

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

A Day Corresponding to a Year

"יום לשנה יום לשנה תשאו את עונתיכם" (יד לד)

The *passuk* seemingly should have said: "shanah leyom", a year for a day, meaning: the Meraglim were punished with a year to correspond to each day that they scouted the land. Why did the *passuk* then say "yom lashanah", a day for a year?

Harav Chaim Hakohen Rappaport, the Rav of Lvov, explained:

It seems that the *passuk* was alluding with this language to the question that really has an answer encapsulated in it: "Yom lashanah?" – Hashem is full of mercy, so why did He punish Am Yisrael so severely, that they were penalized for a year for each day? The answer is: "Yom lashanah tis'u es avonoseichem!" There was a great benefit generated for them by this punishment, because from its power, Bnei Yisrael received one day each year – Yom Kippur – on which their sins of an entire year were atoned.

Kuntres Otzros Chaim at end of Shu"t Mayim Chaim

A Day for a Year When Entering an Apartment

"יום לשנה יום לשנה" (יד לד)

The Ari Hakadosh warned that anyone who leaves his home should not return to live in it before seven years elapse from his departure. (Yosef Ometz [Chida] 37:6)

In response to a person who left his home against his will and sought to return before seven years passed, Harav Meir Eisenstater, the Rav of Ungvar, said that after the apartment is restored to his possession he should then wait another seven days before he enters to live, and he should daven that this seven days should be considered "yom leshanah" – one day for each year that he should have waited, as per the Ari.

Shu"t Imrei Eish Yoreh Deah 59

Tefillah for Klal Yisrael Each Morning

"מראשית ערסתיכם תתנו לה' תרומה לדרתיכם" (טו כא)

The Maor Vashemesh writes that the

passuk alludes here to the special practice of *tzaddikim* each morning when they arose from their sleep:

"Immediately 'meireishis' when you get up from bed [=arisoseichem] each morning – you should daven for all of Klal Yisrael to be healthy and have all good. As the holy Rebbe Harav Meshulem Zusha [of Anipoli] זי"ל, would say each morning right when he arose: 'tzafra tava al kol Yisrael,' and then added *brachos* and *tefillos* for them. And that is the meaning of "itmu l'Hashem terumah ledoroseichem": for all the generations of Yisrael, that they should rise ever higher, amen."

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

"A Share in the World to Come" – From the Cradle

"ראשית ערסתכם חלה תרימו תרומה" (טו כ)

In this *passuk* we can find an allusion to the ruling of the Rema (Orach Chaim 124:7): "And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as the baby answers amen, he has a share in the World to Come." "Reishis arisoseichem" – the first thing a person should give to his child, while he is still little and in his *arishah*, his cradle, is "חלה", which is an acronym for "חלק לעולם הבא", a share in the World to Come, by teaching him to answer amen.

Korbani Lachmi 7

Preceding "Asiyah" – Action, With "Zechirah" – Remembrance

"וזכרתם את כל מצותי ויעשיתם אתם" (טו לט)

The Ksav Sofer explained:

An integral condition for the performance of the mitzvah is the full *emunah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded us to perform it. One

who does a mitzvah without believing that it was commanded at Sinai is referred to by the *passuk* (*ibid* 31): "Ki dvar Hashem bazah v'es mitzvaso hefer, for he has denigrated the Word of Hashem and violated His commandment," (see *Sanhedrin* 99a). For this reason it was established that we make the *brachah* before each mitzvah: "Baruch...asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu..." Thus we declare that we are fulfilling the mitzvah with the faith that Hashem commanded us to do so. This concept is alluded to in this *passuk*: First "and you should remember all the mitzvos of Hashem" – remember that the mitzvah that you are about to fulfill is given to you from Hashem, and only after that, "and you should do them."

Ksav Sofer

The Objective of the Mitzvos Is to Sanctify the Person

"למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדשים אלאיכם" (טו טז)

Harav Yehudah Halava wrote:

The reason that Chazal established that the *brachah* of mitzvos should include the reference to *kedushah*: "Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu..." is based on this *passuk*, in which it is explained that the objective of giving the mitzvos to Am Yisrael is to purify and sanctify them.

The Rebbe Harav Moshe Yechiel of Ozherov further expounded:

Based on simple logic one should first mention the essence of the mitzvah and then the holiness that is evoked from it: "Asher tzivanu...vekidshanu bemitzvosav." The reason that it was established that we mention the holiness first is in order to emphasize that the whole goal of observing the mitzvah is attaining the holiness that it is inherent in it, as the *passuk* says: "And you will do all My mitzvos and you will be holy."

Imrei Shefer [Rav Y. Halava] Bereishis 24 67; Be'er Moshe Kedoshim p. 353

Bais Aharon Baruchu Es Hashem

"...That each one should hear from his friend each *brachah* that he has to say so that he can answer amen. Because it says in the writings of the Arizal that he would hear Birchos Hashachar even from one hundred people, even though he could, in one moment, be meyached all the worlds, and yet, he did not mind the passing time and was not lazy to hear even one hundred times 'Hanosen lasechvi binah' and all the *brachos*."

Bais Aharon, Seder Hayom V'azharos Kodesh

Harav Yom Tov Simcha, the *gabai* of the Bais Aharon of Karlin, would go each morning into his Rebbe to recite Birchos Hashachar before him so that he could answer amen.

Otzar Yisrael p. 92



Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash (Introduction)

In the coming weeks, we will dedicate this section to a series of articles on the *halachos* and *aggados* relating to the importance and virtues of "hashkamas bais hamedrash", rising early to go to shul.

We all know from a very early age the great virtue that we have merited as Jews, to stand each day three times in a direct encounter with the King of kings, Who hears the prayer of every single individual. But regretfully, habit sets in, and these special encounters, whose purpose is to form a connection between the Creator and His creations, are sometimes conducted hastily, with little attention or emotion.

In these articles we will try to reawaken that ancient love in our hearts with the words of Chazal and vignettes and insights from our sages. These articles will also drive home the fact that attending the *bais hamedrash*, with all its facets, is a basic condition for the proper fulfillment of the mitzvah of *tefillah*, and for deriving the maximum benefit from it.

You have surely met once, twice or even more, with a certain prominent personality. These meetings are usually set up a long time in advance, and the closer they get the more the anticipation mounts.

In order to achieve the desired outcome from the meeting, advance preparation is necessary. The time for the meeting is precise, and woe to the person who is late or who arrives unprepared. Even during the meeting, extensive concentration is required, so that no superfluous words are uttered or that nothing necessary is omitted.

You, a human being, is given this opportunity not once in a lifetime, but three times each day! You have to realize that these encounters, despite – or perhaps because of their frequency – are the source of all the spiritual and material abundance in your life; health; *parnassah*; *nachas* and joy, without which, life is not life.

Let us therefore not allow the power of routine, which is rooted in the *yetzer hara*, ruin these encounters, or cause us to miss time after time these irreplaceable opportunities to cleave to the endless Good and to advance ever further in the path towards Hashem, as we strive to fulfill and complete our purpose in this world.

These articles will be divided into five primary subjects:

In the King's Palace

The fundamental virtue of the introduction to *tefillah* lies in understanding the whole concept of *tefillah*, that it should not be viewed as an obligatory burden. Rather, we should understand that this 'encounter' is meant to strengthen the bond between ourselves and our Creator, a bond without which our

lives are not worth living. As such, it is incumbent upon us to make sure to conduct this 'meeting' in a way that its importance surpasses many times over, and at least is not less than, an encounter with a flesh and blood king.

B. *Tefillah* On Time

Chazal established a defined time for each one of the *tefillos* of the day. *Tefillah* that is conducted after its time loses a lot of its benefit and importance. If we once again use the parable with which we began, to a meeting with a king, or a prominent person, we will take care not to be even one minute late to such an event. How much more so is this the case with an encounter with the King of kings.

C. The Order of *Tefillah*

Those who come late have to often recite significant parts of the *tefillah* in haste, or even skip over them. It is important to know that the order of *tefillah* was established by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, the Tannaim, Amoraim and Gaonim. These saintly sages were all as familiar with the pathways of the Heavenly Worlds as they were with the pathways of this world, and they were given the privilege to establish the proper order for *tefillah* that will facilitate its rise to Hashem in a proper fashion. If we do not recite the *tefillah* in the proper order, we surely detract from its effectiveness.

D. *Davening* In a Set Place

It is not for naught that Chazal expounded on the virtue of having a set place to *daven*, because doing so is a symbol of the stability of the bond between us and our Creator. At the same time, it is a *segulah* for reciting the *tefillah* properly, at the right time, in the right order, and thus, with *kavanah* and the right attention.

E. The Virtue of Being Among the Ten First

Aside for the abovementioned virtues, one who come early to *daven* merits to be among the "ten first" who Chazal praised effusively, to the point that the *Zohar* says (*Bereishis* 255 1) that they earn a reward for all those who come after them. It further says there (*Shemos* 131 1) that they are called the beloved of the King.

Our *tefillah* is that Hashem should help us realize this plan, and may these articles serve as a *chizuk* and a benefit for our readers to strengthen this mitzvah and thus to merit all the tremendous abundance that is bestowed by the King of kings upon all those truly call to Him.

A Tefillah That Broke the Barrier of the Turkish Language

Already in the year 5685/1925, when Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l*, settled in Eretz Yisrael and began serving as Rosh Yeshivah of Eitz Chaim in Yerushalayim, his nephew, Harav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach, *zt"l*, had a strong desire to follow him and settle with his family in the Holy Land.

He even expressed these wishes in a letter to his uncle in Eretz Yisrael:

"It would be so beautiful and pleasant for me if I could also...come and settle in Yerushalayim, because I have been very sad since you have left and your departure was very hard for me...I have been left like a stranger in a foreign land, alone, and if there is a place of refuge in our land, then I would be thrilled..."

In actuality, Rav Shach's dream was postponed following the directives of the *gedolim* of his generation to continue serving in his role as a *marbitz Torah* and the successor of uncle in the yeshivah in Kletzk.

Fifteen years passed. At the beginning of 5700, the drumbeat of World War Two began to resonate through Europe and fear took hold in many hearts. During those difficult times, Rav Shach's deep desire once again rose to the fore, and he sought to make aliyah. He presented his question to Harav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, *zt"l*, of Vilna, and expressed his fears for the fate of his young son and daughter.

Rav Chaim Ozer's response was clear:

"You should send your son Ephraim to be with your uncle Rav Isser Zalman in Yerushalayim, but you, in the yeshivah in Kletzk, have a place to be *marbitz Torah* and a steady livelihood, while Eretz Yisrael is a desolate land. Who will you turn to?"

But a short time later, the clouds of war darkened Europe's skies. Now, it was no longer a question of *parnassah* or teaching Torah, but rather a question of life or death. Now Rav Chaim Ozer agreed that Rav Shach and his family should make the effort to go to Eretz Yisrael.

However, the regular route of travel to Eretz Yisrael was virtually impassable by that point, and thus Rav Shach decided to try a different route. He traveled to Moscow, and went to the Turkish Consulate there, in order to try and plead for his life in the hope that they would give him exit visas to Turkey. From there, he hoped to find a way to travel to Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Shach entered the consulate and immediately realized he was in big trouble. He tried to speak to a clerk, but it became clear that it would be a futile effort. The clerk didn't speak any language aside for Turkish, and make no effort to try and understand Rav Shach's explanations about the urgency of receiving a visa right away. Rav Shach looked around, and when he didn't see anyone who could serve as an intermediary between him and the indifferent clerk, he decided to employ the method of his forbears. Like Jews throughout the generations did in times of trouble, he stood in the corner of the corridor outside the clerk's office and began to *daven* fervently and tearfully, pleading with the Creator to help him flee with his family from the war zone.

A short time later, Harav Shabsai Yagel, the Rosh Yeshivah of Slonim walked

into the consulate. Seeing Rav Shach's distress, he immediately went over to the Turkish clerk and began speaking with him in sign language: first he motioned with his hand upwards, and then bent down and pointed to the ground. He repeated these motions over and over again in an effort to illustrate to the Turkish clerk that if they remained in Vilna, they might be buried in the ground...

It was not at all certain that the clerk understood Rav Yagel's explanations, but miraculously, right after the strange charade came to an end, he signed on the exit visas, for Rav Shach's family and then for Rav Yagel's family. The first step of the plan was successful, but the tribulations were not yet over. Rav Shach and Rav Yagel hurried to return to their families to begin preparing o the long trip. After a short time, they were ready in the Odessa Port, waiting for a ship to take them to Istanbul.

The voyage lasted a few days at the end of which the families wanted to disembark at Istanbul. But they were firmly refused by officials at the port. The Turkish government was afraid of a wave of immigrants settling in their land and imposing on the already shaky economy. Thus, they had ordered all port officials to deny entry to any refugees coming from Europe. All the explanations and attempts by both families to persuade the clerks that they had no intentions of settling in Turkey were futile. The authorities had decided to close the borders and to send them back to bloody Europe. Even during this troubling time, Rav Shach never despaired. This time as well, he prepared to do what he had done at the Turkish consulate in Moscow. He walked to a corner of the ship and began to *daven* fervently from the depths of his heart that they not be returned to Moscow, where the fate of the Jews hung in the balance.

A few moments later, the miracle happened: Suddenly, a dignified and regal looking Jew boarded the ship. From his attire, it was evident that he was a distinguished member of the Istanbul Jewish community. He listened kindly to the distress of his fellow Jews, and immediately strode towards the immigration office at the port, where he informed the clerks that in the capacity of his job, he was accepting responsibility that the two families would not remain for long in Turkey, and would make every effort to continue to Eretz Yisrael as expeditiously as possible.

To this day, no one knows who the man was, but in actuality, the Turks were miraculously persuaded as to his sincerity and they allowed the families off the ship. As promised, they did not remain long and immediately began arranging the necessary permits to continue their journey, this time on land, from Turkey to Syria and then to Eretz Yisrael.

Thus, with the power of *tefillah* and *emunah*, the Torah world was blessed with one of its giants who perpetuated the traditions of the *yeshivos* of Lita in Eretz Yisrael, a tradition that continued with is *talmidim* who succeeded him to this day.

Otzar Hasippurim Lemechanchim Ulemartzim, Vol. 1, p. 497