

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

And My Soul Should Be Like Dirt – for All Your Mitzvos

“וידבר ה' אל משה בהר סיני לאמר” (כה א)

“What does shemittah have to do with Har Sinai? Were not all the mitzvos said at Sinai? This teaches us that just like shemittah was said with all its details, rules and specifications at Sinai, so were all the mitzvos said with all their rules and details at Sinai. (Rashi)

Why did the Torah choose specifically this mitzvah to teach us this rule?

Harav Yosef Yisrael Deutsch, the Rav of Balasha-Yarmuth, explains:

Har Sinai is the symbol of humility, and as Chazal said (Sotah 5a), the Torah was given upon it because it was lower and more humble than all the mountains. The middah of humility is a condition for the study of Torah and for fulfilling mitzvos in general, especially the mitzvah of shemittah. That is because a person who thinks that his possessions and acquisitions are the fruit of his own power and effort will not be able to leave his land fallow and refrain from working them for an entire year. Therefore, it is particularly this mitzvah that the Torah determined as a ‘binyan av’, a master plan of sorts, for all the other mitzvos. Just like it is impossible to fulfill this mitzvah unless a person makes himself like Har Sinai, so too with all the other mitzvos - it is impossible to fulfill them properly without being humble and modest.

We can also learn about the necessity of humility to observe the Torah and mitzvos from the fact that we recite in Elokai Netzor the words “venafshi k’afar lakol tihiyeh” and my soul should be like dirt to all, right next to the words “pesach libi beTorasecha v’acharei mitzvosecha tirdof nafshi, open my heart to Your Torah and my soul should pursue Your mitzvos.”

Ben Gorni

Brachah of “Al Sefiras Hayovel”

“וספרת לך שבע שבתת שנים שבע שנים שבע פעמים” (כה ח)

In the days of the Bais Hamikdash, the

Sanhedrin would count each year how many years were left to the Yovel, just like we count Sefiras HaOmer in our time. After forty nine years, which are seven shemittos, they established the Yovel, as we are commanded to do in this passuk.

The Chizkuni writes that although the number of years of Yovel is a mitzvas asech, a positive commandment, the bais din would not make a brachah before performing the mitzvah, the way we do for Sefiras HaOmer. That is because only mitzvos that are the obligation of an individual were given a brachah. But for a mitzvah that is the obligation of the public at large, such as this one, no brachah was established.

However, the **Baalei HaTosafos** disputed this concept and hold that even before counting the years of the Yovel the bais din would make the brachah: “Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al sefiras hayovel.”

Sefer Hamitzvos LaRambam, Aseh 140; Tosafos Kesubos 72a beginning with Vesafrah; Commentary of Harav S. of Shantz on Toras Kohanim Behar 2 2; Chizkuni

The word “dror” is explained by Onkelos to mean “cherusa”, which is freedom. Based on this we ask, why in our tefillos that were composed in Lashon HaKodesh do we use the translation—the word “cherus”—as opposed to the word of the passuk, “dror”? For example, in Shemoneh Esrei, we say “teka beshofar gadol lecheruseinu”, and in Maariv we say, “vayotzei es Amo Yisrael mitocham lecherus olam.” On Pesach we also say “vesiten lanu...es Chag Hamatzos hazeh – Zeman Cheruseinu”?

Harav Avraham Isiel Gurewicz, Rosh Yeshivas Ner Moshe, writes that the word “cherus” also has a source in the Torah, because on the passuk (Shemos 14:2), “Vayashuvu veyachanu lifnei Pi Hachiros” Rashi explains “That is Pisom, and now it is called “Pi Hachiros” because they became bnei chorin, free people.” So the Torah also uses the term “cherus” for freedom.

Ohr Avraham

“Geirim” or “Toshavim” – Foreigners or Citizens?

“כי לי הארץ כי גרים ותושבים אתם עמדי” (כה כג)

The words “geirim” and “toshavim” seem to be contradictory.

Harav Yosef Pachonovsky of Lodz, explains:

The words of the Gemara (Brachos 35a) explaining the contradiction of the pesukim in Tehillim “L’Hashem ha’aretz umeloah” (24:1) and “v’ha’aretz nasan livnei adam” (115:16) are well known: Before the brachah the land belongs to Hashem, and after a person makes a brachah on his food and recognizes that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the Master in His world, then “v’ha’aretz nasan livnei adam.”

Similarly, this concept may be alluded to in this passuk: “Ki Li ha’aretz”, while “geirim vetoshavim atem Imadi.” Whether you are “geirim” or “toshavim” is dependent on to what extent you are “Imadi” with Me, and your recognition of the metzius Hashem and His control over the world.

Pardes Yosef

Meva'er Emunim

Sources on the Great Importance of Answering Amen

“Treasure” of “Amen”

“ונתנה הארץ פריה” (כה יט)

The acronym of the words “ונתנה הארץ פריה” is numerically equivalent to amen, and the world amen in its full form (aleph, mem, nun) is numerically equivalent to אוצר, a treasure. From here we learn that one who is careful to answer amen merits to have blessing bestowed upon his home that he should succeed in his parnassah and his assets, as the Shelah writes (Maseches Tamid 80), that one who is careful about answering amen “opens the Upper Source – the source of Mayim Chaim.”

Ahavas Yisrael; Os Leifi p. 178

“Freedom” Written in the Torah

“וקדשתם את שנת החמישים שנה וקראתם דרוֹר בארץ לכל יושביה” (כה י)

In the holy Sefer HaZohar (Vayeilech 285 2) the Taana Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai reveals to us:

“When Am Yisrael daven about their troubles, a voice declares in all the worlds (Yeshayah 26:2): “Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.” Just like Yisrael opened the gates of blessing with answering amen, so, too, the gates of mercy will open before them to accept their tefillos.” (Vayeilech 285 2)

Open the gates of Heavens by reciting Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa before davening.

Haht's Gepoilt Ales Gut-Your Prayers Should Bring About Good

הוא ימליץ טוב בעדנו אדוננו בריחתי



Birchas Hamazon – Birchas Boneh Yerushalayim (8)

Shelo Neivosh – So That We Should
Not Be Shamed

Before concluding the brachah of Racheim Na with the request of “Boneh Yerushalayim”, we give a reason for our request: “Vena al tatzricheinu...ki im leYadcha” – so that “lo neivosh velo nikalem l’olam va’ed” – we should not be shamed and embarrassed, not in this world and not in the World to Come.

In sefer Vaya’an Yosef (42), the author Harav Yosef Mandelcorn writes an explanation that he heard from Harav Dov Regensberg, the Av Bais Din of Zambrova, in the name of the Chofetz Chaim: One who puts his faith in the benevolence of a human being may come to shame in the World to Come, because sometimes the person only did the chessed with him because he thought he was a tzaddik worthy of receiving that chessed. If, in the World to Come, the giver will discover that he made a mistake, the recipient of the good will be caused pain and shame. By contrast, one who merits to have his parnassah come directly from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, will not be shamed l’olam va’ed. That is because Hashem sees everything that is hidden in each persona and when He grants them sustenance, it is only because He wants to bestow good and not particularly because the recipients are worthy of it. Therefore, there is no shame involved.

The Chofetz Chaim would then relate a story that happened in the city of Vilna: An old man with a dignified bearing came to town and related that he was the grandson of the Gr”a of Vilna. Of course, everyone according him great respect, and supported him with money and food. Ultimately it emerged that the man was a fraud and had lied about his lineage; he wasn’t even related to the Vilna Gaon. Thus, instead of honor, he was treated with derision and suffered great humiliation.

Rav Chaim Aryeh Leib Fenster of Jedwabne explained:

One who receives a gift from a person is doubly ashamed, both when he receives it, as the Yerushalmi says (Orlah 1 3) that one who receives a gift from a friend is ashamed to look at him in the face; and later, because of his dignity that was lowered because he was needy and had to come onto others. But someone who receives his sustenance from Hashem is not ashamed when receiving it, nor is he ashamed afterwards, and that is why we say “shelo neivosh” – in this world, “velo nikalem” – in the World to Come. (Shaar Bas Rabbim Lech Lecha)

Uvnei Yerushalayim –
In the Future Tense

The request of Racheim Na concludes in the same way it begins, with the request of “Uvnei Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh bimheirah beyameinu.”

Harav Naftali of Ropschitz explained: “Uvnei Yerushalayim...beyameinu” – in the merit of yameinu build Yerushalayim, because each and every day, based on the merits that the person accrued, “bricks” are added to the building of the Bais Hamikdash. He writes that Harav Elimelech of Lizhensk made an “aliyas neshamah” and saw angels carrying the vessels of the Mikdash, and the angels said to him that these were the vessels that he had extracted from the Galus through the power of his tefillos and actions. (Zera Kodesh Ki Seitzei)

Yerushalayim Shel
Maalah and Shel Matah

The Yismach Moshe asked why at the beginning of the brachah we ask “Uvnei” [in the future tense] Yerushalayim ir hakodesh”, while at the end we say “Boneh [in the present tense] berachamav Yerushalayim – without mentioning Ir Hakodesh?

He explained: The Gemara (Taanis 5a) explains that just like there is “Yerushalayim

Shel Matah” there is also “Yerushalayim Shel Maalah” and HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not come to Yerushalayim Shel Maalah until He comes to Yerushalayim Shel Matah. Based on this, we can explain that the request of “Uvnei” applies to Yerushalayim shel Matah. When it will be rebuilt – the Shechinah will dwell there and it will be the Ir Hakodesh. But the end, “Boneh berachamav Yerushalayim” applies to Yerushalayim Shel Maalah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu “is building” (boneh) each day through our Torah and tefillos, but it is not yet called an “Ir Hakodesh”, as it says “as long as Yerushalayim Shel Matah is not rebuilt, HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not dwell in Yerushalayim Shel Maalah.” (Yismach Moshe, Vol. I, Siach Sefunim, p. 2)

Tziyon Bemishpat Tipadeh – Tzion
Will Be Redeemed Through Justice

The Tor (Orach Chaim 187) quotes the conclusion of the brachah without the word “berachamav”, just “Boneh Yerushalayim.” The Bais Yosef explained in the name of the Rishonim that he didn’t want to say “berachamav” because it clearly says (Yeshayah 1:27): “Tziyon bemishpat tipadeh” – Tzion will be redeemed through justice, and that means that Yerushalayim will be built with mishpat and not with rachamim.

But the Darkei Moshe (ibid 1) writes that according to halachah one has to say “berachamav”, and he reconciled this with the passuk in Yeshayah, that the Navi meant to say that Tzion will be built in the merit that Am Yisrael interact with one another according to the laws of din and mishpat. The Bach ruled that one has to say “berachamav” and added that that is how the conclusion of the brachah will be like its beginning, because in the opening we ask “Racheim na Hashem Elokeinu...v’al Yerushalayim irecha.”

The Brachah of Yerushalayim
Closes With Amen

The Gemara (Brachos 45b) explains that the brachah of Boneh Yerushalayim is closed with “amen” recited by the person making the brachah, because it concludes the order of Birchas Hamazon that is obligated from the Torah. The Maharal added (Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Ha’avodah 18) that the order of Birchas Hamazon goes from the light to the heavy. Because with the building of Yerushalayim, the level of Kedushas Yisrael was completed, therefore, it is closed out with “amen” which is the highest level, as is known from the Gemara (Brachos 53b): “the one who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the brachah.”

Harav Aharon Thumim, the Av Bais Din of Worms, wrote that that is why it was established to conclude this brachah particularly with amen: The Zohar (Pinchas 231 1) says that a non-Jew asked Rabi Eliezer: How do you believe that the third Bais Hamikdash will be built for you? It doesn’t have a source in the Torah. Rabi Eliezer asked Eliyahu Hanavi, who replied that this fact is alluded to in the passuk (Shemos 15:17): “Machon leshivtecha pa’alta Hashem mikdash Hashem konenu yadecha.” The first and second Batei Mikdash that were built by people did not last for eternity, while the third Mikdash that will be built by Hashem will last for eternity.

This is why we seal this brachah with “amen”, as it means denotes the fulfillment and the belief of things. When Hashem will rebuild Yerushalayim and the third Bais Hamikdash, that will be the fulfillment of our faith in Him throughout the Galus that He will build for us the third Bais Hamikdash. (Match Aharon, cited in Haggadah Shel Pesach Chaluka D’Rabbanan)

A Match Made in Heaven

This special story was heard by the Maggid Rabbi Pesach Krohn from a student of the person to whom it happened, Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zt”l:

In the town of Mir located on the border between Poland and Lithuania, lived a girl who was orphaned of her parents at a young age. When she grew up she remained single, even after all her friends married. Her difficulty in finding a suitable shidduch stemmed from two reasons: one, she was very short, and second, because her strong aspiration to marry a masmid who would devote his life to Torah learning. In order to marry such a person she needed financial support, which she did not have because she was an orphan. She also did not know anyone who could help her realize this lofty goal, and thus she remained single for many years.

The girl worked as a librarian. She saved most of her salary, trying to accumulate enough money to realize her dream, but the years passed, and her friends were already having children, while she remained alone and sad. Still, she did not concede and continued davening fervently. Although suggestions were made for her, as soon as she realized they did not suit her with to marry a ben Torah, she turned them down.

One day, while she was sitting in the empty library and pondering her dismal situation, she had an idea. She decided to write a letter to the only One who could help her – her Father in Heaven.

She took a paper and wrote down the familiar words of her longtime tefillah to Hashem that she had been saying morning and night for so many years. The paper was a very good place for her to unburden the pain and emotions that she carried in her heart. She wrote a detailed description of the husband that she dreamed of and yearned for: a real masmid who was immersed in learning, with good middos, who would not be cowed by the challenges of poverty that he might have to endure, and more.

She concluded her letter with a pure tefillah written straight from the heart:

“You, Hashem, sustain the poor and elevate the lowly and loves orphans. Surely You can answer my tefillos. You know that I place my trust in you all the time. Tearfully signed, Your devoted daughter, Sheina Miriam.”

After she finished the letter, she folded it carefully and put it into an envelope. On the outside, in the space for the address, she wrote: “To my Father in Heaven”. From there, she walked to the outskirts of the town of Mir, to a secluded place where the winds were

very strong.

When she arrived, she raised the envelope over her head and loosened her grip until she felt a gust of wind. She let go and watched tearfully as the envelope floated towards the clouds. When the envelope disappeared from her view, she returned home, infused with a new hope that this time, Hashem would answer her request and find her the chassan she so dreamed of. A few days later, one of the prized talmidim of Yeshivas Mir went out to the open field near the yeshivah in order to review what he had learned and clarify his thoughts. As he was walking and pondering the sugya, he noticed a white envelope stuck in the bushes. He bent down to pick it up, intending to fulfill the mitzvah of hashavas aveidah. He was surprised when he saw the inscription: “To my Father in Heaven.”

He could not overcome his curiosity and opened the envelope. He pulled out a page filled with close writing. He read the letter over and over, and was very moved by the pure pain, the piety and the candidness that emerged from between the lines. Then he returned to the bais medrash to consult with his rebbi, the rosh yeshivah Harav Eliyahu Baruch Kammai, zt”l.

The conversation between the rosh yeshivah and the talmid was long and deep. At the end, the bachur received the rosh yeshivah’s brachah and encouragement for his brave decision.

A successful shadchan was summoned to deal with the matter. Extensive inquiries were made. A conversation was scheduled between the two. After he was deeply impressed by her character and piety, the bachur decided to marry the girl, even though she was six years older than him. Throughout the process, the rosh yeshivah accompanied him with advice and encouragement.

The two married and established a Torah home, and the bachur, as his wife aspired, made great strides in his Torah learning and Yiras Shamayim. In time, he became known as Harav Yitzchak Yechiel Davidowitz, the mashgiach of Yeshivas Minsk, and the rebbi of the leading rabbanim of America: Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky, Harav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman and Harav Avraham Kalmanowitz, zecher tzaddikim livrachah.

Yalkut Lekach Tov – Chaim Shel
Torah, Vol. I, Maamar 65