

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



272

PARASHAS SHEMINI

תשע"ט

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Who Davens Should Repent First

"קרב אל המזבח ועשה את חטאתך ואת עלתך" (ט ז)

The Rebbe Reb Meir of Dzikov said: In this *passuk*, the Torah alludes to an important rule for anyone who gets ready to *daven*. Chazal have said (*Brachos* 26b) that "*tefillos* were established to correspond to the *temidin* [*Korban Tamid*]," and therefore, the *passuk* hints: "*Kerav el hamizbeach*", approach the *mizbeach* – when you get ready to *daven*, "*asei es chatascha*" – repent for your sins, because only then, "*v'es olasecha*" – will you be able to elevate your *tefillos* properly.

Imrei Noam

Learning the Halachos of Ketores Protects Against Plagues

"ויבא משה ואהרן אל אהל מועד ויצאו ויברכו את העם וירא כבוד ה' אל כל העם" (ט כג)

"Why did Moshe enter with Aharon? To teach him the ritual of the *Ketores*. Another interpretation...They begged for mercy and the Shechinah descended to Yisrael." (*Rashi*) The *Chasam Sofer* notes that the two explanations that *Rashi* brings complement one another:

We learn from the deaths of Nadav and Avihu that the dwelling of the Shechinah can possibly bring about plague (see *Rashi Shemos* 29:43) and because the *Ketores* is a *segulah* against plagues (*Bamidbar* 17:13), therefore Moshe and Aharon went earlier into the Ohel Moed to learn the *halachos* of making the *Ketores*. They asked for Heavenly mercy that this study should be as though they had actually sacrificed the *Ketores*, and that the Shechinah should dwell upon them without a plague breaking out, because when one learns the *halachos* of the *Ketores*, it is as though he sacrificed the *Ketores*. (See *Menachos* 110a).

Chasam Sofer

One Only Praises for an Overt Chessed

"ויאמר משה אל אהרן הוא אשר דבר ה' לאמר בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד וידם אהרן" (י ג)

Harav Fishel Donn of Rypin asked Harav Chanoch Tzvi of Bendin:

Is it possible that if Moshe would not have made Aharon aware of it, Aharon would not have kept quiet and accepted the decree? Is it not a *halachah* (*Brachos* 54a) that "A person must bless for the bad just like he blesses for the good"?

The Bendiner Rav replied:

The *Me'iri* (*Gittin* 7a) says in the name of *Targum Yerushalmi* on this *passuk*: "*Vayidom Aharon – Veshibach Aharon*," and Aharon offered praise. Based on this we can say that certainly, right after his sons died, Aharon accepted the decree with love and blessed the bad thing. But because it was a "*chessed nistar*," a hidden *chessed*, he did not mention in his gratitude the language of *shevach*, because one does not praise for a hidden *chessed*. Only after Moshe told him that the Name of Hashem had been sanctified by their death, and it thus became clear that it was an "overt *chessed*", did he stand up and praise the Creator.

Yechahen Pe'er – Haben Yakir Li Ephraim p. 3

Be'er Emunim

From Rabbeinu Bechayei on the parashah

One Who Answers 90 Amens Is Called a Tzaddik

"כי היום ה' נראה אליכם" (ט ד)

"*Ki hayom*" is numerically equivalent to amen to teach us that one who is careful to answer 90 amens in a day, which is the quota that Chazal set (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* 132 1), merits to reach the status of *tzaddikim* to whom Hashem appears. The ancient *Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe* says (day 11) "This amen should not be light in your eyes, and a person is only called a *tzaddik* if he says 90 amens each day."

Chemdah Genuzah Shir Hashirim 3 8

A Shaliach Tzibbur Is Like a Kohein Bringing the Korbanos

"בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד" (י ג)

It once happened in Lemberg that two of the city's *chazzanim* passed away one after another. In his *hesped*, the city's Rav, Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson, spoke of them, using the words of the *passuk* "*bikrovai ekadesh*," with those who are close to Me I will be sanctified." He then cited the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 4 4) that "When one passes before the *amud*, one does not say to him come and *daven*, rather *bo ukerav* – come and make our *korbanos*." That is because the *tefillos* were established to correspond to the *korbanos* and the *chazzan* is like the Kohein who sacrifices the *korbanos*.

Divrei Shaul, Volume Five

"She'asah Li" – and Not to My Friends

"ויאמר משה אל אהרן ולא לעזר ולא יתמר בניו ראשיכם אל תפרעו ובגדיכם לא תפרמם...ואחיהם כל בית ישראל יכבו את השרפה אשר שרף ה'" (י ו)

Harav Shlomo Kluger of Brod said:

Although a person is obligated to accept the Heavenly decree with joy (*Brachos* 54a), that does not exempt other people from commiserating with his pain. Therefore, Moshe told Aharon and his sons: "Do not let your hair grow long and do not tear your garments" – because you have to accept the decree with joy. However, "and your brothers, all of Bais Yisrael," must not look away from your pain and therefore they "will cry the fire that Hashem has set ablaze."

This explanation fits with the beautiful explanation of Harav Moshe Leib of Sassov that the *brachah* of "*she'asah li kol tzorki*" is said in the singular, and even stresses the word "*li*", me:

The praise of "*she'asah li kol tzorki*" expresses the obligation of a person to be "*sameach bechelko*", happy with his lot. That, however, is how a person must act with regard to his person needs. When it comes to the needs of others, he must make the effort to provide everything that he lacks. Therefore it was composed in the singular form: "*She'asah li*."

Siddur Da'as Kedoshim [Rav A.D. of Buchatch] *Birchos Hashachar*; Imrei Shefer



A Call to Rise!



The *Mashgiach* Harav Yechezkel Levenstein, zt"l, (passed away on 18 Adar) would rise early to come to yeshiva a long time before *Shacharis* started. There, he would prepare himself for *tefillah*, and among other things, one of the *bochurim* was asked to rise early in order to say *Birchos Hashachar* so that the *Mashgiach* could answer amen after his *brachos*.

Amud Hayirah Veba'avodah p. 67



Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Birchas Hamazon – Birchas Boneh Yerushalayim (2)

Three Atone for Three

The reason we ask for Yerushalayim, *Malchus Bais Dovid* and the Bais Hamikdash in *Birchas Hamazon* is brought by the *Avudraham* who cites the *Midrash* (see *Yalkut Shimoni Shmuel* 106) that in the days of *Rechavam*, *Yisrael* rejected three things that they had merited: *Malchus Shamayim*, *Malchus Bais Dovid* and the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore, they cannot be redeemed until they ask for the return of all three, thus proving that they regret rejecting these things, as it says (*Hoshea* 3:4): “Afterwards shall the children of *Israel* return, and seek *Hashem* and *Dovid* their king, and they shall come trembling to *Hashem* and to His goodness [=the Bais Hamikdash] at the end of days.”

The *Avudraham* explains that for this reason it was established that we ask each day for these three things in *Birchas Hamazon*: “*al Malchus Bais Dovid...v'al Habayis hagadol...*” in the *brachah* of *Rachem*, and for *Malchus Shamayim* at the beginning of the *brachah* of “*Hatov Vehameitiv*”: “*HaK-el Avinu Malkeinu ...*” so that with our requests we should atone for having rejected these things, and thus the *Geulah* will be hastened.

Another virtue of these requests is brought down by the holy *Zohar* (*Terumah* 157 2): One who enjoys at his table and takes pleasure in his food must remember and worry about the sanctity of the Holy Land and about the King's palace that was destroyed. In the merit of this sadness that he feels at his table, amid the joy of the feast that he has, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* considers it as if the person built his home and established the ruins of Yerushalayim, and fortunate is his lot!

Good News Conveyed Gradually

Harav Aharon Teumim (*Mateh Aharon* on *Haggadah Shel Pesach* Frankfurt 5470) explains the reason that the requests are made in this order: “*al Yisrael amecha*”, and then “*v'al Yerushalayim irecha*” and finally “*v'al Malchus Bais Dovid*”. He cites the *Alshich* on the *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 52:7): “*Mah navu al heharim*, How beautiful are the feet of the herald on the mountains, *mashmia shalom*--announcing peace, *mevasser tov*--heralding good tidings, *mashmia yeshuah*--announcing salvation, saying to *Tzion*, “*Hashem* has manifested His kingdom.” The *passuk* goes in order from the lightest to the most significant: first it says “*mashmia shalom*” and then “*mevasser tov*” and “*mashmia yeshuah*,” and finally it says “*Malach Elokayich*” because the reality proves that hearing good news in a sudden way can harm a person. Therefore, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, in His Compassion will inform us of the *Geulah* gradually.

Therefore, in this *brachah* as well, it was established that we detail our requests in ascending order. First “*al Yisrael amecha*” and then “*al Yerushalayim irecha v'al Tzion*

Mishkan kevodecha” and only in the end “*V'al habayis hagadol vehakadosh*”. This is because if *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* would build the Bais Hamikdash suddenly and immediately, this might cause us harm.

Two Sides to the Coin of Yerushalayim

After we ask for compassion for *Yisrael*, on *Tzion* and on Yerushalayim, we then have a special request for *Malchus Bais Dovid*. The *Gemara* states (*Brachos* 48b and the *halachah* in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 187 4) that anyone who does not mention *Malchus Bais Dovid* in the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim* has not fulfilled his obligation. The reason for this, says the *Rambam* (*Brachos* 2 4) is that the consolation of the rebuilding of Yerushalayim will not be complete until *Malchus Bais Dovid* is restored to its place.

In the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* as well, before the closing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, we add: “*Vekisei Dovid meheirah lesochah tachin*”, even though there is a special *brachah* following that is exclusively about *Malchus Bais Dovid* -- “*Es Tzemach Dovid*.” These words are said for this reason: Yerushalayim is not complete without *Malchus Bais Dovid*. This is alluded to in the *Gemara* (*Bava Kama* 87b): “What is the coin of Yerushalayim? *Dovid* and *Shlomo* on one side and Yerushalayim *Ir HaKodesh* on the other side.” Meaning, the Bais Hamikdash and *Malchus Bais Dovid* are contingent one on the other. The *Gemara* (*Chulin* 92a) also explains the dream of the butler (*Bereishis* 40:10): “*Ubagefen sheloshah serigim*, the vine had three tendrils,”-- “*Rabi Elazar Hamoda'i* says: *gefen* -- is Yerushalayim, three *serigim* -- is the *Mikdash*, *Melech* and *Kohein Gadol*.” So *Malchus Bais Dovid* is an integral part of Yerushalayim and the Bais Hamikdash. Based on this we can say that mentioning *Malchus Bais Dovid* in *Birchas Yerushalayim* is not a *tefillah* in its own right for the return of *Malchus Bais Dovid*. Rather it is part of the *tefillah* for Yerushalayim, because Yerushalayim is not called complete under the rule of any other empire other than the *Malchus of Bais Dovid*. (*Beytzchak Yikraei* [Harav A. Nebenzahl] on *Shas, siman* 7)

The *Mashgiach* Harav Yechezkel Levenstein would add an explanation for the reason we ask that *Malchus Bais Dovid* should return even though the *Navi* repudiates *Am Yisrael* for asking for a king (*Shmuel* I, chapter 12). Here we are not asking for the actual kingship and royalty, but rather for the holiness that will be bestowed upon us by the return of *Malchus Bais Dovid*, as *Rashi* explains (*Brachos* 48b beginning with *Malchus*): “That through him [*Dovid*] Yerushalayim was sanctified.” (*Yad Yechezkel* p. 267)

A Short Tefillah that Tipped the Scales

This remarkable story was passed down from the elders of the community of *Yazd* in *Persia*, who witnessed it. It has a wonderful message for us, a message that emphasizes the tremendous power, and importance, of *tefillah* said in a time of distress, even if it is very short.

The story took place more than one hundred years ago. One day, a dispute broke out between an evil, violent gentile and one of the respected members of the Jewish community of *Yazd*. The dispute was brought before the court, which ruled in favor of the Jew. But the gentile refused to accept the verdict, and he came up with a way to take revenge on the Jew. After carefully crafting his plan, he went to the court and told them a story that he had completely made up.

The Jew was quickly summoned for a cross examination, which, in the best of *Persian* tradition, also included harsh tortures. The fact that he was a Jew did not work in his favor, and within a short time he was sentenced to death by hanging. This was a very common punishment at the time in *Persia*. The sentence included the day and time on which he would be hung, R”l.

When the community of *Yazd* heard the news, they Jews were plunged into grief. They immediately gathered in the central shul to *daven* and pour their hearts out to *Hashem* to have mercy on the person and his young children, who would be orphaned by this disaster.

They also made an effort at *shtadlanus*. The best lawyers were hired to advocate for their brother in distress, but the court refused to reopen the case, the lawyers had to retreat without even being given the opportunity to voice their claims.

The decree seemed to be sealed. The man's family had already come to terms with the horrific fate he would suffer, and mentally prepared themselves. When the day of the decree arrived, they gathered in anguish at the entrance to the prison, where they would be meeting their relative for a final time before he would be taken from them forever.

After a short, heartbreaking meeting, the relatives had to accompany their loved one to the gallows. The man was brought into a large hall, his face covered. The noose had already been prepared, and it was hanging from one of the hooks affixed to the ceiling of the hall. When the cover was removed, the man's face was revealed. He was pale, but his eyes radiated *emunah* and faith. The rope was already around his neck, and, as was customary before the chair was kicked out from under him, the hangman asked him, “What is your final request?”

There was great surprise when the man expressed a most strange request:

“I ask that the rope be removed from the hook to which it is tied, and it should be moved to the hook located there,” the man said after thinking for a short time. He pointed to the other side of the ceiling.

The request took the hangman by surprise, but as stipulated by law, he had to fulfill this last request. The prison employee was summoned. He climbed up, removed the rope and quickly retied it to the hook on the other side of the hall.

The absolute silence that hung over the hall during those few minutes needed to untie the rope and then retie it in

its new place was broken only by the fervent murmurs of *tefillah* by the condemned man.

After the rope was tightly tied into place, the Jew was taken again towards the noose. His family, who expected to at least get a last glance from him, were disappointed when he did not even turn towards them. He seemed entirely engrossed in his *tefillah* and was apparently unaware of what was transpiring around him.

The horrible moment had arrived...The noose was tied around the man's neck as all the spectators held their breaths. The hangman kicked the chair out from under him; the rope tightened around his neck, and the man fell with a big bang...right onto the floor of the hall.

A cry was heard from all those watching. They gazed at the surprising scene without knowing if they were imagining things. The man was lying on the stone floor, bruised from the sudden fall, surrounded by pieces of cement from the ceiling, but his face was radiant with an ethereal glow--the joy of a person who has been saved from death.

Apparently, for some unknown reason, the hook that the rope had been tied to was pulled out of its place, and took with it a piece of the ceiling as it came crashing down. The law in *Persia* was that anyone who was hanged, even for one minute, even if he remained alive, it is considered that the punishment was meted out. Therefore, the man was sent to freedom on the spot. He returned to his home and family, to the great joy of all who knew home and the fury of his enemies.

When he arrived home, after recovering somewhat from the traumatic events, his family could not help but ask:

“Why did you ask as a final request to move the rope from one hook to another? Did you have some secret information that it was not properly anchored into the ceiling?”

They were very surprised to hear the man's answer:

“No...I knew nothing about that hook. But when I was standing the first time under the noose, when, by way of nature, I had no chance of being saved, I suddenly remembered the words of *Chizkiyahu Hamelech* (*Brachos* 10a) after he heard the prophecy: “Because you will die and you will not live”. “I have received from my grandfather that even if a sharp sword is resting on a person's neck he should not despair from receiving mercy.”

“At the time I felt a strong desire to *daven* to *Hashem*, but I didn't have much time left. Therefore, when I was given the option to ask for something, *Hashem* illuminated my eyes to ask the hangman to move the noose to a different spot. I thought that during that time I could *daven* for salvation.

“Indeed, after using those few extra minutes to *daven*, the *yeshuah* of *Hashem* arrived in the blink of an eye. What happened to me has not happened to almost anyone else, and miraculously, the rope was pulled out of its place and my life was restored to me.”

Yishma Meheichalo Koli p. 334