

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Reciting Tehillim as "Toras Hametzora"

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע" (יד ב)

Harav Yehuda Leibish Rosenbaum of Krakow explained:

In this *passuk*, the Torah alluded to the request of Dovid Hamalech that the reward of someone who says *Tehillim* will be equal to the reward of someone who engages in the difficult *sugyos* of *negaim* and *ohalos* (*Midrash Tehillim* 1). The *passuk* says: "zos" – an acronym for "zechus amiras Tehillim", "tithiyeh" – will be equal to engaging in "Toras Hametzora" – which includes in it the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos*.

Yenei Chayecha Hayamim

### The "Elixir of Life" of Tefillah

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע" (יד ב)

The *Midrash* on this *parashah* (*Vayikra Rabba* 16 2) brings the well known story about the peddler that offered passersby to purchase an elixir of life. When Rabi Yannai heard this, he wanted to purchase some of this elixir. In response, the peddler offered him a *Sefer Tehillim* and pointed to the *pesukim* (34 13-14) "Mi ha'ish hechafetz chaim...netzor leshoncha meira." When Rabi Yannai heard this he was deeply impressed by the peddler's wisdom and declared: "All my days I did not understand the meaning of this *passuk*, until this peddler came and informed me!"

Many have asked: The peddler did not add anything beyond the simple meaning of the *passuk*. What was Rabi Yannai so impressed by?

Harav Tzvi Hersh Farber, one of the Rabbanim of London, offered a beautiful answer to this:

Rabi Yannai was impressed by the fact that the peddler defined caution against *lashon hara* as the "elixir of life," meaning: Besides the promise made in this *passuk*, that someone who is careful to watch his mouth from speaking bad merits a long life, he also merits that he can figuratively take the "elixir of life," through which he can restore life to others, by *davening* for them. And as the *passuk* alludes (*Bamidbar* 33): "Lo lachel devaro, kechol hayotzei mipiv ya'aseh." Someone who does not desecrate his

speech with forbidden words merits that every *tefillah* that emerges from his mouth will be fulfilled On High.

Kerem Hatzvi

### Teshuvah Is Welcome Even In an "Eis Ratzon"

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע ביום טהרתו והובא אל הכהן; ויצא הכהן אל מחוץ למחנה וראה הכהן והנה נרפא נגע הצרעת מן הצרוע" (יד ב-ג)

By way of nature, there is no remedy for the blemish of *tzara'as*, because it is a punishment for the sin of the tongue. Therefore, it can only

be healed in one of two ways: One, if the person repents and regrets his sins, or two, when there will be an *eis ratzon*, a time of favor, in the world, as the *passuk* says (*Yeshayahu* 49:8): "B'eis ratzon anischa," In a time of favor, I answered you." This *eis ratzon* occurs when the *tzaddikim* receive good things from Above, as *Chazal* said (*Bereishis Rabbah* 53 8): "At the time that Sarah Imeinu was remembered many barren women were remembered with her."

There is a difference On High between a remedy that comes from the power of *tefillah* and healing that comes from an *eis ratzon*. Based on this approach, it is ordained from Above that the *metzora* meets the Kohein: If he is healed from the *tzara'as* "beyom taharaso" – on the day that there will be an *eis ratzon*, then "And he will be brought to the Kohein." But if "nirpa nega hatzara'as" through the power of his *tefillah* – "min hatzarua", then: "And the Kohein goes outside the camp" – the Kohein goes out to greet him.

Imrei Shefer

### Be'er Emunim

From Rabbeinu Bechayei on the parashah

### The Gates of Amen Open With the Purification of the Metzora

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע... (יד ב)

The holy *Zohar* (*Yisro* 80 1, and similarly in *Onkelos* here) explained the word "metzora" as "sagira" [from the root of *lisgor*, to close]. By way of *remez* we can learn from here that the sin of *lashon hara* causes the gates of abundance that are opened in the merit of answering amen to be closed, as explained in *Zohar Parashas Vayeilech*. (285 2)

A further allusion can be said as follows: the acronym of the three partners in the sin of *lashon hara* are אומר, the one who says it, נאמר, the one who the story is about and מקבל, the one who hears the *lashon hara*, is amen. Thus, the purification of the *metzora* is done through bringing צפורים and אורב whose acronym is *tzaddik-aleph*, or 91, numerically equivalent to amen. Because with his purification, the gates of amen that had been closed to him are opened.

Parparaos LeChochmah; Magen Avraham [Trisker Maggid]

### Two Sides to the Coin of Yeshuah

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע ביום טהרתו והובא אל הכהן; ויצא הכהן אל מחוץ למחנה וראה הכהן והנה נרפא נגע הצרעת מן הצרוע" (יד ב-ג)

The Rebbe Harav Yissachar Dov of Belz said: When a *tzaddik* merits that his *tefillah* for a sick person is accepted, he should not give himself credit as though it was his *tefillah* that was effective. Rather, he should attribute it to the merits of the sick person. On the other hand, the sick person must not attribute it to his own merits, and rather should attribute his recovery to the merit of the *tzaddik's* *tefillah*.

We can find an allusion to this concept in this *passuk*: "Zos tithiyeh Toras hametzora [the sick person] beyom taharaso" – when he will be healed from his illness. "Vehuva el Hakohein" – he should attribute his recovery to the merit of the *tzaddik*. On the other hand, "Vera'ah haKohein" – when the *tzaddik* sees "and the blemish of *tzara'as* is healed", he should not attribute it to his own merit, but rather "min hatzarua" – to the merit of the sick person.

Admorei Belz, Vol. III, p. 301

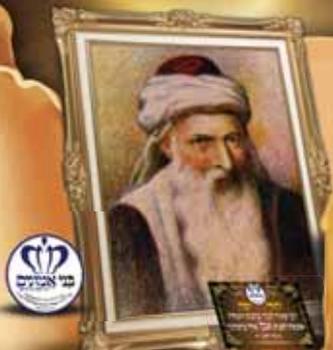
## The Words of Maran Have Become the Minhag

Ahead of the *hilula* of Maran, the Bais Yosef, on 13 Nissan, we cite the words of the Chida, who attributes the custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* to the Bais Yosef:

"Maran the Bais Yosef writes: There is a custom that after one recites *Birchos Hashachar* and others answer amen, one of those who answered then makes the *brachos* and others answer amen to him. This is what all those who answered amen do, one after another...And as is known, this custom has spread in large cities and towns, as per the words of Maran."

Birchei Yosef, Orach Chaim 677

Birchos Hashachar Aloud With kavanah Bechavrusa



**Birchas Hamazon – Birchas Boneh Yerushalayim (4)****A Person Struggles To Acquire  
Sustenance**

Chazal says (*Pesachim* 118a): “It is as difficult for a person to acquire sustenance as it is to split the sea.” Indeed, if we think about this, we will discover that, different to other creatures, whose sustenance is readily available to them without effort or worry, it is particularly the human being, the elite of creation, that was created in a way that he has to exert himself and worry about obtaining substance. This fact is a constant source of strain and pressure on the person.

It is not for naught that a person was thus created. Rather, it is because this way, his eyes are constantly turned to the Creator in prayer to provide his sustenance, as the *Gemara* says (*Niddah* 70b): “What should a person do to become wealthy?...He should ask for mercy from the One to Whom all wealth belongs.”

Thus we can understand the connection between sustenance and the splitting of the sea: Just like in *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the pressure brought Bnei Yisrael, standing on the shores of the sea without being able to do anything themselves or relying on any human being, to raise their eye sin *tefillah* to their Father in heaven for salvation, so, too, with *parnassah*. The constant pressure that a person toiling for his *parnassah* feels is made to cause him to turn his eyes to his Father in heaven to sustain him, and thus to open the treasure-house of abundance to him.

It is also not for naught that this request was worded in such a pleading tone: “*Elokeinu! Avinu!*...” We have no other savior other than You! Therefore, please, “*Parneseinu vechalkeleinu,*” provide us with sustenance. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Tiferes Shimshon*)

Similarly, Harav Yitzchak of Vorka, *zt”l*, explains the request later in this *brachah*: “*Vena,* please do not make us need the gifts of other people...rather only from Your Hand...”

On the one hand, we ask that we should not need to receive gifts from other people. On the other hand, we ask that we should not have such great wealth that we should think that we do not need the help of the Creator, *challilah*. “*Ki im leYadcha*” – we should remain “needy” but “*lo liyedei matnas basar vadam.*” This is how *tzaddikim* explained the curse of the snake that HaKadosh Baruch Hu cursed him that his sustenance should be dirt, and this way he should find it everywhere, and by not needing to ask Hashem for his sustenance, he will not have closeness to Hashem. (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh* 59)

**A Request Upon Which Life is  
Contingent**

The source of this request is the *tefillah* of Rabi Yannai brought in the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 4b), in which he asks: “*V’al tatzrecheinu liyedei matnas basar vadam, v’al timsor mezonoseinu biyedei basar vadam* [don’t give our sustenance in the hands of flesh and blood] *shematnasam me’utah* [their gift is small] *vecherpasam merubah* [and their shame is great]...”

The *Tana Devei Eliyahu* (*Zuta* 15) says: “*Abba Eliyahu zachur latov vezachur livrachah* said: The heavens and the earth can bear witness for me that every *talmid chacham* who reads and learns *l’Shem Shamayim*, and eats of his own, enjoys of his own and does not benefit from the *tzibbur* for anything, of him the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 128:2) “*Yegia kapecha ki sochel ashrecha vetov lach* - If you eat the toil of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you.”

A person once begged the Imrei Emes of Ger to take a gift from him. The Imrei Emes firmly refused, but the man tried to plead and say that it was vital for him that the Rebbe

accept his gift. But the Rebbe replied: For me it is vital that I should not take your gift, as it says (*Mishlei* 15:27, and see *Megillah* 28a): “*Sonei matanos yichyeh*, one who despises gifts will live.” (*Likutei Yehudah* on *Birchas Hamazon*)

**How Do Talmidei Chachamim  
Benefit from Others?**

Many have asked: Do we not see that it has been arranged by Divine *Hashgachah* that *talmidei chachamim* should be reliant on others, like Zevulun who supported Yissachar, his brother, who learned Torah?

The following story happened with Harav Baruch of Mezhibuzh:

Once, his daughter noticed her father crying copiously as he repeated the *brachah* twice and three times: “*Vena al tatzrecheinu...ki im leYadcha.*” When he finished, she asked him, “Why are you asking so much for this? You do not have any other way to earn your sustenance, aside for the *pidyonos* that people give you...”

Rav Baruch said to her: What you are saying is true, that I benefit from others, but there are three levels of people who give their money to a *tzaddik*: Some give it as a gift from them to the *tzaddik*, and it of them that I ask, “*lo liyedei matnas basar vadam.*” There are those who give it as a “loan”, and they know that in the merit of this loan they will merit to receive much abundance from Above. Of them, as well, I ask “*velo liyedei halva’asam.*” But there are those who give out of the recognition of the fact that they are only emissaries to convey the money that has been given to them from Hashem to the *tzaddik*. This is the gift that I do want and for that I ask: “*Ki im leYadcha...*” (*Butzina D’nehora*, “*Tzaddik*” 21)

Harav Avraham Chaim of Zlotchov said:

Even someone who needs to accept *tzedakah* from others in order to live should not think that he is getting his *parnassah* from them. Rather, he should understand that Hashem is the One Who gives it to him through an emissary. “*Harbei shluchim laMakom*, Hashem has many emissaries” and if he does not accept it from this person, he will get from someone else. If he internalizes this, he will benefit that he will not have to flatter the giver, and won’t refrain from rebuking him when it is necessary. [In any case, it does not exempt him from being grateful to the giver (see *Chovos Halevavos* introduction to *Shaar Avodas Ha’Elokim*)]. (*Orach Lechaim Matos*)

**Benefitting from a Gift that Is  
L’Shem Shamayim**

Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the rav of Yerushalayim, was known for being exceedingly careful not to benefit from anyone else. There was only one time that he violated this practice. It was before the wedding of one of his children, when someone put on his desk an envelope with a large amount of money for wedding expenses. Rav Yosef Chaim was certain that the money had been sent to him by his rebbi, the Mahari”l Diskin, and as such, agreed to accept it, explaining his action according to the *Gemara* “One who wants to benefit – should do so like Elisha.”

Elisha was also very strict not to accept money from others, and cursed his helper, Gchazi, who received gifts from Na’aman, the general of Aram. But he agreed to accept from the Shunamis woman, because he knew that her intentions were only *l’Shem Shamayim*. So, too, Harav Yosef Chaim accepted from his rebbi, because he knew that the intentions were solely *l’Shem Shamayim*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Migdolei Yerushalayim*)

**A Switched Check and a Missed Amen**

This story was sent in by Harav Hillel Dovid Litwak, *shlita*, a tremendous *talmid chacham* from Flatbush, who has written beautiful *sefarim* on an array of Torah subjects. Rav Litwak has been scrupulous about strengthening the mitzvah of answering amen, and teaching its *halachos* and *segulos* wherever he goes.

He wrote this story at the beginning of his *sefer* entitled “*Chovas Aniyas Amen.*” It is a story that combines remarkable *Hashgachah pratis* and tremendous *chizuk* for answering amen according to *halachah*, with all its stringencies. The story began on Shabbos *Parashas Mishpatim* 5758. Rav Hillel davened that Shabbos in a certain *shul* in Boro Park, which he would visit once a year in order to make an appeal for an important *tzedakah* organization that he was supportive of.

Despite Rav Hillel being a guest there and needing to find favor in the eyes of the *mispallelim*, he did not desist from urging those around him about a subject close to his heart – answering amen according to *halachah*. Thus, when during *Chazaras Hashatz*, he noticed one of the *mispallelim* answering amen before the *chazzan* completed the *brachah*, he could not bear it. After *davening*, he went over to the person and pointed out that what he was doing was forbidden. “Answering amen before the *Shatz* finishes the *brachah* in its entirety is considered an *amen chatufah* and must not be answered.” Rav Hillel explained to the person. But the man refused to concede that he had made a mistake. “One second here or there is insignificant,” he claimed. When Rav Hillel tried to argue with him, the man demanded that he show him a source.

This was not a big deal for Rav Hillel. As someone engaged in this issue for so many years, the *halachos* of answering amen were very clear in his mind, especially this very straightforward matter. He went over to the bookcase and sought the first volume of *Mishnah Berurah*, written by the Chofetz Chaim. But to his surprise, he could not find the *sefer*.

Rav Hillel went over to the person and explained that although he could not find the specific volume he was looking for, the man could look it up himself in the *Mishnah Berurah* 124:30. He then asked the man for his name and said that he would try to send him a photocopy of the page on which the relevant *halachah* appears.

The way the man refused to accept his comment made Rabbi Litwak second guess his decision to have said something in the first place. Perhaps it had not been wise; after all, he was just a guest in this *shul*.

A week passed. On *Erev Shabbos Parashas Terumah*, an envelope appeared in the Litwak mailbox. It contained a folded letter and a bank check. The letter said that because of a problem with the check, the bank had to return it. A quick glance at the check was enough for Rabbi Litwak to see

that there had been a mistake, and it wasn’t his check at all. He called the bank and asked what was going on, but they could not help him. They suggested he visit the bank branch and try to find out.

A few hours later, the mystery was resolved, when the phone rang at the Litwak home. On the other end was a Yid who identified himself as a resident of Boro Park, and he said that he had received a similar envelope to what Rabbi Litwak had received, but inside the letter was a check made out to the Litwak family. Apparently the bank clerk had erroneously switched around the checks. He had sent the Litwak check to the caller’s house and vice versa.

Rabbi Litwak thanked the caller. He asked for his name and address, and they made up that after Shabbos they would meet to exchange checks.

A few hours later, just before Shabbos, Rabbi Litwak pondered the incident that had happened earlier in the day. He repeated the name of the person who had mistakenly received his check... The name was familiar, and it took him a few minutes to remember where from.

Apparently it was none other than the person who, a week earlier, he had met in the *shul* and chided him about answering an *amen chatufah*. The family name was not a common one, and the address that he had been given was very close to the *shul* where they had davened. There was no doubt it was the same person.

Rabbi Litwak saw this as remarkable *Hashgachah pratis*, as if he had received a sign from Above that he had acted properly by directing the man’s attention to the fact that the amen was not in place. Rabbi Litwak also took it as a sign to continue trying to strengthen the subject of answering amen according to *halachah*.

As soon as Shabbos was over, Rabbi Litwak called the person and asked if he indeed was the person he had discussed the amen with the previous week. Taken aback, the man affirmed that he was, and they arranged to meet to exchange the checks. This time, Rabbi Litwak came to the man’s house with his *Mishnah Berurah* Volume 1, and when they met, he read out to the person:

On the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* (124 8), in the explanation of why an *amen chatufah* is forbidden, “That he should not grab and hurriedly answer before the one making the *brachah* finishes” the *Mishnah Berurah* writes (*siman kattan* 30): “He means to say: He should wait until the *Shatz* finishes the whole last word, completely. There are people who begin to answer while the *Shatz* is still saying the last half a word, and that is forbidden.”

*Chovas Aniyas Amen, Introduction*