

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### One Who Speaks on Shabbos Merits Greatness

”פקד ה' אלקי הרוחות לכל בשר איש על העדה” (כז טז)

From the words of this *passuk*, in which Moshe seeks to appoint a leader for Am Yisrael, the **Chasam Sofer** extracts an allusion to what the *Midrash* says (*Yalkut Shimoni Ki Sisa* 408), that one of the jobs of a leader is to gather the flock and speak before them on Shabbos: קל-”אלקי הרוחות” (see *ibid* 16:22) is numerically equivalent to Shabbos. This day required an “*ish al ha'eidah*”, a man over the community, that will speak for them.

This is also alluded to in the *nusach* of *davening* in *Tikanta Shabbos*: “*Vegam ha'ohavim devarecha gedulah bacharu*”, meaning: those who like to speak and deliver *divrei mussar* on Shabbos were the ones chosen for “*gedulah*” – to be the *gedolei hador*.

Chasam Sofer

### The Power of the Prayer of the Leader

”פקד ה' אלקי הרוחות לכל בשר איש על העדה...; ולא

תהיה עדת ה' כצאן אשר אין להם רעה” (כז טז-ז)

The Rebbe **Harav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin** wrote:

“A leader of the generation needs to constantly be watching over Yisrael, and *davening* for them that not a single one should be lacking... The leader has a tremendous power that he is granted from Above to save all of Yisrael with his *tefillos*. Like the shepherd who has the power to save his flock from hunger and thirst and sickness and harm, so, too Hashem gave power to the leader of the generation to *daven* for Am Yisrael, for a sick person or over a lack of abundance [from Above]. And the leader also has the power to be active immediately in his *tefillah* and if he does not do so, it is a sin...because just like a flock of sheep that he shepherds, so too, Yisrael is in the hands of the leader and he needs being back the same number as he got.”

Bikkurei Avi”v

### Special Willpower in the Morning and Afternoon

”את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני תעשה בין הערבים” (כז ד)

**Harav Raphael Kadir Tzaban**, the Rav of Netivot, said:

Observing the *mitzvos* of *Shacharis* and *Minchah* according to *halachah* requires a significant measure of willpower and prevailing over the *yetzer*. In the morning, the person has a hard time rising from his bed, and in the afternoon, it is hard for him to stop what he is doing in order to *daven*. Therefore the Torah cautions: “*Es hakevess echad*” – the first *kevishas hayetzer* (same letters of כבש), “do in the morning” – when you rise to *daven Shacharis* [which was established to correspond to the *Tamid* of morning], “*v'es hakevess hasheini ta'aseh bein ha'arbayim*” – for *Minchah*, which was established to correspond to the *Tamid* of the late afternoon.

Nefesh Chaya [Rav Raphael Kadir Tzaban] Vol. II p. 212

way it refers to the mitzvah of the blowing of the shofar at *Yovel* (*Vayikra* 25:30) where it says: “*Ve'haavarta shofar teruah*”?

The **Noda B'Yehudah** explained:

**Chazal** explain (*Rosh Hashanah* 32b) that the reason we don't say *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah the way we say on the other festivals is because when the “King sits on the Judgement Chair and the books of life and books of death are opened before Him” that is not a worthy time to say praise. The *Gemara* explains that the fear of the judgment needs to prevail over us throughout the day of Rosh Hashanah. We can say that that is why the Torah wrote the mitzvah of shofar with the words “*Yom Teruah*” to teach us that it is not a mitzvah that is fulfilled and then one can move on – rather, the awe of the judgement that is awakened in the person's heart through the shofar needs to accompany him throughout the day.

Tziyun Le'nefesh Chaya, Chaggigah 14a

### Beloved Mitzvos Confuse the Satan

”יום תרועה יהיה לכם” (כט א)

The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a, according to *Rashi's* explanation there) explains that on Rosh Hashanah, we blow twice: ‘*tekios d'meyushav*’ – before *Mussaf*, and ‘*tekios d'meumad*’ – in *Tefillas Mussaf*. When the Satan sees that the *mitzvos* are so precious to Am Yisrael that they perform them with *hiddur* and blow the shofar twice, his claims are quashed and he cannot be *mekatreg*, he cannot speak badly of them.

**Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz**, the Rav of Frankfurt, adds:

The mitzvah of shofar arouses Am Yisrael to repent, and when they perform it with happiness and love, that is a sign that they have repented out of love and not only out of awe and fear. This fact confuses the Satan and causes him to refrain from mentioning their sins, because that will cause them to have even more merits, as the *Gemara* explains (*Yoma* 86b) when one who repents with love, “his sins become merits”.

Lachmei Todah [Harav T.H. Horowitz of Frankfurt] Shabbos Teshuvah 5568

### Razei Emunim

Allusions to Amen in the Haftarah

### Amen Opens the Gates of Wisdom

”לפוח משפחת הפוני” (כז כג)

“It should have said הפויה and it says הפוני to tell us that all of Yisrael who turn to Him (פונים) to learn from his Torah.” (*Baal Haturim*)

“פוח” is numerically equivalent to amen. The Torah alluded with this to the fact that one who is careful to answer amen the gates of wisdom open for him and he merits “that all of Yisrael turn to him to learn from his Torah.”

Be'er Avraham

### The Mitzvah of Shofar Lasts Throughout the Day

”ובחדש השביעי באחד לחדש מקרא קדש יהיה לכם כל מלאכת עבדה לא תעשו יום תרועה יהיה לכם” (כט א)

Why did the Torah allude to the mitzvah of *tekias shofar* with the words “*yom teruah*” instead of writing it the simpler form, the same

“*Emunim notzer Hashem*” (*Tehillim* 31:24) – those who answer amen with *emunah*... and believe that I am destined to redeem them.”

(*Midrash Tehillim* 31)



In the Palace of the King (4)

The Shechinah Is Found in the Shul

If we delve into the *pesukim* in the Torah, *Nevim* and in the historical works, we will discover that from a very early time, our ancestors took care to *daven* specifically in a place designated for *tefillah*, such as a shul, and that is the practice to this day.

The main virtue of a shul is that it is a dwelling place for the Shechinah, as the *Gemara* says (*Brachos* 6a): "Rabbin bar Rav Ada said, Rabi Yitzchak said: How do we know that Hashem is found in a shul, as it says (*Tehillim* 92:1) 'Elokim nitzav b'adas K-el.'" And the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 5:1) says that Rabi Abahu explained this from another *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 55:6): "Dirshu Hashem behimat'zo" – Where is He found? In shuls and batei medrash."

Indeed, we surely believe that the Honor of Hashem is found everywhere, but the Ramchal explains (*Daas Tevunos* 160) that it is possible that He is present in one place more than in another, so that there, all those who seek Him out and who want to cleave to Him will be able to do so, as we have been commanded in the Torah (*Devarim* 12:5): 'Leshichno tidreshu ubasa shamah, seek His presence and come there."

The reason that HaKadosh Baruch Hu rests His Shechinah specifically in a shul is explained by the *Pnei Yehoshua* (*Brachos* 6a): "The shul is a *bais vaad*, a meeting place, of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Because it was built for the purpose of being sanctified as a shul, and 'hazmanah milsa hi', the actual dedication is an entity, and a *minyan* of people *daven* there several times a day...that is why the Shechinah is always found there and does not leave."

Harav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explained it beautifully:

"The very entry into the holy place that is designated for *tefillah betzibbur*, is itself can have a great effect to purify your heart and fill it with lofty emotions with justice and love. That is because, at that time, the following lofty idea will come to your mind: that everyone gathers and comes together in one unified thought to pour out their hearts to Hashem Who is One, the K-I Yachid Umeyuchad, Who is the Father of all of us...and in this way all the members of the community will unite together to be one entity, and their speech should be one, while they concentrate their hearts and souls on every word that emerges from the mouth of the *chazzan*, they will also affirm and strengthen what he utters through the word of affirmation, amen. (*Chorev Perek Tefillas Hatzibbur*)

Upper and Lower Worlds Unite

One who *davens* in a shul also merits a special *brachah* from the Heavenly angels, as explained in the *sefer Maalos Hamiddos*, by Rav Yechiel Harofei (*Maalah* 7) in the name of the *Midrash Aggadah*: "The ministering angels rise up to the shul to hear the *tefillos* of Yisrael, and when a person enters to *daven* in a shul, they tell him 'Baruch atah bevoacha' and after he finishes his *tefillah* and prepares to leave they say 'Ubaruch atah betzeisecha'. Moreover, HaKadosh Baruch Hu reveals Himself to the person and blesses him, as it says 'in every place where I mention My Name...I will come to you and bless you."

The holy *Zohar* (*Shemos* 164 2) says: When HaKadosh Baruch Hu enters a shul and the nation comes into it as one and *davens* and praises the King of the World, that is the glory of the King. Because when Am Yisrael in the world below organize their *tefillos* and requests in shul, then all the Heavenly Legions also come together and they offer their praise before Hashem. Because the Heavenly Legions come together with Am Yisrael below to praise Hashem together, so that His Praise should rise from above and from below as one.

The Sanctity of the Shul is Like the Sanctity of the Bais Hamikdash

The *Shu"t Mahari"k* (161) writes that the

holiness of the shul is like the holiness of the Bais Hamikdash. The *Shu"t Riva"sh* (518) explains that during the time of the Bais Hamikdash they would be atoned with the *Korban Tamid* that they would sacrifice. Since the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, a shul is considered a *Mikdash Me'at*, so that we can offer our *tefillos* there, which should atone for us as a "service of the heart" in place of the *korbanos*.

The *sefer Kav Hayashar* (Chapter 50) derives a practical *halachah* from this: "Because the walls of the shul are very holy, and the light of Shechinah is constantly present upon them, therefore it is a worthy practice to kiss the walls of a shul due to their holiness...Now in this *galus* the shuls are the dwelling places for the Shechinah."

Kavanah of the Heart Is Found in the Shuls

The *Me'iri* (*Brachos* 6a) writes a beautiful thought: "Every person who can *daven* in a shul should do so because that is where the *kavanah* of the heart is found."

Moreover, the *Tzelach* explains (*Drush* 6 for Shabbos Teshuvah) that even alien thoughts are sanctified in the shul because the primary holiness of the shul is its being a dwelling place for the Shechinah, like the Bais Hamikdash prior to the Churban was. As the *Gemara* says (*Taanis* 8a), it is called a *Mikdash Me'at*, and the *tefillah* is called 'avodah' like the *korban* (ibid 2a). Therefore, even if an alien thought invades his *kavanah*, the *tefillah* can be accepted. A foreign thought in *tefillah* is like *pigul* [a disqualifying thought of the *Kohein* while doing the *avodah*] that disqualifies the *korban*. But we have a rule that "kol shepesulo bakodesh" meaning that if this thought occurred while it was in the *azarah* after it was slaughtered, "hakodesh mekablo," then the *korban* is nevertheless accepted. However, if the disqualifying thought happens out of the *makom kadosh*, then it will not be accepted. Similarly when a person *davens* in a shul, which is a holy place, then even if he has foreign thoughts, it is considered "pesulo bakodesh", and it is thus accepted, but when one *davens* outside the shul, then it is considered "ein pesulo bakodesh" and it is not accepted.

The *Maggid* of Wilkomir (*Einei Yitzchak* on *Ein Yaakov*, *Brachos* 17) added: Even though those who *daven* with a *minyan* cannot properly concentrate unless they are in shul, because we clearly see that in the shul, the way is to *daven* slowly, including *Pesukei Dezimrah* and they do not hurry. After they say *Pesukei Dezimrah* properly, their hearts are overcome with love and fear of Hashem, and it is easier for them to concentrate on their *davening*. Thus, they merit that the prayer is heard and accepted. But one who *davens* in a place that is not designated for *tefillah*, will inevitably hurry and therefore, their *tefillah* is not recited with *kavanah*.

"From Strength to Strength"

We will conclude with another important virtue that is inherent in *davening* in a shul, written by the *Chofetz Chaim* (*Shemiras Halashon* Vol. II, end of the *sefer*):

"It is very common that when one comes to a *bais medrash* he also learns a chapter of *Mishnayos* or a *halachah* or *Ein Yaakov* or suchlike. *Chazal* have said that one who leaves a shul and enters the *bais hamedrash* [meaning that after engaging in *tefillah* he adds Torah learning, and in the times of *Chazal* it was common to *daven* in a *bais knesses* and learn in a *bais medrash*] merits to welcome the Shechinah [for going from *tefillah* to Torah], while one who *davens* alone at home remains bereft of Torah."

It is apt to cite here the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh Deah* 246 2): "Bris krusah, there is a pact, that when one learns in a *bais knesses*, he will not quickly forget it [what he has learned,]"

How Much Is One Amen Worth?

This story was related by the *maggid* Rabbi Meir Tzimrot, *shlita*, during *divrei chizuk* that he gave lauding the mitzvah of answering amen. He related the story of a single, unforgettable amen that he merited to answer many years ago, whose impression remains deeply etched in his heart. This is what he related:

Many years ago, when I lived in Yerushalayim, my grandmother passed away. The *levayah* took place in Bnei Brak, and when it was over, as was customary in those days, I headed for the shared taxi station located across from the Itzkowitz shul, from where I planned to take a shared taxi back to Yerushalayim.

A full van left just as I walked up to the station, so I was the first on line for the next van. This meant I could choose the best seat in the vehicle, next to the driver...Further back it was always crowded and hot, and the front seat was spacious and comfortable. The van filled up with ten *frum* people and we set out. The cost of the trip, in those days, was three and a half shekel a person. When the taxi stopped at the traffic light at the Coca Cola junction, before making the turn out of the Bnei Brak, a young man suddenly stuck his head into the van and asked: "Does anyone want to buy an ices?" I looked at the passengers behind me. It seemed that on a hot day like today, no one would have objected to eating a cool ices, but we all overcome the urge and decided not to get entangled with the question of whether it would have been considered an "ochel bashuk," which as we know is compared to a...

The only one who agreed to buy one was the driver. He paid half a shekel for his ice pop, peeled off the wrapper and was about to consume it in nearly a bite...But before he could do that I stopped him: "Please, my friend," I asked, "I think that this the first time in my life that we are meeting and chances are I will never see you again, so this is a one-time request. I won't ask anything else from you..."

"What do you want?" the driver growled. "If I can do it – I will."

"Please make a *brachah!*" I asked.

"That is something I will not do!" the driver snapped back and quickly took a huge bite of his ice pop.

"Why?" I pressed. "Why do you refuse so adamantly?"

"Listen my friend, you might be new here, but this route from Bnei Brak to Yerushalayim is a really problematic one as far as I'm concerned. Every hour, I get a different rabbi sitting next to me, and they all think I am their personal project. This one tells me to make a *brachah*, the other one tells me to put on *tefillin* and the third asks me to keep Shabbos...Tomorrow someone will come and urge me to go to a yeshivah for *baalei teshuvah*. Leave me alone and let me live my life!"

The ice pop in his hand began to melt, but I wasn't giving up so fast. I took half a shekel out of my pocket, gave it to the driver and said: "I'm willing to pay you for the ices you bought. It will be mine and I'll give it to you as a gift... Just make a *brachah!*" In response, the driver furiously swerved onto the shoulder of the road and screeched to a halt. He began to scream at me: "Mister! I never got involved in your

life, don't mix in to mine!"

"I would never mix in to your life," I replied calmly. "I'm worried only for myself. If you make a *brachah*, I can answer amen, and *Chazal* have told us that the one who answers is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*."

The driver's anger intensified. He threw my half shekel back at me and thundered: "What do you think? That you can buy me for half a shekel?"

"How much do you want me to pay you to make a *brachah?*" I asked him. I think the innocent tone that I was using had an effect. He thought for a moment and said, as he looked longingly at the one empty seat in the taxi: "If you give me three and a half shekel, to pay for the one missing passenger, then I'll make a *brachah*."

His daring request threw me off a bit; it was quite a sum in those days, and I knew that I could merit thousands of amens in one hour at Itzkowitz or Zichron Moshe – for free...

As I deliberated, the driver took another bite of his ices. Fortunately, three of the passengers sitting behind me were enthused by this little drama and they came to my assistance. Each one agreed to donate a shekel and in a minute the driver had his three and a half shekels, the price of one fare...He smiled with satisfaction, grabbed the hat off my head and then recited with remarkable fluency: "Baruch Atah...Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro."

What happened next is hard to describe with words...the taxi literally trembled as we all answered amen loudly and with *kavanah*, like we never had before, not even during *Ne'ilah* of Yom Kippur. "Amen!!!"

I looked at the driver's eyes. He no longer had that aggressive or defensive glint anymore; instead, I even saw a little tear twinkling in the corner...He started the car again, and before putting it into gear, he said, with his eyes lowered:

"You religious people...I don't know where you get the courage from – to pay three and a half shekel for one amen...I will never understand it. But if I already made the *brachah*, I will not sell it for money.

"Take your money back, and now please, don't talk to me until the end of the ride. In the end you'll even get me to do *teshuvah*..."

We accepted. The taxi was silent, at least until I got off in Yerushalayim, where I thanked him and continued on my way. I thought the story was over. But it wasn't...

A few years later I was invited to lecture at a yeshivah for people growing stronger in their observance. As I spoke about the value of *mitzvos*, I related this story. Suddenly, one of the *bochurim* asked to speak.

"I have heard this story more than once," he said. "I'm the son of that taxi driver."

I was very touched to hear this and the *bochur* continued: "The rav should know that since I began growing stronger, every time I go visit my father, he never misses the opportunity to ask me to make a *brachah* so that he can answer amen with *kavanah*, out loud – like only he knows how..."

Doresh Tov Chanukah p. 527