

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



280

PARASHAS BECHUKOSAI

תשע"ט

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah Is Like a "Sword"

"ורדפתם את איביכם ונפלו לפניכם לחרב" (כו ז)

Why does the Torah detail that our enemies will fall before us by sword? What difference does it make to us which kind of death they die?

The **Ohev Yisrael** of Apta explained:

When a *tzaddik* davens for the downfall of his enemies and the *tefillah* is accepted, it is not only those enemies that he davened about who fall. Rather, for generations to come, whenever enemies of Am Yisrael rise up against them, they can easily bring about that same downfall that the *tzaddik* effected with his *tefillos*. That is what the Torah wants to emphasize: aside for the enemies falling before you at that time, their downfall will be like a 'sword' that can serve you even in future generations.

Ohev Yisrael

Walking "Komemiyus" – Upright – Is Only in the End of Days

"ואשבר מטת עלכם ואולך אתכם קוממיות" (כו יג)

"*Komemiyus*" – with an upright stature. (*Rashi*.) Didn't *Chazal* forbid us from walking with an upright stature (*Kiddushin* 31a)?

Harav Chanoch Tzvi Hakohen Levin, the Rav of Bendin, explained:

In the order of *Tachanun* on Monday and Thursday we say: "*Vechol komah Lecha levad tishtachaveh*." **Harav Baruch of Mezhibuzh** explained that in contrast to a flesh and blood king, where bowing before him can only be done with bending one's stature, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the "*Yodea Machshavos*", He knows all thoughts. Therefore, *Lo levado*, only to Him, is it possible to bow even when walking upright, when the obeisance is done internally – with the submission of the heart.

The prohibition against walking tall stems from the fact that it shows a lack of *Yiras Shamayim* (*Sefer Chassidim* 53). This concern only exists at the time about which the well known rule of the *Sefer Hachinuch* (16) was said: "*Acharei hape'ulos nimshachim halevavos*," the

heart follows the action of a person. But in the End of Days, the *avodas Hashem* will be ingrained the depths of our hearts, irrespective of our external activities, and therefore, it will not be a problem to walk in an upright position.

Butzina D'Nehora Taharas Hamiddos 18; *Yechaven Pe'er*

Meva'er Emunim

Sources on the Great Importance of Answering Amen

One Who Withholds an "Amen" from His Friends – Has Sinned

"ואם בחקתי תמאסו... לבלתי עשות את כל מצות" (כו וטו)

"Not to fulfill" – preventing others from fulfilling [the *mitzvos*]. (*Rashi*)

One can say that *Rashi* is referring to the one who makes *brachos* quietly and thus prevents others from answering amen, as the *Sefer Chassidim* (254) says that one who makes a *brachah* quietly – steals the mitzvah of answering amen from those around him. An allusion to this is "לבלתי עשות את" – as the acronym of these words is numerically equivalent to 'amen.'

Kavod Melachim - Emunah

Tefillah with Kavanah Atones for Seven Eighths of Our Sins

"והכיתי אתכם גם אני שבע על חטאתיכם" (כו כד)

The *Midrash Pliah* on this *passuk* says: "This is the person who daven without *kavanah*." This needs explanation.

The **Ohev Yisrael** of Apta explains:

There is a well known rule: "*Tefillah osech mechetzah*, prayer accomplishes half" (*Vayikra Rabbah* 10 5). Based on this, it emerges that if, for example, a person rises in the morning and he has a debit of forty sins from the day before, after he daven *Shacharis* with *kavanah*, half of those sins are erased and he remains with twenty. After *Minchah*, another ten are erased and he remains

with ten. After *Maariv*, he remains with just five sins that were not atoned for.

So we find that together, the three *tefillos* of the day erase 7/8 of all his sins. This is the meaning of the *Midrash*: "*Vehikeisi eschem gam Ani sheva al chatoseichem*" – referring to one who daven without *kavanah*. Because he davened without *kavanah*, he will be punished for those seven parts that would have been erased from his sins if he would have davened with *kavanah*.

Sifsei Tzaddikim [Harav P. Dinowitz] Behar

Tefillos Rise Through the Bais Hamikdash Even Today

"השמות את מקדשיכם ולא אריח בריח נחחכם" (כו לא)

"And I will not willingly accept the *korbanos tzibbur*." (*Targum Onkelos*)

Why did *Onkelos* explain that the *passuk* is referring specifically to *korbanos tzibbur*?

Harav Shlomo Kluger of Brod explained that indeed, *Onkelos* is not referring to the *korbanos* at all, but rather to the *tefillos* that were established to correspond to the *korbanos tzibbur* (*Brachos* 26b). Therefore, he did not explain the *passuk* in its simple form, because we could have learned about the annullment of the *korbanos* from the beginning of the *passuk* "*Vehashimos es mikdesheichem*, and I will bring you sanctuaries into desolation" – and if there is no Mikdash, there are no *korbanos*. Why did the *passuk* have to detail "And I will no longer accept the fragrance of your offerings"? That is why *Onkelos* explained that HaKadosh Baruch Hu warned Bnei Yisrael that if they sin, He would be repulsed by the Bais Hamikdash and would destroy it Himself. Then, even their *tefillos* would not be accepted, because *tefillos* pass through the Bais Hamikdash (see *Brachos* 30a) and He was disgusted by them.

However in actuality, HaKadosh Baruch Hu had compassion on His nation and made it happen that the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed by non Jews; Hashem did not become disgusted by it. Thus, its holiness remained intact, and even after the *korbanos* were annulled, the *tefillos* could be accepted through the Bais Hamikdash.

Imrei Shefer

The Power of Amen

The Holy *Zohar* reveals to us the great power of answering amen:

"Anyone who answers amen with all his might, his decree of seventy years is torn up."

(*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1)

Let us believe in amen. We will answer with all our might and our decrees will be torn up.



Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Prayer of Faith

Explanations and Insights
into Birchas Hamazon

Birchas Hamazon – The Request of Retzei

A Life of Chilutz Atzamos

On Shabbos, it was established that we add in the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim* in *Birchas Hamazon* the special request: “*Retzei vehachlitzeinu...bemitzvosecha ubemitzvas Yom Hashvi'i*.” The *Midrash* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 34 15) explains why we ask this request in *Birchas Hamazon*, using the *pesukim* in *Yeshayah*: (58:11, 13): “וְנָחַךְ ה' תְּמִיד וְהַשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצִחְחוּת נֶפֶשׁךָ וְעִמְתִּיךָ יִחְלִיק...; אִם תִּשׁוּב מִשְׁבַּת גִּלְגָל עֲשׂוֹת חֶפְצֶיךָ בְּיוֹם קִדְשִׁי וּקְרָאתָ לַשַּׁבָּת עֲנֵנִי.”

The root word “חלץ” has many meanings (see *Baruch She'amar* on the *tefillah* of the year, p. 218) and the *Midrash* explains it in four ways: “*Shemittah*” – such as “*vechaltzah na'alo*” (*Devarim* 25:9); “arming oneself with weapons” like “*chalutzim ta'avru*” (*ibid* 3:18); “rescue” – such as “*chalitzeinu Hashem mei'adam ra'*” (*Tehillim* 140:2); and “*menuchah*” – such as “*v'atzmosecha yachlit*” (*Yeshayah* *ibid*) – that through rest, the bones and the body are refreshed with energy and strength. (See *Maharsha* in *Chiddushei Aggados*, *Yevamos* 102b)

The *Avudraham* combines all these explanations into one and explains the meaning of the request: “Through the merit of Shabbos that Am Yisrael will keep properly, they will be redeemed and extracted from the *galus*, and they will go to Eretz Yisrael armed and reinforced with *chilutz atzamos* – good health.” The *Sefer Hamanig* (*Hilchos Shabbos* p. 176), adds the words of the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 118b): “If Yisrael would keep just two Shabbosos according to *halachah* – they would immediately be redeemed.” He explained that that is why we make this request specifically on Shabbos.

The Alacrity Required for Observing Mitzvos

The *Rokeach* explained the request of “*Retzei Vehachlitzeinu...bemitzvosecha*”: “*Yehi ratzon lefanecha shetzarzeinu Hashem Elokeinu bemitzvosecha la'asos*,” and similar to what we ask at the end of *Shemoneh Esrei* “*v'acharei mitzvosecha tirdof nafshi*” (*Chiddushei Mahari Eirvin* 3:9).

We can say that that is why it was established to request *zerizus*, alacrity and *chilutz atzamos* with regard to observing *mitzvos* because the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 86b) says that because Yisrael are busy observing *mitzvos* – their bodies weaken. Therefore they need a special *brachah* “*hachalitzeinu bemitzvosecha*” – strengthen them so even though they are busy with the *mitzvos*, especially the “*mitzvas Yom Hashvi'i*” that they received at Marah, even before the

Torah was given (*Sanhedrin* 56b). That is why they needed a special protection. (*He'ir Mimizrach* on the *haftaros*, p. 335)

Rav Moshe Leib Litch Rosenbaum explained that that is why it was established to ask about the *ziruz hamitzvos*, the extra alacrity that we need for *mitzvos*, specifically on Shabbos, because Shabbos is a gift that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave exclusively to Am Yisrael (see *Shabbos* 10b), and the gentiles are not allowed to keep Shabbos (*Sanhedrin* 58b). There is no other way to explain this other than to say that it was given to them as a gift because they agreed to accept the *mitzvos* upon themselves. That is why we pray: “*Retzei vehachlitzeinu*” – *zarzeinu*, give us the alacrity to fulfill, “*bemitzvosecha*” all the *mitzvos*, “*ubemitzvas Yom Hashvi'i*” – that if we do not fulfill all the *mitzvos* properly we will not be worthy of the gift of Shabbos. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach*, *Bnei Yehudah*)

Removing the Material Garment on Shabbos

The *Sfas Emes* (*Ki Sisa* 5649) explains that the request of “*hachalitzeinu*” has a double meaning: it means both removing the material garment in order to be ready to accept the holiness of Shabbos, and donning “*machaltzos*” – the spiritual garments of Shabbos. The reason that there is redundant language “*bemitzvosecha ubemitzvas Yom Hashvi'i*” is that indeed, every *mitzvah* dresses the person in a spiritual garment, but while each *mitzvah* rectifies a specific organ, Shabbos is equal to all the *mitzvos* and it is like a garment on the entire soul.

The *Divrei Shmuel* of Slonim explained that we ask this on Shabbos because that is when we have to shuck all material matters so that we should be able to focus on the holiness of Shabbos. (*Divrei Shmuel*, *Likutim* p 195)

Retzei Vehachlitzeinu-A Request By Itself

When Harav Aharon of Belz was sick and unable to eat the Shabbos meals, he did it in a way that his Chassidim would not notice. After the *seudah*, he also pretended to be *bentching*, but while he “said” all the *brachos* quietly, he said the request of “*Retzei Vehachlitzeinu*” out loud. When those close to him expressed surprise, he explained: “One can say *Retzei*, because it is a request in and of itself.” (*Otzroseihem Shel Tzaddikim Birchas Hamazon*).

A Story of Faith

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

Baruch Rofei Cholim – Amen!

This moving story was related by Harav Moshe Steinman, *shlita*, the son of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Ahron Leib Steinman, *zt”l*, at a *seudas mitzvah* held for the *Hachnassas Sefer Torah* by tens of thousands of “*Bnei Emunim*” to Rav Steinman’s *yeshivah* Orchos Torah, this past Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Rav Moshe heard the story from the person it happened to, a *talmid* of Harav Steinman from when the *yeshivah* was still in Kfar Saba, who today serves as a well known *rosh yeshivah*.

This is what the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Rav Steinman’s *talmid*, related:

“One day, an old *talmid* of mine who has been living abroad for many years called me. After exchanging greetings, he tearfully told me about his dismal situation and the many troubles that have afflicted him. Years have passed since his marriage and he did not yet have children; *parnassah* was a constant struggle and nearly everything he invested in failed. And his most recent and difficult trouble was that the doctors had just informed him that he was suffering from a severe, life threatening illness.”

The *rosh yeshivah*, who remembered his student well, listened distraught to the tale of woe. After a long conversation, in which he empathized with the student and tried to comfort him, he blessed him from the depths of his heart that he merit to soon see salvation from Hashem. But the *talmid* did not suffice with that and said: “I am asking the *rosh yeshivah*, as he is a *talmid* of the *Ayeles Hashachar* [Rav Steinman], to go to his home and ask him to bless me that I merit to emerge from my troubles, and to also guide me on what I must strengthen in order to merit that *yeshuah*...”

“Certainly,” the *rosh yeshivah* replied, and promised, “At the next opportunity that I go to my *rebbe* I will mention your name for a *brachah* and will ask him to tell you what you should strengthen in order to rescind the *middas hadin*.”

A few days later, this *rosh yeshivah* went to Rav Steinman’s home to speak with him. During their conversation, he told the Rav his *talmid*’s difficult life story, that in addition to not having children or a stable *parnassah*, he had now been diagnosed with a serious illness.

Harav Steinman listened, a pained look on his face. It appeared that the man’s plight touched him deeply. Before replying, he asked the *rosh yeshivah* about his *talmid*’s spiritual state. The *rosh yeshivah* did not have a satisfying answer, because during his conversation with the *talmid*, he had learned that unfortunately, since moving to this foreign country, the man’s spiritual state had weakened dramatically.

When Rav Steinman heard this, he began his answer with a parable cited in early *sefarim*:

There was once a big king who loved music and song. As such, he employed in his palace an expert fiddler whose music was very pleasing for the king. Whenever the king wanted to relax and be reenergized, he summoned the violinist to his room, and as soon as he began playing, the king would feel calm, tranquil and rejuvenated.

But although the violinist excelled at his art, his character traits were not the best. From time to time, the king heard rumors that his beloved fiddler had gotten drunk and rolled in the gutters, that he engaged in thievery, and was even seen associating with the worst of the king’s enemies.

But as Shlomo Hamelech, the wisest of all men says: “*Ha’ahavah mekalkeles es hashurah*”, love distorts all reason. The king closed his ears and refused to listen to the bad rumors about his violinist. Thus,

despite his sins, the violinist continued to visit the palace each day to regale the king with his music.

One day, when the violinist was drunk, he became embroiled in a brawl with one of his friends, and as they beat each other up, one of the fiddler’s fingers was severed in a way that precluded him from playing his instrument.

Those close to the king were very afraid to tell this to the king because they knew how much he loved his fiddler. But they were surprised that as soon as the king heard the news, he instructed his servants to summon the police, and told the police to throw the fiddler into prison and to punish him harshly for all of his bad deeds.

Apparently as long as the violinist was able to serve in his capacity to provide the king with enjoyment, the king condoned his sins, but as soon as he could no longer do this, he was punished.

“The *Ribbono Shel Olam* also has a special tune that He loves,” Harav Steinman concluded. “The *Midrash* says that ‘there is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Yisrael answer.’ (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1). If so, it is not for naught that they said (*Tikkunei Zohar* 70 1) that one who answers amen his decree for seventy years is torn up because that person who sings and praises Hashem the song that He loves most, the amen, that is a merit that protects him.

Therefore, Rav Steinman said, tell your student that if he wants Hashem to look away from his sins, and tear up his harsh decree, he should take upon himself to sing before Hashem the song that is most beloved to Him – to pursue as many amens and opportunities to say “*Yehei Shemei Rabba*” each day. The more he does this, the more Hashem will save him from his troubles and he will see salvation.

When the *rosh yeshivah* emerged from Rav Steinman’s home, he hurried to call his student and convey the message. When the *talmid* heard this, he accepted upon himself right away to strengthen himself in this *mitzvah*. The conversation ended.

One day, more than a year after this story, the phone rang in the *rosh yeshivah*’s home. On the line was his student, but this time, he sounded vibrant and full of life, and he was the bearer of much good news:

“I’m happy to tell the *rosh yeshivah* that *bechasdei Shamayim*, we were blessed with a child, and my *parnassah* has also, *baruch Hashem* stabilized and improved...”

“But the most important thing is that I just received the results of my final tests, and I was overjoyed to hear that the disease has disappeared from my body entirely. I am healthy and happy!”

“The *rosh yeshivah* is the first one I am calling with my news,” the *talmid* added, “because since I began to carry out the advice that you gave me from Rav Steinman, my situation began to improve. From that day on, I dedicated time each morning to go from shul to shul to hear as many *brachos* as I could and to answer amen. My friends who were aware of my past looked at me like I was crazy, but I know that my life depended on it, and I ignored their looks and continued this practice. *Bechasdei Shamayim*, the *yeshuah* has arrived, but I have no intentions of stopping. I will continue to pursue more and more amens, and I hope that Hashem will never leave me,” the *talmid* concluded emotionally.