

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS SHELACH

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Thinking About Divrei Torah Before Birchas HaTorah

“ויאמר אלהם עלו זה בנגב ועליתם את ההר” (ג, יז)

In the introduction to the commentary of the Gr”a to *Safra DeTzniusa*, his disciple, **Harav Chaim of Volozhin**, cites a beautiful story that can teach us about how careful one must be about *divrei Torah* before reciting *Birchas HaTorah*.

It was on Yom Tov Rishon of Pesach, and two of the Gr”a’s leading disciples were seated before him. They were used to seeing their *rebbe* enveloped in tremendous joy during the Yamim Tovim, but now, they were surprised to see his face clouded with distress.

Only after they pleaded with him, did the Gr”a relent and related the reason for his distress: “Last night, I had the merit to have tremendous *chiddushim* revealed to me from the Heavenly Mesivta about the secrets hidden in the *passuk* “*Alu zeh baNegev*.” When I woke up in the morning, I was so overjoyed by the discoveries, that I could not help but think about them before reciting *Birchas HaTorah*, and I was punished for that by forgetting everything.”

The disciples could not find words with which to comfort their revered *rebbe*. When they parted, they wished the Gr”a that he merit that the secrets be revealed to him a second time.

A short time after this story, one of the *talmidim* mustered up the courage and asked his *rebbe* what happened to those *chiddushim*. To his joy, the Gr”a related that *bechasdei Shamayim*, the *chiddushim* were revealed to him again, and now he could relate that they were 2,260 ways to explain the *passuk*, and each one of them contained deep and endless secrets.

Acquiring a Chazakah Through a Brachah

“והתחזקתם ולקחתם מפרי הארץ” (ג, כ)

In *Maseches Brachos* (35a), the Tanna Rabi Levi Sesira asks about two *pesukim* in *Tehillim* that seem to contradict one another. One says (24:1): “*L’Hashem ha’aretz umeloah*, to Hashem is the land and all that is in it,” while the second (115:16) says “*V’ha’aretz nasan livnei adam*, and He gave the land to mankind.” He explained: “In one place it is before the *brachah*, and in the other, after the *brachah*.”

The Rebbe **Harav Yechiel Yehoshua of Biala** learned a *smach* from the words of this *passuk*, “*Vehischazaktam velakachtem mipri ha’aretz*”, as explained by *Targum Yonasan*: “*Vesa’avdun chezkesa vesisbun mei’iba d’ara*.” Because the land belongs to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, we have no right to enjoy its fruits until we make a *kinyan* “*chazakah*” through reciting *Birchos Hanehenin*.

Chelkas Yehoshua

Eight Strings of Tzitzis Correspond to Amen

“ועשו להם ציצת” (טו, לח)

The eight strings of *tzitzis* correspond to the eight times that we answer amen in every *Kaddish* (according to *nusach Sefard*). It is known that the word “amen” is numerically equivalent to the Names *Havayah* and *Adnus*, which together have eight letters, corresponding to the eight strings of *tzitzis*.

Benefesh Dovid [Reb Dovid Hakohen Sakali] 56

And Forever Will You Rule With Honor

“יהיה כלב את העם אל משה” (ג, ל)

“*Vayahas Kalev*” – he screamed “And is this all that the son of Amram did to us?!” One who heard this may have thought that he was going to criticize Moshe, because he bore a grudge towards Moshe because of the words of the *Meraglim*. Everyone fell silent to hear the condemnation, and then he said: “Did he not split the sea for us and bring us down the *mann* and give us the *slav*!” (*Rashi*)

Why would the listener have thought that Kalev was coming to criticize Moshe?

Harav Yaakov Solnick, author of *Nachalas Yaakov*, one of the commentators on *Rashi*, explains:

The words of *Tehillim* (4:3): “*Ad meh kevodi lichlimah*” are explained by *Rashi* to mean that Dovid Hamelech’s enemies would shame Dovid and scorn him by not calling him by his first name, but rather “Ben Yishai.” Here, too, in order that the listeners should think that Kalev was about to scorn and condemn Moshe, he wisely referred to him as “Ben Amram.” As expected, everyone

immediately fell silent and paid attention to Kalev’s words.

Similarly, **Harav Moshe Leib Shachor**, one of the *gaonim* of Yerushalayim, explained the reason why we add at the end of *Aleinu* the words: “*Vene’emar vehayah Hashem leMelech al kol ha’aretz bayom hahu yihyeh Hashem Echad uShemo echad*,” even though we already mentioned His Kingship in the previous *passuk*, by saying “*Hashem yimloch l’olam va’ed*.”

According to this premise we can now understand: Just like a person is shamed when he is not called by his full name, so, too, *l’havdil* a thousand times over, the Honor of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is lacking as long as He is not called His full Name. Therefore, after we ask at the end of *Aleinu* “*Ul’olmei ad timloch bekavod*” we do not suffice with quoting the *passuk* “*Hashem Yimloch l’olam va’ed*.” Rather we add the *passuk* that expresses the honor of His Kingship, “*Vehayah Hashem leMelech...bayom hahu yihyeh Hashem Echad uShemo Echad*.” Only then, when His Name will be complete, will Hashem rule *bekavod*.

Kerem Chemed

Tefillah for Kavod Shamayim Merits Forgiveness

“ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדברך” (יד, כ)

“Because of what you said: ‘Lest they say Hashem cannot do it.’” (*Rashi*)

In the *sefer Ohr Lashamayim*, **Harav Meir of Apta** quotes the **Chozeh of Lublin** that in this *passuk*, Moshe was promised that any Jew who will daven for *Kavod Shamayim* “*Kidvarecha*” – as you davened for the Honor of Hashem (*pesukim* 15-16): “And the nations will say...Hashem is not able to”, he is guaranteed forgiveness.

Harav Moshe Yechiel of Ozherov added that this helps explain the words of the Gemara in *Maseches Shabbos* (119b): “Anyone who answers “*amen yehei Shemei Rabba mevarach*” with all his might – then his decree is torn up.” This is because “*amen yehei Shemei Rabba*” is a *tefillah* for *Kavod Shamayim*, therefore a person who says it has his sins forgiven and his decrees annulled.

Be'er Moshe



The holy *Zohar* explains (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* Vol. II, p. 84 1) that a person needs to answer 90 amens each day, and from 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 5) were careful to hear *Birchos Hashachar* from several people each day, and to answer amen after them, because that is the only way possible to reach this level.

Dear Yid!

You have the opportunity to perform the *mitzvah* for hundreds of people each day, easily, without too much effort, and in addition to merit the promise of “anyone who is *mezakeh* the *rabbim* – sin does not come through him” (*Avos* 5:21). Join the national network of hundreds of *Gabba’ei Amen* who are *mezakeh* the *rabbim* each day by reciting complete *brachos* of *hoda’ah* (See *Mishnah Berurah* 167 20) in a clear language, and pleasantly, for the honor of Hashem. Be one of those of which the Rema MiPano writes (*Shu”t* 109)

“There are no greater beloved friends than this.”

For details and to register please call the *Gabba’ei Amen* coordinator: 058-325-9191.

The Gabba'ei Amen Project

In these week's segment, we decided to deviate from the series of explaining *tefillah* to present a brief overview about the wonderful Gabba'ei Amen initiative in shuls. In the short time since its establishment it has merited, with *siyata diShmaya*, tremendous success.

Anyone who has entered one of the hundreds of shuls that joined the Gabba'ei Amen project in the last year, was certainly surprised by the unusual scene: At a side table or near the entrance to the shul, there is a short line of *mispallelim*, holding open *Siddurim* and waiting to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in the ears of someone sitting on the other side of the table.

The Gabba'ei Amen project is the initiative and personal vision of the founder and chairman of the Bnei Emunim revolution, Harav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, who not only speaks but also implements his ideas into actions. For many years, despite his busy schedule, he has been devoting time each morning to listen to dozens of people recite *Birchos Hashachar* so he can complete the *brachos* by answering amen.

In the framework of this initiative, hundreds of young *avreichim* have volunteered their time to serve as Gabba'ei Amen in the shuls where they daven, in order to give a *zechus* for the public to be able to complete their *brachos* by having someone answer amen afterwards.

It is widely known, especially as brought down by the holy *Zohar*, that a *brachah* that has amen replied to it is considered a complete *brachah* worthy of being presented as a beautiful gift to the King of Kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu. If this is the case with all the *brachos*, how much more so is it with *Birchos Hashachar*, whose entire essence is praise and gratitude to the Creator who bestows upon us each day countless good things and *chassadim*. How worthy it is for us to bless Him and thank Him for all this in the most perfect way possible.

Another point that is unique about *Birchos Hashachar* is the time when they are recited. In past years, and even today, in many communities, davening in shul customarily commenced with *Birchos Hashachar*. Regrettably, in recent years, the attention to these *brachos* has changed drastically. The *tefillah* begins with *Hodu* or *Baruch She'amar*, and as a result, people have gotten used to saying the *brachos* on their way to shul.

This means that many recite the holy *brachos* hastily and with concentration. And we know that the sages have said that "*Tefillah* without *kavanah* is like a body without a soul."

The Gabba'ei Amen initiative seeks to restore the glory to these *brachos*. Aside for the fact that in their merit, the *brachos* are completed because of the amen, it also means that the *brachos* are recited in shul, slowly and with *kavanah*, as one does when reciting *brachos* in front of other people.

This is besides the great merit that the person answering has. Aside for what Chazal said of him: "One who answers is greater than the one making the *brachah*," they also added about someone like him that (*Avos* 5:18) "Anyone who is *mezakeh* the many then sin does not come through him."

This is not the place to expound on the many virtues of answering amen, of which Chazal said: "There is nothing bigger before

Hashem than an amen that Am Yisrael reply. Furthermore, early *sefarim* state that replying amen is the fundamental of *emunah*. The reward for one who replies amen is expounded upon by Chazal, and they promised that "the gates of Gan Eden are open to him."

Today, months after the initiative began, it can be said that it has been blessed with tremendous success, with hundreds of shuls having already appointed Gabba'ei Amen who stand ready each morning to give a *zechus* to both others and themselves.

Bnei Emunim helps the *gabbaim* with enriching material that discusses the virtues of the *mitzvah* of answering amen in general, and the importance of answering amen after *Birchos Hashachar* in particular. The material is distributed to the Gabba'ei Amen in the shuls and they distribute it to the *tzibbur*.

This is also the place to praise and extol those dedicated *gabbaim* who do this without any remuneration, dedicating a long time each morning only in order to increase *Kavod Shamayim* and be *mezakeh* the *rabbim*. The warm response by the *mispallelim* indicate the necessity and benefit of the initiative. Many of them note that for a long time already, they have wanted to say the *brachos* in front of others, but have been ashamed to ask. Now they can finally carry out their wishes.

It should be noted that the feedback for the initiative also comes from the *gabbaim* themselves, who share their impressions of the success and the tremendous enthusiasm with which it was welcomed by the *mispallelim*. At first, many reacted with hesitation, but as the *gabbaim* persisted, the idea captivated the hearts of the *mispallelim*. After a short time, lines began to form in front of the *gabbai's* table each morning of people seeking to recite the *brachos* and have amen answered.

The bottom line is, the *gabbaim* conclude, that the knowledge that so many people merit through us to recite their *brachos* with perfection fills us each day anew with spiritual satisfaction and the joy of the *mitzvah*. This is besides for the words of thanks and appreciation that we get from those making the *brachos*, which infuse us with strength to continue.

With these activities, the organization continues its tradition of activism in order to strengthen and glorify *tefillah* in all its facets among all strata of the public, with an emphasis on persistence on the one hand and innovation the other. This is all in order to increase *Kavod Shamayim* in the world until the fulfillment of the wondrous vision "Veymalei Kevodo es kol ha'aretz amen v'amen."

The management of the organization is appealing to anyone who wants to increase Kavod Shamayim in the world and hasten the arrival of the Geulah or merit yeshuos to join the Gabba'ei Amen network by Bnei Emunim, by calling 058-325-9191.

Tefillah with Simplicity and Innocence

The Rebbe the Maharash, the son of the Tzemach Tzedek would often tell the *chassidim* a wondrous story that he heard from his father about the power of *tefillah* that stems for the depths of the heart, with simplicity and innocence. Tears of emotion would flow from the Rebbe's eyes when he related this story:

It happened many years ago. In a small village near Yerushalayim lived a simple, village Jew. Already as a small child, his father took him to help in the fields, and as such, he grew up with no Torah education and no learning, and he didn't even know how to daven properly.

Because this villager did not know the daily order of *tefillah*, he would go each week, when he was in Yerushalayim for his business dealings, to one of the *rabbanim* of the city. The Rav would write for him on a paper the proper order of *tefillah* for each day of the following week. This way, he knew for that week what he had to add and what he had to skip in davening.

One year, on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, the skies were heavy with clouds. The villager worried that the roads would be hard to traverse because of the heavy rains, and that he would not be able to reach Yerushalayim. Thus, he altered his habit, and asked the Rav to write down the order of the *tefillas* for several weeks, until the end of Chodesh Kislev.

The Rav agreed to his request and wrote down in detail the order of *tefillah* for each and every day for the coming eight weeks. The villager returned home very satisfied. Even though the rains did not actually fall, he was happy that he had spared himself and the Rav needless effort.

Everything would have proceeded smoothly if not for the fact that the villager found himself in Yerushalayim a bit before Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and noticed, to his surprise, that the Jewish stores were all locked up and that the streets were very quiet and empty of people.

For a moment, the villager was afraid that he had made a mistake in the calendar and today was a chag, but suddenly he noticed a Jew walking in the street wearing a *tallis* and *tefillin*, and his eyes lit up. He hadn't made a mistake. Still, he was not calm, realizing that this area of the city was usually hustling and bustling and that something was afoot. He decided to find out what it was.

He hurried toward the Jew, who was trudging heavily, and asked what was going on.

"What, don't you know?" the man was surprised. "Today is a *taanis tzibbur* for the whole public!"

The villager was stunned: How could it be that the Rav had not written this down on his paper? Now he had eaten on a fast day, and had not davened the right order of *tefillah* for a fast day.

The villager was so distraught that he abandoned his donkey and cart in the middle of the market and ran to the home of the Rav. But the Rav was not home, and the family told him that the Rav was in shul and would not return until evening.

The man ran to shul and was surprised to find it packed from end to end. He pushed through the crowd until he reached the Rav's place. By then, his face was covered with tears. "Rebbi, what did you do to me?" the villager sobbed. But the Rav did not understand what the man was talking about.

"I did something to you? What happened?"

The man could hardly compose himself to explain his complaint: "Why didn't the Rav write for me that today is a *taanis tzibbur*? Had the Rav written it, I would not have eaten, and would have davened correctly."

When the Rav heard this, he smiled and said gently: "Calm down, my son. Today is not a regular fast day, but rather a special fast day that the Sages of Yerushalayim established because of the ongoing drought and the empty water cisterns."

When the villager heard this, he looked at the Rav in shock: "What? Because the rains didn't fall one has to make a public fast day? Is it not enough to do what I do in this case? I go out to the field, raise my eyes to the clear skies and I cry to Hashem with all my heart: 'Father! I need rain!' Within a short time, the rain begins to fall."

When the Rav heard these words from the innocent, pure heart, he trembled and said: "Really? That is what you do when there is no rain? If so, why do you not do the same thing now?"

A few minutes later the villager was standing in the courtyard of the shul. He raised his tear-filled eyes to the Heavens and called: "Father! Look down at Your children dwelling in the Holy City; is it possible that the *tzaddikim* should suffer from hunger?! Please, send them Your salvation and bless the rains that they should saturate the parched land!"

It was a short *tefillah*, but because it stemmed from the depths of the heart, with total submission to the Ribbono Shel Olam, everyone quickly saw how effective it was. Hardly an hour passed before strong rains began to fall in Yerushalayim.

The wells quickly filled and people slaked their thirst, as they offered praise and gratitude to the Creator.

They learned a valuable *musar* lesson from the villager's *tefillah*. Sometimes all that is necessary from a person for his *tefillah* to be accepted is simplicity, innocent and absolute submission to the Creator of the world, Who is always attentive to hear the *tefillas* of Am Yisrael.

Imrei Yechezkel, Vol. I, p. 57