

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

"Eleven Stars, Twelve Tribes"

הנה חלמתי חלום עוד והנה השמש והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים משתחווים לי" (לז ט)

In the well known song "Echad Mi Yodea" that we say on Pesach night, we mention the tribes in the number they appeared in Yosef's dream: "eleven stars." But aren't there actually "twelve tribes" as mentioned in the next phrase? Why then are only eleven mentioned?

The *Chasam Sofer* explains: We mean to note the revelation of this dream, that there will always be eleven tribes subjugated to a king that will rise up from the twelfth tribe, and *chalilah* not to a king from a foreign nation. As *Rashi* explains on the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:10): "Hu *ascha vayecheonenecha*" – of you there will be *Kohanim*, of you there will be *Nevi'im* and of you there will be kings."

The *Maharal Tzitz* further explains according to the *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 84 15) that from the fact that Yosef included his eleven brothers – with Reuven – as one in his dream, Reuven thus learned that he had not sinned in what he did with Bilhah. We can say that therefore, that the composer of the song emphasized the eleven tribes that were mentioned in this dream, in order to declare to all that Reuven did not sin.

Toras Moshe; Haggadah Shel pesach Birchas Hashir

Yosef Davened in the Bais Hamikdash

וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה תַעֲבָה בְּשֵׂדָה" (לז טו)

"And a man found him – this is Gavriel." (*Rashi*)

Why did the Torah seek to teach us by noting that Yosef was "going astray in the field?"

Harav Yehonasan Eibshitz explains:

Maseches Sanhedrin (95b) explains that when Yaakov left to Charan, the way was shortened for him so that he could daven in the place of the Mikdash. Thus we can say that that was why Hashem sent Yosef astray when he went to Egypt, so that he should pass "the field" – the Makom Hamikdash [as the *Midrash* says (*Bereishis Rabbah* 15 2): "There is no *sadeh* [field] other than the Bais Hamikdash"] and should daven there.

The words are specified here in the words of the *passuk*: Just like Yaakov saw angels at the site

of the Mikdash, as it says (*ibid* 28:12): "And he dreamed...and there were Heavenly angels", so, too, when Yosef reached the site of the Mikdash he met the Angel Gavriel who served there (see *Rashi Yoma* 77a beginning with *Levush*.)

Tiferes Yehonasan

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

To Give the "Kos" on a "Kaf"

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הַכּוֹס עַל כַּף פְּרֵעָה" (מ יא)

The "kos", cup, is numerically equivalent to amen. "Kaf" is numerically equivalent to 100. If we want to serve the King of kings properly, then we have to make sure to put the "kos al kaf", to complete each *brachah* by answering amen.

Tiferes Tzvi p. 29

Gratitude for Even a Partial Salvation

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלָהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנָו נַפְשִׁי" (לז כא)

Harav Yosef Yisrael Deutsch the Rav of Balassag-yarmat, taught a great fundamental from this *passuk*: Even though while he was in the pit, Yosef was in great danger from the snakes and scorpions that filled it, the Torah calls Reuven's act a "hatzalah", because through it Yosef was spared the great danger that hovered over him when his brothers wanted to kill him.

The Chashmonaim fulfilled this as a practical *halachah*, as cited in *sefer Yosifun* (Chapter 20) that when they were able to purify the Mikdash, even before the general war was over, they did not refrain from praising Hashem for this partial miracle.

Hence we can understand the reason that in the wording of *Al Hanissim* we first praise "Al hanissim...ve'al hateshuos v'al haniflaos..." and only then do we mention "al hamilchamos", to show how the Chashmonaim took care to praise Hashem for "al hanissim" for the partial miracles even before the full victory over the Greeks.

Ben Gami

The Uniqueness of Reuven's Repentance

וַיִּשָּׁב רְאוּבֵן אֶל הַבּוֹר" (לז כט)

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to him: A person has never sinned before Me and repented, and you were the first to begin with *teshuvah*." (*Bereishis Rabbah* 84 19)

Many have asked about the words of this *Midrash*: We know that Adam Harishon and Kayin did *teshuvah*. Why is Reuven considered the first to have done *teshuvah*?

There are a few explanations for this:

1. *Harav Bunim of Peshischa* explained: In *Maseches Shabbos* (55b), *Chazal* tell us: "Anyone who says Reuven sinned is making a mistake." Based on this *Gemara* we find that Reuven did not really sin; he just stumbled by touching on a sin, and yet he had so much *Yiras Shamayim* that he repented as though he had transgressed a serious sin. This act of "*teshuvah techilah*", even before he sinned, was first done by Reuven.

This is clear from the words of the *Midrash*: "*Mei'olam lo chata adam lefanai v'asah teshuvah*" – it has never happened that a person has "not sinned" before me, and still, he has done *teshuvah*.

2. *Harav Yaaov Aryeh of Radzimin* explained: Adam Harishon and Kayin repented only after they found out about the punishment coming to them. But Reuven was the first that did "*teshuvah techilah*" before he knew how he would be punished.

3. The *Emunas Moshe* of Alexander answered this according to what is told about *Harav Saadya Gaon*. Each day he would fast and engage in penitence in order to repent, explaining that because on this day, he reached a loftier level, and he learned additional concepts about the Greatness of Hashem, therefore, he had to repent for the fact that on previous days he did not serve his Creator in accordance with his current understandings.

We can say that Reuven acted similarly, as the *Midrash* says: "*Mei'olam lo chata adam*" – because of the fact that he became closer "*lefanai—before Me*" as Reuven was the first to feel a need to repent out of his closeness to his Creator.

Divrei Avi 2; Shu"t Chashavah Letovah 44

Who Performed Miracles for Our Fathers In Those Days At This Time. Amen.

The letters *aleph mem nun* come in the order of the *aleph beis* before the letters *beis, nun, samech*, which form "**beness**", miraculously. This teaches us that the miracle follows the amen." (*Ner Yisrael* [Kozhnutzer Maggid] *Kavanas Chanukah*)

During the days of Chanukah, which are auspicious for miracles, let us strengthen our answering of amen. This merit will advocate for us that we should be showered with miracles and wonders at all times.



Birchas Hamazon – The Order of Birchas Hamazon

Four Brachos As One

Before we begin to explain *Birchas Hamazon* itself, we will first detail a bit about the structure of it, how many brachos it includes, and who composed them.

As explained in the introduction, the source of our obligation to thank Hashem after eating with *Birchas Hamazon* is from the Torah, and as Chazal taught us (*Brachos* 21a), from the *passuk* (*Devorim* 8:10): “*V’achalta vesavata uveirachta es Hashem Elokecha.*”

The *Rishonim* write that the actual wording of *Birchas Hamazon* was not stipulated in the Torah, and in early days, each person would make a *brachah* after his food in his own personal *nusach*. Over the generations, Moshe, Yehoshua, Dovid Hamelech, Shlomo, and the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah composed the four brachos that we say today, each *brachah* at a different time, as detailed below. (*Rashba Brachos* 48b)

Thus, despite the fact that we call it “*Birchas Hamazon*” in the singular language, in actuality, the *nusach* of *Birchas Hamazon* that we have today is comprised of four brachos, which Chazal compiled into one long *brachah* (*Brachos* 48b). The *poskim* also write that the division of these brachos—three of them, *Birchas Hazan*, *Birchas Ha’aretz*, and *Birchas Boneh Yerushalayim*, are obligated from the Torah. The source of these brachos is from the *passuk* “*v’achalta vesavata uveirachta*”, and therefore they are considered like one *brachah* (*Levush Orach Chaim* 188 6). Another *brachah* was stipulated for us by the words of Chazal, and that is the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv*. (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 188 1)

Order of the
Composition of the
Brachos

The order of how the brachos were composed is brought down in *Gemara Brachos* (48b), which says:

“Rav Nachman says: Moshe established for Yisrael the *Birchas Hazan* when the *mann* descended for them. Yehoshua established for them *Birchas Ha’aretz* because they entered the land. Dovid and Shlomo established *Boneh Yerushalayim*. Dovid composed “*al Yisrael amecha v’al Yerushalayim irecha*” and Shlomo composed “*al habayis hagadol vehakadosh.*” *Hatov Vehameitiv* was established in Yavneh, for the fallen of Beitar. Rav Masna says: That day that the fallen of Beitar were buried, in Yavneh they composed the

brachah of *Hatov Vehameitiv*. *Hatov* – that they did not smell, and *hameitiv* – that they were buried. Chazal tell us that the order of *Birchas Hamazon* is as follows: the first *brachah* is *Birchas Hazan*. The second is *Birchas Ha’aretz*, the third is *Boneh Yerushalayim* and the fourth is *Hatov Vehameitiv*.”

However, we need to know that all three of the first brachos are derived from the words of the *passuk*, and they were certainly recited even before Dovid and Shlomo and the others who composed the brachos did so. They had a different *nusach* and over the generations it was expanded as it became relevant.

Allusions to the Order
of Birchas Hamazon

The record keepers found references to the four brachos of *Birchas Hamazon* from the wording of Yaakov’s blessing to his sons (*Bereishis* 49:25): “*Birchos shadayim varachem*” – “*shaday*”im” are the brachos that were composed by Shlomo, Dovid, Yehoshua and Moshe, and “*rechem*” are the 248 words in *Krias Shema*. From *Birchas Hamazon* and *Krias Shema* as one, Am Yisrael suckles all the abundance that is given to them in this world. (*Ben Yehoyada Birchos Hashem*)

Another allusion to the three brachos that are obligated from the Torah is learned from Rav Chaim the brother of the Maharal of Prague, from the *passuk* referring to the *Shulchan* (*Shemos* 25:24): “*Vetzipisa oso zahav tahor.*” זהב is an acronym for *zan*, *ha’aretz*, *boneh*. (*Iggeres Hatiyul, Chelek Haremez*, 7)

The *Mateh Moshe* (*Amud Ha’avodah* 351) expounds even further: “If you want to provide a protection for your wealth, like a person makes a coating for something to be protected from ruin and loss, then “*vetzipisa oso zahav tahor,*” hinting to the three brachos of *Birchas Hamazon* from the Torah, *zaha*”v.

The *Tosafos Yom Tov* adds (*Avos* 3 3) that the three first brachos correspond to Torah, *Neviim* and *Kesuvim*. The first *brachah* was established by Moshe, who wrote the Torah; the second was composed by Yehoshua, whose *sefer* is the first in *Neviim*, and the third was Dovid and Shlomo, whose *sefarim*, *Tehillim* and *Mishlei*, begin the set of *Kesuvim sefarim*.

The Dog That Appeared To Be from Heaven

This story was related by the person it happened to, Reb Chaim Tzvi Solomon, originally of Halmin, who miraculously survived the war. He was the only remnant of a large, glorious family that was completely annihilated.

Reb Chaim has two ancient *sifrei Torah* that were passed down in his family from generation to generation. They are understood to have belonged to *tzaddikim* from past generations. Despite the many travails that they have been through over the years, they are well preserved and suitable for reading from.

In the period prior to the war, the *sifrei Torah* were renowned far and wide, and the *rabbanim* of the city of Halmin, as well as guests who were visiting, vied for the privilege of reading specifically in these *sifrei Torah*, marveling at their exceptional beauty.

As noted, Reb Chaim Tzvi was the only survivor of his family, but remarkably, the special *sifrei Torah* survived along with him. The story of their survival and discovery is one that Reb Chaim Tzvi relates often. This is the story:

When World War Two broke out, Reb Chaim Tzvi was a student in the yeshiva of Harav Yehuda Segal Rosner of Sekelheid, *Hy’d*. He was learning diligently, when suddenly, he received an urgent telegram from home that he had received a draft notice from the Hungarian authorities ordering him to report to labor cap. He had to fulfill the orders immediately or else his life would be in danger.

Chaim Tzvi ran to his Rebbi’s room. He realized there was no way to evade the order, but before departing, he wanted to take leave of his Rebbi and ask for a *brachah* for success and salvation from the dangerous ahead.

The Rav, feeling the pain of his student, gripped his hand tightly and asked, “Chaim Tzvi, are you ready to pledge that you will never sever the eternal bond between you and your Creator, for even one minute?”

Chaim Tzvi was surprised by the question, but unhesitatingly answered that he would not. “If so,” the Rav said, putting his hand on his student’s head, “I will bless you that in the merit of maintaining the bond between you and HaKadosh Baruch Hu, He should protect you and save you wherever you go.”

Armed with the Rav’s *brachah*, Chaim Tzvi turned to go. The subsequent months were fraught with danger, but the *brachah*

from his Rebbi was constantly in his mind’s eye, and he felt that it was because of that that he was able to get through the many difficult travails during the Holocaust.

5705. The war was just over, leaving Chaim Tzvi alone, with no surviving relatives. One after another, he received news of the loss of his family, his friends from yeshiva, and his Rebbi, the Rav of Sekelheid, *zt”l*, all of whom were killed *al Kiddush Hashem*.

His heart overflowing with grief, he returned to the town of his youth, seeking out his parents’ house. Instead, he found only destruction. He sat down on one of the stones and began to cry bitterly. He cried for his extended family that were gone, for his *rabbanim*, his friends, and his acquaintances. Suddenly, he remembered the rare, holy *sifrei Torah* that he loved so much, and he began to cry even harder...

Something in his heart made him believe that the *sifrei Torah* still existed, and he was filled with unexplained yearning to find them, to hold them close, as an everlasting memory of his family that had gone up in smoke.

Again, he burst into bitter sobs, this time crying and *davneing* at the same time. He pleaded with Hashem to illuminate his eyes so that he could find the lost *sifrei Torah*. He sat crying for a long time, unable to calm down.

He was still crying and *davneing* when he was startled by the sound of loud barking that seemed to be getting closer. He raised his eyes and noticed a dog coming in his direction. He knew the dog well, and he remembered immediately where from: it was their family’s guard dog. They were a wealthy family, and they needed the dog’s services to keep away thieves and other undesirable visitors from their business establishment. Miraculously, he remained alive.

Apparently the dog identified Chaim Tzvi with his remarkable sense of smell, and when he noticed him, he began to approach, barking in a strange fashion that seemed more like a wail than a bark. The dog knocked into Chaim Tzvi, hard, as though indicating him to follow him.

Chaim Tzvi, who had in the past seen the dog display unusual wisdom, did not ignore the hints. He stood up and began to follow the dog. They walked outside of the neighborhood, and the

dog led Chaim Tzvi to an abandoned wheat field. At one point, he stopped and began to wail even louder, as he pawed the dry ground.

Chaim Tzvi began to help him. He found a piece of scrap metal and used it to dig into the ground. But even after digging quite a large hole he didn’t discover anything. He assumed that the buried treasure had already been discovered and taken. But the dog did not give up, barking harder and higher and stamping its feet, as though instructing Chaim Tzvi – don’t give up, keep digging!

Chaim Tzvi dug deeper, until he reached a depth of about two and a half meters. That was when his hands hit something hard. He dug around it until he was able to take it out. It was a large, sealed, wooden crate. With trembling hands, he opened the cover—and inside were the two precious *sifrei Torah*, intact and unharmed. Beside them lay a breathtaking Torah crown, and several other holy articles.

His heart filling with elation, Chaim Tzvi turned to leave, dragging the precious crate with him. But the dog was not yet finished. He continued to wail and Chaim Tzvi realized that he had to dig further. He did so, and reached another box, containing many pieces of jewelry and other valuables, which were worth huge sums of money.

With tremendous exertion, Chaim Tzvi carried the two boxes, and sought a safe place to keep them. The dog continued walking next to him, escorting him, for several more days, until it died. It had completed its mission faithfully.

The veritable fortune that Chaim Tzvi now had helped him rehabilitate his life, together with several other survivors who reestablished the ruins of the community. They lived there for a few years, until they decided to settle in Eretz Yisrael.

Chaim Tzvi settled in Kiryat Ono and placed the *sifrei Torah* in the local shul, where they are safely kept to this day.

Tiv Hakehillah, 5772, p. 167