

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Return Your Shechinah to Tzion, Your City, and the Order of the Avodah to Yerushalayim

זאת תורת העולה" (ו ב)

"It is a good thing to say...the *parashah* of the *olah* and *minchah* and *shelamim* and *chatas* and *asham*" (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 1 5).

The *Magen Avraham* (*ibid* 8) asks: Why did the *Shulchan Aruch* put the *parashah* of the *olah* before that of the *shelamim*? Isn't the reason we say them each morning is because one who is involved in the *parashah* of *korbanos* in our time, it is as though he has sacrificed them (*Menachos* 110a), and the *halachah* is in the laws of sacrifices (*Zevachim* 91) that a *chatas* comes before the *olah* that is brought with it?

Harav Raphael Hakohen of Hamburg answers:

There are parts of the *korban chatas* that are eaten by the Kohanim, and the rule that one who is busy with the *parashah* of the *korbanos* it is as though he sacrificed them applies only regarding the "*imurim*" which are burned on the *mizbeach* and not regarding the parts that are eaten by the Kohanim. Therefore, in our time, the *olah* comes before the *chatas*, because it is "*kulah kalil*", completely and entirely, and therefore even being busy with its laws is like sacrificing the *korban* in its entirety, while in the *chatas*, the part given to the Kohanim is lacking, because recitation cannot complete it.

Based on this, there is a beautiful explanation for the *nusach* of *Mussaf* on Shalosh Regalim: "*Vesei'arev Lefanecha asiroseinu k'olah, ukekorban, ana Rachum berachamecha harabbim hashev Shechinasecha leTzion irecha veseder ha'avodah l'Yerushalayim.*" In our time, when the service of *korbanos* is carried out solely by learning their *halachos*, we ask that "*Vesei'arev Lefanechah asiroseinu k'olah ukekorban*" – that we mention the "*olah*" first, not in the order of the sacrifice, because there is no part of it given to the Kohanim. But we also add a request for the future: "Please Merciful...return Your Shechinah to Tzion Your city" and then we will merit, "*Veseder ha'avodah* the order of the service in Yerushalayim" that it will return to its earlier format that the *chatas* precedes all the other *korbanos*.

Daas Kedoshim, Drush 1; Shu"t Binyan Shlomo Vol. I, Siman 1

Mizmor Lesodah

אם על תודה יקריבנו" (ז יב)

Harav Aharon Shmuel Koidenover in his sefer *Kav Hayashar* (chapter 18) writes:

Chazal established that we recite each day (in *Pesukei Dezimrah*) Chapter 100 (of *Tehillim*) which is *Mizmor Lesodah*, and the meaning of this is that a person has to thank Hashem each day and bring a *Korban Todah*, because one who has benefitted from a miracle does not recognize the miracle that Hashem performed

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Being Careful About Amen Is a Segulah for Parnassah

צו את אהרן" (ו ב)

"Rabi Shimon said: *Beyoser tzarich hakasuv lezarev bemakom sheyesh bo chesron kiss* - the *passuk* needs to urge in a place where there is a loss of money." (*Safra Parashah* 1)

"*Kiss*" is numerically equivalent to 90, and with the *kollel*, it is equivalent to 91, which is the same numerical value as *amen*. For here we learn the obligation to answer 90 *amens* a day, and the *Midrash* alludes: "*Beyoser tzarich hakasuv lezarev bemakom sheyesh bo chisaron*" and being lax in responding *amen* (*kiss*), because a person has to be a *shomer emunim* and to be on guard to wait to hear *brachos* from others so that he can respond *amen* after them.

It is possible that the *passuk* is also hinting that being lax about answering *amen* causes a loss of money, as it is known that the acronym of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 145:16): "*Poseach es yadecha umasbia lechol chai ratzon*" is the special Name of Hashem used in reference to *parnassah*, "*Pa*"¹, which is numerically equivalent to "amen."

V'Imru Amen p. 86

for him, and with saying this passage, his *kavanah* will be as if he is bringing the Torah to the House of Hashem."

Rav Abish Rheinhold, Rosh Yeshivas Tarnow, added: It is not for naught that *Mizmor Lesodah* is the 100th chapter of *Tehillim*. The reason is that it alludes to the obligation to recite one hundred *brachos* each day, which was also established so that we should remember to thank Hashem each day for all the good He bestows upon us.

Arba Knafayim, Drush Na'eh Lehodos, siman 81

Some explained this according to the words used to praise Sarah Imeinu (*Bereishis Rabbah* 58 2): "*Bas kuf kebas chaf*" – Chapter 20 in *Tehillim* is "*Yaancha Hashem beyom tzarah*," and Chapter 100 is "*Mizmor Lesodah*" – to teach us that just like Sarah davened a lot in a time of trouble, she always remembered to thank Hashem for every good that she merited.

Tov Lehodos, Introduction

Appointing a Shochet as a Shaliach Tzibbur

וישחט ויקח משה מדמו... (כ כג)

The *tzaddik* **Harav Pinchas of Koritz** was careful not to send a *shochet* to daven for the *amud* in his *bais medrash*, and noted: the job of a *shaliach tzibbur* is to infuse souls with life, which is the opposite of the role of the *shochet*...

The Rebbe **Harav Shalom of Koidenov** noted that he didn't find anyone that was afraid of this, and on the contrary, throughout communities in Klal Yisrael it was a long held custom to choose one person to serve in all the capacities of *klei kodesh*, including a *chazzan* and a *shochet*.

Harav Yosef Pachenovsky of Lodz found an interesting allusion to this in this *passuk*: the word "*Vayishchat*" has an accent called a *shalshes*, whose tune is long and undulating, like the *chazzanim* sing...Another allusion to this can be derived from the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (149:6): "*Romemos Kel bigronam vecherev pipiyos beyadam.*"

Midrash Pinchas Hachadash, p. 16; Pardes Yosef

"משנכנס ניסן מרבין באמונה...."

During Nissan, the month of *emunah*, the month during which the torch of faith is passed from father to son, from the time Am Yisrael became a nation until this generation, it is very fitting that we should strengthen our observance of the mitzvah of answering amen, "because the main principle of *emunah* is dependent on answering 'amen'." (*Megaleh Amukos Ha'azinu*)

Ma'aminim bnei ma'aminim—believers, the children of believers, answer amen!



Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the
Seder Hatfillah

Krias Shema – Parashah Sheniyah (2)

Performing Mitzvos with Joy

There is a well known rule that wherever it says “*Vehayah*” this expresses joy (*Bereishis Rabbah* 42:3). The second *parashah* of *Krias Shema* opens with the word “*Vehayah*”, meaning “*im shamoa tishme'u*” then you will have a lot of joy. There are a few explanations about the meaning of this *simchah*, this joy:

The *Sfas Emes* (*Eikev* 5663) explained that because this *parashah* speaks about the reward given to those who keep *mitzvos*, the Torah was nuanced and started it with the word “*Vehayah*”. *Chazal* says (*Avos* 4:2): “The reward of a mitzvah – is a mitzvah,” meaning that every mitzvah is like a gateway to doing more *mitzvos* and to rising higher in the service of Hashem. The greater the joy when performing a mitzvah, the greater its value and perfection, and in that merit, the person will merit more *mitzvos*. Therefore it says: “*Vehayah im shamoa*” – the more you do the mitzvah with joy, then “*tishme'u*” – you will merit in this power to fulfill additional *mitzvos*.

Harav Moshe Feinstein similarly explained: Although already in the first *parashah* we committed to accepting the Yoke of Heaven, and that includes the yoke of the *mitzvos*, the Torah here adds the word “*Vehayah*” to teach us that it is not enough to fulfill the *mitzvos* as an “*ol*”, as a burden, but rather we have strive to fulfill them with perfection, out of heartfelt joy and desire to do them. (*Telalei Oros*)

Another advantage of doing *mitzvos* with joy, writes the Chida (*Nachal Eshkol Koheles* 1:15) is that although “*sechar mitzvah behai alma leka*, there is no reward for *mitzvos* on this world,” (*Kiddushin* 39b), a person will be rewarded for the joy with which he performs a mitzvah in this world as well. According to this, the Tzemach Dovid of Skolya (*Eikev*) explained the reason that the *passuk* uses a language of *simchah* in this *parashah*, to teach us that the reward “and I will give rain on your land”, that is later said, will not be give for the actual performance of the *mitzvah*, but rather for the joy that accompanies the *mitzvah*.

“If You Listen in the Old – Then You Will Listen in the New”

The *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 46b) explains this *passuk*: “The *middah* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is not like that of a human being. A human – when it is empty it can hold something and when it is full it cannot. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu, when one is full of Torah, he can acquire more, yet one who is empty of Torah cannot hold anything. As it says, “*Vehayah im shamoa tishme'u*” – if you hear in the old you will hear in the new.” *Rashi* there explains: If you review your studies, you will become wise to understand new things.

By contrast to idle talk, in Torah and *mitzvos*, the more a person continues to fill his vessels with spirituality, the greater the desire in his heart becomes to make more spiritual acquisitions, and so, if a person feels in his heart a desire to do a mitzvah or to learn something, it is clear that that he surely did before that a different mitzvah, and that is what is drawing him to add more *mitzvos*. (*Daas Torah* [Rav Yeruchem Halevi of Mir] Vol. III p. 250)

In *Bais Habechirah*, the *Mei'iri* (*Brachos* 40a) writes about this *Gemara*: “A person should always

be careful to be *mechanech* his son in learning during his childhood, because learning during childhood is what lasts for generations...as they said (see *Shabbos* 21b): “*Girsa deyanakusa maalei*,” is better, and it says (*Daniel* 2:21) “HaKadosh Baruch Hu only gives wisdom to the wise.”

As such, when Torah is learned during childhood, it causes the child to be drawn and to continue to learn it as a youth and an adult, not because he is so great, but because through it he becomes a “full vessel” that is worthy of containing more Torah in it.

The *Ramchal* writes in his *sefer Derech Eitz Hachaim* (2): It is not for naught that the Torah is compared to fire, as it says (*Yirmiyahu* 23:29): “*Halo devarei ka'eish ne'um Hashem*,” but just like fire, if a person does not repeatedly blow it more, it wanes, so, too with *divrei Torah*, the more a person learns and adds to his learning the more they get fired up and multiply.

Learning Brings About A Desire

There are others who explain “*Im shama beyeshan*” – if you force yourself to learn even when you are in a state of “*sheinah*” – sleep – weakness and laxity, then “*tishma bechadash*” – you are guaranteed that you will get renewed *cheishek*, desire to learn, and you will succeed in your learning. This is how the words of *Eishes Chavil* are explained: “*Vatakam b'od laylah vatiten teref lebetsah*” – one who learns from amid the darkness of his pains and difficulties, is guaranteed that he will succeed and receive a *brachah* in his learning. (*Nachal Eisan, Michtavei Kodesh* 4)

Similarly, Hagaon Rav Yechezkel Abramsky brings in the name of one of the *maggidim*, who explained the *passuk* (*Shemos* 15:23-2) by way of *drush*: “And they could not drink the water from Marah because it was bitter...and Hashem showed him a branch and he threw it into the water and the water became sweet.” Sometimes a person has a hard time learning, as if the Torah is bitter in his mouth...The advice, *atzaso* (from *etz*) of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is: Cast yourself on the water – the waters of Torah, and you are guaranteed that very quickly the waters will be sweetened in your mouth. (*Cheshkas HaTorah* Chapter 22)

There is a well known story that the Chazon Ish once noticed two youths learning *bechavrusa* in his home, and from time to time they stopped to speak idle chatter. The Chazon Ish wanted to point this out to them and said kindly:

“You know how great the sweetness of Torah is, it is boundless! But in order to merit to experience this sweetness, you have to learn at least three or four hours straight!”

The Chazon Ish continued emotionally: “Know, my dear boys, that after four hours of learning, it is impossible to describe the feeling, and how much more so after five hours – and how loftiness! After six hours – you already disconnect from this world and its creations and after seven hours you feel a closeness to Hashem that is unmatched...After ten hours – no eye has seen and the heart cannot describe the wonderful feeling and the exceptional emotions! You have to sit and learn and the *cheishek* will come.” (*Maaseh Ish* Vol. IV p. 69)

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

“Eish Tamid Tukad Al Hamizbeach Lo Sikabeh”

A Continual Fire Will Burn on the Mizbeach and Will Not Be Extinguished

This moving story was told by Harav Shmuel Dovid Hakohein Friedman, *shlitia*, of New York, author of *Sdeh Tzofim*, at a *hachmassas sefer Torah* for a *sefer Torah* that he donated to the Khal Chassidim *bais medrash* in Teveriah this past Shevat.

The *sefer Torah* was donated by Harav Friedman in memory of a Yid who he didn't know, a Holocaust survivor who died alone, and childless, and spent most of his life in isolation, far from other Jews. Due to his story, he became known after his passing as “The Shema Yisrael Yid.”

Harav Friedman began by quoting the *sefarim* on the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 18a): “Parchments are burning and the letters rise up into the air,” because when a person comes to the Heavenly Court, after completing his years on this earth, he will be given reward for a mitzvah that was done in a place where he never was in the world. If one asks: If he was never in that place, then how is it possible that an action was done through him, then it will be explained to him that the impression of every act that a person does remains for eternity and its influence can galvanize others to do a good deed, and the credit goes to him.

It is like the story that happened with Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zy"l*, who once made the effort to attend the bar mitzvah of the son of a *talmid* who had learned by him long before. When the *talmid* expressed his surprise—as they did not have any particularly close ties, and certainly didn't think of putting out the elderly Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Isser Zalman explained: When I heard that you are already making a bar mitzvah for your son, I wondered to myself how much time had passed since you learned in my yeshivah. The years are passing and we must do *teshuvah*, and I credit that thought about *teshuvah* to you, and that is enough of a reason to express my gratitude by participating in your *simchah*.

I, too, said Rabbi Friedman, was aroused to *teshuvah* due to a wonderful story that I heard about a lonely Jew who I didn't know, and as a token of my gratitude I decided to donate a *sefer Torah* in his memory.

This was the story:

The year 5704 was one of the most difficult in the history of Am Yisrael. Millions of Jews were slaughtered in German death camps, men, women and children from beautiful European communities were taken like sheep to the slaughter, and murdered and burned *al Kiddush Hashem*.

The sparks of light in the bleak darkness were hundreds of thousands of stories of heroism that are still being recounted to this day, many of which are even documented in books. It's hard to describe the intensity of the Jewish heroism that these Yidden displayed specifically in the most difficult times. Even when they walked in the valley of death, they did not stray from the path of Hashem and agreed willingly to give their lives in order to uphold their faith and do His *mitzvos*.

The living conditions in the labor camps were horrific; both in the summer and the winter the Nazis made sure to do what they could to make life as unbearable as possible. The inmates were given hardly any food or clothes, and what they were given was just barely enough to keep them alive.

Each day, thousands died of hunger and thirst, and no one even had time or headspace to mourn them.

Those evil fiends went out of their way to crush the spirits of the Jews as best they could. Toward this end, they served them tasteless, cloudy soup in huge pots so that the Jews would need to push and shove in order to somehow get a portion.

A daily source of entertainment for the Nazis was to watch the Jews befalling the pot desperately, scrabbling for a portion. Even after all their efforts, many of them ended up with nothing.

One of the younger prisoners, a *bachur* named Pinchas Naftali, remained one day without a

portion. Hunger assailed him and he decided to take action.

Quietly, he sneaked into the kitchen, without anyone noticing. When he found a priceless treasure – an entire slice of bread – he could not be happier. He hid the slice under his tunic and hastened back outside.

As soon as he emerged, the poor boy was caught by two gendarmes who were lying in wait. His fate was sealed. Everyone knew that the punishment for this serious “crime” was death by the shooting squad. He was quickly taking to the “wall of death” and a group of soldiers stood around him with their guns drawn. They waited for the order to empty their gun magazines at the skinny young lad.

Pinchas Naftali stood with his back to the wall, trembling like a leaf. The guns were all aimed at him, and the officer was about to give the order, when a terrible cry burst forth from the boy: “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad...Shema Yisrael Hashem...*” He repeated his cry over and over again, and a Satanic spark suddenly ignited in the officer's eye.

He decided on the spot to commute Pinchas Naftali's sentence from death to lashing... from an easy, short death, to a death by horrific suffering. The gendarmes quickly stood in front of him and began to beat him brutally with the butts of their rifles, as he cried *Shema Yisrael* constantly, until he fell to the floor in a pool of his own blood.

Miraculously, his soul did not leave his body from the beating. He survived the final days of the war, but he went out of his mind from the suffering. His sister, the only soul left in her world, also survived and she compassionately cared for him. When the war was over, she moved to Antwerp, Belgium, and she had no choice but to leave him in a non-Jewish insane asylum. But she first got them to issue a detailed, signed commitment that when he passed on from the world, the management would make sure to give him a Jewish burial in the cemetery of the Antwerp community.

In Tammuz 5777, Pinchas Naftali returned his tortured soul to its Creator. The asylum management upheld their part of the agreement and immediately informed the *chevrah kaddisha* in Antwerp that he had passed on and that they should come and handle his burial. Reb Shalom Berger, a member of the *chevrah kaddisha* in Antwerp, hurried over to the asylum. As he was carrying the bier towards the *chevrah kaddisha* van, he was surprised to see a non-Jewish staff member of the hospital accompanying him to the car, tears flowing from her eyes.

Before the van's doors were closed, the woman asked to say a few words of farewell. She said:

“Pinchas, you were a good person and I hope I served you well over the past thirty years. May your *Shema Yisrael* accompany you for eternity.”

Rabbi Berger was very surprised; where did this non-Jewish woman know about *Shema Yisrael* from? When he asked, the woman explained: “For the past thirty years I have been working here, and they told me that the deceased man was here for forty years before that. For these seventy years, he never stopped crying aloud, morning and evening, the phrase “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*.” Aside for that, he never uttered a single word, and therefore, is it not fitting that I bless him that this phrase should accompany him to the Heavens as well?!”

The story quickly spread through the Antwerp community and many were inspired to do *teshuvah* as a result.

The cry of *Shema Yisrael* that resounded through the death camp continued to resound in the world seventy years later, and no one knows to what extent it influenced others, because an act of *mesirus nefesh* remained etched on a person's soul until his final day.

Heard from the person who it happened to, *shiita*