

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Who Davens for His Generation Lives Long and Has Parnassah

"ושפטו את העם משפט צדק...; צדק צדק תרדף למען תחיה וירשת את הארץ" (טז יח; כ)
"Who will judge the people righteous justice" –they should be *melamed zechus* on the generation." (Tanchuma 4)

The Gemara (Brachos 32b) says: "Early *chassidim* would spend an hour before and then *daven* for one hour and then spend another hour." The Gemara asks: "And if they spend nine hours a day on *tefillah*, how is their Torah preserved and how is their work done?" And it answers: "Because they are *chassidim*, their Torah is preserved and their work is blessed."

The *Ksav Sofer* derives an allusion to the words of the Gemara from this *passuk*:

The Torah is instructing the leaders of the generation: "Tzedek tzedek tirdof" – *daven* a lot and be *melamed zechus* on your generation [as the Tanchuma says], and don't be afraid that perhaps because of that you will forget your learning, and thus risk your life [as we learn (Avos 3:8): 'one who forgets something that he learned...it is as if he has forefeted his life'] because you are guaranteed that your Torah will be preserved – 'l'maan tichyeh.' You also should not worry about losing your *parnassah*, because your work will be blessed – 'veyarashtha es ha'aretz' – as an inheritance which you receive without effort.

Ksav Sofer

Allusion to the Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah and Its Brachah

"לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל" (ז יא)
The Gemara (Shabbos 23a) explains that the reason we make a *brachah* when lighting Chanukah candles stating "Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav *vetzivanu*" even though it is a *mitzvah d'Rabbanan*, is because the Torah commands us even the words of the Chachamim, as is evident by this *passuk*: "Lo sasur min hadavar asher yagidu lecha...,"

Rabbeinu Bechayei Shemos 14 31

do not deviate from what they tell you."

The Raavad of Yerushalayim Harav Yisrael Yaakov Fisher added that it is not for naught that this *passuk* is explained specifically to refer to the mitzvah of *ner Chanukah*, because there is an allusion here to a special *halachah* that applies to the Chanukah lights:

With regard to the placement of the Chanukah menorah, the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 671 7)* says: "It is a mitzvah to place it within a *tefach* of the doorpost on the left, so that

the *mezuzah* should be on the right and the Chanukah light on the left. If there is no *mezuzah* on the entrance, then he places it on the right." The *passuk* alludes to this: "do not deviate from what they tell you," – and especially in the mitzvah of Chanukah which is fulfilled with "yamin usmol, right and left."

Even Yisrael

Descending to Egypt – L'Shem Shamayim

"רק לא ירבה לו סוסים ולא ישיב את העם מצרימה למען הרבות סוס" (ז טז)

Wasn't going down to Egypt only forbidden for the purpose of settling there (*Rambam Melachim 5 8*)? Why, then, should it matter if the king returns the nation to Egypt just to purchase horses for him?

The *Chasam Sofer* replies:

Even though according to *halachah* one is allowed to go to Egypt for business, the Torah wanted any travel to Egypt to be with the goal of blessing and thanking Hashem when seeing places where miracles were performed for Klal Yisrael. Therefore, the Torah warned Bnei Yisrael not to go to Egypt "to acquire more horses", because then they would be distracted from their gratitude to Hashem. Rather, they should go *l'Shem Shamayim* – to thank Hashem for the great miracles performed for them there.

Chasam Sofer Likutim

Krias Shema Corresponds to the Tamid

"ואמר אלהם שמע ישראל אתם קרבים היום" (כ ג)
The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni V'eschanan 835*) says that one who recites *Krias Shema* in *Shacharis* and in *Arvis* is considered to have brought the *Korban Tamid* of the morning and of the evening, according to *halachah*. The *Chida* explains this *passuk*: "V'amar...*Shema Yisrael*" – take care to recite *Krias Shema* twice a day, and it will be considered as if "Atem kreivim hayom" – that you sacrificed today the *Tamid* of the morning and of the evening.

Pnei Dovid 9

Mibe'er Emunim

Sources for the Virtue of Answering Amen

"Judges and Policemen" – Open Gates

"שפטים ושטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך" (ט זיה)

"I thought on the day of the *hakamas matzeivah* for someone who would warn and make sure that each person and the children would answer amen: *Chazal* said (*Shabbos 119b*): "Anyone who answers amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are open for him, as it says (*Yeshayah 26:2*): 'Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim,' don't call it *shomer emunim* but rather "she'omrim amen."

Thus this *passuk* can be explained: "shoftim veshotrim titen lecha bechol she'arecha asher Hashem Elokecha nosen lecha:" that the gates of Gan Eden are the real gates that Hashem gives you, and the *passuk* warns that if you put judges and policemen to warn the nation not to speak, and to listen to the one *davening* and to answer amen for every *brachah*, that will earn you the merit to have the gates of Gan Eden open for you."

Ateres Yehoshua [Harav M.A. Freund, Gaavad Yerushalayim]

"One who makes a *brachah* testifies with his *brachah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the source of blessing, and one who answers amen is the one who affirms the *shitar* [document], and that is the main thing. There is no affirmation of the testimony with only the first witness, only with the second, because the testimony is affirmed by him, and one who answers amen is like the second witness...because with him the testimony is affirmed."

Rabbeinu Bechayei Shemos 14 31

"על פי שני עדים... יקום דבר"



Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash (5)

Tefillah That Emerges from Divrei Torah Is Accepted

Chazal have said that preceding tefillah with Torah learning helps greatly to have the tefillah accepted. Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz says: "Fortunate is the man who establishes time for Torah before davening, and then he davens to Hashem with kavanah...and then without a doubt the gates of tefillah will open before him." (Yeoros Devash Vol. II, drashah 3). Similarly, the Sfias Emes writes (Shavuot 5643): "Every tefillah that comes out of divrei Torah - is accepted." The Sfias Emes cites the passuk in Tehillim (145:18): "Karov Hashem....lechol asher yikeru'hu b'emes," and "there is no truth besides Torah." (Eichah Rabbah 2)

Another source for this is brought by Rav Yaakov Dovid of Radomsk according to the explanation of the Yerushalmi on the passuk (ibid 17a): "Tefillah l'Dovid shimah Hashem tzedek hakshivah rinasi ha'azinah tefilasi belo sifsei mirmah" - "Hakshivah rinasi" is rinun (singing) Torah, and 'ha'azinah tefilasi' is tefillah. From here we learn that one should learn Torah before davening. (Imrei Dovid, V'eschanan 535)

Learning and Tefillah Are Connected to One Another

There is a close bond between Torah and tefillah. As the Chazon Ish famously wrote in his letters (Vol. I letter 2): "Learning and tefillah are connected to one another, toiling in learning helps the light of tefillah, and tefillah helps the learning..."

Prior to that, the Netziv of Volozhin explained the words of the Gemara (Chagigah 12b): "Anyone who engages in Torah at night - HaKadosh Baruch Hu casts over him a thread of chessed during the day, as it says (Tehillim 42:9): 'Yomam yetzaveh Hashem chasdo...'. Why? Because 'ubalayla shiro Imi', and at the end of the passuk there is: 'tefillah l'Kel chayai.' It is evident that the purpose of that 'thread of chessed' that is cast over the one who learns Torah is so that he should be able to daven properly in the morning, because Torah helps the tefillah be accepted." (Ha'amek Davar, Vayikra 20:8)

Harav Aharon Kotler, Rosh Yeshivah of Lakewood, offered a beautiful explanation to this:

The definition of tefillah is becoming closer to Hashem. This closeness needs to be done at a time and in a place where Hashem is close to us, as the passuk says (Yeshayah 55:6): "Dirshu Hashem behimatzo kerai'hu behiyoso karov." We see that prior to the Churban the Shechinah dwelled among us, in the Bais Hamikdash, and since the Shechinah became more distant from us during the Churban, the tefillos are not heard as they were then. (See Eichah 3:44)

However, even today, we can have the Shechinah dwell among us, and that

is through learning the holy Torah, as the Gemara says (Brachos 8a): "From the day that the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, HaKadosh Baruch Hu only has in this world the four amos of halachah." So we find that Torah learning brings the Shechinah closer to us, and tefillah that is said out of Torah learning has a great segulah to be accepted willingly before Him. (Mishnas Rabi Aharon - Ma'amarim Vol. I, p. 97)

Torah Learning Severs the Klipos

By way of sod, the Minchas Elazar of Munkacz cited his grandfather the Bnei Yisaschar, that one who is careful to learn Gemara each morning before davening merits that his tefillah will rise On High through the angels who carry the Kisei and who elevate the tefillos. These angels are Gavriel, Michael, Raphael and Uriel - whose first letters are an acronym for "Gemara." (Divrei Torah, First Edition 19, and see there 81)

The Sar Shalom of Belz cited the Chozeh of Lublin that when a person learns a daf of Gemara l'Shem Shamayim before davening, then the light of the Torah severs the klipos and paves the path for the tefillos to rise to the Kisei HaKavod. (Mahara"sh MiBelz, Ha'azinu)

The Bais Aharon of Karlin (Shabbos Shuvah) further explained in the name of Harav Shlomo of Karlin:

Originally, "Asah haElokim es ha'adam yashar; Hashem made man straight," (Koheles 7:29), but man's sins caused him to distort his ways and to become distanced from Hashem. As such, his tefillos are not said with the proper kavanah. Through learning Gemara b'iyun, in depth, before davening, a person straightens out his mind, and returns to the straight path that he used to be on. Through this, his tefillos and requests are made with the proper kavanah - for the sake of Heaven - and this helps them be accepted.

Learning Before Tefillah Helps Kavanah

Harav Yissachar Dov of Belz would often say: When a Jew learns a daf of Gemara before davening, then the 'baruch' is a different 'baruch', and the 'Atah' is a different 'Atah' and the entire day is conducted in a different fashion. (Vatispalel Chana p. 135)

The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk (for Purim) derives an allusion from the words of the passuk (Esther 9:25): "Ubevoah lifnei hamelech amar im hasefer yashuv machshavto lera'ah" - ubevoah - [when she came] to stand in prayer, "lifnei hamelech" - the King of kings, "amar im hasefer" - [He said with the book, i.e.] through learning in the holy sefarim, "yashuv machshavto hara'ah" - the tefillah will be pure and clear, without foreign thoughts.

The Brachah That Broke the Fall

This story was sent by a resident of Ramot, Yerushalayim, who, with his family, have been strict for many years to recite Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa. They have seen numerous yeshuos in the merit of this practice, but this story exceeds them all, and they wish to share it with readers.

Many people travel each morning on the bus that departs from the Ramot neighborhood in Yerushalayim to the city center. Among them are those heading to work, students who attend schools in the center of Yerushalayim, and many bnei yeshivah and avreichim who sit and learn all day.

I am a teacher and thus I am among those who travel each morning, at a regular time, on the bus that goes from Ramot to the city. I did so that day as well, boarding a few minutes before seven o'clock in the morning. I sat in my nearly regular place as the bus drove down the Ramot Road; I was enjoying the chilly and refreshing air that blew through the open window.

I looked at the passengers sitting around me. Most of them were familiar faces who travel daily on this route; each was busy doing their own thing. Some sat in their places, swaying as they davened, and some were learning or just looking out the window.

My eye caught a small group of young bochorim sitting at the front of the bus, using the few minutes until they got to cheder to recite Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa.

As someone who carries this subject close to his heart, I observed them with pride and admiration. Thanks to you, Bney Emunim, I feel special pleasure whenever I see people who, like me, merited to adopt this holy custom. Now, too, I observed this group of bochorim, watching as each one stood, in turn, and said the brachos with kavanah.

When the bus passed by the Har Chotzvim area, the passengers were all seated in the places - except one. In the middle of the bus stood a refined looking bochur, whose turn it was to say the brachos to his friends. At that moment the bus stopped and people began to board. The boy blocked the aisle a bit, which caused some of the passengers to grumble at him. One of them, an older man, even went so far so as to berate the boy in an angry and scornful way: "Sit, boy, don't you notice that you're blocking the aisle?!"

The boy seemed to wince. The rebuke was jarring, but he couldn't stop in the middle of a brachah, so he remained standing, motioning with his finger that in a moment, he would be done...

The bus began to move before all the passengers sat down. Among them was a young woman who was holding the hand of her son, a boy of about three. She began to walk further into the bus in order to find a seat. The bus picked up speed and suddenly - the driver slammed on the brakes and the bus screeched to a halt...

Apparently, a private car that had entered the bus's lane made the driver slam on the brakes. The result was far from pleasant: the sudden lurch caused some of the passengers to lose their balance and to slam into the seats ahead of them.

In the case of the woman and her son, the result was even more severe. The woman gripped the seat beside her tightly, but her grip on her son was loosened and he flew right towards the front of the bus...

The child flew but his trajectory was stopped by the bochur who was standing, saying Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa.

The mother, who had already gasped in alarm, expecting the worst, needed merely to take her son's hand again and to sit with him calmly on the nearest empty seat.

Like many passengers, I also observed the scene - which unfolded in a matter of seconds - and it left me trembling. It was a miracle; I blanch at the thought of what could have happened if the child's fall had not been broken by the boy's body - or rather by the brachah - of the young bochur.

The passenger who had berated the boy just a few minutes earlier apparently felt remorseful, and he approached to apologize. But the bochur, as though by Divine inspiration, at that moment completed the brachah of "Hagomel chassadim tovim l'amo Yisrael," as his friends answered amen and sat down in his place as though nothing had happened. He didn't quite understand what the ruckus was about; his mind must have been entirely focused on reciting the brachah with kavanah and he did not realize what was going on around him.

Only once I returned home that evening and told my children about the miracle I had witnessed this morning did I realize the significance of what had happened. Or more accurately, my older son pointed out to me the fact that one who is careful about answering amen is called by the passuk "shomer emunim." Not "oneh amenim" or "omer amenim." And with my own eyes I had witnessed the great protection that the world receives in the merit of those people.

I then told my children: "This time you saw the yeshuah clearly, but it's important to know that even when the eye does not see it clearly, the heart surely knows and believes that many catastrophes are prevented each day as a result of your adherence to answering amen. The great sages throughout the generations have said this is so!"

Bney Emunim, you should be praised for having imbued this mitzvah in Am Yisrael. How fortunate you are that you took the untrodden path, made the effort, insisted, and did not desist, and you merit to see the wondrous results.

Ashreichem! Who can estimate your merits!

With appreciation,
G.B., Yerushalayim