

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS KISEITZEI

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Teshuvah Extends Life

“כי יהיה לאיש בן סורר ומורה” (כא יח)

“The wayward, rebellious son is executed in consideration of his ignoble end – the Torah says, let him die in innocence rather than die laden with guilt.” (Rashi)

The **Alter of Kelm** offered a beautiful thought on this: If a person who began to stray from the path of Torah is decreed to die even though he has not actually sinned, in order that he not continue to sin and die while guilty, how much more so can this be applied to the *rasha* who has begun to repent. If he is decreed to die, Hashem will surely add years of life to him so that he can learn more Torah and do more *mitzvos* instead of dying now, while guilty. This is the fulfillment of the well known concept that the “good *middah* is greater than the *middah* of punishment.”

Darchei Mussar [Rav Y. Neiman]

Brachah on the Mitzvah of Hashavas Aveidah

“לא תראה את שור אחיך או את שיו נדחים והתעלמת מהם השב תשיבם לאחריך” (כב א)

There is a well known explanation of Rav Y. Ben Pelet (cited in *Shu"t HaRashba* 18) as to why we do not make a *brachah* on the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, and that is because we fear that the poor man will not want to accept the gift and thus the *brachah* will be in vain. This explanation is satisfactory with regards to the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, but does not explain why we do not bless over the mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner. In that case, there is no need to fear that the person will not want to receive his lost item back, is there?

Harav Tzvi Pesach Frank, the Rav of Yerushalayim, explained this according to a concept explained by *Rabbeinu Bechayei* in his commentary on the Torah (*Bamidbar* 15:38) that one does not make a mitzvah on a *brachah* that common sense dictates that a person do even if we were not commanded to do so. That is because we cannot say the *brachah* of “*asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivyanu*, and He commanded us” on such a mitzvah.

Hence we can understand why we do not make a *brachah* on *hashavas aveidah* – because this is certainly one of those common sense *mitzvos*.

Har Tzvi Al HaTorah

Hosha Na Lema'an Dorsheinu

“והיה עמך עד דרש אחיך אתו והשבתו לו” (כב ב)

One Succos, when **Harav Moshe Leib of Sassov** recited the words “*Hosha na lemaancha dorsheinu*” he raised his hands heavenwards and said:

“Ribbono shel Olam, You wrote in Your Torah that one who finds a lost item is allowed to keep it ‘until your brother seeks it.’ Here it is nearly two thousand years since we have been lost among the nations and You do not come to seek us. Please, “*Hosha na*, save us, *lemaancha*, for Your sake, *dorsheinu*, the One Who seeks us!” – The time has come to demand Your loss that is scattered among the nations, and return us to You with compassion!”

Mei'otzreinu Hayashan p. 71

Between Tzitzis and Amen

“גדלים תעשה לך על ארבע כנפות כסותך אשר תכסה בה” (כב יב)

We can find a beautiful connection between the mitzvah of *tzitzis* and the mitzvah of answering amen:

The four strings of the *tzitzis* that are tied according to *halachah* are made into eight strings. Similarly, an amen that is replied with *kavanah* and according to *halachah* unites the two Names of Hashem with four letters each [Havayah and Adnus] to form a unique Name of eight letters. As the mitzvah of *tzitzis* alludes to the Yichudo of Hashem, so, too, one who answers amen is *meyached* the Name of Hashem in the world.

Keren L'David – Benefesh Dovid 56

Brachah on the Mitzvah of Maakeh

“כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגגך ולא תשים דמים בביתך כי יפל הנפל ממנו” (כב ה)

The Rishonim are divided about whether one needs to make *birchas hamitzvos* on the mitzvah of *maakeh*: The *Rambam* (*Brachos* 11:8) is of the opinion that one makes a *brachah* on the mitzvah, of “*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivyanu la'asos maakeh*.” However, *Harav Elazar of Germeiza*, the *Rokeach* (366) believes that one does not make a *brachah* on this mitzvah.

The reason for their difference is explained by **Rabi Yitzchak Palagi** according to the words of the *Rambam* himself (ibid *halachah* 4), that one does not make a *brachah* on a mitzvah that was established in order to protect those who do it from danger (such as washing *mayim acharonim* which was established because of the danger of salt of Sodom.) Here the Rishonim differ: The *Rambam* believes that because the mitzvah of *maakeh* was established to protect not those who do it, but rather those who go up onto the roof. Therefore, one should make a *brachah* on it. However, the *Rokeach* believes that because the *maakeh* also, in actuality, protects those who make it, therefore no *brachah* should be made.

Yafeh Lalev, Vol. VII, Choshen Mishpat, 427, 1

Wearing Shaatnez Delays Tefillah

“לא תלבש שעטנז צמר ופשתים יחדו” (כב יא)

Harav Yisrael Yaakov Algazi, the Rav of Yerushalayim (*Shalmei Tzibbur, Hanhagas Haboker* 3), writes: “There is nothing that delays *tefillah* like wearing *shaatnez*, even unintentionally.” The *Noda B'Yehudah* added to this (*Drushei Hatzlach, Drush* 8): “If one person is dressed in *shaatnez* one day, his *tefillah* is not heard for 40 days.”

A remarkable story was told by the well known *darshan* **Harav Zorach Eidelitz**, a member of the *bais din* of the *Noda B'Yehudah* (*Ohr L'Yesharim Drush* 1): One of the giants of the generation once took part in the *minyana* where the **Ari HaKadosh** used to daven. That *gadol* would daven for a very long time, and the congregation waited until he finished, out of respect. But then, the *Arizal* instructed the *chazzan* not to wait any longer, and explained that the reason that this *gadol* was davening for so long was because the image of a saddle was in his mind and he could not banish it. After davening, the *Arizal* told that *gadol*: “You should know that you rode yesterday on a saddle with *shaatnez*, and even though you did it because you were hurrying to do a mitzvah, it caused confusion in your *tefillos*.”

A beautiful allusion to this was offered by **Harav Shlomo Baruch of Budapest** from the words of *Tehillim* (55:15): “*Beveis Elokim nehalech berageshi*” – *beragesh* is an acronym for “*belo ribis, giluaach betaar, shaatnes* [without interest, shaving with a razor and *shaatnez*]” to teach us that these three sins delay *tefillah*.

Hanhagos Tzaddikim, Vol. III, p. 946

Monday, 13 Elul, marks the 13th *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi **Chaim Ben Tzion** the son of Aharon Tzvi **Marmorstein**, *zt"l*, who was a “*shomer emunim*” his whole life, in the simplest sense: he guarded the mitzvah of answering amen and waited to be able to answer to *brachos*, especially after *Birchos Hashachar*.

It is in his memory that his son, **Harav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein** effected the *Bnei Emunim* revolution, through which tens of thousands of people begin their day with the recital of *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*. Please, dedicate the recital of your *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* on Monday 13 Elul to the elevation of his soul.

Birchos Hashachar: Aloud, with *kavanah*, *bechavrusa*.



“שְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת
שֵׁשׁ עָרְסִים
גִּי
עֲדִיק שִׁמְר
אֲמֵנִים”
(ישעיהו כו ב)



Birchas Ahavah Rabbah (8)

Geulah – Not a Free Gift

In his commentary on *Tehillim* (*Megillas Starim*), the *Ramchal* explains the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 71:1): “*Becha Hashem chasisi al eivoshah l’olam.*” He writes that just like someone who eats at the table of another, his eating is considered ‘*nahama d’kesufa*’ because he is ashamed to eat free food, so, too, it is with Bnei Yisrael. Because they violated the Word of Hashem and had to go into exile, when it will come time to redeem them, if they will still be mired in their sins, they will be greatly shamed by the fact that they are being redeemed as a gift, despite not being worthy of it.

All this is if, at the time of the Redemption, they will be basking in tranquility and pleasure. However, because in actuality they suffer under the oppression of the non-Jews, and despite that, they justify the decrees they receive with love, and never stop hoping for salvation from Hashem, as the *passuk* says “*becha Hashem chasisi,*” then “*al eivoshah l’olam,* I will never be ashamed,” they will not need to be ashamed by their Redemption.

That is what we are asking in this *tefillah*: “*Veyached levaveinu,*” that we merit to continue to “love and fear Your Name” – despite the troubles and suffering that we endured throughout the exile, so that “we will not be ashamed or humiliated for eternity” – that we will be redeemed with merit and not as a free gift. (*Siach Yitzchak*)

Tefillah for Our Offspring

It is puzzling: After asking all these lofty requests that we mentioned until now, that we merit to “listen, to learn and to teach, to preserve and to do and to fulfill,” why do we have to then add the request of “so that we never be ashamed for eternity?” If we merit all the above attributes then surely we will not be ashamed for eternity.

However, even if we do merit to reach all the attributes of “*lishmoa, lilmot ulelamed,*” and the others, and we will not be shamed by our own actions, we still must fear that perhaps our children will not continue on the straight path, and that will cause us shame and embarrassment. There is no greater shame than children who do not follow the path of their fathers. Therefore, we ask: “So that we not be shamed...for eternity,” that our children and grandchildren should continue to follow the straight and narrow path so that we should never be ashamed.

Through this we can understand the words of the *poskim* (see *Ateres Zekeinim* 47) that in the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah* and in *Birchos HaTorah*, we have to have in mind to ask that our children follow the path of Hahsem and be *tzaddikim*. In *Birchos HaTorah* we see an explicit request for this, but in *Ahavah Rabbah*, it is not so explicit. Hence, according to this, we can understand that this request is concealed in the words “*shelo neivosh...l’olam va’ed.*” (*Shalmei Tzibbur* [Mahari’t Algazi] *Dinei Brachos* 19)

Reward in the World to Come –
By Merit, Not Chessed

The holy Rebbe of Lizhensk, the Noam Elimelech, once sat and made a *cheshbon hanefesh*. In his great humility, he quickly reached the conclusion that he had no merits that would make him worthy of life in the World To Come. This saddened him greatly. But then he suddenly thought that HaKadosh Baruch Hu surely observed the entire Torah, including the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. Here, in this world, He performs *tzedakah* by giving children, life and sustenance for those who are not worthy of it. However in the World to Come, when the deceased do not need all this, how does He perform the mitzvah of *tzedakah*? Surely it is through granting life in the World to Come to those who are not worthy of it by themselves. Upon realizing this, the Rebbe calmed down, reassured that he, too, would merit Olam Haba...

This is how the *Noam Elimelech* explained the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 15:6): “*Vehe’emin b’Hashem,* and he believed in Hashem, *veyachsheveha Lo litzedakah,* and it was considered for Him as a *tzedakah*” – a person must believe that Hashem will give him reward in the World to Come even if he is not worthy of it, because doing so is considered for HaKadosh Baruch Hu like “*tzedakah*” in the World to Come.

Based on this, we can explain our request that we merit to reach all the attributes that we ask for in the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah*. By reaching all those attributes, we will merit to receive our reward in the World to Come by justice, and then “we will not be ashamed...because in Your Holy Name we trusted” – we will not be shamed by the fact that we received our reward only because we trust Hashem, Who gives reward even to those who are not meritorious of it, as the *Noam Elimelech* explained. (*Ishei Yisrael* [Rav Y. Brody] 56)

Nagilah Venismecha
Biyeshuasecha - We Will Rejoice
With Your Salvation

The Vilna Gaon explains the difference between “*gilah*” and “*simchah*” (*Aderes Eliyahu, Divrei Hayamim* 16:31): “*Simchah* is the feeling of joy that envelopes a person when he achieves a goal that he aspired to. This joy naturally dissipates with time. *Gilah* is a state of unending joy.

Therefore, one might think that when a person who completes his soul reaches the Eternal World, he will be enveloped in great *simchah*, but with time, the *simchah* will weaken. Therefore, after we ask to merit to be Torah scholars, we say: “*Nagilah venismecha biyeshuasecha*” that in the End of Days, we will have a constant renewal of *simchah*, that we will not stop in our place, but rather will continue to rise level after level, as *Chazal* said (*Brachos* 64a) “*Talmidei chachamim* have no rest...in the World to Come” because they constantly continue to rise as a result of the good deeds that they performed in this world. (*Sifsei Chaim, Rinas Chaim*)

This letter was received by the Vechol Maaminim office last month. It was written by a woman whose husband devotedly serves as a *gabbai amen* in one of the shuls in central Israel. It is presented here with minor changes, as necessary:

To the directors of Bnei Emunim:

Our family, the H. Family, is a regular family who lives in a chareidi neighborhood in a city in central Israel. My husband works hard for a living and his job necessitates him being out of the house from early morning through most of the day. I stay at home, raising the children and running the household.

The family’s day begins very early. My husband goes to daven in the nearby shul, and in order to save time, he doesn’t return home, but rather continues from there to his workplace. I spend my mornings sending my children to school and then preparing meals for the day.

My two year old son, Shmuel, spends the day at a babysitter not far from our home. Usually, I am the one who brings him there, but one day, due to a doctor appointment, I had to ask my husband to come home after davening to take Shmuel to the babysitter instead of me. After that, he would go to work.

My husband agreed willingly. Right after davening he returned home, took Shmuel and strapped him into the car seat. He drove off towards the babysitter’s house...but suddenly, his phone rang. It was his boss asking to discuss something urgent. My husband connected his earpiece and...settled in for a long, exhausting conversation, which concluded only when he pulled into the parking lot near his office.

Shmuel fell asleep and paid no attention to what was going on. By the time my husband finished the conversation, it was later than usual and he hastened into the office. He had totally forgotten about Shmuel.

Despite it being the month of Shevat, the sun was beating down brightly. The car began to heat up and no one was aware of the little boy inside who was in such tangible danger.

Nearly an hour passed since my husband had gone into the office, and the sun was rising ever higher in the sky. The temperature in the car became unbearably hot...

And then, *bechasdei Shamayim*, my husband was summoned into his boss’s office. The latter needed a certain document that was in the car, and my husband began to slowly make his way down the stairs to the car, not appreciating the inconvenience. As he walked, the memory hit him like a bolt of lightning – the child! How had he forgotten!!

My husband took the stairs two at a time, and in a frenzy dashed towards the car, horrific images flashing through his mind as he recalled several recent tragic stories of children left in cars. He began to think that perhaps the worst of all had happened. His heart pounding in fear, he opened the door. The car was broiling already, but the child was sleeping peacefully and seemed to be in perfect health.

It was undoubtedly an open miracle; just a few minutes certainly separated us from a very different ending, R”l.

It is hard to describe in words how I felt when my husband called to tell me about what happened. My body began to shake and for several long moments, I couldn’t utter a sound.

We received our child as a gift, and recognizing that, we both tried to think of a way that we could express our gratitude. Which mitzvah could we strengthen ourselves with in order to thank Hashem for this great miracle?

With *Hashgachah pratis*, the Shabbos afterwards, my husband brought home your beautiful pamphlet from shul, and the ad there called on people to join the family of *gabba’ei amen*.

“Why don’t I join this project as well?” my husband shared his thoughts. “In *Birchos Hashachar* we thank Hashem for health and for life...and these are the things we are looking to express our gratitude for now.”

My husband decided to rise each morning a few minutes earlier to be able to answer amen to a few people after they recited *Birchos Hashachar*. I also undertook to say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each day.

So for the last half a year, each morning, as soon as I awaken, I go over to my little son’s bed, and the sight of his tranquil face floods me with a wave of gratitude for the precious life that was given to us as a gift that fateful morning, and that is given to us as a gift each and every morning anew. This might be a hidden miracle, but that does not mean we are exempt from thanking Hashem for it.

I conclude with a special thanks to you, Bnei Emunim, for your efforts on behalf of this great mitzvah. There is no doubt that in your merit, many people have the *zechus* to thank the King of Kings in the optimal way for the wonderful and complex life that He grants us each day anew.

Fortunate are you and may Hashem be with you to grant you success and *brachah* in all areas.