

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS V'ESCHANAN

תשנ"ט

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Moshe Davened to Enter Eretz Yisrael for Bnei Yisrael

“אעברה נא ואראה את הארץ הטובה” (ג כה)

“Did he need to eat from its fruit? Or to satiate himself from its goodness? Rather, Moshe said: ‘Yisrael were commanded many *mitzvos* that they only observe in Eretz Yisrael. I will go into the land so that I can fulfill them all.’” (*Sotah* 14a)

Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lvov explained:

Moshe did not seek his own benefit when he asked to enter the land and fulfill the *mitzvos* that are relating to it. Rather, he wanted the benefit of Am Yisrael, because after they sinned with the *eigel*, Moshe claimed in their merit that they had erred and thought that the Torah had been given only to him and not to them (*Shemos Rabbah* 43 5). If he would not enter the land, the *mitzvos hateluyos ba'aretz* would prove to them that the Torah had been given to them, because only they could fulfill them when they entered the land, and from that point on he would not be able to *daven* for them when they sinned.

Divrei Shaul, Vol. V

When Moshe Passed Away, Who Would Daven for Am Yisrael?!

“כי לא תעבר את הירדן הזה...ועתה ישראל שמע אל החקים ואל המשפטים” (ג כז - ד א)

Harav Chaim Vital explained that Moshe told Bnei Yisrael the following: Until now even when you sinned, I *davened* for you and your sins were forgiven. But now that I have been informed that “you will not pass” [into the land] you will not have anyone to *daven* for you like me, therefore, “Now, Yisrael, listen to the *chukim* and the *mishpatim*.”

Eitz Hadaas Tov

“Achaltzeihu” Even Though “Imo Anochi Betzarah”

“כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו כה” אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו” (ד ז)

The Chasam Sofer explained:

With regards to a human being it says (*Brachos* 5b): “A prisoner cannot release himself from prison.” This means that even a *tzaddik* who has the power to bring others salvation with his *tefillos* cannot save himself. But in this *passuk*, it is explained that that is not the *middah* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu; although He is “*Elokim kerovim eilav*”, He is near and is sharing our pain, still, He can still answer us and sends salvation “*bechol kera'einu Eilav*.” Dovid Hamelech also alluded to this in *Tehillim* (91:15): “*Imo Anochi betzarah*,” I

am with him in his pain, and still, “*achaltzeihu v'achabdeihu*, I shall rescue him and I shall honor him.”

Chasam Sofer, *Devarim, Likutim* p. 156

Why Does “Shamor” Come Before “Zachor” in Lecha Dodi?

“שמור את יום השבת לקדשו כאשר צוך ה' אלקיך” (א)

In the *piyut* of *Lecha Dodi* that we say in *Kabbalas Shabbos* we sing: “*Shamor vezachor bedibur echad*.” Why is it that the poet put “*shamor*” before “*zachor*”? In the order of the *pesukim*, “*zachor*” came first, during the first *Dibros* (*Shemos* 20:8) while “*shamor*” is used only in this *parashah*, in the second set of *Dibros*.

Harav Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson, the Rav of Plonsk, explained this simply: Because the composer of *Lecha Dodi*, Harav Shlomo Alkabetz, wanted to use the first letter of each stanza to spell out his name [Shlomo Halevi], he therefore put “*shamor*” first – to begin with a “*shin*” the first letter of his name.

However, Harav Baruch Epstein of Pinsk, had difficulty accepting this explanation. In his opinion, it does not make sense that the *mekubal* Rabi Shlomo Alkabetz would change the order of the *pesukim* just to allude to his name. Therefore, he offered a different explanation, based on the *Ramban* in his commentary on the Torah (*Shemos* ibid): “And in the Midrash of Rabi Nechunye ben Hakanah (*Sefer Habahir* 182) there is a mention of another great secret in “*zachor*” and “*shamor*”, that in general the *zechirah* should be for the day and the *shemirah* for the night.”

Without delving too deeply, it explains there that “*shamor*” is referring to the eve of Shabbos while *zachor* refers to the day of Shabbos. This easily explains why the *piyut* of *Lecha Dodi*, recited at night, mentions *shamor* before *zachor*.

Shu”t Tirosh Veyitzhar 134; Baruch She’amar on tefillah, p. 235

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Amen in the Haftarah

“Tzedakah” Corresponds to “Avodah Zarah”

“וצדקה תהיה לנו כי נשמר לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת לפני ה' אלקינו כאשר צונו” (ו כה)

The *Tikkunei Zohar* (19, p. 41 2) states that the word “*tzedakah*” – צדקה alludes to the quota of holy things that a person must respond to each day: 90 amens, 4 *kedushahs*, 100 *brachos* and 5 *Chumshei Torah*. One can say that this principle is alluded to in this *passuk* as well: How will “*Utzedakah tihyeh lanu*”? “כי נשמור” לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת לפני ה' אלקינו -- כאשר צונו -- when we meet the quota that *Chazal* established for holy things, alluded to in the word “*tzedakah*.”

Thus we can understand the words of *Chazal* (*Kesubos* 68a): “Anyone who turns his eye away from *tzedakah* – is considered to worship *avodah zarah*.” Why were *Chazal* so strict about *tzedakah*? The word “*tzedakah*” alludes to the amens and the *brachos*, which are the fundamentals of *emunah*, and therefore, one who is negligent with them is considered to be negligent in his *emunah*.

Nachalas Yaakov Yehoshua, *Shemos*

Everything that Mordechai Commanded the Jews...

This week is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Mordechai Banet, *zt”l*, about who his son Yaakov related:

“He was always the first of the first ten, and heard each one of them make *Birchos Hashachar* so that he could answer amen. Then he would stand to say *Birchos Hashachar* himself, in a pleasant voice and with *kavanah*, before the *shaliach tzibbur* stood up to daven.” *Toldos Rabi Mordechai Banet* p. 16

Birchos Hashachar Aloud With *kavanah* *Bechavrusa*



Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash (2)

Go to Sleep on Time
to Wake Up on Time

One who wants to get up on time in the morning has to do so by going to sleep the night before. Harav Chaim of Volozhin (*Ruach Chaim Avos* 2:13) says that the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (6:9): “*Ad masai atzel tishkav, masai takum mishnashcha*, until when will you lay, lazy one, when will you rise from your sleep,” is not told to a lazy person in the morning when he is woken up to *daven*. Then, it is very difficult for him to wake up. But at night, he is told: “*Ad masai atzel*,” until when will you walk around doing nothing? “*Tishkav*” – go to sleep now! And if you say: Why does it matter when I go to sleep? The answer is: see: “*masai takum mishnashcha!*” – if you go to sleep late, you will get up late and you will not be able to *daven* on time.

It is told that the *Imrei Emes* would praise the virtue of rising in the morning early. He did this himself, and toward that end, he had a specific time by which he went to sleep. In the name of his father, the *Sfas Emes*, he explained the reason we say in *Eilu Devarim*, among the things that “a person eats the fruits in this world and the reward exits into the next...” is “*hashkamas bais hamedrash Shacharis v'Arvis*.” What is “*hashkamah*” for *Arvis*? He explained that this teaches us that in order to get up for *Shacharis*, one must go to sleep early in the evening, because if not, one cannot get up.

A neighbor of the *Imrei Emes* from the time he spent in Warsaw noticed that each night at a certain time, the light in his room went off, and in the morning at dawn, it went on again – at a set time. This went on for a long time, with remarkable precision. Even when one night there was an important gathering of *rabbanim* in his home, the practice did not change. A few moments before the regular time when the Rebbe went to sleep, the *rabbanim* left the house, and the light went off at the regular time. The next morning it was once again on at the regular time. (*Rosh Golas Ariel*, p. 275)

Harav Yonasan Eibeshitz would rebuke his community: “It is not good that we waste valuable time with nonsense...Due to our great sins, and we transform light to darkness. Because at night we spend time on nonsense...and in the morning – the sun rises on the land and they are asleep, turning over from side to side, and they pass the *zeman tefillah*... they went from one bad thing to another, *aveirah goreres aveirah*.” (*Ye'aros Dvash*, Vol. II, 10)

The Shinever Rebbe explained that it is not for naught that the Rema added to the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* at the beginning of the *Orach Chaim* section: The *Shulchan Aruch* writes “He should be strong like a lion for *Avodas Hashem*” – to which the Rema adds “and when he lies down to sleep, he should know before Whom he lies, and as soon as he awakens from his sleep, he should get up with alacrity to serve his Creator.” The second part of his addition seems to repeat exactly what the *Shulchan Aruch* wrote – why does he need to write it again? The Rema apparently wanted to teach us this basic fundamental that in order for one to rise with alacrity to serve Hashem, he must sleep properly. (*Divrei Yechezkel* in his *chiddushim* on *Tehillim*)

There Is an Order to Davening

One who is late to *tefillah* will ultimately end up skipping over parts of it. The early sages wrote that the Maggid [the Malach with whom he learned] warned the Bais Yosef to make sure to come to *davening* early so that he could *daven* in order, without skipping, because one who does so is “*mehapech hatzinoros*” changes the order of the conduits of abundance from the Upper World to our world. [*Tefillah* is built in a way to bring down abundance in an optimal fashion, and skipping certain parts of *davening*, even if they are said later, mixes up that order of bringing abundance.] (*Mishnah Berurah* 52:1)

If *tefillah* is carried out regularly each and every day, meaning that a person gets up at a certain hour each day and prepares himself properly, and begins to *daven* at a regular time, a full *tefillah*, word for word, without skipping things, that shows that he considers himself a ‘servant’ of the King of the world. But if he *davens* each day at a different time, and he skips one part one day and a different part the next day, and sometimes he only gets to *davening* in time for *Ashrei* and *Yishtabach*, and he fills in what he missed during *Chazaras Hashatz* and suchlike, that is the contravention of *hamalachas Hashem*, crowning Hashem.

The *Tikkunei Zohar* says (*Tikkun* 6 p. 21:1) that if a person makes his Torah and his *tefillah* regular, then the *Shechinah* helps him regularly as well. (Harav Sroya Deblitzky, *zt”l*, *Eis Lidrosh*, *Yamim Noraim* p. 45)

Aside for this, the Gra writes that the entire order of *tefillah* is built on the order of the Upper Worlds, and *chalilah* to skip even one thing in *tefillah*; there is no *heter* to skip *Pesukei Dezimrah* unless one does so in order to be able to *daven betzibbur*. It further says in *Brachos* (43b, according to *Rashi* there beginning with “*posea*”) that one who enters the *bais medrash* late is called a *poshea* (a sinner) and an *atzel* (lazy). When one who can come to *davening* on time, and with contempt comes late so he should not have to wait a few moments for the *chazan*, this displays a tremendous shaming of *Avodas Hashem*. It is as though he does not believe that the *Shechinah* is present in the shul during *davening*. On the contrary, it is fitting that for *Kavod Shamayim* that he should be there a few moments before *davening*, because if he comes late it might lead to a *chillul Hashem*.

The Mashgiach Harav Yechezkel Levenstein was asked by a young man who had two options: either *daven* in the morning *vasikin*, but realistically would only be able to arrive ten minutes late and would skip *Pesukei Dezimrah*, or to *daven* at a later *minyan* which he could get to on time. The Mashgiach said to him: “*vasikin*” is a virtue in *tefillah*, but *tefillah* without “*Pesukei Dezimrah*” has no format of *tefillah* at all, and it is certainly preferable that he should *daven* at the later *minyan*. (*Bnei Chayil* on 48 *Kinyanei HaTorah*, p. 147)

The Wondrous Lachash that Healed the Gra

The following remarkable and relatively unknown story about the Vilna Gaon, *zt”a*, was related by the renowned Maggid, Harav Reuven Karelinstein, *zt”l*, who heard it from his *Rebbi*, the Maggid Harav Shalom Schwadron, *zt”l*:

It is known that the Gra was very scrupulous throughout his life not to seek the assistance of doctors. He would quote the Ramban in his commentary on the Torah (*Vayikra* 26:11): “One who seeks Hashem through a Navi should not seek out doctors, as what part do doctors have in a house made of the Will of Hashem.”

The Gaon was once suffering from a severe ear infection that bothered him and distracted him from learning. He was writhing in pain and those close to him saw him suffering, yet they knew that he would not seek out doctors to be healed. Hence, they sought a different way to ease his suffering. After some inquiries they heard that on the outskirts of Vilna lived an elderly widow, a true *Yiras Shamayim* who was very scrupulous about *mitzvos*. She had earned a reputation of being able to heal serious illnesses using a special *lachash* that she had received from an unknown source.

Those close to the Gaon were happy to hear about this and they hastened to his house to tell him that they had an idea to help his suffering. “There’s a woman who heals illnesses through a *lachash*,” they told the Gaon. “She can help the Rav ease his suffering without going to a doctor.”

The Gaon listened, and after thinking for a bit, he agreed that they bring the woman to his home.

When she arrived, the Gaon asked first to find out about the *lachash* that she used to treat sick people, wanting to ensure it did not come from an impure source. But the woman did not want to reveal her secret, and claimed: “This is my only source of my *parnassah* and if I reveal my secret, I am liable to lose my livelihood.”

Of course, her fears were unfounded. One of the *talmidim* offered to explain to her that she had nothing to worry about, and that the holy Gaon, with his *Yiras Shamayim*, would not do anything bad and reveal the *lachash* to others.

The woman thought it over and accepted this. She agreed to reveal how the *lachash* worked. Her words were stunning in their simplicity:

“I take a cup of water in my hand, and stand next to the person seeking a *yeshuah*, and make the *brachah* of ‘*Shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro*’ with a lot of *kavanah* and drink it. And the *yeshuah* comes. That’s all.”

Those present noticed a slight smile playing on the Gaon’s lips

as he continued to ask the woman: “And who revealed this special *lachash* to you?”

“The *Ribbono shel Olam!*” she replied. And then she continued to explain:

“It was many years ago, after I was widowed of my husband at a young age. I was left alone in this world with my young orphans and I didn’t have a penny with which to buy them food. At first I tried to earn money here and there, but nothing worked out.

“In despair, I decided to turn to the Creator of the world. At a late morning hour, I entered the shul, opened the *aron kodesh* and began to cry to Hashem that I had no *parnassah*. I cried over and over and begged Him with simple words to send me a livelihood. I pleaded and my *tefillah* was answered.

“Suddenly I heard a *Bas Kol* from *Shamayim* saying to me – and I had to exert myself a bit to hear the words – but this is what I heard: ‘Say *shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro* to heal people and you will have a plentiful *parnassah*.’

“I accepted this and that is how I have been earning a comfortable living *baruch Hashem*, for more than thirty years,” the woman concluded.

When the Gaon heard this story he could not help himself and burst out laughing. From the suddenly laughing, the pus bubble in his ear burst, and he no longer needed the *lachash* to heal it...

“Why did the Rav laugh?” the woman asked, somewhat offended. “Did I do something wrong?”

The Gaon explained:

“I was that *Bas Kol*...I was learning at the time on the floor over the shul, in the *ezeras nashim*, when suddenly I heard from the *bais medrash* a Jewish woman crying bitterly. My heart filled with compassion and I could not continue learning. I heard her pleading and crying over and over about “*parnassah...parnassah*.” I wanted to calm her down so I called to her from above:

‘If you need *parnassah*, say “*shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro*” with *kavanah*.’ I did not know before what I was going to say, but those are the words that HaKadosh Baruch Hu put in my mouth at that very moment to ease the woman’s pain.”

The Gaon didn’t think and didn’t mean it but “*tzaddik gozer v’Hakadosh Baruch Hu mekayem*.” After he said this and the woman fulfilled his words with innocence, Hashem fulfilled his words. The woman found her *parnassah* and many were healed in her merit.

Yechi Reuven, Matos