

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Mizmor Shir to Conclude the Bikurim

“ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה אשר תביא מארצך” (כו ב)
It says in *Maseches Sofrim* (18 3) that the reason we recite *Mizmor Shir Chanukah Habayis* on Chanukah is because this was the song that the Leviim sang on Chanukah in the Bais Hamikdash. (*Maseches Sofrim* 18 3)

Harav Shlomo Zalman Baharan noted that by reciting this chapter on Chanukah it is also serves as a remembrance of the *mitzvah* of *Bikurim*, for the following reason: The latest time one could bring *Bikurim* to the Bais Hamikdash was the end of Chanukah (*Rambam Bikurim* 2 6) and being that when one brought *Bikurim* they would sing this *mizmor* (*Bikurim* 3 4), it was established that it be recited on Chanukah, when the time for doing that *mitzvah* came to an end.

Halichos Shlomo, Moadim, Chapter 17:11

“Hear Our Cries” in the Merit of “Knowing All Secrets”

“וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך ארמי אבד אבי” (כו ה)
“*V'anisa*” denotes a loud proclamation.” (*Rashi*, based on *Sotah* 32b)

The obligation to raise one’s voice when reciting *Mikra Bikurim* seems to contradict the words of the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 24b): “One who makes his voice heard in his *tefillos* is *mikattei emunah*, has diminished *emunah*”.

Harav Naftali Katz, the Rav of Lublin, explained:

In *Maseches Brachos* (ibid), *Rashi* explained that the reason one must not raise their voice during this *tefillah* is because one who raises his voice seems to show that he does not believe that HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears a whispered *tefillah*. Therefore, here he is permitted to raise his voice, because when reciting “*Arami oved avi*”, and as *Rashi* explains, “Because he thought to do so Hashem considered it as though he had done it,” the one reciting it proves his faith that HaKadosh Baruch Hu knows one’s thoughts, and therefore, there is nothing wrong about raising his voice.

Based on this concept, **Rav Yissachar**, the

Av Bais Din of Podkamin, explained the words of the *tefillah* of *Ana Bekoach*: “*Shavaseinu kabel ushema tza'koseinu, Yodea ta'alumos*” – don’t turn away from our “screams”, why? Because we believe that You “know all secrets.”

Kedushah Ubracha [by his grandson, Rav N. Katz, author of *Semichas Chachamim*] *Brachos* 24b; *Haggadah Shel Pesach Hilula DePischa – Vanitzak El Hashem*

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Answer Amen Every Day

“וענית ואמרת לפני ה'” (כו ה)

The word “*v'anisa*” alludes to answering amen [as it says (further on chapter 16): “*v'anu kol ha'am, and they say amen*”], and the word “*v'amarta*” alludes to the recital of the *brachah* [as it states (*Bamidbar* 6:22): “*ko sevorachu es Bnei Yisrael amor lahem.*”] This alludes to our obligation to answer amen for every *brachah*. The name of the *parashah* alludes to the same thing: “*Ki savo*” is an acronym of “*kol yom tishma brachos vetaaneh amen.*”

Kovetz Imrei Kodesh

Don't Forget Birchas HaTorah

“לא עברתי ממצותיך ולא שכחתי” (כו ג)

“And I did not forget” – to make a *brachah* on separating *maasros*.” (*Rashi*)

The commentaries ask: The obligation of *Birchas Hamitzvos* is *deRabbanan* (*Brachos* 15a), so how is it possible that the Torah explicitly mentioned this obligation here?

There is a well known explanation by the commentaries of *Rashi* (*Mizrachi; Gur Aryeh*) that although the *nusach* of the *brachah* is *deRabbanan*, the actual obligation to thank Hashem for sanctifying us with His *mitzvos* and giving us the merit to perform them is from the Torah.

Harav Aryeh Tzvi Frommer, the Kozhiglover Rav, offered another explanation of *Rashi's* words:

The obligation to make *brachos* on the *mitzvah* is also from the Torah, but in order to fulfill this obligation, we can be *yotzei* by reciting *Birchos HaTorah* [which is obligated *d'Oraisa* (Addition of the Ramban to *Sefer Hamitzvos Mitzvah* 9)], because the objective of learning is to bring about action. So this is what *Rashi* meant when he explained: “And I did not forget” – to make a *brachah*...” He is referring to *Birchas HaTorah* in which we also make a *brachah* on the fulfillment of all the *mitzvos*, including the *mitzvah* of separating *maasros*.

Shu"t Eretz Tzvi 27

This is also the place to bring a comment by **Harav Moshe Leib Shachor**, one of the *gaonim* of Yerushalayim:

The *Gemara* says in *Maseches Pesachim* (7b) that “with all the *mitzvos*, one makes the *brachah* on them *over* [=right before, and next to] when they are performed,” and it is not for naught that the *Gemara* used the word “*over*” *l'asiyasen*, rather it is because in this *passuk* that refers to the *Birchas Hamitzvos* this language is used: “*Lo avarti mimitzvosecha...*”

Avnei Shoham

The Chazzan Has To ‘Raise Up’ the Torah

“ארור אשר לא יקים את דברי התורה הזאת לעשות אותם” (כ זכו)

The *Yerushalmi* (*Sotah* 7 4) says: “*Asher lo yakim*”...that is the *chazzan* who stands.” The *Ramban* (*Al HaTorah*, here) explains the intention of the Yerushalmi that “Cursed is he who does not raise up” is said of the *chazzan* who does not raise and elevate the *Sefer Torah* to show it to the *tzibbur*. [For that reason, some communities call *hagbahas haTorah – hakamas haTorah*.]

In addition, **Harav Shmuel Yaffeh Ashkenazi**, author of *Yefeh Toar*, explained that the intention of the Yerushalmi is that “*arur*”, cursed, is said of the *chazzan* who davens and reads the Torah when he is seated, and not standing, as is befitting the Torah and its lofty status.

Yafeh Mareh, Yerushalmi Sotah 7 4; *Alei Tamar* ibid; *Yeshurun* Vol. II p 166

Dear Yid,

Answering amen is a powerful declaration about the Kingship of Hashem in His world, as *Chazal* said (*Shabbos* 119b): “What is amen? *Kel Melech ne'eman.*”

Ahead of Rosh Hashanah, when we crown Hashem our King over the whole world, let us accept upon ourselves to crown Him each morning by reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa.*

Birchos Hashachar, aloud! With *kavanah*! *Bechavrusa*!



Krias Shema – Parashas Vayomer (9)

Why Did the Torah
Say “Lema’an Tizkeru”
Twice?

Many have asked: Why did the Torah command twice “*lema’an tizkeru v’asisem es kol mitvosai*” after it already commanded in the earlier *passuk*: “*ure’isem oso uzechartem es kol mitzvos Hashem*”?

Harav Shraga Grossbard explained according to the Chofetz Chaim: The Torah wants to teach us about the importance that the Torah attributes to the trait of remembering. We find in the *Mishnah* (*Avos* 2 21) that when Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai listed the praise of his students, he praised Harav Eliezer ben Horkenos that he is a “*bor sod she’eino m’abed tipah*.” Why is this praise of a person if it is a natural trait that he is born with?

The Chofetz Chaim explained that although memory is indeed an inborn trait, it is in the hand of the person to take it in whichever direction he wants. For example, the Chofetz Chaim related that in his town of Radin lived an elderly man of about eighty who was able to remember in full detail the visit of the Kaiser in his birth town seventy years earlier, as though it had happened that moment. That was because the details of the visit interested him and aroused his curiosity and therefore, he paid attention to remember each and every detail.

The same is also true with Torah learning. Even when someone is not blessed with a phenomenal memory—if he has a strong desire in his heart to know and remember, then he will surely utilize the power of his memory to pay attention to every detail of what he is learning, then he will surely remember it. That is why Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai praised his student Rabi Eliezer for the power of his memory, because by paying attention and with a strong desire he was able to utilize it for Torah. The praise was so extensive that he said, “If all of the sages of Yisrael would be on one side of the scale and Rabi Eliezer ben Horkenos on the second side – he would weigh them all down.”

Now we can understand why the Torah stressed this mitzvah here over and over, to teach you about its virtue and importance, as a vital tool to knowing Torah. (*Daas Shraga Shelach*)

Turn Away from Bad
and Do Good

The Rebbe Harav Aharon of Belz explained that the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 34:15): “*Sur meira v’asei tov*” and we learn from here that in order to do good, one has to first distance themselves from bad, and then to fulfill the mitzvah completely and properly. But reality proves that it’s hard to remove the bad without being helped by doing mitzvos. Therefore the Torah begins by saying: “*Ure’isem.. uzechartem es kol mitzvos Hashem v’asisem osam*” and then you will have the strength to fulfill the mitzvah of “*velo sasuru*” and to banish the bad from within you. After that it will be easier to “do good” with completion – “so that you should remember and do all My mitzvos and You should be holy to your G-d.” (*Alim Lierufah, Shelach* 5767)

And You Should Be Holy
for Hashem

Knowledge of Torah sanctifies a person to be like an angel, as *Targum Yonasan* translates the *passuk* “*V’heyisem kedoshim l’Elokeichem*” – “and you should be holy like angels who Serve before Hashem.” And as the *Ohr Hachaim* wrote: “And we find that the *tzaddikim* achieve this lofty status of being called holy and angels, because through Torah the person’s virtue rises and grows endlessly until it is greater than that of the angels.”

The words of the Chazon Ish in his letter are well known (Vol. I, letter 13): “And although the person who merits knowledge of Torah, he goes among people and appears like a person, but in truth he is an angel who resides with the mortals and lives a life of nobility and is elevated above all praise.”

Silence That Released a Prisoner

The beautiful Jewish community in Antwerp, Belgium, is not used to uproar and storms. It is a quiet, calm community, whose members conduct tranquil Jewish lives, with a bit of old time flavor, in the heart of a cold, hostile European country. Among the millions of non-Jews, there is a spirit of pure, innocent Yiddishkeit, a continuation of the ancient Antwerp community, many of whose members were annihilated during the Holocaust.

Although it is a relatively small community, it has a sterling reputation, much because of the acts of *tzeddakah* and *chesed* that its members perform. Jewish Antwerp is home to numerous affluent Yidden, who have become renowned as *baalei chessed* who perform remarkable acts of giving and charity to others.

In the past, many of Antwerp’s Jews were engaged in Belgium’s thriving diamond industry. But over the years, many of them began to work in international commerce, primarily on the European continent, which offered many opportunities.

Reb Moshe, a member of an affluent family in Antwerp, did just that. After identifying the awakening commercial market in Eastern Europe, he decided to invest his money there. For several years, he worked importing and exporting merchandise from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and the opposite, and was very successful.

His business primarily focused on Russia. The man, aware of the rigidity of Russian clerks, tried to be very cautious in his business. For years, everything ran smoothly, until he once tripped up...A routine customs inspection of his merchandise turned up that he was importing products that were forbidden to be marketed in Russia. The authorities, wanted to show their force against foreigners as well, quickly arrested him and tossed him into prison. A quick trial was held a short time later and he was severely punished: no less than thirteen years in prison.

His family in Antwerp was frantic with worry. As a first step, they first hired the best lawyers in Russia, and spared no expenses. One family member, using ways that cannot be detailed, even transferred a seven digit sum to an anonymous, very influential destination in Moscow, but the money went down the drain and his brother’s fate went unchanged.

Meanwhile, in the prison, among the dozens of dangerous criminals, this Chassidic young man sat for several months, not knowing

how had fallen into such a foreign, strange place. He davened constantly to Hashem: “*Ana, hotziah mimasger nafshi, take my soul out of the bars!*”

During one of the rare phone calls that he was allowed to make to outside the prison, Reb Moshe told his brother, in a moment of turbulent emotions:

“Dear brother, it looks like you have already spent enough money on lawyers, and I am very grateful for that. But because the reality has proven that the verdict cannot be changed by any natural way, perhaps it is better to turn our efforts to the spiritual plane. Hashem is the Al-mighty, and He certainly has the power to sent me salvation. I have no idea how you will do it, but I am sure that *gedolei Yisrael* will have good advice for you...”

At the time, one of the prominent *rabbanim* of Eretz Yisrael visited Antwerp, the brother decided to meet with him to ask for his advice.

The rav listened attentively, rested his head between his hands and thought deeply, and then said:

“One of the most severe sins that many stumble with today is talking during davening. By contrast, being careful about this is very dear to Hashem, and many *yeshuos* have been attributed to doing so. If you accept upon yourselves to refrain from talking during davening, you will surely see *yeshuos* and your brother will be released from prison.”

Infused with *bitachon* and renewed energy, the family hastened to appeal to the *mispallelim* of the chassidish shul where they davened, and asked them to please help their brother by accepting upon themselves not to talk during davening.

It was very hard to persuade people, because it is not an easy request to implement, but ultimately, they were able to canvass seventeen people to sign a *nusach* of a detailed *kabbalah*, which also included a call to the other *mispallelim* to act like them and be partners to the mitzvah of *pidyon shevuyim*.

The Rav, who was still in Antwerp, was very pleased when he heard this and again, warmly blessed the family that the prisoner should be released very soon.

A few months passed, and no good news was forthcoming. The brother, who was already desperate for a *yeshuah*, called Eretz Yisrael, to the Rav’s home, and tearfully pleaded with the Rav to daven for his brother, who was still incarcerated.

The Rav spared no efforts and

traveled to Meron, where, at the *tziyur* of Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai, he davened and wept to Hashem that the wonderful *kabbalah* that the family and friends of the prisoner had undertaken should not be turned away, and that the prisoner should be released quickly, and thus Hashem’s Name should be sanctified.

Two more weeks passed in nerve wracking waiting. It was on the night of Hoshana Rabba when an emotional phone call arrived from Russian and informed the family that surprisingly, and against all odds, their brother had been released from prison.

Antwerp was in an uproar at the news of the remarkable miracle. Everywhere people went, they talked about the *yeshuah* that had occurred in the merit of refraining from speaking during davening. Those who knew even a bit about the complex legal situation that seemed to pose no chance for the prisoner were stunned, not believing the unexpected turnabout.

But it quickly emerged that their joy was somewhat premature: Although the man was acquitted of the crimes, he was not permitted to leave Russia because he did not have a valid visa. Rumors said that the authorities wanted to imprison him yet again for the crime of being illegally in the country. His friends were overcome with dread.

Again, the brother called the Rav in Eretz Yisrael and told him of the developments. “The will of Hashem is surely that the *mispallelim* of the shul should join the *kabbalah*; I’m sure that if everyone signs, then within a few days he will be home safely.”

This time, the job was easier, after all of Antwerp could speak of nothing but the miracle, the family had no trouble persuading the members of the shul as to how vital this was. The community Rav also invested all his energy, and the response was far beyond expectations: almost all the members of the shul joined the *kabbalah*.

Hardly a day passed after the goal was complete when the long awaited call from Russia came informing them that the authorities had retracted and decided to let the man leave the country and return home.

This wondrous story about the *yeshuah* spread like wildfire through Antwerp and the rest of the Jewish world, and caused tremendous *chizuk* regarding the prohibition of speaking during davening. Everyone saw how important this *kabbalah* was to Hashem, and how, against all odds, it was able to effect *yeshuos*.

Ubeichalo Omer Kavod, p. 81