

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



234

PARASHAS BALAK

תש"ה

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Hundred Brachos As a Protection

"מה אكب לא קבה אל" (כג ה)

Harav Shabtai Atun, Rosh Yeshivas Reishis Chochmah, explained:

"Mah ekov" – is an acronym for "Melech Ha'olam Asher Kidshanu Bemitzvosav." The Torah is alluding that the power of the merit of reciting one hundred brachos protects Klal Yisrael that no curse or plague should have control over them. As Chazal said (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18 21): "Each day one hundred people died in Klal Yisrael; David Hamelech came and established the one hundred brachos for them – and when he did that, the plague stopped."

Rauch Chochmah p. 51

Lavan Failed Because He Sought "To Uproot Everything"

"ויאמר אליו בלק לך נא את אל מוקם אחר... אפס קצחו תורה
וכלו לא תורה וקבנו לי שם" (כג יג)

We need to understand: What purpose would Bilam derive from going to somewhere else?

Harav Baruch Frankel, author of *Baruch Ta'am*, explained: Balak was afraid that perhaps the reason that Bilam was unable to curse Bnei Yisrael was because he first sought to uproot all of them from the world, and there is a covenant with Bnei Yisrael that they will never all be eradicated from the world. Therefore, he wanted to take him to "a different place" where he could see "only the edge of the nation" with the hope that if he tried to only curse part of Bnei Yisrael he would be able to carry out his evil intentions.

This is what we say in the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*: "Tzei ulemad, go out and learn what Lavan the Arami wanted to do to Yaakov Avinu, that Pharaoh only decreed on the males, and Lavan sought to uproot everything." What is the reason we minimize the extent of Pharaoh's actions specifically on the night that we mark our redemption from him?

Now we can understand, that on the contrary, our intention is indeed to magnify the miracle because "Lavan wanted to uproot everything" – and therefore he did not succeed, because it is impossible to eradicate an entire nation.

But Pharaoh thought he was smarter and only decreed on the males, and if Hashem would not have saved us from his hands, he could have carried out his evil plans.

Ateres Chachamim, beginning of the sefer

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Amen on Birchot Hashachar

"הן עם כלביה קום וכארוי יתנשא" (כג כד)

"When they rise up from their slumber in the morning, they are as vigorous as the young lion and the lion, to snatch mitzvos, to don a tallis and to recite Krias Shema and to put on tefillin." (Rashi)

The word "lachtof, to snatch", needs explanation. Are mitzvos done like that—by being snatched? Is it not the contrary, that Chazal instruct us to rise and come to shul before davening starts so that we can fulfill the mitzvos slowly and with concentration?

It is possible to explain that Rashi was referring to the *mitzvah* of answering amen, that when he comes to shul, the person should utilize every moment to grab another amen and yet another, and he should become like a "shomer emunim" – and wait expectantly for each amen. That is how this *passuk* alludes to amen and brachos: "Hen am kelavi" – the acronym of the last letters of each word is amen. "Am kelavi yakum" – the acronym is numerically equivalent to one hundred, corresponding to the one hundred brachos.

Chok Yaakov, Vol. I, p. 28

Teshuvah Annuls the Decree

"אי איש אל-ויכוב ובן אדם ויתחנן ההוא אמר ולא עישה ודבר
ולא קימנה" (כג ט)

The Mekubal **Rabi Meir Bikayam** of Izmir, explains:

When HaKadosh Baruch Hu decrees a punish-

ment on a sinner, even though "lo ish K-l vyechazev, Hashem is not like man" and His decree is ultimately carried out, still, "uben adam veyisnecham, when a person changes his mind" – when the person repents for his sins, then "hahu amar velo yaaseh vediber velo yekimenah." As Chazal said (*Yerushalmi Taanis* 2 1 and see *Rambam Yesodei HaTorah* 10 5) that a bad prophecy can be annulled through teshuvah and tefillah.

Me'orei Ohr [Salomiki 5512]

Who Is Worthy of Serving As Chazzan And Baal Tokea?

"לא הביט און ביעקב ולא ראה עמל בישואל ה' אלקי עמו
ורוחנית מלך בו" (כג כא)

"When they transgress His commands, He does not pursue them exactingly..." (Rashi)

The Rebbe **Harav Moshe Tzvi of Savran** explained:

When we seek to appoint a *shaliach tzibbur* or *baal tokea* we must seek someone who judges his fellow man favorably, and does not see the flaws and lacks in others, as alluded to in this *passuk*:

A person who fulfills "Lo habit aven beyaakov velo ra'ah amal beYisrael" is the one who is worthy of "Hashem Elokov imo" – in his *tefillos*, "useruas Melech bo" – and his *tekios* rise up to Hashem the King of Kings Who accepts them willingly

Mekadesh Hashabbos

Birkas Mah Tovu Exists Forever

"מה טוב ואחדליך יעקב משנתיך ישראלי" (דכ ה)

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 105b) says that all the brachos of Bilam returned to being a curse, just like his original intention was, except for this one that refers to shuls and *batei medrash*, which will never disappear from Klal Yisrael.

Why did this brachah remain more than all the others?

The Rebbe **Harav Yoel of Satmar** explained: If Yisrael has in their hands the *brachah* of "Mah tovu ohalecha Yaakov" then they are protected from all curses, because Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 65 20) that "when the voice of Yaakov is found in the shuls then the hands are not the hands of Eisav."

Divrei Yoel Vayikra

"Kelavi yakum veka'ari yisnasa" (23:24)

"When they rise up from their slumber in the morning, they are as vigorous as the young lion and the lion, to snatch mitzvos." (Rashi)

Dear Yid!

Do you want to among those strong people who overcome like a lion each morning and continue the custom of the Ari HaKadosh, who would answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* of many people each day, sometimes as many as one hundred people?

Join the national network of *mezakei harabbim*,
"gabba'eim amen" in shuls.

For details and to join call 058-325-9191.

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



Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the Seder Hatefillah

Krias Shema – Parashas Tzitzis (Introduction)

Remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim Every Day

The third *parashah* in *Krias Shema* is the *parashah* of *tzitzis*. This *parashah* completes the two preceding it, where we accepted the Yoke of Heaven and the yoke of *mitzvos*. In this passage, we add a very important and vital detail in our lives as Jews, and that is remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the exodus from Egypt.

The mitzvah of remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is stated in the Torah in the *passuk* (*Devarim* 16:3): “*Lema'an tizkor es yom tzaischa mei'Eretz Mitzrayim kol yemei chayecha*, so that you should remember the day you emerged from Egypt every day of your life.” From here the *Mishnah* learns (*Brachos* 12 2) that it is incumbent upon us to mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* twice each day, morning and evening, by reciting *Parashas Tzitzis*, in which this matter is mentioned [and in *Mechilta* (*Shemos* 13:3) it derives remembrance during the day from “*lema'an tizkor*” and the remembrance at night from the *passuk* (*ibid*): “*Zechor es hayom hazeh asher yatzasem miMitzrayim*.”]

This mitzvah, according to some of the Rishonim, is an obligation from the Torah (see *Rambam*, *Krias Shema* 1 3; *Sema*”k 110 and more), but it is not counted in the number of *mitzvos*, because it is included in the mitzvah of *Krias Shema* (*Shu'ot Beis Yitzchak* [Rav Y. Shmelkes] *Orach Chaim* 12 2) and because it is not stated in the commanding tense. (*Tzela*”ch *Brachos* 12b)

Yetzias Mitzrayim is mentioned in fifty two *pesukim* in the Torah, and yet, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of remembering our exodus from Egypt, the *parashah* of *tzitzis* specifically was chosen. This is because there are other important matters mentioned in it, as the *Gemara* explains (*Brachos* 12b):

“Rabi Yehudah Bar Zeveda said: they wanted to establish that *Parashas Balak* be recited in *Krias Shema* [because there too it says “*K-l motziam miMitzrayim*” (*Bamidbar* 23:22)]. Why did they not do so? Because it would be a strain for the public...Why did they establish the *parashah* of *tzitzis*? Because there are five things in it: the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the yoke of *mitzvos*, *daas minim*, thinking of sin and thinking of *avodah zarah*.”

The Connection Between Parashas Tzitzis and Krias Shema

In explaining the connection between the *parashah* of *tzitzis* and the other *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema*, *Tosafos* writes (*Brachos* 12b, beginning with *bikshu*) that it be established within the *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema* because it completes the order of the Ten Commandments, some of which are alluded to in the first two *parshiyos* and some of which are alluded to in this *parashah*, as explained in the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 1 5) that the Ten Commandments are alluded to in the *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema*.

The commentaries also explained according to the *Gemara* (*Menachos*

43b) that *tzitzis* is compared to a seal of clay, and *Tosafos* explained (*ibid*, beginning with *chosam*) that this is the clay seal that the slaves would bear as a testimony of who their owners were. So, too, the *tzitzis* testify of the wearer that he is a servant of Hashem.

The *Seforno* writes further (*Bamidbar* 15 39) that the seal of the *tzitzis* is intended for us, because by seeing it we remember the *mitzvos* that the Master of the World commanded us, and through that we understand that we are His servants, and we cannot do what we please.

According to this we can understand why this *parashah* was established to be recited after *Vehayah*, which discusses accepting the yoke of *mitzvos*. It is because it mentions the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, whose purpose is remembering the *mitzvos* and accepting the Yoke of Heaven, as it says: “And you will see it and remember all the *mitzvos* of Hashem.” Therefore, we need to recite it after the *parashah* of *Vehayah*, which discusses the acceptance of the yoke of *mitzvos*. (*Sifsei Chaim Rinas Chaim*)

Remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim in Krias Shema

There are several reasons why it was established to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in *Krias Shema*:

1. Because while we are still in exile under the rule of other nations, we cannot accept the Yoke of Heaven in its entirety through the *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema*, because we are subjected to the rule of the nations. But through remembering the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, when the Kingship of Hashem was displayed to all, we can accept the Yoke of His Kingship even in a time of exile. (*Sfas Emes*, *VEsachanan* 5664; *Pesach* 5642)

2. Some explained this according to the Rishonim (*Sefer Hachinuch* 21), that the mitzvah of remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is a “major principle and a strong pillar in our Torah and our *emunah*,” and its purpose is to arouse in our hearts the memory of the great miracles that occurred during *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, which proved to the whole world the Existence and Oneness of Hashem, and therefore it was determined to remember it in *Krias Shema* whose subject is the *Yichud* of Hashem, as it says “*Shema Yisrael...Hashem Echad*.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach*, *Hallel Nirtzah* by the Arugas Habosem of Pupa, *Seder Hakiddush*)

3. Harav Yitzchak Zev of Brisk further explained that because the purpose of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* was so that we should accept upon ourselves the yoke of *mitzvos* and we should believe in the Oneness of Hashem, as we say in this *parashah*: “I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of the Land of Egypt to be your G-d”, therefore this *parashah* was placed at the end of the *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema* in which we accept the Yoke of Heaven and the yoke of *mitzvos*. (*Chiddushei Hagri*”z [Stencil] al HaTorah, 147)

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About Amen and Tefillah

Somech Noflim Verofei Cholim...Amen

How painful it is to think of a home where the mother has to schlep from one hospital to another instead of fulfilling her role in raising her children calmly. It's hard to think about the children who, at once, are torn out of their pure innocent world and have to start living in a difficult reality under the shadow of the Angel of Death. But apparently children have a very strong power at such a time. A small awakening on their part can determine fates, for the good, as happened in this story.

Eliezer had no strength to get up from his bed, but he had no choice, and started his day.

It was early, and the alarm clock had not even rung yet. Most of his friends were still sleeping deeply, but the expeditious ones were already in the midst of preparing for davening, and Eliezer, strange as it was, was among them.

This morning he would get up once again, Eliezer knew, but how hard it was to do that when the thoughts, the sadness and the confusion were sucking him into their vortex...

He knew that overall, his condition was far from satisfactory, but he could not forgo getting up early to daven! “Rise up like a lion!” a voice inside him shouted, “in honor of your Father in heaven!”

“And for your mother on this earth,” Eliezer completed the sentence quietly.

His mother was sick...

Just a few weeks had passed since he'd learned of the news. The house was no longer the warm nest that he and his siblings had gotten used to living in.

The calm, the smile and pleasant atmosphere were replaced by tension, sadness and neglect.

Quiet phone calls were held with faces wrinkled with worry and exhaustion. His mother was in the hospital and his father was devotedly taking care of her. There was no hot food and the children were going from one neighbor to another.

Last night, like on previous nights, while all his friends were sleeping, Eliezer had tossed and turned from side to side, doubts and dejection gnawing at him. One voice kept whispering to him: “Maybe tell the Rosh Yeshivah or the *mashgiach*?”

“No!” another voice answered firmly. “It's a secret! No one is allowed to pity us...”

He didn't tell. He came to the *shuir* each day disoriented and sleepy, unable to concentrate from exhaustion, and the results spoke for themselves. His head was not in the *sugyos* they were learning. He didn't ask or answer, and didn't participate at all. He could hardly even be considered an observer...

Eliezer's general behavior was also marked by tension and frustration. Until recently, he had been one of the yeshivah's most diligent learners and excelled in everything. But now, he began to feel a certain coolness. The serious learning atmosphere in the yeshivah, which had always drawn him so much, had suddenly stopped

is happening to him. The decline is evident in all areas, and he is beginning to emanate coldness wherever he goes. We have to find out what is going on before it's too late..."

Some of the staff members nodded in agreement. It seemed that the subject was not one that was bothering only the *mashgiach*. Suddenly, the Rosh Yeshivah's authoritative voice cut into the conversation. He seemed very surprised: “A decline? Impossible!! Just recently, I saw how he is *moser nefesh* to get up early to answer amen and how he says the *brachos* aloud and with *kavanah*, in a way that expresses true *Yiras Shamayim*!”

“His insides are burning with *ahavas Shamayim*, I am sure of that. I have to find out a few more details before I decide anything,” the Rosh Yeshivah concluded the conversation.

In the evening, the Rosh Yeshivah summoned Eliezer to his office.

Eliezer lowered his eyes. He waited to hear what the Rosh Yeshivah had to say, while the Rosh Yeshivah waited to hear what he had to say...

In the end he broke down and related it all. He didn't omit a single detail when describing the pain, the difficulty, the confusion and the dejection.

Tears filled the Rosh Yeshivah's eyes. He spent a long time consoling Eliezer with words of *chizuk* and encouragement, and guidance on how to deal with the new situation.

The next day, as well, Eliezer kept at his practice, and the days following. He appeared each day, making sure not to miss even one amen, and to do it as *Chazal* says, “With all his might and all his *kavanah*.”

The *yeshuah* was not long in coming. On *Erev Shabbos*, Eliezer was informed that his mother was coming home, still weak, but recovering. The color had returned to his father's cheeks, and some order was restored at home. The children all moved back in...

One evening soon after, when he saw his mother sitting on the couch and folding laundry, Eliezer wiped a tear away from his eye.

He couldn't believe it...but he was sure of it. It was all because of the power of that word: ‘amen’.

He knew very well that his strengthening in his observance of amen had saved his mother's life, but what he didn't know was how much it had saved his own future...

Heard from the person it happened to