

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS NASO

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Place Where Baalei Teshuvah Stand

"זהב את אשמו בראשו" (ה כב)

Harav Dovid Deutsch, a disciple of the Noda B'Yehudah, finds in this *passuk* an allusion to the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 34b) that in "the place where baalei teshuvah stand – absolute tzaddikim cannot stand."

"*Veheishiv es ashamo berosh*" – one who repents for his sins, merits to take a place at the head, before the *tzaddikim*.

Dvash Vechalav [Rav M. M. Krengel]

Replying Amen With an Exposed Head

"האשוה חזרה תשא את ענה" (ה ל"ב)

Chazal ask (see *Bamidbar Rabba* 9 27): If the woman was not made impure, which sin will she bear?

HaRav Avraham Saba, in his *sefer Tzeror Hamor*, offers an answer:

The woman's sin is that she replied amen with an exposed head, as it says above (22) "V'amrah ha'isha amen amen." That was with her head uncovered, as it says (18) "Upara es rosh ha'ishah, and he uncovered the head of the woman."

The reason the Torah is so strict about this prohibition is because amen is numerically equivalent to the Names Havayah and Adnus, and there is a *halachah* (See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 91 3) that one must not mention the Name of Hashem with an exposed head, and thus, one must not answer amen in such a state either.

Statement and Warning to Kohanim Going up to the Duchen

"כה תברכו את בני ישראל" (ו כב)

Harav Yitzchak Elchanan Spector, the Rav of Kovno, was dedicated to rectifying the deeds of his generation. From time to time, he would speak out publicly on various subjects. In 5648, he publicized a special proclamation to Kohanim, who, as is the custom out of Eretz Yisrael, *duchaned* only on Yamim Tovim. He wrote:

"This announcements is for all, about the great warning of *Chazal* and the holy *sefarim* about the *mitzvah* of reciting "Amen yehei Shemei rabba, and "amen", and the converse, *chalilah* about the severity of one who annuls them. We have seen how during the Yamim Noraim and Yom Tov

when the Kohanim go up to the *duchan*, they return to their place before the *Shatz* finishes *Kaddish* of the *Chazaras Hashatz* right after their *brachah*. The *tzibbur* is very *mehader*, very scrupulous about saying *yasher koach* to the Kohanim, and this is all while the *Shatz* is saying *Kaddish*. Thus they do not answer *Yehei Shemei Rabba* and amen after *Kaddish*.

"Therefore, I ask the Kohanim that they do not hurry back to their places until the *Shatz* finishes *Kaddish* after *Chazaras Hashatz*, and thus they will not cause a stumbling block for the *tzibbur*. In this merit, may we merit to see the Kohanim returning to their service in the *Bais HaMikdash*, speedily on our day."

Teshuvos Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, 3

A Brachah Answered by Amen is Worth Ten Gold Coins

"כף אחד עשרה זהב מלאה קסורת" (ז יד)

The *Ohr Zarua* (*Kisui Hadam* 399) writes in the name of **Rabi Yehudah Hachassid**: It is not for naught that the spoon of the *ketores* weighed the same as ten gold coins. It is to hint to us that bringing the *ketores* is equal to saying a *brachah*, whose value *Chazal* have set (see *Chulin* 87a) as ten gold coins. **Rabbeinu Ephraim** in his commentary on the Torah added an allusion from the words of the *passuk* itself: "Kaf achas" – *kaf* is numerically equivalent to 100 – a hint to the one hundred *brachos*, each of which is worth "asarah zahav."

There is a well known ruling by the *Shach* (*Choshen Mishpat* 382 4) that the value of each *brachah* is ten gold coins, only as long as amen was answered. There is an allusion to that in the *passuk* as well, as it says "kaf achas asarah" – the acronym is numerically equivalent to amen.

Emunas Yitzchak, Vol. II, p. 111

"With Love" and Not Hastily

"כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמרו להם" (ו כג)

"Amor lahem" is written with a *vav*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to the Kohanim: Just because I

told you that you should bless Yisrael, does not mean you should bless them in a hurry, and hastily [just because I said so], but rather, bless them with *kavanah* in your hearts so that you can complete the *brachah* for them." (*Tanchuma Naso* 10)

According to the *Midrash*, **Harav Yissachar Ber Eilburg** answered the question that arises in the wording of *Birchas Kohanim*: "Vetzivanu levarech is amo Yisrael b'ahavah" – Where were the Kohanim instructed to bless Bnei Yisrael with love?

It is explained that the *vav* that is added in the word "amor" teaches us that *Birchas Kohanim* needs to be said by the Kohanim from the depths of their hearts, with love and tranquility, and not quickly and hastily.

Beer Sheva, Sotah 39a, Tzeidah Laderech in this parashah

And I will Bless them With Answering Amen

"ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברך" (ז ז)

There is a question about the basis of the *mitzvah* of *Birchas Kohanim*: If Hashem wants to bless Bnei Yisrael – they will be blessed. Why was it necessary to instruct the Kohanim to bench them?

Harav Yehudah Leib Eiger of Lublin offered a beautiful explanation to this according to the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 53b): "One who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*:

Because Hashem wants to expand the *brachah*, He instructed the Kohanim to bless Yisrael so that they should answer amen after the *brachah*, and thus the *brachah* will be fulfilled more. This is also alluded to in the wording of the commandment: "Vesamu es Shemi al Bnei Yisrael" – in their *brachah*, "v'ani avrachem" – by answering after them amen. David Hamelech also alluded to this in *Tehillim* (31:24): "Emunim notzer Hashem umeshalem al yeser oseh ga'avah" – HaKadosh Baruch Hu creates for Himself the reply of amen after *Birchas Kohanim* so that it will be the essence of "the one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*." Thus the *brachah* on Am Yisrael will grow.

Imrei Emes (Lublin) 5631

Nevarech Sheya'anu Amen (Naso)

The *Zohar* (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* Vol. II p. 84 1) explains that a person has to reply 90 amens each day. From the words of the *Zohar* there it appears that it is worthy to complete them before *Tefillas Shemoneh Esrei*. Therefore, many *gedolim* throughout the generations, chief among them the Ari HaKadosh (*Shaarei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim* 6 6), would hear *Birchos Hashachar* each day from a few people and answer amen, because this is the only way to reach this status.

Dear Yid!

You have the opportunity to fulfill each day the *mitzvah* for hundreds, easily, without great exertion, and in addition to merit the promise of "anyone who is *mezakeh* the *rabbim* – no sin happens through him" (*Avos* 5 21). **Join the national network of hundreds of gabba'eim amen**, who give the merit to people each day by reciting the complete *brachos* of gratitude (see *Mishnah Berurah* 167 20), clearly, and pleasantly, to glorify the Name of Heaven.

For details and to register, call the coordinator of gabba'eim amen at 058-325-9191.

Bnei Emunim. Amen with Emunah Sheleimah.



Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the
Seder Hatefillah

Birchash Yotzer Ohr (6)

Venosim B'Ahavah Reshus Zeh Lazeh

"From where do we see that they fear one another and honor one another and are more humble than humans? Because when they open their mouths and say *shirah*, one says to his friend, you begin because you are greater than me, and the other one says to his friend, you begin because you are greater than me, not like people, where one says to the other I am bigger than you and the other says I am bigger than you." (Avos DeRabi Nossen ch. 12)

As cited in earlier articles, the behavior of the angels described in *Yotzer Ohr* serve for us as a *mussar* lesson from which we can learn and thus act.

In this part of the *brachah*, we mention the praise of the angels that they do not envy one another and they all unite in order to glorify their Creator and do the will of their Maker. There are some valuable lessons here for us regarding our service of Hashem.

Because the human traits of "envy" and "hate" do not exist among holy angels, no single one of them seeks to rise above his friend. Therefore they "give permission to one another to sanctify their Creator" and why? Because their entire goal is only to "sanctify their Creator" and to bring Him "nachas ruach."

We must learn from this that anyone who truly loves the Creator and yearns with all his being to bring *nachas* to Hashem should never try to grab a mitzvah away from another person. If the main objective of his actions are always only to bring *nachas* to Hashem, what difference does it make to the person if the act is done through him or another person? (Otzar Hatefillos – Eitz Yosef)

The Rav Is Like an Angel

Harav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz, zt"l, one of the founders of Torah in America, was known for his overflowing kindness, which was especially manifested after the Holocaust, when he helped *roshei yeshivah* who came from Europe to reestablish their *yeshivos* in America. He would give them detailed lists of all the donors to his *yeshivah*, Torah Vodaas, without fearing that perhaps this would detract from the donations to his own Torah enterprise, which he had established with much effort over many years.

In a *hesped* delivered by Harav Michael Dov Weissmandl, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Nitra, who also benefited from Rav Mendlowitz's generosity, he said:

"The Gemara says (*Moed Katan* 17a) 'if a Rav is like an angel of Hashem – one should seek Torah from his mouth. And if not – one should not seek Torah from his mouth.' Many have asked: We have never merited to see an angel,

so how can we know if a Rav is similar to one or not?

"True, we have never merited to see an angel with our eyes, but from the *nusach* of *Yotzer Ohr* we can learn what an angel acts like. Thus we need to explain the Gemara: 'If a Rav looks like an angel of Hashem,' by the fact that he is not concerned about his own honor and status, but acts like the angels who 'lovingly give permission to one another to sanctify their Creator,' then 'seek Torah from his mouth.' Fortunate is the person who merited to be among the students of Rav Shraga Feivel, who, with his behavior, proved that he was like an angel who was worthy of teaching Torah..."

Beloved are Yisrael Who Serve Hashem While So Busy

On the other hand we have to remember that although the holiness and status of the angels is very high, the song of Klal Yisrael is more beloved to Hashem than that of the angels. As the Gemara says (*Chulin* 91b): "The *Malachei Hashares* do not say *shirah* Above until Yisrael say *shirah* below." The reason for this is explained by the Divrei Yisrael of Modzhitz: Although the praise of the angels is clearer and purer because it is clean of any appeals, still, for the same reason, the *shirah* of Am Yisrael is more beloved by Hashem. That is because in order to say it, Am Yisrael is required to make an effort and concentrate their thoughts, despite the many things that they are busy with that prevent them from reciting *shirah*.

Thus, the Rebbe's father, Harav Shmuel Eliyahu of Zhvallin, explained the *nusach* of *Yotzer Ohr*: "Vechulam mekablim aleihem ol Malchus Shamayim." Why is the word "ol", yoke, used with angels who are ready every day to praise Hashem with love? Hence, it is explained that all the yearning and desire of the angels is that they also merit to serve Hashem out of a burden and with other disturbances, like Klal Yisrael, because such *shirah* is invaluable. (*Ishei Yisrael, Modzhitz, Balak*)

Vechulam Mekablim – Every Single Day

In conclusion we will cite the piercing words of Harav Yisrael of Salant:

We do not say of the angels: "Vechulam mekablim Ol Malchus Shamayim," but rather "vechulam mekablim aleihem ol." We can learn wonderful *mussar* from this: It is very easy for a person to stand at the time of *Krias Shema* and coronate HaKadosh Baruch Hu on the seven firmaments and four directions of the world. But he must make sure not to forget that the primary purpose of his service is: to accept the Yoke of Heaven on himself, on his head, his eyes and his heart. (*Ohr Yahel*, Vol. III, p. 164)

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

They Poured Their *Tefillos* on Stones and Wood

Monday, 11 Tammuz 5687. 3:07 p.m. The burning sun outside drove all the passersby into their homes, when suddenly, the ground trembled with a roar.

Only ninety years had passed since the horrific earthquake of 5597, in the Galilee, which took thousands of Jewish lives. Once again, Eretz Yisrael was struck by an earthquake, albeit a smaller one.

Numerous homes in Yerushalayim, Yericho and Shechem, as well as Teveriah and many other cities, were destroyed. But wondrously enough: while hundreds of non-Jews were killed and thousands were injured, not a single Jewish life was lost.

A rare testimony about this miracle, was recorded by Rabi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, author of *Kaf Hachaim*, in his *sefer* (*Orach Chaim* 576 26):

"In 5687, 11 Tammuz, there was a big earthquake in Yerushalayim and its surrounding areas, and several walls were destroyed, and others damaged. There were tremendous miracles that not a single person in Yerushalayim was lost, only in the villages was the damage extensive, and several non-Jews died. Hashem guarded over Yisrael, and it was wondrous in the eyes of all those who saw it and they believed in Hashem; even those who follow the ways of nature testified that the Hand of Hashem had done this."

Indeed, there were many miraculous rescue stories circulating among the survivors at the time. The *Kaf Hachaim*, it was said, was sitting at the time in the second floor of the Shoshanim L'Dovid shul, busy writing his *sefarim*. The earthquake was felt strongly on the first floor, and the walls shook; the staircase leading to the second floor collapsed. However, the upstairs area where the *Kaf Hachaim* was sitting sat was not damaged at all. After things quieted down, he needed to be rescued from with a very high ladder, but he was safe and well.

A remarkable story told over by the elders of Yemen in Yerushalayim sheds light on this miracle:

When the Yemenite community began to take root in Yerushalayim in the year 5642, they suffered severe discrimination, and as a result, were in a state of constant, extreme poverty. These pious people made learning their priority and their *parnassah* secondary; they only worked to eke out the barest necessities. Most of them worked in construction, a skill they had learned in their homeland. However, in those years, the Arabs still dominated this profession, and only several years after their arrival were the Yemenites

given approval to integrate into the construction field.

They could have managed to live this way for many more years, but World War One broke out, and brought about the end of the Turkish rule and the rise of the British Mandate in Eretz Yisrael. This caused the waves of *aliyah* from Diaspora countries to slow significantly, and the demand for new homes stopped. The first to feel this were the Yemenite builders.

The Jewish residents of Yerushalayim who already had homes had no money to renovate them. Hence, the builders remained with no work.

So they sat and learned, and did whatever work they could, with happiness with their lot. Much as they tried to live on the barest minimum, the situation only became worse. The hunger and poverty began to take a toll, and the suffering was evident on the drawn faces of the children. Things were at the point of *pikuach nefesh*.

The elders of the community met to discuss what to do. They raised several ideas, but in the end they decided that the most worthy thing to do would be to gather together in *tefillah* that Hashem should provide them with a source of *parnassah*.

A few days later, the *tefillah* took place. Chapters of *Tehillim* were recited emotionally, and in the end one of the elders got up and asked in a hoarse voice in the name of the entire community: "Ribbono shel Olam, please, provide us with *parnassah* with dignity so that we can sustain our families!"

That very moment, they heard a loud noise and the ground began to tremble violently. At first, fear and panic began to spread. But when it emerged that although hundreds of homes in the city had been destroyed and hundreds more needed to be repaired, not a single Jewish life had been lost, they all burst into cries of joy and gratitude.

For the Yemenite builders, the earthquake was a source of *parnassah*. In the years that followed, they were overloaded with work, and their plight eased significantly.

The story of this remarkable miracle began to spread through the city. When the sages of Yerushalayim heard the story, they stated that indeed, we it appears that the pure *tefillah* is what brought about the earthquake, because not a single Jew perished.

Shulchan Melachim, Vayeira