

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Praying for the Sick – Without Mentioning a Name

“וירא אליו ה'” (יח א)

“To visit the sick.” (Rashi)

How does Rashi derive that this was the reason Hashem appeared to Avraham?

**Rabbeinu Eliezer of Germeiza**, author of the *Rokeach*, offers a remarkable explanation:

In *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* (16b) Chazal say that one of the things that has the *segulah* to tear up a person’s decree is ‘changing his name’ and according to that, we can say that when davening for a sick person, it is preferable to refrain from mentioning his name as much as possible. In this *parashah*, the Torah writes: “*Vayeira eilav*” without mentioning Avraham’s name, and thus Rashi learns that because Avraham was sick and HaKadosh Baruch Hu came to visit him and bless him, therefore his name was not mentioned.

*Yalkut Reuveni; Nachalas Yaakov – Avnei Shoham 10*

### Mamrei Instructed to Make the Brachah “Al Hamilah”

“וירא אליו באלני ממרא” (יח א)

“He [Mamrei] advised him regarding the *milah*, therefore, He appeared to him [Avraham] in [Mamrei’s] territory. (Rashi)

The commentaries ask: Is it possible that Avraham Avinu needed to follow Mamrei’s advice in order to fulfill Hashem’s mitzvah?

**Harav Yosef Moshe Shapiro**, the Maggid of Zaloshitz, offered an insightful explanation for this:

There is a *halachah* (*Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 265 1) that one who circumcises his friend’s son makes the *brachah*: “*Baruch Atah...Asher Kidshanu...vetzivanu al hamilah*,” and not “*limol*”, because the term “*limol*” means that the one who is doing the *bris* is the one obligated to do the mitzvah (*Pesachim* 7b), and the principle of

the mitzvah is not incumbent on him, but rather on the father. But the *poskim* question whether (*Yoreh Deah ibid* 2) in a case where the father circumcises his own child, that does not change the wording of the *brachah*. The question is if he should say “*al hamilah*” or perhaps because the main obligation of the mitzvah is his, he should recite “*limol*.”

Therefore, we can explain Rashi to mean that because Avraham circumcised himself (*Bereishis Rabbah* 49b), he was unsure of which term to use, and therefore he consulted Mamrei, who gave him the advice to make the *brachah* “*Al Hamilah*.”

*Bris Avram*

### Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

#### Wake Up Quickly So As Not to Miss Amen

“וכמו השחר עלה ויאצו המלאכים בלוט לאמור קום...” (יט טו)

The acronym of “*ukemo hashachar alah va'yaitzu hamalachim*” is numerically equivalent to amen [with the kollel], and it is known that amen is numerically equivalent to “*malach*” “*leimor kum*” – the *passuk* is alluding to us that a person must hurry to arise to daven *Shacharis* with a *minyan*, so as not to miss out on answering amen, and the angels that are generated by doing so.

*Chen Vachessed*

#### Make a Brachah on the Food Before Giving it to Others

“ואקחה פת לחם וטעדו לבכם אחר תעברו” (יח ה)

Avraham seemingly should have said: “And I will give you bread.” Why does it say “and I will take?”

**Harav Tzvi Yitzchak Abramowitz**, the Rav of the Chassidic Kiryah in Chatzor Haglitlit,

explained:

The *Be'er Heitev* writes (*Orach Chaim* 213 1) that one who seeks to serve his friend food or drink should first make a *brachah* on it himself and then offer to his friend, because the *Gemara* says (*Brachos* 35b) that as long as a person does not make a *brachah* on the food it is not considered to be his.

That is what Avraham said to his guests: First, “I will take bread” – in order to make a *brachah* on it, and only afterwards will I give you “and you can eat your fill.”

*Ta'am Hatzvi*

### Hakadosh Baruch Hu Hears a Whispered Tefillah

“ותשא את קלה ותבך; וישמע אלקים את קול הנער ויקרא מלאך אלקים אל הגר מן השמים ויאמר לה מה לך הגר אל תיראי כי שמע אלקים את קול הנער באשר הוא שם” (טז-יז)

Although Hagar was the one who raised her voice, Hashem heard “the voice of the youth” – why?

**Harav Yosef Moshe Shapiro**, the Maggid of Zaloshitz—explained:

Chazal said (*Brachos* 24b): “One who makes his voice heard in his *tefillah* – is of diminished faith,” because he is showing that he believes that Hashem does not hear a whispered prayer (*Rashi ibid*). Therefore it is understood that because Hagar raised her voice, therefore Hashem heard specifically the boy’s *tefillah*, as he was so week he surely cried and prayed silently. And thus we can also explain the rest of the *passuk*: “And the angel of Hashem called...*Mah lach Hagar*” – why are you raising your voice in prayer? Are you worried that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not hear a whispered prayer? Do not be afraid of that, because “Hashem has heard the voice of the child,” specifically “*b’asher hu sham*” – because he was so sick and weak that he could not raise his voice.

*Bris Avram*



**Marking One Year Since the Passing of the Mashgiach HaRav Dov Yaffe, zt"l**  
In honor of the *yahrtzeit* on Sunday 19 Cheshvan we present a passage from the words of *chizuk* that he delivered at a Bney Emunim gathering in Elul 5776:

“HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world in a way that the most needed items, such as oxygen and water, and the most easily found and available. The Alter of Kelm said that the same is true in spirituality. Because *emunah* is a fundamental of spiritual life, that is why it is easily obtainable: ‘*Se’u marom yedeichem ure’u mi bara eileh.*’ (*Yeshayah* 40:26). How wondrous it is to see that the ‘amen’, in which all the fundamentals of *emunah* are contained, is readily available everywhere. With every answer of amen, we have the opportunity to remember HaKadosh Baruch Hu, to live our role in this world and to live with the Creator.”

Amen is Readily Available Because of Its Necessity



## Birchas Asher Yatzar



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Nekavim Nekavim Chalulim  
Chalulim

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 1 3) explained the *passuk*: “Ki gadol Atah v’oseh niflaos” (Tehillim 86:10), as follows: “Rabi Tanchum said: If this leather bag has a hole the size of a pinhead, then all its air seeps out, while a person is comprised of many *mechilos* [mechilim], holes, and yet the air does not seep out of him. Who can do this? “Atah Elokim levadecha, You alone.” (ibid)

Indeed, when we want to describe the extent of the brilliance concealed in the body’s organs, we can encapsulate this by recognizing the fact that they are created in a way of “*nekavim nekavim chalulim chalulim*”, because that defines all the organs. This is how the commentaries explain it (See *Tur Bais Yosef* and *Bach* beginning of *siman* 6):

The human body has many holes that serve various purposes. The head has two holes where the eyes are set through which a person sees everything around him. Under the eyes are the nostrils, through which we breathe, smell and take out the excess phlegm from the body. Below that is the mouth, intended for speaking and eating. Inside the mouth is the hole for the esophagus, which carries food to the stomach, and the trachea, through which a person breathes air into his lungs and is able to express speech from his throat. Thus, our body is full of holes, some of which are externally visible and others that are inside the body, and they are all made with such wisdom and brilliance, so that they can serve their purpose in the most effective way.

Likewise, the person’s body is also built with many cavities and spaces, such as the brain cavity, where the brain is found, the mouth, where the tongue and teeth are found, the heart cavity through which the blood is sent to all the body’s organs, the abdominal cavity where the food is processed, the pulmonary cavity where air passes through for cleansing, and from there the oxygen is sent to the blood, and more.

Aside for all this, the *Tur* writes (ibid) that the words “*chalulim chalulim*” are numerically equivalent to 248, corresponding to all the organs in the body. The Gra explains (*Imrei Noam Brachos* 60b) that because: “There is no organ that does not have a cavity, and even the hairs have a cavity.” then we find that with this language we are thanking Hashem for the creation of all the organs.

## Chalulim or Chalalim

The *Tur* (ibid) writes that one should say “*chalulim*” and not “*chalalim*” and the *Darkei Moshe* (ibid) explains that this is because the word “*chalalim*” denotes killing, such as “*bechalal cherev*” (*Bamidbar* 19 16). The *Bais Yosef* explains it differently, that the word “creation” cannot be applied to a *chalal*, because *chalal*—emptiness—connotes an absence or a void. But the word *chalulim*—meaning something hollow—applies to the organ itself, which is created hollow.

The *Bach* questions the opinion of the *Bais Yosef* because we have found the term “creation” applying to a void as

well, as we say “*Uborei choshech*,” even though darkness is the absence of light. The *Taz* (*Orach Chaim* 6 1) further questions the *Bais Yosef* and notes that if the word “*chalulim*” is used for the organs, then we should also have to say “*nekuvim*” and not “*nekavim*.”

The *Pri Megadim* (ibid) explains the difference and says that one can apply the word “creation” to darkness and *nekavim*, because in order to make them, action must be taken; for darkness – the light must be removed, and to obtain a cavity—the insides must be removed. But the cavities are formed themselves, by the creation of the organ that surrounds them, and therefore, it is not possible to say “*ubara ... chalalim...*”

Galuy Vayadua Lifnei Kisei  
Kevodecha

Later in the *brachah* we declare that only before HaKadosh Baruch Hu is “revealed and known” the depths of wisdom with which our bodies were created, in the most perfect, ideal manner.

Indeed, many of the commentaries have discussed the fact that we mention in this *brachah*: “*Galuy vayadua lifnei kisei kevodecha*”—why do we specifically thank for this in this language and not in the more commonly used “*lefanecha*”?

The Gra explains that this wording was established in order to refute the claims of those who mistakenly think that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not oversee the lowliest and smallest creations. Therefore, the *brachah* was composed specifically with this language, to teach us that even from such a lofty place where even the angels cannot reach, HaKadosh Baruch Hu observes and watches even the lowliest and smallest parts of His world, because nothing can work without His *Hashgachah*. (*Imrei Noam Brachos* 60b)

Rabbi Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, the president of Bney Emunim, offers a unique insight into this subject: Already during the first minutes of the day, in the midst of reciting *Birchos Hashachar*, we testify to the unique connection between us and HaKadosh Baruch Hu, a connection that is manifested through each and every one of our organs, which the Creator, Who resides in the Highest of the Highs, observes from the *Kisei Kevodecha* at any given moment. (See *Hagahas HaRema Orach Chaim* 6 1)

So we find in *Birchos Hashachar*, when we thank Hashem for the good that He does with us each day, the fundamental of the strong bond between us and the Creator, a bond that reaches until “*Kisei Kevodecha*.” As such, we have to recite them in the most perfect way, with the full awareness that it is impossible to exist at all, even for one minute, without needing the *chassadim* of Hashem. And we can strengthen and complete this awareness through being careful to answer amen after the *brachos*, which is an unmatched declaration of *emunah*, faith.

The Hidden “Chavrusa” For *Birchos Hashachar*

When the renowned Yerushalmi chassid, Harav Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, ז”ל, the grandfather of Harav Yisrael Grossman, ז”ל, was young, he took up his wandering staff and set out on the long and perilous trip from Yerushalayim to the court of his great Rebbe, the Bais Aharon of Karlin. For years, he was overcoming with longing for his Rebbe, and unable to bear it anymore, he decided to travel to him.

This was not the first time Rav Yitzchak Dovid had undertaken the long journey to see his Rebbe. Twenty years earlier, when he was a little boy, before settling in Eretz Yisrael, his father, Rav Mordechai took him to receive a parting *brachah* from their Rebbe the Bais Aharon. At the time, the young boy merited to shake the holy hand of his Rebbe and to receive a *brachah* from him.

On this trip, the first time he entered his Rebbe’s home, in the greatest state of awe and fear, Harav Yitzchak Dovid was astonished when the Rebbe lovingly took his hands and whispered almost to himself: “I already shook these hands once...” Harav Yitzchak Dovid was left merely to nod his head with emotion and amazement at the Ruach Hakodesh so clearly displayed before his eyes.

When Rav Yitzchak Dovid arrived at the holy *heichal*, he felt a calmness pervading his body. After years of yearning and longing, finally, his soul had found balm. Rav Yitzchak Dovid knew that his time was limited, and he tried to utilize every minute. He was bound to the Rebbe with cords of love, and hardly moved from his presence, hoping to fill his reserves in a way that could keep him going for a long time to come.

The Rebbe, in turn, showered the young *chassid* with love and drew him exceptionally close. He was open in his words of endearment and did not conceal his admiration for the young man from those close him, as evident in the following story:

The Bais Aharon of Karlin kept to a rigorous daily schedule. He hardly slept and spent all his time engaged in Torah and *avodas Hashem*; a large part of his time was spent in solitude.

His holy *avodah* began in the small hours of the night. After a short rest on his bed, he would rise up early and learn Torah in depth. Then he would purify himself in the *mikveh* near his home and from there, he would go to his room and begin the *avodah* of the morning by reciting *Birchos Hashachar* aloud and with great *kavanah*, a routine that took him some time.

The Rebbe insisted that during these few hours of the morning, he was to be alone in his room. No one saw him in his *avodah*, but rumor had it that it was unbelievably special. Many of the Chassidim yearned to witness it, but the Rebbe insisted on carrying it out in private, with great modesty.

Rav Yitzchak Dovid was different. As noted, his yearning for the Rebbe was boundless, and having just arrived from Eretz Yisrael, he felt that he could allow himself a bit more. He resolved that he had to be a partner to those lofty moments even if only once in his life.

In the darkness of night, while most people were sleeping deeply in their beds, Rav Yitzchak Dovid arose and headed for the Rebbe’s home. He waited quietly until the Rebbe emerged to go to the *mikveh*, and then quietly slipped into the Rebbe’s room on tiptoe and hurried to hide behind a long thick coat that was hanging on the wall.

He huddled in his corner in terrified silence, waiting expectantly for the Rebbe to return from the *mikveh*. Each moment felt like an eternity; he dreaded being discovered, but he hoped that the darkness in the room at that time, together with his efforts to conceal himself as best as possible would prevent the Rebbe from discovering him, at least before he’d hear *Birchos Hashachar* from his mouth.

Finally, he heard the Rebbe’s footsteps approaching the room. The door opened and the Rebbe entered, his face resembling that of a Heavenly Angel. Not waiting even a moment, the Rebbe began reciting *Birchos Hashachar* with enthusiasm and *dveikus*, each word uttered slowly, in a moving singsong.

Rav Yitzchak Dovid was so overjoyed he could hardly contain himself. The effort had been worth it. He listened excitedly to the Rebbe’s *brachos* and made sure to answer amen after each one. During those lofty moments, it seemed to him as if all of creation was singing through the Rebbe’s throat, and his soul almost departed from the sweetness and longing of it all.

Finally, the Rebbe concluded his recital of the *brachos* and turned to leave the room to continue his *avodas Hashem*. Rav Yitzchak Dovid waited for a few minutes until he heard the echo of the Rebbe’s footsteps fading. Then, he silently slipped out of the room, his feet nearly dancing at the great merit.

He thought he had fulfilled the yearning of his soul, but no. Once Rav Yitzchak Dovid tasted the flavor of those wondrous moments,

he was once again in a state of hunger. The next night, he tossed and turned with yearning, and when the appointed time came, he could not help himself. Again, his legs carried him to the Rebbe’s room.

This time as well, he waited for the Rebbe to go to the *mikveh* and then slipped inside to the same hiding place as the day before. After a few minutes, again he heard the Rebbe’s voice reciting the *brachos* with *kavanah* and in that pleasant voice. Rav Yitzchak Dovid, who naively thought that the Rebbe did not know that he was there, answered amen with *kavanah*, and then continued hiding until he had an opportunity to slip out of the Rebbe’s room.

Over the next few days Rav Yitzchak Dovid continued this practice until it became virtually routine. Those lofty moments in the Rebbe’s presence forged deep impressions in his soul, and elevated him to great heights.

As stated, Rav Yitzchak Dovid thought that the Rebbe was not aware of his presence, but one morning, when the Rebbe was in his room, together with the hidden *chassid*, an elegant coach suddenly pulled up to the house. A familiar figure emerged; it was one of the Rebbe’s wealthy *chassidim*, who quickly strode to the Rebbe’s room, and without knocking, entered the room seeking to speak to the Rebbe urgently. He noted that he had to come so early because he had to depart on a business trip right away. But the Rebbe was disinclined to respond to his request, because this was the time that the Rebbe was strict to spend alone. But the *chassid* insisted and pleaded...When the Rebbe realized that this *chassid* would not leave so fast, he turned to him somewhat accusingly and pointed to the large coat hanging on the wall:

“There, behind that fur coat, is hiding a young *chassid* who is as dear to me as the pupil of my eye, yet, I cannot speak to him one word at this hour, and you want me to speak to you about worldly matters?!”

Thus, Rav Yitzchak Dovid realized that that with his spiritual vision the Rebbe had long discovered his secret, and yet, because of his great love for him, had tacitly permitted it to continue. The wealthy man left the room with his head bowed, and the Rebbe began his *avodas Hashem*, reciting *Birchos Hashachar* with *kavanah* and great emotion, as was his habit, and behind the heavy coat, Rav Yitzchak Dovid fervently answered amen.

Gadol B’Yisrael Vol. 1, p. 56