

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



296

PARASHAS KI SEITZEI

תשע"ט

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Tefillah Before War, Gratitude Afterwards

"כי תצא למלחמה על איבך ונתנו ה' אלקיך בידך ושבת שבו" (כא י')

Rabbeinu Ephraim writes:

The previous *parashah*, *Parashas Shoftim*, concludes with the words "*ki sa'aseh hayashar b'einei Hashem*." "הישר" has the same letters as "שירה", and the proximity of the *pesukim* to one another teaches us that in a time of victory, when the words "*unesano Hashem Elokecha beyadecha*" are fulfilled, you should say *shirah*, song, to Hashem. This *shirah* has the power to expedite and expand the victory, as the *passuk* testifies of the King Yehoshafat (*Divrei Hayamim* II 2:22): "And at the time they commenced with song and praise, the Hashem placed liers-in-wait against the children of Ammon, Moav, and Mount Seir, who were coming to Yehudah, and they were struck down."

Harav Tzvi Yitzchak Abramowitz, the Rav of Chatzor Haglilit, also explained the reason for the proximity of these two *pesukim* one to another:

"*Hayashar*" is numerically equivalent to "*tefillah*", which is an allusion to the fact that before going out to war, Am Yisrael would *daven* to Hashem that they should win the war, as explained in the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 3b) that before going out to war they would "*nimchalin b'Sanhedrin*". *Rashi* there explains "they received permission from them so that they [the Sanhedrin] should daven for them."

Peirush HaTorah L'Rabbeinu Ephraim; Ta'am Hatzvi

### "A New Home" – L'Shem Shamayim

"כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגנך" (כב ח)

"[The *talmidim* ask] Rabbi teach us: When one who builds a new home, *keitzad*, how should he make a *brachah*? *Chazal* taught us that one who builds a new home recites the *brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* so that he should generate *nachas ruach* for his Creator." (*Tanchuma Bereishis*)

We need to understand the meaning of the

words "*keitzad tzarich levarech*", **how** does he need to make a *brachah*. Would it not have been more suitable to ask: "**What** *brachah* does he make?" Furthermore, we need to understand the actual question: Don't we have clear *Mishnah* (*Brachos* 54a) that: "One

who built a new home and bought new dishes should say '*Baruch Shehecheyanu*'?"

The *Ksav Sofer* answered:

Indeed, *Chazal*'s question was "*keitzad tzarich levarech*" – how is it possible to make a *Shehecheyanu* on such a physical, mundane pleasure as buying a new house? Therefore, they replied: "So that he should bring *nachas ruach* to his Creator," meaning: When such a house built l'Shem Shamayim – in order to perform *mitzvos* with it, such as *ma'akeh*, *mezuzah*, and the other *mitzvos* relating to the home – then it is indeed worthy to recite the *brachah*: "*Shehecheyanu*" for the merit that Hashem granted us to bring pleasure to Him through this house.

Ksav Sofer

### A Person Should Precede the Trouble with Tefillah

"ולא תשים דמים בביתך כי יפל הנפל ממנו" (כב ח)

In *Maseches Shabbos* (32a) *Chazal* say: "*Ki yipol*" – when a person is already in a state of distress and trouble, then the "*nofel*" needs to receive assistance "*mimenu*" – through his deeds and merits, in order to be saved. Therefore: "A person should always ask for mercy that he not become ill, because if he comes sick, he is told: 'bring merits and you will be spared.'"

But the question is obvious: How does a person know that he is going to be struck with a trouble, so that he can *daven* first?

Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, *shlita*, Rav of Ramat Elchanan explained:

*Chazal* want to teach us here that when a person hears about a sudden trouble that befalls his friend, he must awaken immediately and ask that this same trouble not befall him. As the *Gemara* says (*Shabbos* 106a): "[When] one of the members of the group passes away, the whole group should worry." That is what Harav Elchanan Wasserman, *Hy"d*, also did: From time to time, he would ask to be updated about what was doing in the world, explaining that he wanted to use that to help him *daven* before the trouble befall him.

Tuvcha Yabiu, Vol. II, p. 129

### Mibe'er Emunim

Sources for the Virtue of Answering Amen

#### "B'ein Meilitz Yosher" – Say Amen

"כי תצא למלחמה על איבך ונתנו ה' אלקיך בידך

ושבת שבו" (כא י')

"Rabi Yosi says: The one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*. Rabi Nehora'i told him: *Hashamayim* [a language of oath]! That is how it is. Know, that simple soldiers [are sent first to provoke] in a war, and the strong ones [who go down after them] win." (*Nazir* 66b).

The *Maharsha* (Vol. I *ibid*) explained:

"Because the sustenance of a person is as difficult as *Krias Yam Suf*, splitting the sea (*Pesachim* 118a), therefore HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded that one who eats to satiation should bless the food... Through this HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestows the person's *brachos* with influence that he should have sustenance in abundance. A person has many *mekatregim*, hostile forces, who make it difficult for him to receive sustenance in abundance... Because the *brachos* are the 'simple soldiers' and answering amen is the 'strong soldiers' who win the war against the hostile forces..."

The *dorshei reshumos*, record keepers, offer an allusion to this from this *passuk*: "כל יום הענה צ"צ" is an acronym for "כי תצא" [the quota that *Chazal* established (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* Vol. II p. 83 I)] and in that merit you should prevail over the hostile forces: "*Unesano Hashem Elokecha beyadecha*."

### "פתחו שערים ויבא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים" (ישעיהו כו ב)

On Erev Shabbos, 13 Elul, is the 16<sup>th</sup> *yahrtzeit* of the passing of Rav Chaim ben Tzion the son of Aharon Tzvi Marmorstein, *zt"l*, who, his whole life, was a *shomer emunim* in the simplest meaning of the words: He watched and waited to be able to answer amen, especially after *Birchos Hashachar*.

In his memory, his son, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, instituted the Bnei Emunim revolution, through which tens of thousands of members of Klal Yisrael begin their day by reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

On Friday, 13 Elul, please dedicate the recital of *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* to his memory.

*Birchos Hashachar*



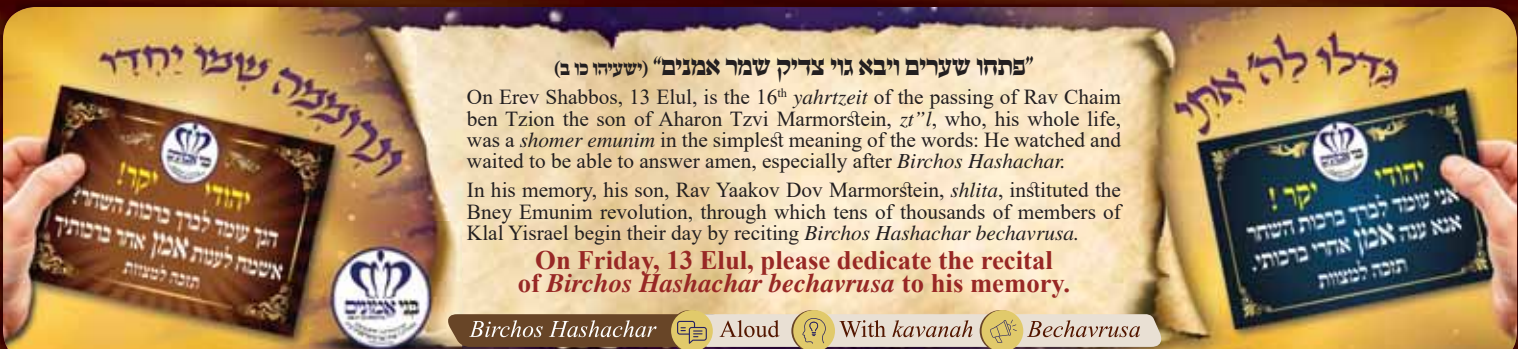
Aloud



With kavanah



*Bechavrusa*





## "Asarah Rishonim - The Ten First Ones" (1)

The jewel in the crown of the subject of *Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash* is the virtue of *Asarah Rishonim*, the ten first ones, as explained in the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 47b): "A person should always rise early to shul so that he should merit to be counted among the ten first ones, because even if one hundred come after him - he receives the reward of all them."

In this segment, we will try to understand the reason of this virtue of the ten first who come to shul, delving into some of the wealth of sources in *Chazal* on this subject.

### Elokim Nitav B'Adas Kel

As stated in earlier segments, since the day the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed and the Shechinah was exiled, it dwells in the shuls, which are called "*Mikdash Me'at*" (*Megillah* 29a, and see *Devarim Rabbah* 7 2). The dwelling of the Shechinah is fulfilled through the ten people of Am Yisrael who gather there (*Brachos* 6a), and together they come together to become an "*eidah*."

For this reason, the ten first people who come to shul are highly praised, because they are the components that together complete the entity that is called "*eidah*" upon which the Shechinah can dwell. Thus, through them, the Shechinah dwells upon the entire congregation that comes after them to shul. (*Zohar Shemos* 126 2, see there, and see *Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona Brachos* 4a, *Midapei HaRif*, *Maharsha Chiddushei Aggados* ibid).

The virtue of ten who gather together is in and of itself a very great thing. The words of the Baal Hatanya in *Iggeres Hakodesh* are well known (23) where he cites his *rebbeim* that if an angel would happen upon a place where ten people from Am Yisrael convene, even if they are not engaging in Torah and *tefillah*, he would be so overcome with fear and awe of the Shechinah that dwells upon them that his essence would completely dissipate. If this the case with a random gathering, how much more so is it the case if they gather to *daven*.

### Sparing from Punishment

The *Gemara* further states (*Brachos* 6b) on this subject: "Rabi Yochanan said: at the time when HaKadosh Baruch Hu comes to a shul and doesn't find ten people - He immediately gets angry, as it says (*Yeshayah* 50b): Why did I come and no one was there; I called and there is *ein oneh*, no response." *Rashi* explains: '*V'ein oneh*' - refers to a quorum that can answer something holy."

The *Me'iri* explains why they were so strict about this:

"When the *zeman tefillah* arrives and there isn't a suitable quorum in the shul, this is very derogatory, and indicates that the hearts of the residents of that city are far from loving Hashem. This distance is the great anger and

the tremendous fury, and that is what *Chazal* refer to when they said here that immediately HaKadosh Baruch Hu gets angry."

But we need to understand: Where did Rabi Yochanan learn that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is angered when He does not find ten? Doesn't the *passuk* say, "*madua basi v'ein ish*", in the singular? Where is the reference to ten?

The Bobover Rebbe explains in the *sefer Kedushas Tzion* (Vol. II p. 108): Rabi Yochanan explained that the word "*איש*" is an acronym for "*yud* (10) *she'onim amen*", ten who answer amen, and when HaKadosh Baruch Hu comes to the shul and sees that there isn't a quorum of ten to answer amen, He immediately gets angry and says "Why did I come, *v'ein ish*?"

For this reason, *Chazal* instituted (*Sanhedrin* 17b, according to *Rashi*, ibid beginning with "*v'asarah*") that there is no "*ir*", no city, without "*asarah batlanim*", literally ten idlers, referring to Torah scholars who are supported by the community. They learn in the shul so that there should always be a quorum of ten when *davening* begins, and thus the anger will be lifted.

Harav Tziv Hirsch Horowitz, the Rav of Frankfurt, emphasize that the role of those ten *batlanim* was also to answer amen after the *brachos* and the *Kaddish* that were recited in shul, indicated by the fact that בטלן is numerically equivalent to אמן. (*Lachmei Todah, Tochachah* first day of *Selichos*)

### Padah Beshalom Nafshi - In the Merit of the Ten First People

On the other hand, when there are ten, it is extremely praiseworthy, as the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* says (*Raba* 10): "In whose merit does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge on the nations of the world on behalf of Am Yisrael? Through people who go to shul morning and evening and answer amen, and bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu with amen...and bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu each and every day, always, of whom he says (*Tehillim* 54:19): "*Padah beshalom nafshi...ki berabbim hayu imadi*." - In what merit did Hashem redeem my soul? In the merit of the one who rises in the morning and goes in the evening to shul to fill the quorum to be an *eidah*...

The commentary of *Zikukin Denura* [by the mekubal Rabi Shmuel Heida, Prague 5436] on the words of the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* writes that because answering amen nullifies the punishment (*Shabbos* 119b), and anyone who seeks to answer amen properly has to go to the shul in the morning and in the evening to fill the quorum of ten and be among the first ten, so that he should hear all the *brachos* that need to be answered with amen, therefore *Chazal* said that in the merit of those who come early to *daven*, Hashem punishes Am Yisrael's enemies.

## "Baruch...Shehecheyanu" And Saved Us from Death

*Iyar* 5708/1948. The Old City of Yerushalayim had just fallen into the hands of its enemies, and the shuls and *batei medrash* in the city were destroyed into heaps of ash; the residents were exiled.

One of the special *batei medrash* in the Old City was Yeshivat Proat Yosef, a bastion of Torah, which for years had stood facing the Kosel. The yeshivah produced legions of Torah scholars who were the crowning glory of Sephardic Jewry in Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora.

The grief over the destruction of Porat Yosef was overwhelming. However, the Rabbanim of the yeshivah, who did not want to stop learning for even one moment, did not wallow in their anguish. Rather, they mustered up every effort to reestablish the yeshivah. Initially, the students scattered in groups around several shuls in the newer part of Yerushalayim, outside the walls. At the same time, with the help of generous donors and the efforts of the dedicated *gabbaim*, construction on the new yeshivah building commenced in the Geulah neighborhood.

By 5716/1956, the new building was already standing. Although there were a few parts that had yet to be completed, because of the dire straits of the students, who had been scattered among various shuls that were far from one another, the *roshei yeshivah* decided to move in. They united all the branches of the yeshivah into the spacious new building.

So while the builders were till banging their hammers, the sound of Torah began to resonate from the *bais medrash*, infusing life into the very stones, and transforming them from inanimate objects to a pulsing entity of Torah.

The spacious building also had space for a group of *mekubalim*, who until the destruction in 1948, had been an integral part of Yeshivat Porat Yosef. They also resumed learning near the sages of the yeshivah, headed by their *rebbe*, the Mekubal Harav Ephraim Hakohen, ז"ל, who by then was quite elderly already. Rabi Ephraim Hakohen was known for his tremendous depth in learning, especially in *Kabbalah*. He could always be seen pacing back and forth, his mind engaged in lofty thoughts as he pondered the difficult *sugyas* that the yeshivah was learning at the time.

One of the eminent members of this group was the renowned *mekubal* Harav Yitzchak Kadouri ז"ל. A few days after they entered the new building, Rav Yitzchak noticed the head of the *chaburah*, Harav Ephraim Hakohen, walking, as he was wont, while engrossed in his

lofty thoughts. Every so often, he would cast a glance at the sheaf of papers he held in his hand, and then returned to his deep thoughts.

From a distance, Rav Yitzchak's gaze followed the elderly *mekubal* as he paced back and forth in the long corridor, his mind elsewhere. Suddenly, he gasped: he was horrified to see Rav Ephraim walking towards the end of the corridor, where the construction was not yet complete. Because it was far from the *bais medrash*, the workers had not bothered to properly gate it off. Rav Yitzchak fearfully watched the scene unfold, unable to do anything to save his Rebbe, Rav Ephraim. The distance between them was too great for him to stop the Rav in time. Besides, he knew well that even the loudest shout that he could emit would not reach the ears of the *tzaddik* who was so engrossed in his learning.

There was only one way for him to save the Rav - and that was to cry out in prayer to Hashem. Indeed, Rav Yitzchak did not despair of mercy: he had just a few seconds, which he used to scream and plead with all his might to Hashem to save Rabi Ephraim ben Simchah from near certain calamity.

Rav Yitzchak's prayer was accepted. Rav Ephraim was just a footstep away from falling - with near certain calamitous results - and suddenly he stopped, as though an unseen hand gripped his leg and prevented it from taking another step. Reb Ephraim stopped literally on the edge of the abyss - and only when he looked ahead did he discover realize, aghast, how close he had come to falling to his death.

In the interim Rav Yitzchak managed to close the gap between them, as his lips never stopped moving in *tefillah* to save the *tzaddik*. Very quickly he arrived at his *rebbe's* side; Rav Ephraim was still reeling in shock from the miracle that had occurred.

The looks the two exchanged said it all: The Rav had been saved at the last second.

"It is worthy that we all together should thank Hashem for this miraculous salvation," Rav Yitzchak said to the *gabbai* of the yeshivah at the end of the *sefer*, as he handed him a sum of money.

"With this money, go to the market and purchase enough new fruits for all the students here, so that we can make a *Shehecheyanu* together - and we can have in mind to thank and praise Hashem for saving the life of the *tzaddik*."

Harav Kadouri, p. 89