

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



277

PARASHAS KEDOSHIM

תשע"ט

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The One Making a Brachah Blesses the Thing He Made a Brachah On

"לא תעשק את רעך ולא תגזל" (יט יג)

The **Ohr Hachaim** explained:

This *passuk* alludes to the words of the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 35b): "When someone benefits from this world without a *brachah* it is as though he steals from HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Knesses Yisrael," and says it should be explained as follows: If you are careful to make a blessing on your food, then "*lo sa'ashok*," you will not exploit HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who is called "*Reiacha*" (*Mishlei* 27:10 according to *Rashi* *ibid*), and therefore, "*lo sigzol*," you will not steal from Knesses Yisrael either.

The **Dubno Maggid** explained the essence of the "theft" that is caused to Knesses Yisrael:

Chazal established a specific *brachah* for each and every species, because every type of food in the world is blessed in the merit of the *brachah* that Am Yisrael makes before eating it. We find, therefore, that one who eats a certain food without a *brachah* is indirectly harming the future crop of that same species, and that is how he is stealing from Am Yisrael.

Ohr Hachaim; Ohel Yaakov Eikev

"Hocheach Tochiach" on Answering Amen

"הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך" (יט יז)

The early *mochiach* **Harav Moshe Kahana** of Gibitch said that when he was appointed as a *mochiach*, one who gives rebuke, in several places, his father-in-law told him that because he was a grandson of the Baal Halevushim, who accepted upon himself to speak about and reprove the public about the answering of amen, it behooved him as well to speak about answering amen.

He wrote in his *sefer Derech Moshe*:

"It says in the *sifrei mussar* that a certain *chassid* fasted over the lengthy *galus*,

and he had a dream, where he heard it said: How will the *Geulah* come if the world is not careful to answer amen on the *brachah* of *Geulah*, *Hamachazir Shechinaso* [because the *tzibbur* immediately begins saying *Modim DeRabbanan* and the *brachah* of *Uferos Aleinu...*] and on *Yerushalayim* [because the *tzibbur* immediately begins reciting *Veshamru*]?"

"Therefore, I have established that in all the communities, wherever I travel to speak for the public, I instruct all the *chazzanim* that before *Modim* and before *Veshamru*, they should wait a bit after the end of the *brachah*, and should bang with a fist on the *amud*, in order to remind the people – men women and children – to answer mane. If they become

accustomed to this from a young age, the habit will become nature, and even when the person ages, he will not desist from doing it. And if the *chazzan* does not do this, he will be punished because he is causing death to the listeners... *chas veshalom*. But the Baal Harachahim does not first strike at the souls, and first the person will be poverty stricken, *chas veshalom*, as a poor man is considered to be dead. Therefore, my friends and brethren, this amen should not be taken lightly."

Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe Day 11

"Selichah" for a "Cheit" – How?

"כפר עליו הכהן באיל האשם...ונסלח לו מחטאתו..." (יט כב)

"And he will be forgiven for the sin that he committed...This includes the one who sinned intentionally, as one who sinned unwittingly." (*Rashi*, according to *Krisos* 9a)

How did *Chazal* derive from this *passuk* that even one who sinned intentionally is required to bring an "*asham shifchah charufah*"?

The Maggid **Harav Pinchas of Polotzk**, a *talmid* of the Gr"a, explained:

In the *viduy* that we say on Yom Kippur we expound and ask: "שתכפר לנו על כל חטאתינו." ותסלח לנו על כל עוונותינו ותמחל לנו על כל פשעינו." **Harav Yitzchak Eisik of Tirna**, author of *Sefer Haminhagim* (*Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Erev Yom Kippur*) explains that the *nusach* was composed specifically in this way because Torah also discerns between the *baal* "*cheit*" [=unintentionally], using the word "*kaparah*"; and for an "*avon*" [=an intentional sin] uses the word "*selichah*" and for a "*pesha*" – [rebellion] uses the word "*mechilah*."

Thus we can explain why in this case the Torah writes *selichah* together with "*cheit*", and the *selichah* implies that in here, the Torah is referring to a *meizid* – [who intentionally sinned] as well.

Peulesai Hashmini, Kuntress 19

Be'er Emunim

From Rabbeinu Bechayei on the parashah

One Who Answers Amen is Called Kadosh

"והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני ה' אלקיכם" (כ ז)

In *Maseches Brachos* (53b, see *Maharsha* Vol. I there) *Chazal* explain this *passuk* to apply to *Birchas Hamazon*. **Harav Naftali Katz**, author of *Semichas Chachamim* wrote: "If the *mevarech* is called *kadosh* then how much more so is the one who answers amen called holy, because 'one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*.'" (*Brachos* *ibid*)

Sefer Hatzava'a 21

Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, *shlita*, recalls that in *Yerushalayim*, a certain *Yid* was called "*Kadosh*" only because of the fact that despite his advanced age and weak state, he made the effort to go to shul to answer amen to the *brachos*.

Notrei Amen Vol. I, p. 157

You Don't Have More Beloved Friends Than These

"And it is good to have the custom that the *shaliach tzibbur* should recite *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, and the ones who answer should have in mind not to be *yotzei*. Not only that, but friends who sleep in one room should rise early to each make the *brachos* and his friends can answer amen, and then they can go with excitement to shul...and there are no friends more beloved than these..."

Shu"t HaRema MiPano, 109

Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Birchas Hamazon – Birchas Boneh Yerushalayim (6)

“And You Will Not Borrow”

In the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, we add a special request, that aside for not needing the gifts of human beings, we also should not need their loans.

We can learn about the drawbacks of taking loans from the fact that one of the *brachos* in the Torah is “*v'atah lo silveh*” and you will not borrow (*Devarim* 28, 12).

The *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 35a) explains the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (11:3): “*Veselef bogdim yeshadem*, the distortion of the treacherous robs them”, to refer to a person who takes a loan, because the fact that the person needed to take a loan for his sustenance is a sign that his *tefillah* of “*Vena al tatzricheinu*” was not accepted because of his sins. (*Mishneh Halachos* 14, 211)

Harav Yehonoasan Eibshitz (*Urim Vetumim* beginning of 97) explained that the reason we do not make a *brachah* on the mitzvah of giving a loan is because it is a kind of curse. That is because the one who takes the loan could easily become a “*rasha*”, as it says “*loveh rasha velo yeshalem*” a wicked man borrows and does not pay (*Tehillim* 37:21). The Mashgiach Harav Yechezkel Levenstein said that it is not for naught that the term used is “*loveh rasha...*” and not “*loveh velo meshalem – rasha*”. It is to teach us that already at the time that he took the loan he was considered a “*rasha*” because he did not have a plan of how to pay it. As Rabbeinu Yona expounds on extensively in his commentary on *Maseches Avos* (2 9), that is why one should distance himself from loans. (*Leshichno Tidreshenu* Vol. I, p. 227)

Do Not Make Us Need “Na”

Yet, we see that not every person who takes a loan is necessarily poor. Very wealthy people also need a large loan sometimes to help them grow their businesses. Are we referring to this kind of loan as well?

There is a big difference between a poor man and a rich man. When the rich man approaches his friend and asks for a loan, he does not need to plead at all. He can ask – and will immediately be answered positively, because the lender knows that he will only benefit from his connection with the wealthy person.

In contrast, the poor man must ask for the loan with pleas and begging, and even then, he hardly gets answered. Therefore we

ask: “*Vena – al tatzricheinu... liyedei halva'avsam*”. Even if we need a loan, it should not be out of poverty that we have to plead – “*vena*” – but rather that we should be able to ask for loans as wealthy people.” (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Gedolei Yerushalayim* [p. 161] in the name of Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld)

Many Gifts and One Loan

In the years after World War Two, Harav Mordechai Pogremansky lived in France. One day, he noticed the *rosh yeshivah* of Novhardok, Harav Gershon Liebman, running back and forth among people asking them to lend him some money for his yeshivah. Rav Mordechai said to him:

I always wondered why the request of “*lo liyedei matnas basar vadam*” is said in the singular form, while “*velo liyedei halva'asam*” is said in the plural? It seems that it is not for naught that it is written this way. When a person needs a loan, it is better that he should get one large loan from one person, rather than approaching a few people and asking them to lend to him. Therefore, we ask: “*Al tatzricheinu liyedei matnas basar vadam*” at all, and even if it is decreed that we should need to borrow money for our sustenance, we should not need “*liyedei halva'asam*” – the loans of many people. Rather, we should obtain one large loan to cover all that we need. (*Ohel Moshe* [Rav M. Scheinerman] Vol. II, p. 547)

“Malveh Hashem Chonen Dal”

The fact that we include in the request: “*velo liyedei halva'asam – ki im leyadcha*” infers that aside for the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives gifts to His creations, He also “lends” to those who do not have merits, on account of the future. Therefore, even someone who is not a *tzaddik* makes the *brachah* in *Birchas Hamazon*, in which he asks Hashem to lend him on account of the future, even though he has not yet “repaid” the previous “loan” that he received. The Chofetz Chaim says that this shows us the greatness of the *chassadim* of Hashem to His creations. A human being will not lend again to a person who has not yet paid his previous loan, while HaKadosh Baruch Hu lends and then lends again, and even though the person repeatedly sins, Hashem is very patient with him. (*Ezri Me'im Hashem, Eikev*, in the name of Rav Y.D. Schlesinger of Monsey)

A Chavrusa Between the Judge and the Defendant

This story began two years ago, when the chairman of Bnei Emunim, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, was traveling from Bnei Brak to Yerushalayim in order to attend the wedding of a friend's son. At the time, the construction work on the access road to Yerushalayim was at its peak. The highway to the city was clogged with traffic for many miles, and the trip took far longer than expected. A quick glance at his watch made it clear to Rav Marmorstein that he would not make it to Yerushalayim before the *shekiah*, as he had planned, and he scanned the road for signs hoping to find a town here he could stop and find a *minyán* for *Minchah*.

When the car finally reached the exit for Mevasseret Tzion, the driver made a right into the town and traveled straight to the local shul. There, a *minyán* was about to start, and Rav Marmorstein and those traveling with him joined the *minyán*.

After *davening* was over, the thought entered Rav Marmorstein's mind that surely, it was not for naught that he had been sent here. So before continuing his trip, he opened the trunk of his car, took out a few *Vechol Ma'aminim* pamphlets. He returned to the shul, placed them on a table, and then left. As far as he was concerned, the story ended here.

Only two years later did Rav Marmorstein learn of the wondrous continuation of the story. Among the hundreds of faxes that Bnei Emunim's office receives every month, came a letter signed by a resident of Mevasseret Tzion, in which he relates the following story:

Two years ago, I first learned of your extensive activities to strengthen the answering of amen. It happened when, one day, I found a pamphlet on a table in my shul. I had never known that such a pamphlet exists.

Between *Minchah* and *Maariv* I read it and enjoyed the beautiful ideas presented there in a clear and pleasant format. I read the pamphlet from beginning to end and thoroughly enjoyed it. Because the subject of *tefillah* was always close to my heart, I decided to join the mailing list to receive the pamphlet.

From then, each Erev Shabbos, I print out the pamphlet that I receive, and read it during the course of Shabbos.

Each week, there is an ad calling for the strengthening of answering amen, and there are sometimes articles relating to this mitzvah. Through the ads and the essays, I have learned much about the depth and secrets of the mitzvah of answering amen.

Like every Jew, I grew up on the mitzvah of answering amen since I was a child, but it kind of got “swallowed” up by the rest of the *mitzvos*. I always answered amen without understanding its significance or delving into it too deeply. It was mostly by habit. But you have opened my eyes and those of my family, as if to say, Hey, stop! Amen ahead!

In your merit I realized for the first time the great virtues of this mitzvah that is so readily and frequently available, and this fact in and of itself is enough to obligate me to write you this heartfelt thank you letter. But as you will read, that is not why I am writing.

As a veteran reader of your pamphlet, I occasionally read the personal stories that you publish relating to answering amen, and therefore, I want to share with you a true story that recently happened to me.

I have a business in the transportation industry. At one point, I was sued by one of my clients for a very large sum of money for damage that he claims I am to blame for. I will not get into the details of whether his claim is justified or not, because it is not relevant here. In any case, it was a serious lawsuit, and the person suing me was helped by a top tier lawyer. You can imagine that I was very fearful for my financial future.

What does a Jew who is in trouble do? He remembers that there is a Creator, and turns to Him and pleads for help! That's what I did, but the thought immediately came to mind: If I want HaKadosh Baruch Hu to give me something, what will I give Him?! I decided, because of you, to strengthen my observance of the mitzvah of amen. As you have noted in your pamphlet often this involves being careful about answering amen in general, and in particular reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each morning.

I did this for the several months that I waited for the trial. It became a habit, and all the while I just hoped for the best.

On the day of the hearing, I rose early. The hearing was set for eight thirty in the morning, and in order to be able to *daven* calmly and to say a few chapters of *Tehillim* before the trial, I traveled to Yerushalayim at first light. I arrived at the neighborhood where the court is located and looked for a shul nearby where I could *daven*.

When I arrived at the shul, I saw that there were about twenty minutes until the start of *davening*. So I took a *Tehillim* and began *davening* with great emotion. Slowly, the shul began to fill. *Davening* was about to start. And then I remembered the *kabbalah* I had taken upon myself. I mustered up the courage, and turned to a dignified looking person sitting next to me and asked if I could say *Birchos Hashachar* for him so he could answer amen.

At first, he looked at me, very taken aback. But then I explained to him that this was a pledge I had made because of a big lawsuit that was filed against me, for something I had not done. He agreed right away.

I made the *brachos* and he answered amen. When I finished he apologized and said he had already made the *brachos* at home. So I turned to another *misparallel* and asked him to say the *brachos* for me so I could answer amen.

When *davening* ended I walked over to the courthouse and entered the courtroom. I was stunned when I noticed that sitting on the judge's bench was – no more and no less – that same Jew who a short time earlier had listened to my *brachos* and answered amen!

It's hard to describe what I felt like at those moments. Without knowing what the outcome of the trial would be, I felt a big “smile” sent down to me from Above. Deep down, I already breathed a sigh of relief, as if I had received a sign from Above that the *kabbalah* that I had undertaken was wanted.

To this day I do not know if the judge recognized me or not, but at the end of the hearing, the grounds for the lawsuit were exposed as false and I was completely acquitted.

It is very possible that the judge was influenced by the fact that I had come over to him that morning and asked him to make the *brachos*, and I remarked that I was doing it because of a lawsuit against me. Perhaps he also saw it as a sign from Above...Who knows?!

In any case, I felt a need to thank you from the depths of my heart for your work to be *mezakeh* the public and, and to express my gratitude for the miracle that you were instrumental in. I hope that this letter expresses a bit of the gratitude that I feel. May it be Hashem's will that you continue to spread and expand your influence for the glory of Torah.

With blessings and gratitude,
Y.G.

Mevasseret Tzion