundance in this world that is similar to the abundance that was bequeathed during the service of the *korbanos*.

Pri Yitzchak p. 48

Mentioning the Sick Person’s Name with Respect

“איש אמו ואביו תיראו” (יט ג)

The Rambam writes regarding the *halachos* of fearing one’s father (*Mamrim* 6 3): “What is ‘*mora*’ – fear? ...He should not call him by his name in his life or after his death, but rather should say ‘*Abba mari*’”

But the *Sefer Chassidim* writes (800) that when a son davens for his sick parents, he should mention their names without adding any honorifics. The Chida explains (*Hagahos Bris Olam*) that this is because it is not proper for one to express himself in a language that shows deference to a mortal human when praying to HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

As such, many have asked: How is it that we ask

at the end of *Birchas Hamazon*: “*Harachaman Hu yevarech es avi mori v’es imi morasi...*”? Are we not davening to Hashem here as well—while using an honorific for one’s parents?

There are three answers to this question:

1. Harav Yisrael Chaim Friedman, the Rav of Rachov, differentiated between a *tefillah* where the Name of Heaven is invoked, which is what the *Sefer Hachassidim* was referring to, to the *tefillah* of *HaRachaman*, in which Shem Shamayim is not mentioned. (*Likutei Mahari”ch Birchas Hamazon*)

2. Harav Reuven Margulies, author of *Margulios Hayam*, explained that it is different when one is davening for a sick person whose fortune has taken a turn for the worse. In that case, indeed, it is not proper to mention his name before Hashem with an honorific. Yet when it is a *tefillah* about a different matter, then there is no need to be strict about this. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach, Beer Miriam, Birchas Hamazon*)

3. Harav Shmuel Hominer differentiated between the *tefillah* for a sick person, when we turn to Hashem in second person, and the *tefillah* of *HaRachaman*, which is recited in third person, when one who is praying may mention his parents in a respectful way. (*Eved Hamelech Kedoshim*)

I Will Honor Those Who Honor Me

“ומקדשי תיראו” (יט ל)

The *Sefer Chassidim* (128) writes that Rabi Yaakov ben Rabi Yakar, the rav of Rashi, would clean the floor with his beard in front of the *aron kodesh*.

But in the *sefer Mishnas Chachamim* (219), Rabi Moshe Chagiz brings that it was not Rashi’s *rebbe* that did so, but rather the grandfather of Rashi, and that is the reason he merited a grandson who illuminated the eyes of Klal Yisrael.

Rise Because of “Shemei”

“מפני שיבה תקום” (יט לב)

In his commentary on the Torah, *Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel* writes that from this *passuk* we can learn a hint to the fact that we must stand when replying “*Amen yehei Shemei Rabba*” (see *Rema Orach Chaim* 56 1): The acronym of the first and last letters of “*mipnei seivah*” are “*shemei*” and therefore, the Torah instructs us *mipnei seivah-Shemei*—you should “*Takum! Rise!*”

“Ukedoshim bechol yom yehallelucha selah”

Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, shlita, noted that a certain Jew in Yerushalayim was known as “Kadosh!” What was the reason? Even when he was weak, he made the effort to go to shul to reply *amen* to *brachos*. What is the reward for one who merits to be called “Kadosh”? He merits “*Yehallelucha selah*” – to praise for eternity, with no stop. As the *Midrash* says: “Everyone who answers *amen* in this world merits to answer *amen* in the World to Come.” *Notrei Amen*, Vol. I, p. 157



Prayer of Faith

A Glimpse at the
Seder Hatefillah

Birchas Yotzer Ohr (4)

Praises in the Order of the Aleph Beis

Later in the *brachah* of *Yotzer Ohr*, we add praises to Hashem in order of the *Aleph Beis*: “*Adon uzeinu, tzur misgabeiunu...Kel Baruch Gadol Deah...etc.*”

In several places, the holy *Zohar* (*Terumah* 132 1; *Vayakhel* 205 2; *Pekudei* 260 2) expounds on the *segulah* of this wonderful *tefillah*, in which each word alludes to one of the *Heichalos* in the Upper Worlds.

The *Eitz Yosef* offers a reason why this *tefillah* is in alphabetical order: An early *Midrash* cites that the renowned poet Rabi Elazar Haklir was brought to the Heavens by the angel Michael in order to find out how the angels sing. When he was told that they arrange their praises in the order of the *Aleph Beis*, he then formulated his praise in the same order. He alludes to this later in the *tefillah*, with the words “*Mesaprim Kevod Kel*”, which is a reference to the name Michael, from whom he heard this advice.

Reciting Kel Adon on Shabbos

Similarly, the commentary of Rav Avraham the son of the Gra cites the words of the *Zohar*, *Terumah* (132 1) that on Shabbos we say “*Kel Adon*” in big letters, and during the week, with small letters (meaning that on Shabbos we recite a whole phrase for each letter, while during the week there is only one word of praise per letter.) He explained the *Zohar* that the reason that on Shabbos we extend each letter with several words, such as “*Kel Adon al kol hamaasim*”, and on weekday the praise for each letter has just one word, is because on Shabbos we rise to a level through which we can praise the Creator for His actions in the Upper Worlds, by contrast to weekdays, when we can comprehend only the actions in the lower worlds.

Tov Yatzar Kavod LiShemo – The Secret of Our Existence in the World

The Gr”a (cited in the commentary on *tefillah* by his son, Reb Avraham) explains: The *passuk* says (*Yeshaya* 43:7) “*Kol hanikra biShemi ulichvodi barasiv, yetzartiv af asisiv.*” All the creations were created in order to give honor to the Creator, and only with the power of these praises can they merit to receive from the

abundances of His goodness that gives them life. But because in actuality, it is not in the power of a mortal to comprehend even the tiniest iota of the real honor that the Creator deserves, Hashem, in His great kindness, created “*Kevod liShemo*” – a special opportunity through which we can honor Hashem despite not comprehending Him. That is how we survive in this world.

Harav Yisrael Eliyahu Weintraub, z”l, added an explanation by way of a parable: A wealthy man was presented with a rare deal through which he could profit a huge sum. Toward that end, he would need to obtain a tremendous sum of money in a very short time. He had most of it, but because he was short a small amount to complete the sum, he had to go over to his poor neighbor and ask him to lend him a small sum of money until the deal went through.

Even though this poor man gave his neighbor such a minuscule sum, compared to the overall sum, the wealthy man will certainly feel a debt of gratitude, because in the poor man’s merit he was able to complete the deal. Similarly, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His great compassion, created a situation of a certain “lack” in His honor, which we can complete through our *tefillas* and praises. Through this, we can get a reward as though we succeeded in truly honoring Hashem in accordance with what He deserves. (*Nachalas David*, Bnei Brak 5773, p. 186)

We can learn about the intensity of these lofty words from a story related about the Shefa Chaim of Sanz: Even during the turbulent days following the Holocaust, he did not alter his custom of davening for a very long time. Once, he needed to travel early in the morning on a mission to save a life that could not be delayed. Therefore, he rose early and davened uncharacteristically quickly. But when he reached the *brachos* of *Krias Shema*, and the words “*Tov yatzar Kavod LiShemo...*” he was unable to suppress his emotions. His face burned like a torch and his body appeared to be burning with enthusiasm. Without noticing it, he repeated these words dozens of times, and for a long time, he was deeply engrossed in his *tefillas*, until suddenly, he shook himself out of his state of emotion and hastily finished the rest of his *tefillas*. (*Lapid Ha’Eish*, Vol. 1, p. 303.)

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

Rescue in the Merit of Sefiras HaOmer

A cacophony of screams and barking dogs informed Reb Yankel that another day was about to begin in the camp. He quickly donned his faded rags and prepared to go outside for roll call. Within a few minutes, he would find himself together with thousands of fellow suffering inmates on the big trucks that would take them into the thick forests nearby. There, they would spend the rest of the day in backbreaking labor, chopping down trees and transporting them to long cargo trains. While many of his bunkmates were still rolling over in their beds, Reb Yankel hastened to his regular corner, where he quickly donned the precious *tefillin* that he had managed to smuggle into the camp. After reciting the *pesukim* of *Krias Shema*, he removed the *tefillin* and hurried out to the roll call.

In the thicket of the forest, among the tall, dense trees, Reb Yankel continued to daven, as his burly arms chopped the trees and created piles of logs that, every so often earned him a pat on the back from his commanders. They had been raised to appreciate physical strength.

A rumor that had been circulating the camp the past few days was worrying Reb Yankel. According to the rumor, the Siberian camp where they were now incarcerated was going to be evacuated in the near future. They would be taken to a place even more remote than where they were now.

Reb Yankel knew his life was in danger, and didn’t think he could go on working like this for much longer. He was worried about the possibility of moving to a strange place, where there would be closer supervision and where the work might be harder. But most of all, he knew without a doubt: it would be virtually impossible to escape from any different location.

The camp in which he was now was relatively close to the town where, he had heard, a Jewish family lived. This family played a prominent role in the escape plan that he was slowly formulating. Reb Yankel decided that he had to run away, no matter what.

In the dark of night, when his bunkmate, a husky, hirsute non-Jew was snoring loudly, Reb Yankel began digging an underground tunnel through which he could escape to freedom. He didn’t have suitable tools, but his willpower and determination infused him with the strength to keep working until dawn broke.

Thus, night after night, Reb Yankel continued working, carefully but steadily, until he felt he was nearing his goal.

That night, a few minutes after Reb Yankel descended into his tunnel, he froze in fear when he heard his neighbor’s bed creak. A moment later, the non-Jew’s head appeared in the opening of the tunnel. “You should know my friend, that I don’t plan to report your daring activities to the camp authorities. But because I admire you, I feel like I should let you know that I heard from one of the commanders that in the next day or two we are all going to be moved to a distant location, and you’ll have to give up on your plans.”

Reb Yankel, who felt the Divine Hand guiding him from Above, warmly thanked his bunkmate. He quickly packed together his few belongings and carefully descended into the tunnel, taking care to conceal all traces of his departure.

When he reached the other side of the tunnel, he quickly dug out an opening and ran into

the forest, where he hid himself in a hollow tree trunk. He waited some time until he was sure he could continue. From there, he began walking quickly through the trees towards the nearby town.

After hours of walking, and gnawing hunger, he finally reached the outskirts of the town. He feverishly began searching for the Jewish house he had heard about, hoping that the owners would agree to perform the *mitzvah* of *hachnasas orchim* and conceal him.

Reb Yankel was sure that his escape had already been discovered back at the camp, and that this town would be the first address the search parties would reach. In his heart, he offered up a silent prayer that he quickly reach safety.

He needed to exercise all of his senses to locate the house in the thick darkness. When he finally discerned the outline of a *mezuzah*, he breathed a sigh of relief.

He knocked loudly at the door, and was happy to hear the heavy footsteps of the man of the house. The door opened, and an elderly Jew stood there in his nightclothes. His wrinkled face and heavy eyebrows were creased into an expression of harsh suspicion.

“I am a Yid!” Reb Yankel said quickly. “I seek a bit of water to revive myself.” But the man, who had already heard how the authorities punished anyone who collaborated with its enemies, was afraid to help and quickly slammed the door.

Through the closed door, Reb Yankel tried to plead with the man for his life, but his words fell on deaf ears. In desperation, he tried to call with a dry throat the eternal Jewish words, “*Shema Yisrael...*” But even this cry drew no response.

When he saw that all avenues had been exhausted, he was about to turn away and leave the courtyard in disappointment, hoping he could find somewhere else to take shelter. But then he remembered that in his haste to escape, he’d forgotten something very important:

It was the days between Pesach and Shavuous, and Reb Yankel took care, even in that Gehinnom, not to miss the *mitzvah* of counting the Omer. Now he looked at the sky, which had begun to redden, and sighed with relief; he may have lost out his long awaited refuge, but at least he would do the *mitzvah* in time.

He stood in the corner of the courtyard and began to recite the *brachah* with great *kavanah*, as he always did: “*Baruch Atah...al Sefiras HaOmer. Hayom...yamim la’Omer! Harachaman Hu yachzir lanu...*”

Suddenly, the unbelievable happened: The door opened and the old man walked out with a sheepish smile on his face. He invited Reb Yankel to come inside. Once they were inside, he apologized and explained:

“When you knocked at the door, I was sure that you were a non Jew who escaped from the camp, and as part of his escape plan, was posing as a Jew. Even when you recited *Shema Yisrael* I was not yet convinced of your identity. But when I saw you making the *brachah* on *Sefiras HaOmer* with *kavanah*, word for word, it was clear to me beyond a doubt that you are a Jew and it is worth taking the risk for you.”

“A non Jew will never learn to make *brachos* with *kavanah*,” the man concluded. As he spoke, he placed a pot on the stove and poured Reb Yankel a hot drink to revive him.

Notrei Amen, Vol. II, p. 342