

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah with Absolute Unity

"ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת ועשייתם אתם; אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה'" (כט ח-ט)

Harav Naftali Schwartz, the Rav of Mad, explained the reason these two *parshiyos* are adjacent to one another based on the explanation of Harav Dovid Bistriz, the Rav of Micheldorf on the *Yotzer* of the second day of *Succos*: "Ahalel bepeh velashon, lishmoa kol lachshon, kenam velakachtam beyom harishon":

The poet asks: Why do I have to praise "with my mouth and my tongue"? Doesn't HaKadosh Baruch Hu know our thoughts "He hears the sound of our whisper"? He explains: In thought, each person praises Hashem based on his level, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu "nam", commanded: "And you should take for yourselves on the first day." Chazal explain (*Vayikra Rabbah* 30 12) that the four species symbolize four groups in Am Yisrael, and they needed to be bound together because "HaKadosh Baruch Hu said, they will come as one group before Me and I will forgive them for all their sins." Therefore, we praise Him "with our mouth and our tongue" because only in this way will everyone be able to Praise Him equally, and then Klal Yisrael will be unified in their *tefillos*, as Hashem desires.

This is also alluded to in the placement of these *parshiyos*: "And you should keep the words of this covenant and you should do them" – in action not in thought. Thus we find that "You stand today all of you before Hashem" – unified and equal.

Bais Naftali

Daven In a Language That Cannot be Negatively Interpreted

"אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם" (כט ט)

Rashi explains on the *passuk* (*Iyov* 1:6) "And on the day Bnei Ha'Elokim came to stand beside Hashem,"-- "That day was Rosh Hashanah." From the words of Rashi it is apparent that the word "*hayom*" refers

to Rosh Hashanah. Why then, did Rashi not explain the same thing regarding "*Atem nitzavim...hayom*" that it was Rosh Hashanah

Harav Yechezkel Landau, the Noda B'Yehudah explained

The *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chaim* 582 2) wrote that one says during *Aseres Yemei*

.also have a negative connotation

Noda B'Yehudah Al HaTorah

Malchus Expressed by Shleimus

"אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל" (כט ט)

The Gaavad, Harav Yosef Tzvi Dushinski explained the seemingly repetitive language of "*kulchem...kol ish Yisrael*." He said that the intention of the Torah with the word "*kulchem*" was to describe the way Am Yisrael stood "before Hashem," not just as lip service, but rather "*kulchem – bechol levavchem ubechol me'odchem*."

The Gaavad then explained what we ask in the *tefillah* of Rosh Hashanah: "*Meloch al kol ha'olam kulo bichvodecha*" – here, too, it seems to be redundant language, and we explain that our intention is to ask that the Kingship of Hashem on the world should not be manifested only by the externalism of the creations, but rather, it should be a perfect Kingship manifested by their entire essence and being.

Toras Maharitz

Pesukim of Tehillim That Converted the Woodchopper

"וגורך אשר בקרב המחנה מחטב עציך" (כט י)

There was a story with a gentile woodchopper, who happened to be playing his trade near the room of the Noda B'Yehudah. At the time the Noda B'Yehudah was fervently reciting *Tehillim*, and the holiness of the *pesukim* that were said with a holy fire penetrated the heart of the woodchopper to the point that he converted.

Harav Menachem Mendel Shapiro, the Rav of Dragomiresti, derived an allusion to this beautiful story from this *passuk* "And the convert who is amid your camp from your woodchoppers" – an allusion to the woodchopper that converted because he was standing near the window of the Noda B'Yehudah's room.

Mo'aznei Tzedek

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Amen for a Long Life

"ראה נתתי לפניך היום את החיים ואת הטוב" (ל טו)

In *Maseches Brachos* (47a) Chazal said: "When who prolongs his amen – his days and years are prolonged." The *Yerushalmi* (ibid 8 8) adds: "One who answers a ...long amen, his days and his years are extended for good." The words of the *Bavli* and *Yerushalmi* are alluded to in this *passuk*: The acronym of "*nasati lefanecha hayom es hachaim*" is numerically equivalent to amen, to teach us that one who answers amen will merit to receive "*es hachaim v'es hatov*", life and good.

Misod Chachamim 22

Teshuvah: "*Zachreinu V'chaim*" [with a "*sheva*"] and explained: According to the rules of grammar, it should have said "*lachaim*" [with a *pasach*], but this could have also made it sound like "*lo chaim*", and it is preferable to daven on Rosh Hashanah in a language that does not have any ambiguous meanings

Similarly, the *Pesikta Zutresa* says on this *passuk*: "*Atem nitzavim*" – there is *hatzavah*—standing—for good and for bad..." Therefore, Rashi did not explain that "*hayom*" is Rosh Hashanah, because had it been Rosh Hashanah Moshe certainly would not have used the word *nitzavim*, which can

"Shaarei Shamayim Pesach, V'Otzrecha Hatov Lanu Tiftach"

Dear Yid!

A new year is approaching; this is the time to open the gate to a new beginning.

Did you know? You have the key to open all those gates. Yes!



The holy *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) says that all the gates open before someone who is careful to answer amen with *kavanah*. Take upon yourself to hear *Birchos Hashachar* from your friend each morning, begin your day by reciting amen and all the gates will open before you...

"Open for us Hashem...the gates of light...the gates of blessing...the gates of success...the gates of a good life...the gates of forgiveness...the gates of sustenance...the gates of *refuah sheleimah*...the gates of good news...the gates of *tefillah*...the gates of repentance."

Krias Shema – Parashas Vayomer (10)

Remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim

Parashas Vayomer concludes with mentioning Yetzias Mitzrayim, with the passuk: "Ani Hashem, I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of Egypt to be for you for a G-d, I am Hashem, Your Elokim." Thus we fulfill our obligation to mention Yetzias Mitzrayim every day of the year, an obligation learned from the passuk (Devarim 16:3): "L'maan tizkor es yom tzeischa me'Eretz Mitzrayim kol yemei chayecha." (Brachos 12b). There are many mitzvos in the Torah that we were commanded to do as a remembrance of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

The uniqueness of being taken out of Egypt is that through the wondrous miracles and signs that were performed before the multitudes of Klal Yisrael, our forbears who emerged from Egypt, it became as clear as possible that Hashem is the Elokim – the Creator of the World and its Leader. This was so obvious that there wasn't a single person in the world from one end to the other who did not admit this. Through this, the tangible emunah in His existence was established in the collective heart of the Jewish nation, and it is a pillar that will never collapse. (Sefer Hachinuchah Mitzvah 21)

Purification of the Mind On the Path to Emunah

The Maharal writes (Gevuros Hashem chapter 3): "The Torah established Yetzias Mitzrayim as the foundation of all foundations and the root of everything, and many mitzvos were established because of the exodus, through which we will have before our eyes this fundamental and it will never collapse...All this indicates that Yetzias Mitzrayim...is the foundation of emunah upon which everything was built. Although Hashem has performed countless miracles and wonders for Am Yisrael, the Torah did not stipulate that they need to be remembered the way it did for Yetzias Mitzrayim...because Yetzias Mitzrayim itself is equal to all the miracles."

Harav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk once asked Harav Bunim of Peshischa how he was able to reach the lofty levels he was on in emunah and

avodas Hashem? Harav Bunim replied with the words of the passuk (Yeshayah 40:26): "Raise your eyes upwards and see Who created this." But Rav Bunim said to him, after Yetzias Mitzrayim there is no other source of emunah other than remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim.

The grandson of the Kotzker Rebbe, the Shem MiShmuel of Sochatchov, asked: The Rambam (Yesodei HaTorah 2 2) proves that the Kotzker Rebbe's words were right, that one should reach a level of emunah by gazing at the world around him, which Hashem created. The Shem MisShmuel explained: Indeed, only after the mind was purified by the memory of Yetzias Mitzrayim can every person awaken to emunah through delving into Creation. And that is the form of emunah that the Rambam was referring to. Therefore, prior to Yetzias Mitzrayim, emunah was the lot of just a few select people, because they lacked this hisorerus. (Shem MiShmuel, V'eschanan)

Between Yetzias Mitzrayim and the Parashah of Tzitzis

Many have asked: what is the connection between Yetzias Mitzrayim and the parashah of tzitzis? This question is first asked in the Gemara (Bava Metzia 61b), which answers: "I am the One who discerned in Egypt between ... a bechor and [who was not] a bechor – and I am the One who will punish whoever binds a kalei ilan - a sap that is very similar to the color of techeiles extracted from the chilazon – onto his garment and says it is techeiles."

Rashi (Bamidbar 15:41) cites four additional explanations that connect between Yetzias Mitzrayim and tzitzis: 1. The tzitzis is on the corner of the garment "V'esa eschem al kanfei nesharim" (Shemos 19:4). 2. The four corners of the tzitzis correspond to the four languages of the Geulah. 3. The techeiles is derived from the root of "shechol", bereavement, alluding to the plague of the loss of the firstborns when Yisrael left Egypt. 4. Eight strands of tzitzis correspond to the eight days between Yetzias Mitzrayim and Krias Yam Suf.

Vechol Ma'aminim SheHu Levado Hu

The tefillos of the Yamim Noraim in Yeshivas Chevron had, as all its alumni agreed, a special flavor that was unmatched anywhere else. It was a flavor that remained with them long after they leave the yeshiva. The lofty tefillos were a combination of a special tizbbur that included no small number of eminent elders and gaonim of Yerushalayim, along with wonderful chazzanim. The latter were talmidei chachamin who, more than pleasing the ear with their sweet voices, made hearts tremble as they poured their souls in tefillah and swept the entire crowd up with them to their lofty and pure levels.

The tefillos of the Yerushalmi Maggid, Harav Shalom Schwadron, z"l, were especially renowned, for their unique nusach which he copied from several baalei tefillah in earlier generations, and then added many of his own nuances. With his unbelievable voice, Rav Shalom was able to produce a unique tefillah that penetrated the depths of the hearts of the listeners, and also gave rise to a generation of baalei tefillah who serve in the yeshiva world to this day.

It's hard to describe Reb Shalom's tefillah with mere words. It is possible that anyone who wasn't present will never be able to fully grasp what it was like. Reb Shalom, with his unique brilliance, was able to unite himself with the niggun and with the words of the tefillos, until they were all one entity. Each word took on a unique significance and interpretation that was expressed in his facial expressions and the rise and fall of his voice as he sang the accompanying song. Thus, the words "vechil ure'adah" were said with just that—trembling and awe. The words "kol demamah dakah" were said in a quiet near whisper. The declaration of "uteshuvah utefillah..." were said in such a way that there was no one in the bais medrash who was not aroused to teshuvah and tefillah.

Reb Shalom was successful in conveying and illustrating to thousands of mispallelim who surrounded him everything that they yearned for in their tefillos—the pleasantness, the longing, the holiness, and the glory of the Kingship, and they all followed him like sheep after their shepherd.

This story takes place on that year that the Chevron Yeshiva did not merit to hear Rav Shalom's extraordinary voice. That Rosh Hashanah, Reb Shalom was compelled to be in Switzerland for Yom Tov, on a holy mission. He was among a very different community, with an unfamiliar style and character.

In Eretz Yisrael, many were disappointed to hear that they would not merit to hear Reb Shalom davening that year, but on the other hand, the Swiss

community was overcome with anticipation. Reb Shalom, the renowned maggid and legendary baal tefillah was going to daven in the yeshiva in the city where he was staying. Those in that yeshiva who had merited to hear Rav Shalom in their youth enthused to their friends with superlative descriptions. Many of them chose to remain for Rosh Hashanah with Reb Shalom, in the yeshiva, with the hope that he would daven for the amud, and inspire the Swiss community with his tefillos.

Rosh Hashanah eve. When Reb Shalom's dignified form appeared at the entrance to the yeshiva, hundreds of pairs of curious eyes followed him as he walked slowly between the aisles. His face was somber and the mispallelim turned towards him and nodded their heads, as they wished him a gut yom tov, which was returned with a nod.

Maariv began with "Barchu", sung in the traditional niggun and Reb Shalom was quickly swept up in his thoughts of that poignant niggun that accompanied the first Barchu of Rosh Hashanah, far away in Eretz Yisrael. The memory triggered a burst of emotions but Rav Shalom suppressed it and focused solely on the words of the tefillah: "Ki heim chayeinu...v'ahavascha al tasir mimenu 'olamim..."

Rav Shalom davened Shacharis vasikin, as was his habit for many years, and each tune reminded him over and over again of the tefillah in Yerushalayim, which could not possibly be duplicated; in his heart he felt the intensity of the exile and its travails.

During the short break between Shacharis and Mussaf, the roshai yeshiva approached Rav Shalom and pleaded with him to honor them by davening Mussaf before the amud. Reb Shalom vacillated but ultimately agreed, and a thrum of excitement rippled through the crowd. This was no small thing for them, to participate in the tefillos of such an eminent and remarkable baal tefillah. The chazzan announced "Ashrei" and everyone, laymen alongside the youth and the yeshiva students, were swept up after him with holy emotions. Reb Shalom decided not to forego even one

note of his regular nusach of tefillah, and the tizbbur, despite not being used to such a long davening, did not rue for one moment the passing time.

Reb Shalom began Chazaras Hashatz in a low voice that slowly grew louder, until it reached a crescendo as he neared Kedushah. When he began reciting Kedushah, he was able to literally make the room tremble, and just like in Chevron, the entire tizbbur, young and old, responded thunderously: "Kadosh, Kadosh Kadosh...Baruch Kevod Hashem mimkomo..."

Reb Shalom continued his fiery tefillah: "Elokeinu v'Elokei Avoseinu heyei im... ha'omdim levakesh tefillah vesachanunim..." when suddenly, he recoiled and stepped back.

The sound of bells—a foreign and strange noise—suddenly penetrated through the windows of the shul. These were notes of impurity coming from the nearby church, and they disturbed Reb Shalom's pure tefillah. His tremendous heart shattered inside him and he could not continue.

The crowd looked at him in surprise. The mispallelim had long become inured to the sound, and hardly even heard it, but Reb Shalom's ears were very sensitive. He could hardly suppress the storm in his heart. When he was finally able to continue, the words "gashim mul aron hakodesh b'eimah, leshakech ka'as vecheimah" the words burst out of his mouth in a new tone, which combined placidity with fear, awe and kingship.

In time, when Rav Shalom returned to Yerushalayim, he integrated this tune into the piyut of Vechol Maaminim. He felt it to be a teshuvah hamishkal for that jarring disturbance he had experienced during Mussaf in a foreign land. Against the backdrop of the tolling of heresy, Rav Shalom sang a song of pure faith in Hashem: "Vechol ma'aminim sheHu levado Hu..."

Siach Shmuel Uvdos Vehanagos p. 526