

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

To Complete the Angel's Creation

"איש כי ידר נדר לה...לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה" (ל ג)

The **Reishis Chochmah** writes (*Shaar Hakedushah* 14 20):

"When one vows to do a mitzvah, his very statement creates one angel, but it will not be complete until he fulfills the entire mitzvah... And one who makes a vow and does not fulfill it, then that angel is hanging, and it is in distress until the mitzvah that created it is complete. One who wants his tefillah to be heard and his request fulfilled – should try to fulfill his vows, as it says (*Tehillim* 50:14-15): "זבח לאלקים תודה ושלם לעליון נדריך. וקראני ביום" – "צרה אחלצך ותכבדני today and pay the Most High your vows. And call to Me on a day of distress; I will rescue you and you will honor Me."

Harav Yosef Shalom the Rav of Pizencz, explained that the words of the *Reishis Chochmah* are alluded to in this *passuk*: "*Ish ki yidor neder*" – one who makes a vow to fulfill a mitzvah, "*lo yachel devaro*" – should not profane his word, because "*kechol hayotzei mipiv ya'aseh*" – as soon as he utters the vow, an angel is created, and its creation is not complete until he fulfills the vow.

Yad Avi Shalom [Offenbach 5480]

Similarly, **Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg** says relating to the mitzvah of answering amen, that one should be careful to make each *brachah* in front of someone who hears and can answer amen after it, because by reciting his *brachah*, and angel is created, and its creation is not complete until amen is answered.

Ohel Yitzchak, page 36

Everlasting Salvation – Only Through Tefillah

"לא יחל דברו ככל היצא מפיו יעשה" (ל ג)

There are two other places in *Tanach* aside for this where the word "*yachel*" appears: "*Yachel Yisrael el Hashem ki im Hashem hachessed*" (*Tehillim* 130:7); and "*Yachel Yisrael el Hashem mei'atah v'ad olam*", (*ibid* 131:3).

Harav Yehoshua Buxbaum, *Hy"d*, the Rav of Galanta, explained:

Putting these three *pesukim* together alludes to the concept conveyed by the Chozeh of Lublin. He says that although the decree of a *tzaddik* is fulfilled Above even without him *davening* for it (see *Taanis* 23a), there is still a special virtue in the *yeshuah* that comes through *tefillah*, in that it is an everlasting salvation, by contrast to a *yeshuah* that is achieved without *tefillah*, which is only temporary.

These three *pesukim* allude to that. Although it is said of the *tzaddik* "*Lo yachel devaro kechol hayotzei mipiv ya'aseh*", and he can effect a *yeshuah* through the power of his speech alone, still: "*Yachel Yisrael el Hashem*" – he still prefers to *daven* for the *yeshuah*, because only then can this be an everlasting salvation that will be fulfilled "*mei'atah v'ad olam*," from now and forever.

Or Pnei Yehoshua

Rashba, wrote:

It is not for naught that the Torah detailed the names of the travels; this way, later, one traveling in the Sinai Desert would be able to identify the places where our ancestors walked, and could thank Hashem for the miracles that occurred to them on their way. As *Chazal* said: (*Brachos* 54a): "One who sees a place where miracles were performed for Yisrael says: *Baruch she'asah nissim l'avoseinu bamakom hazeh*."

Drashos Al HaTorah L'R"Y Ibn Shuib

In the Merit of "Bemakhelos" You Will Be Saved from "Charadah"

"יסעו מחרדה ויחנו במקלה" (לג כה)

Harav Moshe Leib Litch Rosenbaum, author of *Masa D'Yerushalayim* explained:

This *passuk* alludes to the words of the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 6b): "When HaKadosh Baruch comes to the *bais knesses* and doesn't find ten [people], He immediately gets angry." "*Vayisu meCharadah*" – how can you escape the Anger of Hashem? "*Vayachanu beMakhelos*" – if you are careful that the *kahal* should come early to "*lachanos*" to camp, in the shul before the beginning of *davening*.

Imros Hashem

One Should Not Set Himself Apart from the Tzibbur

"יסעו מחרדה ויחנו במקלה" (לג כה)

The word "*bemakhelos*" is mentioned in two places in *Tanach*, here and in the *passuk* in (*Tehillim* 68 27): "*Bemakhelos barchu Elokim*" (*Baal Haturim*).

The connection between the two *pesukim* is explained by the *Shevet Mussar*:

There is a well-known *halachah* (*Brachos* 51) that a group of people who eat together must not recite *Birchos Hamazon* individually without a *zimun*, because they have already been obligated to *bentch* together. This *halachah* is alluded to by the *pesukim*: "*Vayachanu beMakhelos*" – those who gather to eat together, "*bamakhelos barchu Elokim*" – it is incumbent on each of them to *bentch* together.

Chut Shel Chessed

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Amen in the Haftarah

Yiras Shamayim Depends on Amen

"כי לא מלאו אהרי" (לב א)

"Because they did not have enough *Yiras Shamayim*." (*Onkelos*)

The acronym of לא מלאו אהרי is numerically equivalent to amen, to teach us that refraining from answering amen indicates a lack of *Yiras Shamayim*. As the *Midrash Ashrei* says (*Drush* 102): "When a person answers amen with all his might, immediately he is infused with *Yiras Shamayim*."

Chairman of Bney Emunim Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein

A Brachah on the Miracles Performed for Our Fathers

"אלה מסעי בני ישראל" (לג א)

Harav Yehoshua Ibn Shuib, a *talmid* of the

Harav Tzvi Hirsh of Zidichoiv

(*Pri Kodesh Hilulim, Shaar Habrachos* Ch. 4):

"Because we say *Birchos Hashachar* in shul in order, surely it will be good for each one to answer amen after the *brachah* of his friend. As a *brachah* without an amen is literally a *plag gufa*, half a body."



In the King's Palace (5)

Establishing a Place in Shul
One Who Establishes a Place for his Tefillah, Is Helped by Elokei Avraham

In earlier segments we discussed the virtue of tefillah recited with a quorum of ten, and the importance of praying in a place designated for tefillah – a shul. Now we will address another virtue that was lauded by Chazal: establishing a place for one's davening.

Chazal learn of the virtue of establishing a set place for davening (Brachos 6b) from the passuk said about Avraham Avinu (Bereishis 19:27): "Yayashkem Avraham baboker el hamakom asher amad sham es Pnei Hashem", meaning, Avraham arose to daven in the same place where he had previously stood in prayer. As such, it was said there that one who establishes a place for his tefillah then "Elokei Avraham assists him", and when he passes away we eulogize him: "Where is the chassid, where is the anav, who was from the disciples of Avraham Avinu."

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 98 4) further states that the importance of setting a specific place to daven stems from the fact that tefillah was established in place of the Korban Tamid. Just like the Korban Tamid was sacrificed in a specific place in the north of the Azarah, similarly tefillah needs to be performed in a regular place, and this way, it is willingly accepted. It should be noted that the Rishonim were divided on the explanation of this halachah. The Bais Yosef (90) cites the opinion of Rabbeinu Yona that only when at home should one daven in a set place, but in a shul, there is no need for a specific place because the whole shul is considered one "makom." But the Shulchan Aruch ruled practically (Orach Chaim 90 19) like the Rosh that even within a shul one should daven in a specific place.

A Set Place Strengthens Kavanah

In the seforim we find that Chazal list several virtues of tefillah recited in a specific place. The Me'iri (Brachos 6b) explains simply that in a regular place, it is easier for the one davening to have kavanah. The Rashba further expounds (in his Chiddushai Aggados, Brachos ibid) that because the one davening needs to have kavanah and to stand "as though he is standing before the king" with awe and fear, the more he davens in a particular place, the more his mind will be clear to have kavanah. He explains that this also why this person earns the titles of "chassid" and "anav", because when one davens in this way, he understands how low he is, and out of his humility he comes to chassidus.

Rabbeinu Yona (Brachos 3b Midapei HaRif) adds that one who sets a place to daven shows his great love for tefillah and his desire to present it before the King of kings in the most mehudar and complete way, to the point that he says it in a set place in order to strengthen his kavanah. Through that he reaches the level of chassid and anav.

We Rely Only on Our Father in Heaven

The Maharsha (Vol. I, Brachos 6b) explains that one who sets aside a place to daven shows his pure emunah in HaKadosh Baruch Hu. We find that there are places that are more auspicious for tefillah to be accepted, as the Gemara says (Bava Basra 25b): "One who seeks to be wise – should go south, and to become wealthy – should go north." One who chooses to daven in a specific place shows that he does

not put his hopes on the segulos of the place, and relies purely on his firm faith in Hashem, Who, in His Compassion, will save him from his troubles.

The Iyun Yaakov (on Ein Yaakov, Brachos, ibid) says that one who sets a place to daven shows that he is one of the disciples of Avraham Avinu, who followed his Creator with temimus, and always davened in one place. That is in contrast to Bilam, who we find in Parashas Balak constantly changed his place, thinking perhaps the other place would be better for his prayer to be accepted.

Kedushah Generates More Kedushah

The Tzelach (Brachos 6b) offered another explanation: the more a person will daven in a set place, the holier that place becomes. Thus, every time he returns to daven there, the holiness of that place will help his tefillah be better accepted.

The sefer Kli Pas (by Rav Shmuel Laniado, a disciple of the Bais Yosef, Yeshayah 50:3) explains similarly: the way of holiness is to intensify as the result of regularity, as the passuk says (Shemos 20:20): "Bechol hamakom asher azkir es Shemi avo eilecha," meaning that you should set a place for your prayer, and then "I will come to you". This is evident from the Gemara (Brachos ibid) that the Shechinah comes early to the shul, because that is the regular place for tefillah betzibbur. Establishing a place also indicates the middah of anavah, humility, and chassidus, because just like a person would not ask a human king to meet him in a different place every day, how much more so is that the case with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

This is explained by the Degel Machaneh Ephraim on the passuk (Bereishis 37:1): "Vayeishev Yaakov b'erez megurei aviv b'erez Canaan." The place where the Shechinah once dwelled remained with a lasting impression, and that is "be'erez megurei aviv" – the place where his father "agar" accumulated the kedushah, with the holy Yichudim that he performed there. Just like "mitzvah goreves mitzvah", one mitzvah generates another, likewise, kedushah generates more holiness, and the tefillah is holier in a place where one davened previously.

The Sfas Emes (Brachos ibid) explained that just like praying with a tzibbur helps tefillah be accepted, so, too, by davening in the same place one many times, his tefillah joins the other tefillos that were said there at other times, and together they rise up and are willingly accepted.

In his way of mussar, Harav Dessler (Michtav M'Eliyahu Vol. III p. 129) explained this according to a concept presented by the Mesilas Yesharim (end of Ch. 7) that "external movement arouses the internal". The Chinuch also writes (mitzvah 16) that through external actions, the clarity of the heart's understanding is preserved.

Hence, because the internal understanding that the person attained in his heart might be blurred with time, the best idea to prevent this from happening is to link it with external symbols. When a person establishes a place for his davening, he remembers, through the place, the impressions that the tefillos that he davened in that place left on his heart, and this helps him intensify the level of his current tefillah, and to preserve it from being blurred in his heart in the future.

A Court Case Decided by a Single Brachah

Reb Binyamin, an avreich from Yerushalayim with a large family, never dreamed that he would ever find himself sitting on the defendant's bench in court, as the primary suspect in a serious crime, clutching tightly in his fist...a small candy.

The story began about a year earlier. Through no fault of his own, Reb Binyamin became embroiled in a complex legal matter, together with several other people. His role in the incident was rather marginal at first, but as opposed to the other people involved, he lacked resources, and was not able to hire a good lawyer to deal with the accusations. Thus, things spiraled out of control until he became the prime suspect. Things reached a point that the prosecution was seeking a long prison sentence for Reb Binyamin.

Only after things got so out of hand did Reb Binyamin turn to his friends for help. They rallied to his assistance, but the chances of success seemed dim. The prosecution had had plenty of time to draft a long, complex indictment, based on hundreds of witness testimonies and documents. Even the best lawyers that his friends had hired were not able to refute the clear testimony against Reb Binyamin. His chances of being spared any prison sentence seemed dim, and all they could do was hope to negotiate the severity of the punishment.

On the morning of the trial, Reb Binyamin arrived with trembling legs at the home of the Yerushalmi gaon Harav Yisrael Yaakov Fisher, zt"l, the Raavad of the Eida Hachareidis and the Rav of the Zichron Moshe neighborhood. Woefully, he poured out his troubles to the Rav. He spoke of the tensions at home since the legal proceedings had begun, and sought the Rav's advice and brachos.

Rav Yisrael Yaakov listened patiently to the young man and sympathized. He offered words of comfort and blessed him warmly. Then he opened the draw in his desk, took out a small red candy and handed it to Reb Binyamin, who took the candy, somewhat baffled. Rav Yisrael Yaakov took his hand and offered an explanation:

"Take this candy and put it in your pocket. When the trial begins, when the judge enters the court, take the candy in your hand, and block out everything going on around you and make a brachah with utmost kavanah: 'Baruch Atah Hashem...Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro.'" It is very important that when you say the word "Shehakol" you should have the simplest explanation in mind: that everything – with no exception – happens by Word of the King of the all kings! Hakol means "everything"! Whatever the judge will rule, the way you will deal with the verdict, the fine that perhaps you will have to pay – it is all because of the Word of Hashem! And may it be His Will that in the merit of your pure emunah that you believe in Him, HaKadosh Baruch Hu will shower you with much blessing and success."

From that moment on, Reb Binyamin thought only of the small candy in his pocket. He totally ignored all the advice he had received from his friends until now, and focused only on the candy, or rather on the brachah that he would be making on it.

Over the next few hours, he concentrated over and over on the simple explanation that Rav Yisrael Yaakov had told him, with his singsong voice: "Shehakol – that everything – hakol – is because of His Word!" And "Ein old milvado."

When the time came, Reb Binyamin was seated on the defendant's bench. His lawyers who sat at his side tried to give him various pieces of advice, but he hardly heard them. He was very focused on the words "Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro."

The pounding of the gavel brought him back to the present reality. "Order in the court!" The judges walked into the room and everyone rose. Silence hung over the courtroom but Reb Binyamin did not let that silence distract him. His eyes were closed as he took the candy out of his pocket, and slowly, with utmost

concentration, made the brachah:

"Baruch Atah Hashem" – the Master of everything, Hayah Hoveh Veyihyeh, "Elokeinu" – the One Who is firm, Almighty and the Master of all powers, "shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro!"

Many of those present answered "amen" but the judges glared at him severely. Reb Binyamin ignored them. He sucked the candy with a feeling of pure joy; he had never made a brachah with such kavanah. The proceedings began. The prosecutor began reading out the indictment, and in conclusion declared: "The prosecution seeks to impose on the defendant twelve years in prison." His performance was impressive and persuasive; his arguments were organized and backed up with evidence. Everyone waited to see how the defense would handle this.

The defense lawyer stood up and began to speak. He articulately presented the counterarguments, trying to reduce the importance of the testimonies and proofs presented by the prosecution. But his slight stammer indicated that he was not completely convinced of what he was saying.

When he finished speaking, he did not dare ask for a total acquittal, but rather requested that that the sentence be reduced to two years.

Silence hung in the courtroom as everyone waited to hear the judges' ruling. They conferred among themselves for a long while. There seemed to be a disagreement between them. Was it possible that something dramatic was about to happen?!

Finally, the judges announced a half hour recess so they could consult.

Most of the people present walked out into the corridors, but Reb Binyamin remained seated in his place, totally enveloped in his thoughts. He did not stop concentrating for one moment on the words "Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro."

The half hour felt like an eternity. Finally the judges returned. The presiding judge began speaking, and summarized the verdict in a few short sentences:

"From the indictment my colleagues and I were impressed that the actions described were indeed very severe. However, later, when we examined the testimonies presented, we saw serious contradictions in the primary witness's testimony. As such, we have decided, with a majority of opinions, to acquit the defendant because of these doubts."

The judges rose from their seats, completely ignoring the pandemonium that broke out following the verdict.

The prosecutor tried to appeal, to ask for a retrial, but the stern look given to him by one of the judges made it clear that there was no chance they would change their minds.

It was an open miracle! There was no other way to explain it. Reb Binyamin literally floated out of the courtroom. In his rosiest dreams, he did not fathom such a happy ending. He looked at the shining sun, at the chirping birds, and at the world just carrying on, and he could not get enough of it. Just a short time ago, he was sure that he would be spending his next few years in prison, far away from all of this. And now this miracle: an acquittal.

That same day, he hurried back to the home of Rav Fisher to share the great miracle and thank him for his advice. Rav Yisrael Yaakov was overjoyed to hear and said:

"You have seen Reb Binyamin, how great the power of the brachah of one Shehakol is. Try that this brachah should not be a one-time thing, and that the chizuk should not cease after this one brachah. Promise yourself that from today on, you will take care to make all the brachos aloud and with kavanah! Thus you will surely merit continued siyata diShmaya and success in all that you do."

Doresh Tov, Succos p. 556