

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### "V'al Tisalem" from "Ben Ahuvecha" – Don't Turn Away Your Beloved Child

"לא תראה את שוור אחיך או את שיו נדחים והתעלמות מהם השב תשיבם לאחריך" (כב א)

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 30a) derives a lesson from the seeming redundancy of the word "vehisalamta": "Sometimes one is permitted to overlook [a lost item]...if he is an older man and it is not befitting his dignity [to deal with this loss and to return it]...Therefore it says, "Vehisalamta meiheim", in those instances one is allowed to overlook those lost items."

Once, Harav Akiva Eiger was in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, and knowing that one of his relatives lived there, he sought to visit him at home. That relative was a simple man, and lived in a tiny hovel on the outskirts of the city. The people accompanying the Rav felt that it was beneath his dignity as the gaon of the generation to visit this simple home, and tried to dissuade him from doing so.

When Rabi Akiva Eiger saw what they were trying to do, he responded firmly: "Regarding hashavas aveidah it says "vehisalamta" and Chazal learn from this that "an older man for whom it is not befitting" is allowed to ignore the lost item. However, with regard to relatives, it clearly says (Yeshayahu 58:7): "Umibesarcha al tisalem," do not ignore your relatives. Therefore, even "an older man for whom it is not befitting" must not ignore his relatives.

Based on this concept, Harav Naftali of Ropshitz explained the words we sing in the third stanza of the piyut Yedid Nefesh: "Vasik yehemu na rachamecha vechusah na al ben ahuvecha...vechusah na v'al tisalem." Although HaKadosh Baruch Hu is called "Zaken malei rachamim" (Mechilta Beshalach 4), and it is not befitting His honor to reveal Himself before people who are mired in sins, still we ask: "Vechusah na al ben ahuvecha" – because we are "related" to Him like sons, He cannot ignore us under the rule of "zaken v'eino lefi kevodo." That is what we add: "Vechusah na v'al tisalem."

Zemiros L'Shabbos – Heichal Hatefillah, p. 293

### Tefillah in a Decisive Language

"כי יקרא קו צפור לפניך...לא תקח האם על הבנים" (כב ו) Maseches Brachos (33b) explains that one who seeks mercy from Hashem, and cites as proof of His middah of compassion the mitzvah of shiluach haken, in which we are commanded to send away the mother bird before taking the eggs so she should not be distressed, "is silenced." This is because we do not know that this is the reason for the mitzvah of shiluach haken. We have to fulfill the mitzvah only because Hashem thus commanded us.

Based on this, the question is asked about the words of the Midrash in this parashah (Devarim Rabbah 6 1), from which it sounds that the sages cite this reason for the mitzvah

of shiluach haken: "Just like HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave compassion to the animal, so too, He was filled with compassion for the birds. How do we see this? As it says: 'Ki yikarei kan tzipor lefanecha...', if you happen upon a bird's nest. So it seems that the reasoning behind the mitzvah of shiluach haken is in fact compassion that we have for the bird.

Harav Elazar Segal Landau the Rav of Brody and the grandson of the Noda B'Yehduah, reconciles this apparent contradiction:

The Tosafos Yom Tov (Brachos 2 3) explains that the prohibitions above [of not using compassion as a reason for the mitzvah] is only when a person says it as a way of tefillah. When he mentions it in davening, he shows that he has decided that this is the reason for the mitzvah. But saying this by way of drash, explanation, was not prohibited, and therefore, there is no question over the words in the Midrash, which are said as a drash.

Yad Hamelech, Tefillah 9 7

### Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

#### Amen Converts a Curse Into a Blessing

"ואשר שכר עליך את בלעם בן בעור מפתור ארם נהרים לקללך... ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את הקללה לברכה" (כג ו)

The Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe (day 11) writes: "A person is obligated... to make a brachah aloud so that his friend can answer amen. If he does this, then if a curse is chalilah decreed upon him, then this converts the curse to a blessing."

An allusion to this can be found in this passuk: "Hashem Elokecha" is numerically equivalent to "amen" (with the kollel) to teach us that in the merit of answering amen Hashem converts the curse to a blessing.

Zecher Yehudah

It can be added that the acronym of "mipesor Aram Naharayim" is amen, to teach us that answering amen prevents the curse.

### The Tefillah of the Poor Man Protects the Rich man

"כי עני הוא...ולא יקרא עליך אל ה' והיה בר חטא" (כה טו)

Harav Chiam of Friedburg, the brother of the Maharal of Prague, writes:

A poor man who is supported by a rich man always davens for his benefactor to succeed in business so that he can continue to support him. This fervent tefillah is effective for the rich man's success, despite his sins. This is what the Torah warns the rich man: If you don't support the poor man, "and he does not call about you to Hashem" – with tefillah for your success, then "and you will have a sin" – as you will be lacking this tefillah that protects you from prosecuting angels that constantly remind of your sins.

Sefer Hachaim Sefer Parnassah Vechalkalah



"וַיִּהְיֶה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָה"

"A person must...recite the brachah aloud so that his friend should answer amen. If he does so then even if chalilah a curse is decreed upon him, then that curse is converted into a blessing."

(Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe, day 11)

Ahead of the new year, when we all hope to be blessed with a good and sweet year, let us accept upon ourselves to be strict about beginning our day with reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa, and we will merit to have our request of "ticheh shanah vekilelosehah, may the year and its curses end, and may the year and its blessings begin" fulfilled.

Librachah velo liklalah, amen is an acronym for Elul.

## Prayer of Faith

A Glance at the  
Seder Hatefillah

### Krias Shema – Parashas Vayomer (8)

#### Between Two Towns...

The Mashgiach, Harav Yerucham Halevi Levovitz of Mir would compare the negative commandment of “*lo sasuru*” to a person walking on a path leading to two towns, one town populated entirely by Jews in which non-Jews were not allowed, and the other town populated entirely by non-Jews and Jews were not allowed in. As long as he is in the middle of the path, he can make each person he passes wonder if he is Jewish or not, but the moment he enters the Jewish town—or the opposite – then there is no doubt as to who the person is.

That is how a person should look at holiness and impurity in the world – they are like two completely different towns. *Kedushah*, holiness, has no ground in impurity, while the impurity has no hold in holiness. Hence, one who is not sure and wants to connect between something holy and something impure, that is a sign that he is not in the right “town.”

HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give Am Yisrael merits and to bring them into the right town so to speak, therefore He gave them so many *mitzvos* and the Torah. This is especially regarding the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*, which is equal to all the other *mitzvos*, as it envelops us on all sides – like that Jewish town where there is nothing to find except “*ure'isem oso*” – and you will see Him - Hashem Yisbarach.

Therefore, the Torah commands with regards to this *mitzvah*: “And you will see it...and you should not stray after your heart and after your eyes...” As long as you keep yourselves within the “town” without looking out, then there will be no doubts in your heart. But if you follow your eyes to look at things beyond the town then you are liable to develop doubts in your heart, and no one can predict what this results in. (*Daas Torah Shelach* p. 131)

#### Source for the Prohibition of Pride

The Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa was once asked by those close to him: In many places we see how *Chazal* condemn the desire for honor and for money. Where do we find a source in the Torah forbidding these desires?

The Rebbe replied that this is alluded to in this *passuk*: the letters following the letters of *lamed* and *beis* (*le"v*) are *gimmel* and *mem* (*gam*). The letters following *ayin*, *yud*

*nun* (*ayin*) are *kaf samech pei* (*keseif*), and when the Torah says “*Velo sasuru acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem*” it is alluding to the fact that we should also not go after the letters following the letters “*lev*” and “*ayin*” (heart and eye), which are “*gam*”, alluding to the desire of honor [as we find often in the *Gemara*: “*gam* alludes to more of something”] and the word “*keseif*”, money, which hints to the desire for money. (*Atarah Lerosh Tzaddik, Likutim Yekarim Shelach*)

#### A Segulah for Remembering Torah and Mitzvos

A *chassid* who was a very diligent scholar once complained to his Rebbe, Harav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, that he did not remember what he learned. The *tzaddik* immediately replied: “There is a *segulah* for this in the Torah – *‘velo sasuru acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem...lemaan tizkeru...’* (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh Shelach*)

The Chofetz Chaim would compare this to a person who lived in a moldy hovel with mud and dirt for the floor. One day, he decided to renovate it, but he had no money to do so. He walked around the market at a loss for ideas, and finally he noticed a beautiful painting of a scenery. With the last few pennies he had, he purchased the painting and hung it on the dirty wall, thinking that this would spruce up a bit the shabbiness of his home. But instead, the reverse happened: the beautiful painting only emphasized the dirt and dismalness that it was surrounded with...

The *nimshal* is that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave the Torah the power to elevate a person and to imbue his heart with holiness and purity. But in order for it to actually remain etched in his heart, he has to make sure first to be careful about “*velo sasuru*”, to clean his heart from forbidden thoughts. Only then, will the Torah beautify his soul and sanctify it with its holiness and the holiness of the *mitzvos*. Then the words “*Lemaan tizkeru v'asitem es kol mitvosai vehiyisem kedoshim l'Elokeichem*” will be fulfilled. (*Shemiras Halashon* Vol. II, Ch. 2)

## A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About  
Amen and Tefillah

### The Tefillos of 130 Grandchildren...

Several years ago, Rav Yisrael Dovid Bringer of Bnei Brak passed away. He was a scholarly and G-d fearing Jew, a carryover from an earlier generation, who left behind a large, beautiful family and many students who he had taught during his lifetime.

Nine years before his passing, Reb Yisrael Dovid was taken to the hospital because he did not feel well. His condition did not seem that dire, but as soon as initial tests were done in the emergency room, the family was surprised when the doctor somberly instructed that the patient be transferred immediately to the cardiac intensive care unit.

The family ran after the stretcher that was being wheeled rapidly through the corridors, and at the doorway of the room, they were told to wait outside. Meanwhile, doctors and other staff members entered and left the room, among them the department director. After administering treatment, he summoned the family to his office, asked them to sit down, and informed them:

“Your father’s condition is not simple at all. As far as we are concerned, he is critical, and is very close to the end of his life.”

The doctor then explained the condition in detail, in a grave tone, step by step, and finally lowered his eyes as he offered his conclusion: “The way I see it, your father doesn’t have more than a few hours left to live.”

This was a bombshell for the family: from one minute to the next, things had gone from bad to the worst.

One of the family members tried to ask the doctor to what extent the condition was irreversible and if there was even a small percentage of people with the condition that did survive. But the doctor evaded the question and merely said: “Pray...maybe a miracle will happen...”

In silence, the family filed into their father’s room. The scene was rather strange. Reb Yisrael Dovid lay on the bed; his expression was tranquil and he was fully conscious. He was unaware of the sword hanging over his head, while his healthy family surrounded his bed with broken, tortured expressions.

Reb Yisrael Dovid’s other sons, who had heard by phone about their father’s condition, hurried to leave whatever they were doing and headed for the hospital to be with their father in his final moments. One of them even brought with him *sefer Geshet Hachaim* in order to be able to read the *tefillos* recited when the soul departs. A sense of awe and solemnity pervaded the room.

After standing there for some time, with no change, the family began to daven. One after another, they pulled out their *Tehillims*, and they uttered the words with fervent emotions...

A mere five days later—in a drastically different atmosphere—the family gathered again at the hospital

once again. This time they were there to escort their healthy, vibrant father home. He was being discharged.

One of the sons offered to go to the department director’s office to sign the discharge papers. It was the same son who, five days earlier, had heard the doctor’s dismal prognosis for his father.

“Are you the one who was here five days ago?” the doctor began with a question.

“Yes,” the son replied.

“I remember that you asked me how much of a chance your father had and I evaded the question,” the doctor continued. “Now I can tell you that he really didn’t have much of a chance. You could say that one in every few thousand people come out of this situation...But, what can I tell you, we worked hard and succeeded!”

The doctor’s words, uttered with a broad smile and a tone that held more than a hint of pride in it, forced the son to correct the impression. He apologized to the doctor and asked if he could relate a story that might explain the miracle. The doctor agreed and the son began:

It was a few years ago, and the prime minister at the time suddenly suffered a stroke and fell into a coma from which he never awoke. His son, who was at his side constantly, suddenly turned to the doctor caring for his father and asked:

“Is there any chance that my father will come out of this critical state and return to life, or is this irreversible? Do you know someone of his age who ever emerged from such a coma and returned to life?”

The doctor thought for a bit and then replied candidly: “The truth is that medical literature has hardly any records of such cases, but if I remember correctly, here in our department, such a medical miracle did occur...”

The doctor went into his office and began to rifle through his files until he finally found the details about that particular patient. It was a Jew in his seventies living in Geulah in Yerushalayim.

Armed with the name and address, the prime minister’s son went to the man’s home, and knocked on the door. It was opened by an elderly man with a kindly face.

The son asked if he could come inside, and the man welcomed him in warmly. The son began to speak:

“I am the prime minister’s son. As you know, for some time, my father has been hospitalized in a coma, and we have brought the best doctors and are trying everything to help him recover.

“I came here because I heard that you were also in a similar state. You were like a vegetable in a rehabilitative institution and the doctors had given up on your life. But now I see that against all odds, you’ve come back to life. There must have been something that your family or doctors did that

brought you back from death. Can you please tell me about it? We have every resource available to help my father; we will try anything even if the chances are very slight...”

“Indeed,” the man replied. “There is a special procedure that I went through. There is a unique thing that my family did for me...”

The prime minister’s son’s face lit up, but the older man quickly tempered his happiness:

“I’m sorry, but I don’t think this thing can help your father.”

“Why?” the son’s face sobered up. “I already told you that we have every resource at our disposal and that we want to do everything for my father.”

“I’m sorry but it’s not relevant,” the older man insisted.

“But why?” the son was getting angry now. “Do you think your family had more resources than ours?! Tell me what you did already and finished!”

The older man’s face became very solemn as he asked a piercing question:

“Does your father also have sixty descendants, may they multiply, among them sons, daughters and grandchildren, who poured out their hearts and stormed the Gates of Heaven with their prayers, so that their father and grandfather should recover?! I do have, *baruch Hashem*, and they did that; throughout the time I was sick, my offspring did not stop davening. Is it any wonder then that I returned from death to life?! Can you now understand why I told you that this piece of advice is not relevant for your father...?”

“This is the story, whose details I had never confirmed,” Rabbi Bringer’s son concluded, and then said to the doctor sternly:

“You know very well that five days ago you gave my father no chance. You told me then with near certainty that he didn’t have more than a few hours to live, and now you want to take credit for saving him?!”

“My father has more than 130 children and grandchildren, who, from the moment they heard of his condition, did not sleep and stormed the Gates of Heaven with prayers and tears, pleading with the Healer of all flesh to spare their father and grandfather. How can you now arrogantly say ‘we succeeded!’?”

The department director could not remain indifferent to these words, uttered with such conviction and courage. He stood up and said, “You win.”

He parted from the father and the son with a warm handshake and then escorted them out of the room. His eyes remained on them as they walked down the corridor, and his expression was one of deep respect and admiration.

For the first time in his life, he had been taught an inspiring lesson about the power of *tefillah*.

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