



עֵלוֹן שְׁבוּעֵי מִבֵּית 'בְּנֵי אֲמוּנִים' וּכְל מֵאֲמוּנִים

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Good Influences from the Candles

“אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות” (ח ב)

The Gaavad of Yerushalayim, **Harav Zelig Reuven Bengis**, explained:

The seven branches of the menorah were the conduits for the seven spiritual influences upon Am Yisrael, which we mention in the last *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*: “*Ki b’or Panechah nasata lanu Hashem Elokeinu*: 1. *Toras Chaim* 2. *Ahavah chessed* 3. *Tzedakah* 4. *Brachah* 5. *Rachamim* 6. *Chaim* 7. *Shalom*.”

This is what *Chazal* were referring to when they said (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 15 3): “If you were careful to light it before Me, I will preserve your souls from anything bad, and souls are compared to a candle, as it says (*Mishlei* 20:27): “*Ner Hashem nishmas adam*, the candle of Hashem is the soul of a person.”

Liflagos Reuven – Aggadah, Vol. I, p. 332

When They Are Distressed – He Is Distraught

“ויצעק העם אל משה ויתפלל משה אל ה' ותשקע האש” (יא ב)
The *Gemara* (*Brachos* 32a) explains: “Moshe spoke very bluntly towards Hashem, as it says: ‘*Vayispalel Moshe el Hashem*,’ don’t read it ‘*el*’ but rather ‘*al Hashem*.’” The question is asked: Why did this *passuk* need to be explained in a way that is critical of Moshe Rabbeinu?

Rabbeinu Chaim of Volozhin explains: *Chazal* were not speaking critically of Moshe, but rather in praise of him, saying, ‘Moshe’s *tefillah* was not ‘*el Hashem*’, to Hashem’ – to complain about his personal pain over the tragedy that had struck Bnei Yisrael. Rather it was “*al Hashem*” – Moshe cast the words of his *tefillah* upon the pain of the Shechinah that is also distraught with Klal Yisrael in their pain.

Nefesh Hachaim 2 12

Who Chose “Good Prophecies”

“אלדד ומידד מתנבאים במחנה” (יא כז)

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 17a) states that the prophecy of Eldad and Meidad was: “Moshe died, and Yehoshua brings Yisrael into the land.” The *Gemara* asks: Why did Moshe

state, upon hearing this (later *passuk* 29): “*Umi yiten kol Am Hashem nevi'im*—may it be that the entire nation of Hashem should be prophets.” Was their prophecy so pleasant for him to hear? Therefore, it states that Moshe only heard the first part of the prophecy: “Moshe died,” and not the end, “and Yehoshua brings...” Therefore he was happy.

But what kind of answer is this? Isn't the beginning of the prophecy even worse than the end?

Harav Simchah Hakohen Rappaport, Av Bais Din of Lublin, answers:

Chazal said (*Yerushalmi, Taanis* 2 1; and see *Rambam Yesodei HaTorah* 10 5) that a bad prophecy can be annulled through *teshuvah* and *tefillah*, but a good prophecy is never annulled.

Thus, the words of the *Gemara* can be explained: Because the end of the prophecy of Eldad and Meidad was considered to be a “good prophecy” for Yehoshua, if Moshe would have

heard it, he would have surely been distraught, because it would not be able to be annulled. But because he heard only the beginning, which falls into the category of a “bad prophecy” he was happy because he thought he could annul it with the power of his *tefillah*.

Based on this, **Harav Shammai Ginsburg** explained the *nusach* of the *brachos* of the *haftarah*: “*Asher bachar benevi'im tovim*, who chose good prophets, *veratzah bedivreiheim hane'emarim b'emes*, and wanted their words recited with truth.” What does “good prophets” mean? Is there such a thing as not good prophets? Perhaps what we mean to do here is praise Hashem for those good prophecies that are “said with truth” and are not annulled.

Gevulos Binyamin; Imrei Shammai

True Preparation for the Coming of Mashiach

“ויאמר ה' פתאם אל משה ואל אהרן ואל מרים” (יב ד)

“He appeared to them suddenly, and they were impure...” (*Rashi*)

In the introduction to the *sefer Asifas Zekeinim* on *Kodshim*, the **Chofetz Chaim** learns from here an important lesson about the importance of learning *Seder Kodshim*:

In the End of Days, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will also reveal Himself to us “*pisom*, suddenly” as the *passuk* states (*Malachi* 3:1): “*Upisom yavo el heichalo ha'adon...*”. Then we certainly will not have free time to learn the *halachos* of the *Mikdash* and the *korbanos*... Therefore we need to study them while we are still in *galus* so that when the time comes we should be ready to serve Him.

The Chofetz Chaim added: By learning *Seder Kodshim* we prove that our hope for the arrival of Mashiach is genuine and it is not *chalilah*, as though we are lying when we ask: “*Al kein nekaveh Lecha Hashem Elokeinu liros meheirah besiferes uzzechah.*” And also: “*Mimkomcha Malkeinu sofia...ki mechakim anachnu lach.*”

Asifas Zekeinim, Maamar Torah Ohr, Chapter 12

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Amen in Every Shul

“בכל ביתי נאמן הוא” (יב ז)

There is a well known *takanah* of *Chazal* (*Megillah* 3b) that in every city there have to be ten “*batlanim*” who sit in the shul and learn Torah and answer amen after the *chazzan*. *Dorshei reshimos*, people who work on the meanings of words from various angles, have explained that “*batlan*” is numerically equivalent to “amen.”

We can find an allusion to this in this *passuk*: “*bechol baisi*” – *baisi*, My home is another way of saying a place of *tefillah*, as it says (56:7) “*Ki baisi bais tefillah*,” “*ne'eman hu*” – you have to make sure that there should be a person who is responsible for answering amen.

See: *Lachmei Todah, Tochachah First Day of Selichos; Segulas Yisrael, p. 68*



"Bechol Beisi 'Ne'eman' Hu"

Dear Yid!

Join the expansive network of *mezakei harabbaim*, the *gabba'ei amen*, who strengthen the observance of reciting amen after *Birchos Hashachar* in shuls. Call today: 058-325-9191

And merit to be a “*goy tzaddik shomer emunim*” and to be blessed with children, health and *parnassah* and all other *brachos* guaranteed by *Chazal* to those who are careful about the mitzvah of answering amen.

~ Birchos Hashchar: Aloud... With kavanah... Bechavrusa... ~

Krias Shema – Parashas Vehayah Im Shamo'a (10)

Set Up Markers for
Yourself

"V'avadetem meheirah... vesantem es devarai eileh" – even though I exile you from the land to chutz l'aretz, excel at performing mitzvos so that when you return they will not be like new to you. That is what Yirmiyahu says: (31:20): "Hatzivi lach tziyunim" – these are the mitzvos that Yisrael excel in (metzuyanim bahem.) (Sifri Devarim 43)

The Sifri is brought by Rashi in his commentary on this passuk (Devarim 11:18), with further detail: "Even after you go into exile, excel at the mitzvos, lay tefillin and make mezuzos, so that they should not be new to you..."

The Ramban in his commentary on the Torah comments about the example Rashi gives: Tefillin and mezuzos are not mitzvos hatehuyos ba'aretz, mitzvos whose performance is contingent on being in the land of Israel. How then, is it conceivable, that if the Torah would not have commanded: 'Excel at the mitzvos' Klal Yisrael would have been exempt from them?

The Ramban writes that "This Midrash has a deep secret, and I have already alluded to it..." The 'deep secret' the Ramban is referring to is delineated in his commentary on Parashas Acharei Mos (Vayikra 18:25); there too, the Ramban cites this Midrash and concludes: "Because the main purpose of all the mitzvos – is for the ones dwelling in the Land of Hashem."

The Maharal details even further: At first, the mitzvos were given only to those residing in Eretz Yisrael [as it says that the Avos performed all the mitzvos only when they were in Eretz Yisrael], and the reason that Klal Yisrael were commanded to keep them even in chutz l'aretz was because it was clear to Hashem that they were destined to be exiled from the Land. In order that they should not, upon their return, have to receive the Torah a second time, and they might think that it is not the same Torah that was given at Har Sinai, therefore, He commanded them to fulfill the mitzvos even when out of the Land, for the reason explained in the Midrash: "So that they should not be like new for you." (Gur Aryeh, Devarim 11:18)

Tefillin and Mezuzos or
Terumos and Ma'asros

Another way to reconcile what Rashi says is offered by the Ksav Vehakabbalah [and cited also in the name of the Gra]: It is possible that originally, his words were written as an acronym "to"m", and his

intention was "terumos and maasros", which are mitzvos contingent on living in the land. However, someone erred and interpreted the acronym to be "tefillin umezuzos." As proof of this, the Ksav Vehakabbalah cites the Midrash (Eichah Rabbah 1:56) on the passuk (Eichah 1:19): "Karasi lam'ahavai, heimah rimuni" – "Rashbi interpreted the passuk as referring to the nevi'ei emes who endeared me [Knesses Yisrael] to HaKadosh Baruch Hu; "Heimah rimuni" – they tricked me and told me that they separated terumah and maasros. Yet was there terumah or maaser in Bavel? However, they said so in order to make me beloved to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. As Yirmiyah said (Yirmiyah 31): "Hatzivi lach tziyunim," in the mitzvos that you excelled in while in Eretz Yisrael."

But later on the Ksav Vehakabbalah rejects this answer, because, as it says, the Ramban cites the words of Rashi in their simple explanation, and even notes that there is a great secret contained in them. Therefore, the Ksav Vehakabbalah explains things according to the parable cited in the Sifri there: A king was angry at his wife and returned her to her father's house. When she left, he said to her: Make sure you continue to wear your jewelry so that when you return they should not be like new for you.

According to this parable we can understand the words of Rashi, and as the Ksav Vehakabbalah says: "In fulfilling the mitzvos, the obligation is on the person, and by fulfilling them even when he is in chutz l'aretz, he shows that he has not despaired of the Redemption, but rather that there is hope and promise to return quickly to the House of the King like earlier times."

Importance of Setting Aside
Time to Learn Torah

The Chofetz Chaim (Al HaTorah, ibid) learns a valuable lesson from this for each person: A person should not think that when he has to go out to work for a living, or when he is overcome with things that keep him busy, that is an excuse to abandon his learning until he gets back to himself or has more time... Rather, he has to make sure to set for himself regular sedarim for learning, so that the words of Torah should not be new for him when he returns to routine. Human nature is to yearn for spiritual things, however, that dulls over time when that yearning is not satisfied.

"The Gates of Gan Eden Opened" – In This World

This story was part of a long conversation of *chizuk* with the renowned *gabbai amen* of Vizhnitz, Rabbi Alter Dovd Roth, *shlitia*. Within that conversation, he related:

It was about forty years ago, towards the end of a long trip I had made to America. As I was getting ready to return home, I had the opportunity to attend one of the renowned *Chumash-Rashi shiurim* that the holy Rebbe the Shefa Chaim of Sanz used to give. During the *shiur*, the Rebbe sharply expressed his disappointment with the fact that there were *bonei Torah* who used the time of *Chazaras Hashatz* to learn and review the *parasahah*. He expounded on the loss that this behavior incurs, and how many amens they lose as a result. Even the amens that they do answer are done without *kavanah*.

During his words, the Rebbe made one statement that has remained in my heart since then and will always be there: "This way, learning isn't learning, and davening isn't davening!"

The day after I returned to Eretz Yisrael I went to take *shalom* by my Rebbe, the Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz, *z"l*, with whom I was privileged to be very close to throughout the years. For thirty two years I was one of the regular *mispallelim* at the *minyán* in his house.

At the time, the Rebbe was vacationing in Arad, and when I entered his house there it was in the midst of *Chazaras Hashatz* of *Minchah*.

I turned my eyes to the Rebbe; he sat on his chair, enveloped in holy thoughts, a small *Siddur* in his hand as he followed with his finger word for word as the *shaliach tzibbur* recited them. At the end of each *brachah*, he fervently answered "amen."

I was stunned. The Sanzer Rebbe's words were still echoing in my ears, and now I was able to observe how *tzaddikim* actually behave... I saw this 'coincidence' and wondrous Divine *hashgachah*, and I felt like an invisible, divine thread linked these two holy Chassidic courts, one in Brooklyn and one in Eretz Yisrael.

I mused to myself: If such *gedolim*, for whom every moment of Torah is invaluable, are so scrupulous about following along in the *Siddur* in order to be able to answer amen with *kavanah*, and not to use the time for learning... then how much more so the simple people must be careful about this.

I decided that I would also start being careful about this. At first, it wasn't easy. The thoughts were confusing and my eyes kept straying... But I made the effort, and as the *poskim* write relating to the *halachos* of reciting *vesein tal umatar*, that after ninety times, then it becomes habit, that happened to me as well. After a month and a half, it became habit, and from then until this day, I carry a small *Siddur* in my pocket all the time, so that even when I happen onto a *Chazaras Hashatz* in a *minyán* that I'm not davening with, I take the *Siddur* out of my

pocket and my eyes follow the *brachos*.

Once I undertook this holy practice, I also strengthened myself in replying amen in general... My acquaintances often say that my life is divided into two: the years before amen and the years after... Since I began intensively engaging in the subject, especially as a *gabbai amen*, I have felt a special bond between me and the Ribbono Shel Olam, as if the gates of Gan Eden in this world have opened for me...

Rav Roth continues: When I was a month old I suddenly fell ill with a serious blood infection. I was hospitalized and my life hung in the balance.

My father, Reb Avraham Yehudah, *z"l*, was one of the prominent *chareidi askanim* at the time in Haifa and who was known for the Bikur Cholim Achisamach organization that he established, a pioneer in the field of volunteering on behalf of sick people in Eretz Yisrael. He was also an ardent Belzer chassid.

The doctors did not hide the severity of my condition from my father and he wasted no time. He hurried to travel to Tel Aviv, to the court of his Rebbe, Harav Aharon of Belz, *z"l*. It was Friday afternoon and dozens of people wanted to get in to the Rebbe, and my father was barely able to persuade the *gabbai* to let him in head of the line. When he entered the Rebbe's room and tearfully described my dire condition, the Rebbe instructed him to immediately call the hospital and demand that the doctors add to the patient chart hanging on my bed the name "Alter."

"From today and on your son will be called Alter Dovid," the Rebbe instructed. And when he glanced at his watch and saw the late hour, he told my father to remain in Tel Aviv for Shabbos.

My father began to run around looking for a phone to be able to call the hospital. Only at 2:30 in the afternoon did he find one, and placed the call to the hospital and conveyed the Rebbe's instructions. He did not hang up until he had confirmed that indeed, it had been done.

On Sunday, my father traveled back to the hospital and was stunned to discover me awake and full of life. "Which Rabbi were you at?!" the doctor asked in wonder. "Your son's life has been given to you as a gift!" he declared. My father asked what time the change had occurred and discovered that it was about half an hour after the Rebbe's instructions had been carried out.

The Rebbe's *brachah* accompanies me to this day, especially in the last thirty years, since I have started strengthening my observance of reciting amen. I have experienced several heart attacks since, and each time I have *baruch Hashem* recovered.

About four years ago, just after midnight, I awoke and felt pain in my heart. The pain was not what I had become familiar with from past heart attacks, and the

general symptoms were also different. I can't really explain it, but the feeling was horrible; I felt helpless, literally at death's door. I do not wish this on anyone.

I felt an urge to recite *Viduy* but I couldn't. I mustered up the last of my energy and sat up in bed; I could hardly wash my hands, and then, suddenly I could clearly see the gates of Gan Eden opening before me...

I felt deep in my conscience how I was standing before the King of Kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and speaking to Him. The words seemed to emerge from my mouth of their own accord:

"Ribbono shel Olam, I merited to cleave to the *mitzvah* of amen, and I know that the gates of Gan Eden are open before me, as it says: "One who answers amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are opened to him," but I feel like I still have lots more with which to fill my "valise" in order to get there ready. Please, let me fill this deficit...!"

Suddenly, I felt a Divine Voice calling in my ears: "Alter Dovid, do not worry, you are remaining here; you will have Gan Eden here as well!"

I began to feel my strength returning, and out of the corner of my eye I could see the image of the Rebbe, Rav Aharon of Belz, *z"l*. A once again called: "Rebbe, are these the years you allocated for me when I was a child? Sixty two years?!"

Through the fog of my pain, I could hear the voice of the Belzer Rebbe, *z"l*, affirming what I had already heard: "You are staying here; here too you will have Gan Eden!"

I didn't take a risk; I mustered up my strength and dialed an ambulance. They quickly arrived and took me to the hospital, where they discovered that I was suffering from severe convulsions where were affecting my heart function and putting my life in danger.

Bechasdei Shamayim the doctors were able to stabilize me, and I returned to life.

A few days later, when I was released, I met a close friend, who was surprised to hear that I had just been released from the hospital. In conversation with him, I saw that he was vacillating whether to tell me something... I urged him to tell me, and he related that that night when I had been hospitalized, he had dreamed that I had passed away. The dream did not leave his mind and now he was surprised to discover that there was actually something to it...

I merited to have the gates of Gan Eden open for me in this world.

I remained here, "*lehagid baboker chasdecha...*", thanking the Ribbono Shel Olam, the King of all kings.