

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

"Elokei Avoseinu" and "Elokei Avraham"

"כי באתי אל הארץ אשר נשבע ה' לאבותינו

לתת לנו"

The Mishnah (*Bikkurim* 1 4) explains that a *ger*, a convert, who brings *bikkurim* does not recite *Parashas Habikkurim*, because he cannot say: "Asher nishba Hashem l'avoseinu." On the other hand, the Baalei Hatosafos ruled that in the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, a convert can say "Elokeinu v'Elokei avoseinu" [as per the *Breisa* cited in the *Yerushalmi* there.] What is the difference?

Harav Yitzchak Katz, the son-in-law of the Maharal of Prague, explained:

In *tefillah*, when a convert says "Elokei avoseinu", he can have in mind to mean Adam and Noach, the patriarchs of all the nations of the world. When reciting the words "Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak v'Elokei Yaakov" he should have in mind the patriarchs of Klal Yisrael. But in *Parashas Habikkurim*, the words "Asher nishba Hashem l'avoseinu" cannot be interpreted as anything but our holy Avos, because it was only to them that Hashem promised to give the Land. Therefore, a convert cannot say these words because he is not one of their descendants.

Baalei HaTosafos al haTorah; Hagahos Rav Yitzchak Katz on Paaneach Raza

"And I Did Not Forget" - And Proudly So

"ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך בערת הקדש מן הבית... ככל מצותך אשר צויתני לא עברתי מצותיך ולא שכחתי" (כו ג)

This statement is called in the Mishnah (*Sotah* 32a) *Viduy Maasros*. Where did we find in this *parashah* any *Viduy*, an

Mibe'er Emunim

Sources for the Virtue of Answering Amen

To Merit Answering Amen in Olam Haba

"ועינו כל העם ואמרדו אמן" (כז טו)

The Midrash (*Devarim Rabba* 7 1) says: "Rabi Yuden said anyone who answers amen in this world merits to answer amen l'Asid Lavo."

Harav Eliyahu Itamari, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained this Midrash in three ways:

"It can be explained by way of *drash* through what was written by the *mekubal* Harav Yitzchak Luria Ashkenazi, *zt"l*, (*Eitz Hadaas Tov, Ki Seitzei*) that a person comes to the world to fulfill a mitzvah that is lacking, and it is his task to complete that mitzvah. That person constantly engages in one mitzvah, knowing that he came for this mitzvah. This appears to be alluded to in the words of the Midrash: 'Anyone who answers amen in this world', meaning: his entire involvement is to answer amen, 'merits to answer amen l'Asid Lavo', as it is known that that this shows that he came to this world to fulfill this mitzvah and with this he goes complete to the Next World...

It can further be explained (*Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah* 429) that in *Asid Lavo* the evil ones answer amen from Gehinnom to the *Kaddish* that Zerubavel the son of Shealtiel says in Gan Eden. HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears their voice and through this He takes them out of Gehinnom.. It appears with this that what Rabi Yuden was saying here that 'anyone who answers amen in this world,' - even a total *rasha*, 'merits to answer l'Asid Lavo' - because even if he will be in Gehinnom - he will merit to answer from there.

We can further explain in the response of the *Shai Lamora* (9) that when one hears *Kaddish* and *Kedushah* - which of them come first? And he answers that the amen comes first; see his proofs there. It appears that Rabi Yuden ruled the same way and said: 'Anyone who answers amen in this world merits to answer l'Asid Lavo' - meaning "kol ha'oneh" - even if he refrained from answering something else, such as *Kedushah*, he should not think that the *Kedushah* is greater than answering amen..."

Chut Shel Chessed, Eikev

expression of regret, for a sin? On the contrary, the statement declares that the person conducted himself properly with regard to *maasros*. Why then is this so?

Harav Dovid [son of Rav Meir] Arik explained:

On Rosh Hashanah, the *brachah* of *Zichronos* concludes with the praise: "Ki zocher kol hanishkachos Atah... v'Ein shichechah lifnei Kisei Kevodecha, because You remember all the forgotten things...and there is no forgetting before Your Kisei Hakavod." This seems to be redundant language. Harav Yisrael of Ruzhin explained that this teaches us that Hashem reminds a person only of the mitzvos and sins that he banished from his heart; the mitzvos that he 'forgot' and was not proud of, and the sins that he 'forgot' and did not repent for. But the sins that a person remembers and atones for, and the mitzvos that he remembers and is proud of, are not remembered before Hashem.

He says that one can explain that the *Viduy* is contained in the words: "Lo avarti mimitzvosecha velo shachachti, I did not transgress any of Your mitzvos and I did not forget" -- that I did not fulfill the mitzvos out of humbleness, but rather I was boastful and proud of them.

Tal Torah Hachadash

'A Picture' In the Mind Before Davening

"הסכת ושמוע ישראל" (כז ט)

The Rebbe Harav Shmuel of Sochatchov wrote:

We have to learn from this commandment that whenever we come to serve Hashem with *tefillah* and Torah learning it is incumbent upon us to first picture in our mind the essence of the lofty thing we are about to do and what benefit will emerge for us from it. As Chazal say (*Brachos* 30b): "The early *chassidim* would spend an hour and then *daven*, so that they could concentrate their hearts on their Father in Heaven."

Shem MiShmuel

The year is 5761. On Shavuot night, Rabbi Moshe Horowitz, *zt"l*, a well-known *avreich*, and tremendous *masmid*, passed away. After his passing he appeared in a dream to his *chavrusa* from Kollel Chazon Ish. The *chavrusa* asked: "Can you reveal to me what it is wanted Above that we should rectify...?" Rav Moshe said to him: "Take care to answer amen according to halachah! Here in Shamayim they are very strict with those who are not careful about it."

Notrei Amen, Vol. II, p. 320



Asarah Rishonim (2)

“Umishacharai Yimtzu’neni”

The Gemara with which we began this subject, (Brachos 47b), praised the reward of the ten first people who arrive in shul, and says that even if a hundred people come after them, they get the reward for all. We find several reasons why they so effusively praised those who rise early to go to shul:

The holy Zohar (Shemos 131a) explains that those who come early to shul before the rest of the *mispallelim* show that they do not do the *mitzvos* just to fulfill their obligation, but rather because of their love for Hashem. They explained with a parable of a king who went on a long journey outside his own land. When the residents of the land heard that he was about to return, a few of them immediately abandoned what they were doing and hastened to the hills outside the land to wait for his arrival. By contrast, many others did not come until they completed their affairs, and thus, they arrived after the king was already there. Even though they also came to greet the king, the king called the ones who came before him “*ohavov*”, those who love him. He then showered them with honor and abundance, while he treated the rest of the people as regular citizens.

So, too, those who come early to shul show their tremendous love for the King. Of them the *passuk* says (Mishlei 8:17-18): “*Ani ohavai eihav umeshacharai yimtzu’neni; osher vekavod iti hon atek utzedakah*, I will love those who love me, and those who seek me eagerly will find me... Riches and honor are with me, powerful wealth and charity.” This is in contrast to those who come later who do not merit this virtue.

In his words there, the Zohar writes that the earlier someone comes to shul, the more he merits to connect to and cling to the Shechinah, and thus to rise to the level of “*tzaddik*” who is in the presence of the Shechinah. The Maharam Di Lunzano wrote (*Shei Yados – Derech Chaim* p. 87) that if the world would understand the significance of the level of *tzaddik* that the Zohar is referring to “they would marvel and wonder at the greatness of one coming to shul early, and each day they would jostle one another in order to enter before their friends.”

“Ki Motzai Matza Chaim”

The Gemara (Brachos 9a) adds to this the *passuk* in Mishlei (8:34): “*Ashrei adam shomea Li lishkod al dalsosai yom yom lishmor mezuzos pesachai; ki motzai matza chaim vayafek ratzon mei’Hashem*, Fortunate is the man who listens to Me to watch by My doors day by day, to watch the doorposts of My entrances. For he who has found Me has found life, and he has obtained favor from the Hashem.” The Maharam

Di Lunzano explained (ibid): “*Ashrei adam shomea Li*” – and not his *yetzer*, “*leshaked*” – that in order to merit to be one of the first then he needs extra *shekidah*, diligence: “to preserve the *mezuzos* of My openings” – to run to shul even before the doors are opened. But there is one condition – that a person has to act this way “*yom yom*”, each day, because if not, HaKadosh Baruch Hu asks (*Yeshayah* 50:2): “Why did I come and there is *ein ish* no man there?!” – *Ish* is an acronym for “*amen yehei Shemei rabba*” that when there aren’t ten men present, Hashem is not praised with this praise from *Kaddish*.

What is the reward of one who is careful to adhere to this? “*Ki motzai matza chaim vayafek retzon mei’Hashem*,” that because the one who comes to shul early merits to find Hashem Yisbarach there, he will in any case merit a good life and to have his *tefillas* accepted.

The *Alshich* added an explanation for the continuation of the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (ibid 35): “*Ki motzai matza chaim vayafek retzon mei’Hashem*.” It is not like someone who comes to the door of the human doctor to find a cure for his ailment, because even though with that he “*matza chaim*”, he found life, it will not cause him to find favor in the eyes of the doctor. On the contrary, the doctor will ask for double and triple pay. HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in addition to giving life to those who rise early to come to shul, also gives us the privilege of special favor – “*Vayafek retzon Mei’Hashem*.” (Rav Peninim, *Mishlei* ibid)

A Place That My Heart Loves

The *Mechilta* (*Yisro* 11) explains on the words of the *passuk* (*Shemos* 20:21): “*Bechol hamakom asher askir es Shemi avo eilecha ubeirachticha*, wherever I permit My Name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you.”: “Rabi Eliezer ben Yaakov says: If you come to My House I will come to your house, and if you don’t come to My House I will not come to your house. A place where my heart loves, that is where my feet lead me. From here they said: every ten people that enter a shul are accompanied by the Shechinah, as it says (*Tehillim* 82:1): ‘*Elokim nitzav b’adas K-l*.’”

The *Birchos Hanetziv* explains (ibid) that because HaKadosh Baruch Hu loves the shul, then His Legs, *kaviyachol*, take Him there, and someone who rises early to come, then measure for measure, HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestows His blessing upon that person’s home. The *Baal Haturim* writes (*Shemos* ibid, and similarly in *Orchos Chaim* of Lunil, *Tefillah* 75) that the word “*Avo*” is numerically equivalent to ten. From here we learn that the *brachah* is given to all ten first ones, that if they are in shul then “*Avo eilecha ubeirachtichah*.”

Dreams That Met After a Decade

This unique story was told by the person it happened to, Reb Yehoshua Waxpress, *shlita*, a prominent Belzer *chassid* in Bnei Brak. It can serve to strengthen and arouse hearts to the importance of *tefillah* recited properly, slowly, and with concentration, and indicates how powerful it is Above.

Rav Waxpress relates:

In the month of Adar 5760, my father, Harav Chaim Waxpress, *zt”l*, passed away. A short time after his passing, right after Pesach, I returned to Erez Yisrael after living in American for fifteen years, so that I could care for my widowed mother. I had an apartment in Bnei Brak, but because it was rented out at the time, I rented an apartment in another neighborhood. Hence, I had to *daven* each morning for the *amud* in the main shul of that neighborhood, where many *minyanim* are held each day.

I was happy to discover that one of the early *minyanim* did not have a regular *baal tefillah* and decided to make this my daily *minyan*. Because I am used to *davening* slowly, I did the same with this *minyan*. As the days passed, I was happy to discover that a number of *chashuve avreichim* had chosen to *daven* with this *minyan* for exactly this reason. They expressed their great enjoyment at the pace at which I *davened*.

I received further *chizuk* some time later, when the mother of a twelve year old boy who *davened* at “my” *minyan* called me. She related that sadly, her son was in the year of mourning for her husband, *zt”l*, and until now, he had struggled to find a *minyan* in which he could say *Kaddish* properly. Almost each day, he would complain that the *chazzanim* *davened* so fast that he couldn’t say *Kaddish* the way he wanted to. Only now, after a long time of trying out one *minyan* after another, he found the *minyan* where I *davened* for the *amud*, and finally he was able to *daven* and say *Kaddish* properly.

The woman called to ask if I agreed that the boy should continue to *daven* with me and to say *Kaddish* each day. Of course I willingly agreed. I told her that from that day on, I’d take the boy under my wing and would make sure he said *Kaddish* at the pace that was good for him. She thanked me profusely.

So from that day on, each morning the boy arrived in shul a few minutes before *davening*. He said *Kaddish* before *davening* with me, and during the other *Kaddish* recitals, he stood beside me. I made sure to recite *Kaddish* slowly, to his relief.

Davening together each day brought us closer to one another. Even after our ways parted – both because the year of mourning ended for me and for him, and because my apartment became available and I moved into it – we continued to maintain contact for some time. A year later, I attended his bar mitzvah, and a few years after that, I had the privilege of attending his wedding. But from then on didn’t

hear from him.

Several more years passed. One day, I needed to visit the office of a well-known *chessed* organization, from where I wanted to borrow a certain piece of medical equipment. I approached the secretary in order to give her the requisite security check, and when she saw the name on the check, she identified herself as the mother of Yossi, the boy who had *davened* with me more than ten years earlier. She asked if she could tell me a story she’d never told anyone.

She related that the week before she had called me regarding her son, while he was still unsuccessfully trying to say *Kaddish* properly, her departed husband appeared to her in a dream. Incidentally, his father was a close neighbor of my father’s on the *moshav* where they lived in the center of Israel. He told her reproachfully: “Why do I need Yossi’s *Kaddish*? It would be better that he shouldn’t say *Kaddish* at all than to say it in such a mixed up way and cut off like that!”

At first, she didn’t pay attention to the dream. But after it recurred four nights in a row, she decided to make every effort to find a better *minyan* for her son. And then wonder of wonders, from the day that he began to *daven* in ‘my’ *minyan*, her husband no longer came to her in a dream.

When I heard this story, I was moved to tears, not only from the actual fact, but mostly because the dream she had reminded me of a different dream that I had during that time:

It was about a month after the boy started *davening* with me, and one night I had a dream in which I saw my father, *zt”l*. In his lifetime, he would occasionally *daven* at the shul I was *davening* in during that time. He was standing at the entrance, looking tall and well dressed, and the picture of good health, the way he looked at the prime of his life.

I continued to look at him, and watched as he entered the shul and paced back and forth. One of the *mispallelim* came over and asked him in surprise, “Reb Chaim, aren’t you in the World of Truth? What are you doing here?!” My father replied, his eyes shining with joy: “I came to see in which *shtiebel* my son is *davening*...” Then he disappeared from view. At the time, I didn’t attribute any special significance to the dream. I was happy to see my father, to whom I was so close, appearing so healthy, and I understood that I had caused him great pleasure with my *davening*. But only now, after I almost forgot about that dream, did I wondrously discover that at the same time, the boy’s father also appeared in a dream in order to make sure that his son should also *daven* for him pleasantly and slowly.

It is clear to me without a doubt that such a *tefillah* gave them *nachas ruach* On High, and it was certainly an Aliyah for their *neshamos*. I feel very fortunate to have merited this.