

# Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Birchos HaTorah – A Segulah to Retain Learning

ויתן אל משה ככלתו לדבר אתו בהר סיני שני לחת העדת לחת אבן כבתים באצבע אלקים (לא יח) "At first Moshe would learn Torah and forget it, until it was given to him as a gift, as it says "Vayiten el Moshe, and He gave it to Moshe..." (Nedarim 38a)

From this Gemara, the Noda B'Yehudah learned that reciting Birchos HaTorah properly is a segulah for retaining what one learns:

In Maseches Brachos (35a), Chazal ask: One passuk says (Tehillim 34:1) "L'Hashem ha'aretz umeloah", while another passuk says (Tehillim 115:16) "Veha'aretz nasan livnei adam." They reconciled this: Before the brachah, the food belongs to Hashem and a person has no part in it, but after the brachah, the person merits to have it.

Similarly, with Torah, it can be said: Until a person recites Birchos HaTorah the Torah is considered "Toras Hashem" and a person cannot remember it. After he makes the brachah "Venasan lanu es haTorah...nosen haTorah", he merits to get it as a gift, and as such, he remembers it, like Moshe, who did not remember what he learned until it was given to him as a gift.

The Noda B'Yehudah also explained the reason that the first Masechta in Shas is called Maseches Brachos, even though it does not address the halachos of brachos until the sixth perek – "Keitzad mevarchin." The Tanna is reminding us that only if we take care to make "Birchos HaTorah properly before learning can we retain what we learn.

Tzelach, Brachos 64 1

### Aseres Hadibros – The Foundation Stone for the Entire Torah

שני לחת העדת לחת אבן (לא יח) In Shacharis of Shabbos we mention in praise of Moshe: "And the two luchos avanim he brought down in his hand..." Why do we call the luchos specifically avanim, stone ones,

and not luchos ha'eidus, as they are referred to in this passuk?

Harav Baruch Epstein of Pinsk explained:

The term "luchos avanim" does not describe the material from which the luchos were made, but rather the fact that the Ten Commandments written on the luchos are the main foundation upon which the entire Torah is based. As Rashi explained the words of the passuk (Bereishis 49:24): "Even Yisrael" – "ikaran shel Yisrael, the mainstay of Yisrael", and likewise we refer to the foundation stone of a building as the even hapinah.

Baruch She'amar, Shacharis for Shabbos

we told you that "See that ra'ah is against you." Immediately, "Vayinachem Hashem al hara'ah" and He transformed the blood to blood of bris milah that Yehoshua circumcised them." (Yalkut Shimoni remez 392)

Harav Avraham Chaim Schorr learned from the Midrah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not annul the decree of "hadam hara", the bad blood, but rather He turned it to blood of the milah, because a bad decree cannot be annulled. However, teshuvah has the power to transform it to something good. He explained that that is why we say in the tefillos of Yamim Noraim: "Utshuvah utefillah utzeddakah ma'avirin es roa hazezeirah", meaning, the decree is not annulled, but the bad in it becomes good.

Toras Chaim, Bava Kama 55a

### Be'er Emunim

From Rabbeinu Bechayei on the parashah

### Tefillah and Amen in Place of Korbanos

לשרת להקטיר אשה לה (ל כ)

The acronym of "לשרת להקטיר אשה לה" is numerically equivalent to "amen" to teach us that in that in our time when the Bais Hamikdash does not exist and there are no korbanos, tefillah takes the place of the korbanos. The most important virtue of the tefillah is when it is said betzibbur, because then it can be completed by answering amen.

Bais Yaakov, Naso

### Teshuvah Passes the "Roa", the Bad, In the Decree

למה יאמרו מצרים לאמר ברעה הוציאם ... וינחם ה' על הרעה אשר דבר לעשות לעמו" (לב יב;ד)

"Because Pharaoh saw in the stars and said to Yisrael (ibid 10:10): "Look that ra'ah is against you" – he said to them: I see in the stars one star rising to greet you and it is called "ra'ah" and it is a sign of blood and killing. When Bnei Yisrael sinned in the desert with the Eigel, Moshe said in his tefillah: "Why should Mitzrayim say bera'ah hotziam, He took them out with bad" – that they will say,

### The Levi'im Are Not Partners in the Reading of "Vayachel"

יעמוד משה בשער המחנה ויאמר מי לה' אלי ויאספו אליו כל בני לוי" (לב כו)

When leining the parashah of "Vayachel" on fast days, it is customary for the tzibbur to repeat aloud passuk by passuk (ibid 12): "Shuv mecharon apecha..." during the leining of the aliyah of Kohein, and then again after the Thirteen Middos and the passuk (Shemos 24:9): "Vesalachta l'avoneinu ulchatasteinu unechaltanu" – in the leining of the Yisrael. In contrast, during the kriyah of Levi, the tzibbur does not repeat any passuk. Harav Eliezer Landau the Av Bais Din of Brod, offered a wonderful explanation for this:

The reason we read Vayachel on fast days that Chazal established for the troubles that befell our forbears is in order to arouse Heavenly Mercy, is that Hashem should forgive us for the sin of the Eigel, because there is no tzarah in Klal Yisrael that does not have a bit of this sin combined with it. Therefore, the tzibbur participates in the kriyah of the Kohein and the Levi, because Aharon Hakohein and his sons and Bnei Yisrael were involved in making the Eigel. But during the kriyah of the Levi, the tzibbur does not participate because the Leviim were not involved in this sin.

Yad Hamelech Avodas Kochavim 1 3

Shabbos 18 Adar is the yahrtzeit of the Mashgiach Harav Yechezkel Levenstein, zt"l.

In his many sichos of emunah, the Mashgiach would strengthen his students with the virtues of answering amen. He would often cite what he heard from his rebbi, the Alter of Kelm, that it would have been worthwhile for a person to come down to this world, and even endure suffering like Iyov, if only to ultimately merit the reward of one amen that he answered once in his life, because the reward of every amen is unfathomable. (Ohr Yechezkel Emunah p. 274)



## Birchas Hamazon – Birchas Ha'aretz (7)

## Eating In Order to Bentsch

Before we finish *Birchas Ha'aretz* we mention the source of our obligation to thank Hashem after eating: "As it says (*Devarim* 8:10): 'And you should eat and be satiated and bless Hashem Your Elokim for the good land that He gave you.' And as the *Gemara* in *Brachos* says (21a), 'Rav Yehudah said: Where do we learn about *Birchas Hamazon* [that we recite after food] from the Torah - as it says, 'V'achalta vesavata uveirachta.'

The *Alshich* (*Devarim* ibid) explains that this *passuk* said as part of *Birchas Ha'aretz* alludes to another unique praise of the holy land: that one can become satiated after eating only a bit of its fruits. Thus it says: "V'achalta" – even if you eat the smallest amount of food, "vesavata" – you are guaranteed to become satiated by this eating.

The *Malei Omer* (ibid) added:

The Torah states "v'achalta vesavata" that even though according to *halachah* a person should minimize the enjoyment of his body and not eat to the point that he is fully satiated, because there is no way to become obligated in *Birchas Hamazon* without eating to satiation, he must therefore eat his fill. But at the same time he should remember that the objective of satiation is so that he can fulfill "And you should bless Hashem for the good land that He gave you."

Harav Shlomo of Karlin would explain:

"V'achalta vesavata", how? Through "ubeirachta." You should be spiritually satiated from the actual *brachah* that you make after you eat. It is further brought down in the name of his *talmid*, Harav Uri of Strelisk, that: "V'achalta vesavata" – only if you are strict not to eat more than the measure considered "satiation", then "ubeirachta es Hashem Elokecha" – will you merit to truly bless Hashem. (*Shema Shlomo* ibid)

Closing Out the  
Brachah With a Passuk

The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 1:5) rules: "Ein omrim brachah passuk", and the commentaries explain (*Pnei Moshe* and others) the words of the *Yerushalmi* to mean that one should not state a *passuk* adjacent to the closing of a *brachah*. That being the case, how is it that we say the *passuk* "V'achalta vesavata" adjacent to the closing *brachah* of *Birchas Ha'aretz*? Indeed, the *Rema Mipano* (*Shu"t* 102) ruled that one should add after the *passuk* the words "Venodeh Lecha al ha'aretz v'al hamazon." Even before that, Rabbeinu Elyahu of Londrish, one of the *Baalei Tosefos* (*Perushei Rav Elyahu MiLondrish* p. 103) resolved the words of the *Yerushalmi* as follows: "Because all of *Birchas Hamazon* is derived from the same *passuk*". He later brings a *chiddush* in *halachah*: "And anyone who does not say "Venodeh Lecha al ha'aretz v'al hamazon" as a closing ahead of the closing *brachah* did not fulfill his obligation."

In actuality, it did not become the custom to say the stipulated addition, and as the *Tur* writes (187): 'And one

does not need to say before the closing *brachah* "venodeh Lecha selah b'emes al ha'aretz v'al hamezonos." Rabi Meir Arik (*Tal Torah*, in annotations to the *Yerushalmi* there) explained that this custom does not contradict the *Yerushalmi*, because in the commentary of the *Chareidim*, he explained the words of the *Yerushalmi* that no *passuk* should be added after the closing *brachah*, but we mention the *passuk* before the closing.

## Divrei Torah at a Seudah

In *Maseches Avos* (3:3) we learn: "Rabi Shimon says: Three that sat at one table and did not say *divrei Torah* it is as if they ate from *zivchei meisim* [animals sacrificed for *avodah zarah*]...But three who sat at one table and say *divrei Torah* it is as if they ate at the Table of HaKadosh Baruch Hu." Rabbeinu Ovadiah of Bartenura (and also apparent in *Rashi* there, and see *Rashbatz*, there) wrote: "And in *Birchas Hamazon* that one recites at the table, fulfills this obligation, and it is considered as though *divrei Torah* were said. This is what I heard."

Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (*Shu"t Shalmas Chaim Orach Chaim* 167) explained that the *Bartenura* means that they fulfill the obligation of reciting *divrei Torah* by reciting *Birchas Hamazon*, because in *bentsching* we mention a full *passuk* from Torah: "V'achalta vesavata ubeirachta es Hashem Elokecha al ha'aretz hatovah asher nasan lach." [Although he writes there that *lechatchilah* those dining should certainly learn something together].

## Brachah for Settling the Land

An interesting *chiddush* was written by Harav Shraga Feivel Frank, *zt"l*, in his *sefer Toldos Zev* (*Shabbos* Vol. II p. 67) that according to the *Rishonim* (see *Ramban* in the *Hasagos Lesefer Hamitzvos, Mitzvas Asei* 4) that the mitzvah of settling in Eretz Yisrael is a *d'Oraisa* even in our time, and it seems that this mitzvah is worthy of having a special *brachah* made on it. It seems that we can fulfill the obligation to make this *brachah* by saying the *brachah* of "al ha'aretz v'al hamazon." Therefore, it is worthy that those who merit to live in Eretz Yisrael should have in mind while reciting this *brachah* the mitzvah of settling in Eretz Yisrael, and fortunate is their lot in this world and in the next.

Before this, Harav Mordechai Eliezer Weber, Gaavad of Ada, wrote in his *sefer Temuras Torah* [Yerushalayim 5647] that really it would be fitting to make a *brachah* in our time on living in Eretz Yisrael according to those *poskim* who believe this mitzvah applies in this time as well. We can fulfill this obligation by saying *Birchas Ha'aretz*, and therefore it concludes with the *passuk*: "V'achalta vesavata ubeirachta ... al ha'aretz hatovah."

## Surprising Salvation in the Middle of the Night

Spiritual Immunization  
for Tuberculosis

This awe inspiring story was heard firsthand by Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, *shlita*, the Rav of Ramat Elchanan, Bnei Brak. When he was a young man he was a neighbor of the Rebbe Harav Yechiel Yehoshua of Biala, *zt"l*, and merited to witness his conduct and his practices.

It was known that one of the Rebbe's lofty customs was that each day, before *davening*, the *shochet* Harav Yitzchak Weiner would come to his home and slaughter a chicken for him. The Rebbe would stand at his side during the *shechitah* and would prepare with awe for the mitzvah of *kisui hadam*, covering the blood, which he was very strict about. As soon as the *shechitah* was over, the Rebbe would sway with emotion, with great awe he would begin the *brachah*: "Baruch Atah...asher kidshanu...al kisui hadam!" His voice rose with every word. He said the *brachah* each day with the same tremendous enthusiasm, his body trembling with emotion.

Rebbetzin Aliza Shoshana Silberstein, *a"h*, the daughter of Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, *zt"l*, would try at every opportunity to line her six children up at the window of the house when the Rebbe performed the mitzvah of *kisui hadam* so they could watch the Rebbe make the *brachah*.

"It's a good thing for the children to see and learn how a *brachah* is recited with the right *kavanah*. I want them to learn already at a young age how a real Jew makes a *brachah*!" she would explain to anyone who wondered why she did this.

The scene indeed penetrated deep into the hearts of her children, who would wait with anticipation for the next time they would merit to witness the Rebbe making the *brachah*.

At one opportunity when Rav Silberstein met the Rebbe, he told him about his wife's practice of putting the children at the window so they could witness and learn the importance of a *brachah* with *kavanah*. He even described to him how much the children awaited the opportunity. When he heard this, the Rebbe smiled with pleasure, and then replied with a story from his own memory, which took place in Poland in the court of his grandfather, the *Divrei Binah* of Biala:

One day, one of the

*Chassidim* entered the Rebbe's room, the picture of sadness on his face. "Holy Rebbe," the man moaned, "I am sick with the dreaded tuberculosis. For some time already I have been suffering terribly; day and night, *Shabbos* and weekday, a moment does not pass without me being overcome with sharp, painful coughing..."

As if to illustrate his point, the man was suddenly overcome with a bout of coughing that lasted several long moments. It was hard to watch the man in his dismal state. The coughs came from the depths of his lungs and it was evident that they were very painful. His face became red and he felt dizzy. His hands were clutched to his chest in pain, and still, the coughing continued.

The Rebbe waited patiently, and with great compassion, until the man was able to calm down. He rested for a moment, and then continued, with tears pouring from his eyes:

"Rebbe, help me! My wife and children are waiting for me at home. I am still a young man and I am terrified of this dreadful disease that has already taken the lives of so many. The doctors say that if there is no immediate improvement in my condition, they will have to place me in quarantine so that I don't infect others, and I will remain there, suffering bitterly, until the day I die..."

"Rebbe, please, save me! *Daven* that I should finally recover from this horrible disease that has turned my life into Gehinnom on this earth!"

When the *chassid* finished, he looked at the Rebbe, who sat across from him with his eyes closed, deeply engrossed in his thoughts.

The tense silence continued for some time. Suddenly, the Rebbe looked at the man and asked him tersely: "Do you want to live?"

The question took the man by surprise, and he responded immediately: "Of course! That is why I came here, to ask for advice and a *brachah* to save my life!"

"If so," the Rebbe said, "I have a good idea for you. Undertake to say *brachos* with *kavanah*. Before every *brachah* that you make – pause for a moment and think of the fact that you are about to speak with the King of Kings. Only after that should you utter the *brachah*, and take care to have *kavanah* on the meaning of the words, in the simple clear sense. If

you undertake to do this – I promise that you will quickly merit a new life!"

The Rebbe concluded his words, the man thanked him with great emotion and left.

Already that day, the man began to be very careful when reciting *brachos*, as the Rebbe had advised. From that day on, not one *brachah* emerged from his mouth without *kavanah*. He was careful to say each word slowly, with *kavanah*, while thinking of its meaning. Indeed, already by the next time he visited the doctor, the latter happily informed him that the disease had begun to recede and he was no longer in danger of being quarantined.

Over the next few days, the *chassid's* condition improved, and within a short time, he returned home, to his wife and children, overjoyed and healthy.

"A *brachah* has power!" Rav Silberstein concluded the story. "It has strength. A *brachah* recited with *kavanah* provides protection and is an effective *segulah*. Let us take upon ourselves to make *brachos* with *kavanah* because a *brachah* with *kavanah* can save us, plain and simple!"

In light of so many diseases with no cure, and endless suffering that we witness each day, we are seeking any way possible to merit *yeshuos*, *refuos* and protection. This is the most effective tool, and it is available at any time and any place – make *brachos* with *kavanah*, because a *brachah* with *kavanah* has boundless power to bring about *refuos* and abundance!

How important it is to know and understand what a *brachah* is and what significances it contains, and to internalize how important it is to make a *brachah* with *kavanah*. Stop the race of life for a moment, and think about the fact that we are about to offer a prayer of thanks to our Creator for blessing us with the food or drink we are about to consume. Because a *brachah* is not just a random statement; it is an emotional prayer of gratitude. Let us say it properly and we will merit *refuos* and *yeshuos*!

Likras Shabbos Malkesa – Beshalach