

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

PARASHAS RE'EH

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

"Emes V'Emunah" – The Secret of Existence

כי תעשה הטוב והישר בעיני ה' (יב כח)

"Hatov", that which is good – in the eyes of Hashem. "Vehayashar" – and that which is the upright--in the eyes of mortals. (Rashi)

Harav Shaul Yediyah Elazar of Modzhitz said: The secret of the existence of the Jew is being good towards Heaven and honest with other people. Therefore we say in Maariv: "Emes v'emunah kol zos vekayam aleinu" – the middah of emes, truth, is acting with honesty towards others, and emunah is the fundamental of the connection between man and Hashem. These two fundamentals are together "kol zos", all this, the foundation of all middos, "vekayam aleinu" – they are the secret of the existence of Am Yisrael.

Imrei Shaul, Inyanei Succos, 24

"Lo Sisgodedu" – Do Not Gather Together for Idle Talk

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם לא תתגודדו (יד א)

The priests would regularly challenge Harav Yonasan Eibeshitz, who would respond to them in turn. A priest once hurled a question at him: "How is it possible that my non-Jewish brethren all stand in their prayer houses with fear and awe, while in your Jewish synagogues, we can find among the worshippers those who are disdainful and speak amongst themselves?"

Rav Yonasan, in an effort to favorably judge Am Yisrael, replied: "Indeed, you are right, that is the way of the world. A servant under his master acts with fear and awe, but a child in his father's presence feels like he is in his own home. You are like servants, while we are like children to our Father in Heaven, and as such, there are some who speak in shul, because they feel comfortable."

Based on this, Harav Amram Blau, author of Bais Shearim, explained the passuk by way of mussar: Although "you are children to your G-d", still, you should stand with awe in His home – the shul, and chalilah, "lo sisgodedu", do not gather – to speak idle chatter.

Divrei Shmuel, Mipi Sefarim Vesofrim

Tefillah in Shul – A Symbol of Closeness to Hashem

וכי ירבה מן הדרך כי לא תוכל שאתו כי ירחק מן המקום (יד כד)

Harav Shlomo Zalman Unsorfer, the Maggid of Pressburg, said: One who avoids davening in shul with the claim of "if the journey will be beyond you" or with the claim of "you will be unable to carry it" – it is hard to bear the noise and tumult there, should know that these claims are groundless. The real reason he is refraining from attending is "ki yirchak mimcha HaMakom" – because he has distanced his ways from the ways of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Pnei Shlomo

Amen Wards Off the Anger

למען ישוב ה' מחרון אפו ונתן לך רחמים ורחמך (ג יג)

The acronym for "Ieman yashuv Hashem meicharon apo" is numerically equivalent to "amen," an allusion to the words of the holy Zohar (Tikkunim 40 1): "Anyone who answers amen with all his might then his decrees for seventy years are torn up."

Nitei Sha'ashuim Tehillim 2:11

"Lecha Hashem Hatzedakah" – Because We Do Not Make a Brachah Before It

נתן תתן לו (טו י)

The mitzvah of tzedakah is counted among the mitzvos aseih that ne does not make a brachah before doing. The widely regarded reason for this is because there is a chance that the poor man will be embarrassed to take the tzedakah from the giver, and thus it will be a brachah levatalah, a blessing in vain. (See Shu"t HaRashba 18)

Based on this, Harav Yissachar Ber Bloch, the av bais din of Mattersdorf, explained the passuk in Daniel (16) "Lecha Hashem hatzedakah velanu boshes hapanim, to You Hashem is tzedakah, and to us is the shame," as follows:

There is a well known Gemara (Brachos 35a) that explains the contradiction between the passuk: "L'Hashem ha'aretz umeloah" (Tehillim 24:1) and "Veha'aretz nasan livnei adam" (ibid 115:16) that before the blessing, the land belongs to Hashem, and after the brachah, He gives permission to His creations to enjoy and benefit from it. As such, we can say that when we give tzedakah and do not make a brachah beforehand, then we have not been given permission to benefit from it, and it is

considered as though we have given from what belongs to HaaKadosh Baruch Hu. That is what the passuk means: "Lecha Hashem hatzedakah" – it is from Yours that we are giving, and that is because we cannot make a brachah before it because of "velanu boshes hapanim" – perhaps the poor man will be ashamed and will not want to accept from us.

Binas Yissachar, Drush Derech Hachaim

Viduy With a Clenched Fist

על כן אנכי מצוך לאמר פתח תפתח את ירך לאחריך לעניך ולאבינך בארצך (טו יא)

While saying Viduy, we have a custom of beating our chests with a fist (see Magen Avraham 607 3). The reason for this custom is brought down in the Midrash (Koheles Rabbah 7 2), which says that the desires of the heart are what caused us to fall to sin and thus we strike the heart.

Why do we strike specifically with a fist?

Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, the Rav of Shamlo, explained: It is known that a person can atone for his sins by giving tzedakah, as the passuk says (Daniel 4:24) "Vecha'ach bitzedakah peruk." But with all that, often a person closes his fist and does not give tzedakah, and that is why we strike our chests with a fist when saying Viduy, as if to say – this fist is what caused us to need this Viduy, and if not for that, we would have atoned for our sins with tzedakah.

Tiyul BaParedes, on Iggeres Hatiyul, Chelek Haremez, 14

In Memory of the Exodus from Mitzrayim

וזכרת כי עבד היית במצרים ושמרת ועשית את החקים האלה (טז יב)

Why is this passuk mentioned specifically in reference to Shavuot?

Harav Chaim Kanievsky, shlita, explains: As is known, we take care to mention in the davening and Kiddush of all Three Regalim that they are "zecher leyetzias Mitzrayim." However, with regard to Pesach, the passuk did not need to mention it, because the whole principle of Pesach is to commemorate Yetzias Mitzrayim. Regarding Succos it says (Vayikra 23:43): "So that your generations will know that I seated Bnei Yisrael in the sukkahs when I took them out of Mitzrayim." Therefore, it is only necessary for the Torah to mention it with regard to Shavuot.

Taama Dikra



The Divrei Chaim of Sanz once noticed a person reciting Birchos Hashachar to himself without having anyone answer amen to them. The Rebbe turned to him and said: "At the beginning of Parashas Re'eh it says: 'Es habrachah asher tishme'u – es habrachah, should be made in a way 'that it should be heard' that others can hear and reply amen.

(Atros Chaim, p. 103)

Birchos Hashachar: Aloud, with kavanah, bechavrusa.



Birchas Ahavah Rabbah (6)**Ushemartem Va'asisem**

The request of "lishmor, velaasos ulekayem" to preserve, to do and to fulfill, seems to be a separate request than the one to keep and observe the mitzvos, and does not seem related to the requests prior and subsequent to it: "Lehavin, lehaskil, lishmoa, tilmod ulelamed... ve'ha'er eineinu beSorasecha" which are related to learning Torah. But the truth is that we need to explain that these three requests also relate to learning Torah. "Lishmor velaasos ulekayem" is the test of how deeply one learns Torah. If a person learned a sugya in such a wonderful way that he is able to watch himself against prohibitions that he learned about during that sugya, then he merits the level of "lishmor." If, in addition to caution against these prohibitions he is able to accept upon himself – because of this learning – new obligations that he did not know about before, that is the level of "laasos", doing. And if his spiritual stature was strengthened, to the point that no power in the world can sway him from the conclusions he reached while learning, then he rises to the level of "lekayem." These three levels are what we are asking for here. (He'aras Hatefillah)

The Vilna Gaon explained the connection between Torah learning and its fulfillment: Chazal say (Niddah 30b) that while a baby is in the mother's womb, it is taught all of Torah, and during the birth, an angel come and strikes him on the mouth and the whole Torah is forgotten. We find, then, that for learning Torah alone a person did not have to emerge into the world, because even in the womb he learned Torah. His entire existence in this world is to fulfill what he learned, and therefore, during the request for Torah learning, we ask that the learning should be in order to fulfill, because that is the reason we were created. (Maalos HaTorah, Perek Maalos Hamaseh at end of sefer).

The Shefa Chaim of Sanz, ז"ל, would say: A person can learn all the sifrei mussar and chassidus, and still be like a total goy, R"l. It is better that he should learn a few lines every day, and should make sure to imbue in his heart what he has learned. The most important thing is that through the learning he should fulfill, meaning that every time he learns a segment, he should examine his own deeds if he is indeed fulfilling what it says. Until he doesn't feel that the words are deeply entrenched in his heart he should not continue to learn further. Early Chassidim would not return to learn from their Rebbe until they knew that the words that they had heard the last time were ingrained in their hearts. (Shefa Chaim – Rava Deravin, Vayeira, 12)

All the Words of Your Torah

We do not suffice with knowing and fulfilling part of the Torah, but rather, we plead to know and be

able to keep the whole Torah, and that we should not be withheld from performing any mitzvah, whether due to lack of knowledge, or due to lack of ability because of illness or other coercion. This request also includes that we merit to quickly fulfill all the many mitzvos of the service of the Bais Hamikdash, with the arrival of Moshiach. This request does not have any arrogance, as Chazal have said (Brachos 50a) that in the words of Torah, Hashem is as if saying to the person: "Harchev picha v'amaleihu" (Tehillim 81:11), in other words, expand your mouths to ask all that you want, even a major request, and I will fulfill your request. (Tefillas Avigdor [Rav Avigdor Miller], p. 225)

To Be Included in the Supporters of Torah

The Kaf Hachaim (Orach Chaim 60 3) writes: When it says "Ulekayem es kol divrei Talmud Torasecha b'ahavah" a person should have in mind to be part of those who support Torah learners, and to bring others closer to Torah and mitzvos. As it says in the Yerushalmi (Sotah 7:4) that even if a person is an absolute tzaddik in his deeds, if he can support Torah among the parts of the nation that do not observe it, and does not do so, he is included in the passuk "Cursed is whoever does not uphold the statements of this Torah, to perform them." (Devarim 27:26)

As such, after we ask to merit to learn and to teach, to preserve and to do, we immediately ask that we also merit to be "mekayem" – to establish the Torah by trying to bring all of Am Yisrael to learn it and observe it.

"Talmud" Requires "Ahavah"

The Midrash (Tanchuma 58 3) explains that "a person does not learn the Oral Torah unless he loves HaKadosh Baruch Hu with all his soul and all his being." Later, he writes that this is derived from the words in the first passage of Krias Shema: "V'ahavta es Hashem... Vehayu hadevarim ha'eleh...al levavecha." Which words are "on your heart" [i.e. not written]? This refers to Torah Shebaal Peh.

According to this we can understand why we ask "Ulekayem es divrei Talmud Torasecha b'ahavah," because in order to merit to "learn the Talmud", meaning Torah Shebaal Peh, we need to reach the level of "ahavah." Here we are asking HaKadosh Baruch Hu to implant love for Him in our hearts so that we can teach the "Talmud Torasecha" the Oral Torah. (Rinas Yitzchak)

The Steps of Man Are Ordained from Hashem

The segulah of tefillah for forty consecutive days at the Kosel has been widely publicized in the last few decades. However, among the residents of Yerushalayim shel Maalah, it has been known for generations. Many gedolim in the city would recommend those seeking brachos to practice it, and when they did, they saw yeshuos. This story is about one such yeshuah, as related by Harav Yitzchak Schwadron, shlita, about his mother, the Rebbetzin, a"h.

It was the beginning of the 1940s. Rebbetzin Schwadron, the daughter of the Yerushalmi mekubal Harav Chaim Yehudah Leib Auerbach, and the wife of the renowned maggid, Harav Shalom Schwadron, ז"ל, was standing in the doorway of the children's room of her small house. With tears in her eyes, she gazed at her five year old daughter sitting on her bed, deeply engrossed in her games, quiet and placid. The child's face radiated joy, not at all betraying her serious medical condition. A famed orthopedist had just been for a home visit, at a steep cost, and he had just issued a dreaded diagnosis. Without mincing words, the doctor rendered his opinion in the mother's stunned ears.

"All your efforts and investments are useless. This child will never walk!" the doctor declared. He then continued to explain: "There is an unexplained flaw in her spine that prevents the messages from being transmitted between the brain and her legs. There is no medicine in the world that can fix this, and physical therapy exercises will be futile as well. You'd be better off investing your efforts in training her to manage in life despite her severe condition."

Before he turned to leave, as if to sprinkle some more salt on their wounds, he pointed to his palm and said arrogantly: "Hair will grow on my palm before this child will walk."

Now, standing across from her daughter's bed, these words stabbed at the mother's heart. Yet, as despondent as she felt, she mustered up a ray of encouragement. She looked again at her innocent child and consoled herself: "A flesh and blood doctor is limited in his abilities, but the Healer of all flesh certainly has the power to cause a miracle that will make our daughter walk. I will turn to Him; perhaps He will have mercy."

With renewed vigor in her step, the Rebbetzin turned to the other room, where her husband was sitting and learning. She hovered at the entrance until he noticed her and then expressed her request:

"I would like to go to the home of the holy Rebbe, Harav Shlom'ke of Zhvill. He is renowned for the intensity of his avodah and tefillos, and his brachos that bring about yeshuos. I will ask him to daven for our daughter to walk, against the odds." Reb Shalom acceded with a nod, and the Rebbetzin set out on the long walk from Shaarei Chessed, where they lived, to the Bais Yisrael, where the Rebbe's modest abode was located.

At the entrance of the Rebbe's home, Rebbetzin Schwadron spilled out the burden on her heart. The Rebbe listened patiently, and when she finished, he asked quietly: "And what can I do?"

"Please," she cried, "the gates of Heaven are never closed; surely there is something that can be done to heal the child!"

The Rebbe sat in silence for some time, deep in his holy thoughts. Suddenly he stood up and instructed the worried mother: "The Rebbetzin should wait a few moments until I return from the mikveh, then I will see what can be done."

A few minutes later, the Rebbe returned and said: "If you want your daughter to be healed, daven for her at the Kosel for forty consecutive days, and you are guaranteed that there will be a miracle."

Rebbetzin Schwadron was stunned at this proposal. It was a tense time between Jews and Arabs, and going to the Kosel in such times was very dangerous for a woman, certainly for forty days consecutively! As if reading her thoughts, the Rebbe said in his compassionate voice: "I will go instead of you!"

So for the next forty days, when the Rebbe went to the Kosel, as was his custom every day, he made sure to offer a special tefillah for the child's recovery. Forty days later, Rebbetzin Schwadron reminded her husband that forty days had passed since the Rebbe had begun davening, and it was time to witness the yeshuah that was surely imminent.

Infused with emunah in the power of tefillah, the parents went to their daughter's room. Rav Shalom took out his wallet, stood at the door and called to his daughter who was lying helplessly in bed:

"Chaya'le, Chaya'le, do you see my wallet? It is full of coins—and they are all yours! Come and take it from me!"

The child gaped at her father, but quickly recovered and decided to try. She sat on the edge of the bed and placed her feet on the floor.

Rav Shalom remained in his place, gazing tensely at the miracle unfolding before his eyes. Suddenly, the child stood on her legs, teetering in place, a smile of joy—combined with worry—spreading onto her face. Rav Shalom waited in his place, encouraging her: "Come, Chaya'le, try to walk. Come to me!"

With faltering, yet increasingly confident steps, Chaya'le walked for the first time in her life. One step, then another and another. The unbelievable had happened: the child had walked!

"I did it!" she cried jubilantly. Her mother, who could not withhold her emotions, hurried over and enveloped her in a fierce hug, tears of joy rolling down her cheeks.

"Yes, you did it! Or rather, the tefillah is what did it!" she said to her daughter.

The news quickly spread all over Shaarei Chessed that Chaya'le Schwadron had begun to walk. A few days later, they could all see her frolicking outside with all the other girls her age. It was a wondrous example of the power of tefillah that comes from the depths of a pure soul, for forty consecutive days, at the place where the Shechinah never leaves.

Vezev Shaar Hashamayim p. 518