

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS VAYETZEI

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Siyata DiShmaya – Something from Nothing

“ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרונה” (כח י)

Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 68 2) that when Yaakov departed from Beer Sheva with nothing but the clothes on his back, after Eisav took everything from him, he said Chapter 121 in *Tehillim*, which begins with the words “*Shir lama’alos esa einai el heharim mei’ayin yavo ezri. Ezri mei’im Hashem oseh shamayim v’aretz.*”

The Mashgiach **Harav Eliyahu Lopian** explained: When Yaakov saw that he was left with nothing, his *middah* of *bitachon* was strengthened and he said, “*Mei’ayin yavo ezri*” – my help will come specifically from the *ayin*, from the nothing, that was left of him. And it would come because “*Ezri mei’im Hashem oseh Shamayim va’aretz.*” –the heavens and earth were also created “*yesh mei’ayin*” – something from nothing.

Lev Eliyahu, *Bereishis* p. 9

Tefillah Dependent on Kefitzas Haderech

“ויפגע במקום” (כא יא)

From *Rashi’s* words it appears that the word “*Vayifga*” in this *passuk* has a double meaning – that Yaakov composed *Tefillas Arvis*, and that the way was shortened for him.

Rabbeinu Yaakov Reischer, author of *Shevus Yaakov*, adds that the two explanations are interdependent. If the route would not have been shortened, Yaakov would not have been able to daven and compose *Tefillas Arvis*, as the Gemara states (*Eiruvim* 65a) that in the early days, one who came from a long journey did not daven for three days because he was so preoccupied with the travails of his traveling. But here, because the way was shortened for him, and he was not preoccupied with it, he could immediately daven and compose the *tefillah*.

Iyun Yaakov *Eiruvim* 65a

Prolonging Tefillah Strengthens Bitachon

“ויקח מאבני המקום וישם מראשתיו וישכב במקום ההוא” (כא יא)

Rashi explains that Yaakov formed a wall around his head with the stones, because he feared wild animals. The question is obvious: The Gemara (*Brachos* 28b) says that “one who is in a place of danger should daven a short *tefillah*.” Here,

the word “*vayifga*” indicates that his *tefillah* was extensive (see *Rashi Rus* 1:16).

Harav Meir Warshaviak, one of the Rabbanim of Warsaw, explained:

The Gemara is referring to someone who is hurrying past a place of danger in order to reach safer ground. Such a person indeed has trouble concentrating on his *tefillah* and thus he should daven a shorter *tefillah*. By contrast, Yaakov Avinu planned to remain, and even to sleep, in this place of danger, and therefore, specifically, it was worthy that he should prolong his *tefillah*, because the more he would cleave to his Creator, the more faith he would have and would not be afraid.

Imrei Kohein

The Secret of Amen Was Revealed to Yaakov

“ויצא יעקב” (כח י)

The *Megaleh Amukos* (beginning of *Parashas Vayeishev*) writes that Yaakov Avinu learned about the secret of amen, and therefore, when he awoke from his sleep he said (28:17), “*Vezev shaar hashamayim.*” The *segulah* of answering amen opens the gates of Gan Eden (*Shabbos* 119b).

An allusion to this can be derived from the words: “*Vayeitzei Yaakov*” – the letters of *vayeitzei* are “*vey-tzeh* (91)” that Yaakov was distraught over the fact that the masses are lax in replying amen (numerically equivalent to 91).

Likutei Peninei Ben Yissachar Vol. III, *Parashas Vayeitzei*

Sleeping in Shul

“ויקץ יעקב משנתו...ויירא ויאמר...אין זה כי אם בית אלקים” (כח ז-ז)

“*Shaar Hashamayim* – a place of *tefillah* where the *tefillos* rise Heavenwards.” (*Rashi*)

Harav Chaim Aryeh Kahana Rav of Givat Aliya – Yaffo explains: The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 151 3) ruled: “One does not sleep in a shul, even a short temporary sleep, but in a *bais medrash* it is permitted.” Therefore, when Yaakov

awoke from his dream in which he saw that the place where he was lying was a “*makom tefillah*, a place for davening,” immediately “and he was afraid and he said: this is a House of Hashem” – not as I thought that the holiness of this place is like a *bais medrash*, in which one may sleep, but rather “*Vezev Shaar Hashamayim*” and because it is a place of davening, it is like a shul, where one must not sleep even for a short time.

Be'er Chaim

At Dawn, the Gates of Heaven Are Open

“ויזה שער השמים. וישכם יעקב בבקר...” (כח ז-ח)

Rabbeinu Yaakov Baal Haturim explains: From the adjacent placement of the words “*Vezev shaar hashamayim...vayashkem Yaakov baboker,*” we learn that at dawn, the gates of Heaven open and it is an auspicious time for *tefillah*.

Tefillah – The Key to a Yeshuah

“וירא ה' כי שנואה לאה ויפתח את רחמה ורחל עקרה” (כט לא)

At first Leah was barren like Rachel (*Bereishis Rabbah* 71 1). Why, then, was she blessed with children rapidly, unlike her sister who needed to wait a long time?

Harav Tzvi Shraga Grossbard explains: Leah, who was “hated” did not put her faith in people, and rather cast her burden only on HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and therefore, she was remembered quicker. By contrast, Rachel also trusted Yaakov because “she thought that in his love for her, Yaakov would fast and wear sackcloth and would daven that she should have children so that she should not die from her pain” (*Ramban*, 30:1). Therefore, until she did not internalize that she had to daven herself, and not rely on the prayers of others, she was not yet blessed with children.

Daas Shraga

May Hashem Make You Like Rachel and Leah

“וישלח יעקב ויקרא לרחל וללאה השדה אל צאנו” (לא ד)

By preceding Rachel to Leah, the *Ben Ish Chai* sees proof that even when we mention the Matriarchs in our *tefillos*, we should state Rachel before Leah, although Leah was years older than Rachel.

Shu"t Torah Lishmah 19



On Shabbos 7 Kislev (5755) is the *yahrtzeit* of Rosh Yeshivas Me’or Hatalmud, Harav Chaim Naftali Hertz Zelivanski, zt”l:
In a *chinuch* lecture that he gave to parents and teachers, he said:

“The job of every Jew on this earth is to “build” the *emunah* in the depths of the heart, and to imbue his children with it. One of the ways to do this is by strengthening the recital of *brachos* and replying amen after them. It is also a halachic obligation, as explained in the *Rem’a* (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): “And he should teach his young sons to answer amen.” Because it is known that an impression made on the hearts of children lasts for generations, if they are accustomed from an early age to recite “amen” regularly, then the *emunah* is etched deep in their souls, and will influence their entire lives.

When a father and mother merit this, they should know that they have given their children a good gift, for which the gates of Gan Eden are opened.”

Kuntress Sichos Chizuk, p. 25

Amen. From youth to old age.



Prayer of Faith

A Glimpse at the
Seder Hatefillah

Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim

Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad

The *Midrash (Sifri V'eschanan 31)* relates that before Yaakov Avinu passed away, he summoned all his sons and rebuked them. When he concluded, he expressed his fears that perhaps they had complaints in their hearts against Hashem, *challilah*, and they all replied "*Shema Yisrael*," —our father, "just like there is no discord in your heart, so, too, there is no discord in our heart towards the One Who created the world. Rather, *Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*" Immediately, Yaakov prostrated himself and expressed his gratitude: "*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso L'Olam Va'ed!*" HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to him: "Yaakov, you always wanted your sons to recite *Krias Shema* upon arising early and prior to going to sleep!"

The *Midrash* says that this was Yaakov Avinu's aspiration throughout his life, that his children should make Hashem One with the eternal recite of "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*" Indeed, he merited to have this aspiration fulfilled, and from that day on, this wondrous *passuk* has become the unequivocal symbol of a Jew wherever he is. From morning to night, the Jew cleaves to this *passuk*, and from a very early age until his final day, he follows its light.

The pinnacle of the life of every Jew, as well as his aspirations, are encapsulated in this *passuk*, each and every one of the words of which has major significance, because it symbolizes the essence and the role in this world as a faithful servant subservient to his Creator. As the *Rashba* writes in his *repsonsa* (Vol. V, 55) in praise of this *passuk*: "Everyone with common sense must know that this special *parashah* includes the *yichud* and the *emunah*, the faith, as it truly alludes to secrets and major principles that are the fundamentals of the building upon which Bais Yisrael is built."

Accepting the Yoke of Heaven

This *passuk* is known as *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim*, and this is alluded to in the words "*Shema*" — whose acronym is "*Ol Malchus Shamayim*." The reason for this is that by saying it, we are placing HaKadosh Baruch Hu above us, and He is loftier than anything we can comprehend. When we repeat it morning and night we express our absolute subservience to His Kingship.

The *Midrash (Devarim Rabbah [Lieberman] Parashas V'eschanan)* explains that this *passuk* was the key through whose power we merited to receive the Torah at Har Sinai. After HaKadosh Baruch Hu went from nation to nation asking if they want the Torah, He turned to Bnei Yisrael and said: "Are you seeking to choose for yourselves a god just like all the other nations chose from the angles that serve me..." They said to Hashem: "You are our G-d and You are our part...That is why we are *meyached* Your G-dliness and Kingship upon us, twice a day, and we say, '*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*.'"

The *Midrash* there further states that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu descended upon Sinai, 22,000 ministering angels descended with Him, the most eminent among them Michael, Gavriel and the others like them. When they saw Yisrael in all their glory, they recoiled. HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to them: 'Don't stray after the angels that came down with Me, as they are all My servants.' From that time on, they made Hashem One, and said to one another, "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*."

Shema Yisrael

The *passuk* opens with an announcement: "*Shema Yisrael*" whose simple meaning is, a call to the entire Am Yisrael to listen to the words coming out of our mouths. But one who delves into the words will understand that there is a special significance to them:

In *Tachanun* we ask: "*Shomer Yisrael*, Guardian of Yisrael, protect the remnant of Yisrael and Yisrael should not be lost, the ones who recite *Shema Yisrael*. Preserve one nation, preserve the remnant of one nation and this one nation that is *meyached* Your Name, *Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*, should not be lost." We ask: The words "*Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*" have a meaning of *Yichud Hashem*, in whose merit we ask for protection. But what virtue do the words *Shema Yisrael* have?

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains: Our faith in HaKadosh Baruch Hu stems from what a son hears from his father and a student hears from his *rebbe*, and not from investigation and delving into it. That is what we ask: that in the merit of our pure faith in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, which stems merely from hearing, and not from investigation, we should merit protection. (*Halichos Shlomo Tefillah p. 367*)

The Mashgiach Harav Yitzchak Pinchas Goldwasser further explains: Declaring "*Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*" means the *yichud* of Hashem, which is one of the principles of religion. But if the goal was only to know this, it would have been enough to say it once. Why were we commanded to repeat it twice each day and even to bind it (with *tefillin*) close to our hearts and our heads?

Surely we must say that the goal is not only to know these things, but to accept them upon us as a yoke and way of life, in a way that all our thoughts and actions will be only according to them. This concept is alluded to in the words "*Shema Yisrael*" meaning: Don't suffice with just knowing things as they are, but rather, you must say them aloud to your ears constantly, and accept them on your soul over and over again, because only that way can they have the desired influence on you, and you will become a person whose entire essence is doing the Will of Hashem. (*Mimidbar Matanah p. 412*)

The *Avudraham* writes on this subject (*Dinei Krias Shema* beginning with "*Vehata'am*"): "*Shema*" is an acronym for "*Se'u marom eineichem*—lift your eyes up high" (*Yeshaya 40:26*), to who? "*Shakai Melech olam*." When? "*Shacharis Minchah Arvis*." And if you do so, that is how you accept upon yourself "*Ol malchus Shamayim*."

This is the place to note the words of Harav Chaim, the brother of the Maharal of Prague, who said (*Sefer Hachaim, Selichah Umechilah Ch. 9*): "The way of the world is to scream *Shema Yisrael* when one is in trouble...so that they should be saved from that trouble by being *meyached* their hearts to Hashem's Name. It would be more appropriate for them to scream "*Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*" which is the principle of the *Yichud*...and the reason is because these two words include the Will of Hashem of Yisrael that they should heed His words, and includes also the request of Yisrael from HaKadosh Baruch Hu [Whose Name is Yisrael] to save them from any trouble."

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

A Man's Home is From Hashem

The suggestion that was presented to the Cohen family was one they could hardly resist. For several years, they had felt an urgent need to move to a larger apartment, but their financial abilities were limited and they had to postpone the move over and over. Now, they were being presented with an exceptional opportunity:

The elderly parents of one of their neighbors needed to move out of their apartment, located in a satellite city, and to move near their son in the city of Bnei Brak. But because they could not consider apartments that were too far away, or on high floors, due to their health limitations, they were not able to make the move.

As time passed, the need became more urgent, and lacking any other choice, the son decided to approach his neighbors on the ground floor, the Cohens. Everyone knew how overcrowded their home was, and he offered to pay for their apartment far more than it was worth if they would agree to move out so his parents could move in.

It was a very tempting offer, but Rabbi Cohen, who didn't do anything without consulting with a *talmid chacham*, said he would consult his *rebbe* and then give an answer.

When he received a *brachah* for the move, he hurried to sign a contract, while the buyers agreed to wait two months for the Cohens to move out — a period of time that seemed to be enough to find a new apartment. The contract was signed. But within a few days, it became clear to Rabbi Cohen that the task of finding apartments was much harder than he'd thought. He went from one real estate agent to the next and combed the daily newspapers each day, but could not find an apartment that met their needs, within their budget. When they did find something that met the other criteria, they learned that it would not be available for far longer than the time they had.

The pressure grew from day to day. They could not turn back the clock and postpone their own move, because the neighbor's parents had already sold their apartment and committed to move out within the time frame that they were supposed to get their new apartment.

The weeks passed, and the Cohen family was in constant motion. They made every possible, but to no avail. In their hearts they came to terms with the fact that they would need to move into their parents' house, or to rent a small, crowded apartment until they would find an apartment for themselves, but both options were not really feasible.

There were just two weeks left until the deadline and the Cohen family had already begun packing their belongings without knowing where they were going. The father of the family went out to the street once again hoping for a miracle. But no end to their conundrum seemed to be in sight.

After another fruitless search, Rabbi Cohen entered a small shul that he passed. He had an hour until *Minchah* and he decided to utilize the time to daven. He took out a *sefer Tehillim* from the shelf and began to recite. Suddenly, the dam of tears broke. The hour passed in the most emotional recital of *Tehillim* he had ever experienced. Now that none of his efforts had been effective, he felt more than ever how dependent he was on his Creator, and this made a very strong impression on his *tefillah*.

Davening began, and Rabbi Cohen closed his *Tehillim* and joined the *minyan*. The emotions he had felt during his *Tehillim* continued in *Minchah*, which was also very tearful. He offered up a request from the depths of his heart that he succeed in finding a new home for his family that met their needs. When he finished davening, he

felt a sense of *bitachon* spread throughout his body.

Rabbi Cohen went out of the shul, and suddenly noticed a poster with the heading "Apartment for Sale" hanging on an electric pole. The sign looked rather old, but because the specifics described appeared suitable to his needs, he decided to try.

He plucked off the tab of paper with the phone number so that as soon as he came home he could call and make his inquiries. But when he arrived home, he rummaged in his pocket but could not find the paper. He didn't dwell on this too much, because it was an old poster and the apartment had likely been sold already anyway.

The next morning, Rabbi Cohen went out for another round of searching. This time, he decided to walk along Kahaneman Street, but like the day before, he did not come across any new signs or ads. He stopped next to one of the buildings—it was the address that had been noted on the poster the day before, the one whose phone number he had misplaced.

In desperation, he entered the building, intending to ask the neighbors which apartment was for sale. He went up to the first floor and knocked. The door opened, and Rabbi Cohen tentatively asked the man: "Perhaps you advertised an apartment for sale?"

"Advertised? Absolutely not!" the man replied, and then added, with a look of surprise on his face, "But why did you decide to knock on our door?"

After Rabbi Cohen explained the chain of events, the man said in a voice full of emotion: "You must have been led here by Shamayim, because just a few minutes ago, my wife and I decided to sell our apartment and move out to one of the younger chareidi cities..."

"A week ago," the man related to a shocked Raabbi Cohen, "I was offered a position in a yeshiva in that city. I asked for time to think about the proposal, because it entails me moving to be near the yeshiva. A few minutes ago, as we ate breakfast, we made the decision to accept the offer.

"The yeshiva has prepared an apartment for us. We just have to pack our things and order a mover..." the man concluded with a smile, and invited Rabbi Cohen inside to take a look at the apartment. The apartment met his needs to a tee—Rabbi Cohen was shocked to what extent. The price was also within their means.

Just a few days later the contract was signed. The Cohen family happily moved into their spacious new home, and the neighbor's parents were overjoyed to finally be able to live near their son. The power of *tefillah* and pure *emunah* was so clearly apparent in this story.

On one of the first days of living in the new house, Rabbi Cohen met one of his new neighbors. The two got into conversation, and Rabbi Cohen asked the neighbor perhaps he knew which apartment had been the one originally for sale, for which he had seen the poster. The neighbor knew, but was most taken aback at the question. "That apartment was sold a year ago..." he said.

Indeed, Rabbi Cohen marveled even more at the wondrous things that can happen when a person davens from the depths of his heart: HaKadosh Baruch Hu can make him notice a very old poster, cause him to lose the tab with the phone number and then force him to find the apartment with his own efforts...which led him to an unexpected apartment that had been destined for him from Above—the result of his *tefillah*.

Heard from the person the story happened to