

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



302

PARASHAS NOACH

תש"פ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Who Benefits from "Ha'aretz" Without a Brachah Is Stealing

"כי מלאה הארץ חמס מפניהם" (ו יג)
The Ohev Yisrael of Apta explained:

Chazal say (Brachos 35a): "Anyone who benefits from this world without a brachah – has embezzled." That is because before the brachah, the food is considered 'hekdesh' and forbidden in enjoyment, as it says "L'Hashem ha'aretz umeloah," (Tehillim 24:1). The members of the generation of the Mabul who sinned by stealing surely benefitted from this world without a brachah and therefore "malah ha'aretz chamas mipneihem" – every time they enjoyed the land without a brachah it was considered theft on their part.

Maggid Tehillos

The Prohibition Against Robbing Another of Prayer and Rebuke

"כי מלאה הארץ חמס מפניהם והנני משחיתם" (ו יג)
The Zohar (Noach 67 2) explains that because Noach did not ask for mercy for his generation, the mabul was called in his name, as it says "Ki mei Noach zos li" (Yeshayah 54:9).

The Chasam Sofer explains:

When a person can daven for his friend or rebuke him so that he should desist from a sin, but he does not do so, this is considered "chamas", theft, - because he is robbing his friend of the possibility of being spared the judgement. As we find, Sarah told Avraham (Bereishis 16:5, see Rashi there): "Chamasi alecha" – because he did not daven for her to have a child. Here too, the claim of "ki malah ha'aretz chamas" is directed at Noach, because by refraining from davening for his generation, and by not rebuking them, he robbed them of the possibility of being saved. An allusion to this is: "Mei Noach" is numerically equivalent to "חמס".

Toras Moshe Hashalem, Haftarah of Noach p. 34

The Measurements of the Teivah Correspond to the Tongue

"שלוש מאת אמה ארך התבה חמשים אמה רחבה"

Tzaddik Shomer Emunim

"אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו" (ו ט)

The Rema MiPano cites the holy Zohar (see Tikkunei Zohar 18 p. 132 a) that the reason that Yisrael is called "goy tzaddik" (Yeshayah 26:2) is because they are careful every day to cover a quota of holy things alluded to in the word "90 – צדי" amens, 4 Kedushos, 10 Kaddish and 100 brachos.

Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote that it is enough to answer amen to be called a tzaddik, and he said: "For this middah of answering amen, Yisrael are called tzaddikim, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2) "... Veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim..."

Harav Shmuel Laniado, the Baal Hekeilim, added that even someone who has only the merit of answering amen is called a tzaddik, and therefore the passuk says "goy tzaddik," that "even if he is like a gentile in all his things, and has no merit, except he is a tzaddik in saying amen with all his might, that is enough for the gates of Gan Eden to open for him." (See Shabbos 119b)

Kad Hakemach, entry Emunah; Shu"t HaRema MiPano 109; Kli Pas Yeshayah 26:2

The acronym of איש צדיק is numerically equivalent to 91, which is equal to amen, because one who is careful to answer amen is called a tzaddik. (Rabbeinu Bechayei, Kad Hakemach entry Emunah).

Similarly, we can explain the rest of the passuk: "Es Elokim his'halech Noach" – the word "HaElokim" is numerically equivalent to "amen" to teach us that Noach the Tzaddik's thoughts were always focused on answering amen so that he should accumulate ninety amens each day on brachos.

Rabbi Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, Nasi of Bnei Emunim

ושלשים אמה קומתה" (ו טו)

Rabbeinu Yehonasan Eibshitz explained:

The measurements of the teivah were 30 amos high, 300 amos long and 50 amos wide – and the ל of 30, ש of three hundred and נ of 50 are an acronym of לשן, alluding to the fact that

Noach sinned with his tongue by refraining from davening for his generation.

Tiferes Yehonasan

Illuminating the Words of Tefillah

"צהר תעשה לתבה" (ו טז)

The Maggid of Mezeritsch explained:

When the words of tefillah are recited without kavanah, then they are dark and closed. The Torah instructs us: "tzohar ta'aseh lateivah" – make sure to have kavanah in your tefillos and this way, each and every word will be bright and illuminated with a precious light.

Turei Zahav

"Yonah Matza'ah Bo Manoach" – The Dove Found Rest on This Day

"ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפייה... ויחל עוד שבעת ימים אחרים וישלח את היונה ולא יספה שוב אליו עוד" (ח יא-יב)

Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson wrote:

In the piyut of Yom Shabason Ein Lishkoach, sung on Shabbos morning, we say: "Yonah matza'ah bo manoach", that on Shabbos, the dove left the teivah for good, because she found a place where to rest her feet. The Yaavetz writes (Migdal Oz, Bais Middos Aliyah 25) that the impression of the holiness of Shabbos remains with the dove to this day, and therefore, it never eats from a plant that was plucked on Shabbos.

Hence this passuk can be explained as follows: "And the dove came to him towards evening" – on Motzaei Shabbos, "and it had a torn olive branch in her mouth..." because she refrained from tearing it on Shabbos. Then he waited "another seven days" and sent her again the following Shabbos, when indeed, she found rest as "she did not return to him again."

Divrei Shaul

This is the place to note that Rav Yosef, a talmid of the Terumas Hadeshen related that each year on Shabbos Parashas Noach, his rebbi would sing the song "Yom Shabason" which relates particularly to this Shabbos.

Leket Yosher p. 36



Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote: "For this middah of answering amen, Yisrael were called tzaddikim, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2): 'Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.'"

(Kad Hakemach, Entry Emunah)

"V'amech kulam tzaddikim."

Birchos Hashachar: Aloud, with kavanah, bechavrusa.

איש צדיק תמים

Taaneh Emunim

Insights into the Virtues of
Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash

Birchas Hamazon – Hatov Vehameitiv (Introduction)

After a long break in order to present a series of articles on *Hashkamas Haboker*, we return to the subject of *Birchas Hamazon*, picking up where we left off, with the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv*.

The *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv*, the last of the four *birchos hamazon*, and the only one of them that is not an obligation *d'Oraisa*, was composed by the Sages who were based in Yavneh after the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. It was an expression of gratitude for the wondrous miracle that occurred with the holy martyrs of Beitar.

During the days of Emperor Hadrian, the Jews rebelled against the Roman Empire in an uprising led by Bar Kochba. The rebellion leaders dwelled in Beitar, which was a very large city. When the Romans quelled the rebellion and killed the residents of the city, they did not allow the victims to be brought to a Jewish burial. As per Hadrian's orders, the bodies were stacked up one on the other to serve as a fence for one of the emperor's huge vineyards. Distraught over the way the bodies were being defiled, Rabban Gamliel and his *Bais Din* fasted frequently, and Rabban Gamliel even paid a huge sum of money from his family's fortune, until the Roman regime finally allowed the victims to be buried.

In memory of this, it was established to recite a special *brachah* in *Birchas Hamazon* to thank Hashem for the fact that throughout those years that the bodies lay in shame, they did not decompose or give off an odor, and that they ultimately were brought to *keivurah*. The *brachah* is called *Hatov Vehameitiv* – *hatov*, that they did not decompose, and *hameitiv*, that they merited burial. (*Brachos* 48b; *Eichah Rabbah* 2 4; *Avudraham*, *Seder Birchas Hamazon*)

Why Does It Begin With "Baruch"?

Even though this *brachah* is adjacent to the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, it was composed with the word "*baruch*" at the beginning. Yet, it does not have the *halachah* of a "*brachah semuchah lechavertah*," a *brachah* right next to another *brachah*, which does not begin with *baruch*. That is because it was established as a *brachah* in its own right, and is not considered a continuation of the *brachos* preceding it, which are stipulated in the Torah. However, it does not conclude with *baruch*, like the first three *brachos* of *Birchas Hamazon*, because only "*Brachos Aruchos*," long *brachos* that have another *tefillah*, or an addition, conclude with *baruch*. This *brachah* is considered a "*brachah ketzarah*," a short *brachah*, because while it is long, it is all different forms of the Name of Hashem (*Brachos* 46b; *Tosafos Pesachim* 104b, beginning with "*hatov*."). Moreover, if they would have established that the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* should conclude with "*baruch*," it would appear that this *brachah* is on a higher level than the two *brachos* before it, which only conclude with *baruch* [and don't begin

with *baruch*], and Chazal did not want a *brachah d'rabbanan* to appear more important than the *brachos d'Oraisa*. (*Levush*, *Orach Chaim* 189 1)

The Reason It Was Included in Birchas Hamazon

Because the entire *Birchas Hamazon* is praise, Chazal established that the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* should be included in it, as it praises for the miracles of the *kedoshim* of Beitar (*Rosh*, *Brachos* 7 22). Moreover, they wanted it to be next to the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim* because since the destruction of Beitar, the *keren Yisrael* was severed and it will not return until Yerushalayim is rebuilt (*Rosh* *ibid* according to *Maadanei Yom Tov* *ibid* 90).

The *Baal Haturim* (*Devarim* 8:10) explains further that because a *seudah* might cause a person to *chalilah* forget Hashem, as it says (*ibid* 8:12-14): "*Pen tochal*, perhaps you will eat and be satiated...and your pride will increase and you will forget Hashem." Therefore, this *brachah* was established in *Birchas Hamazon*, because through it, a person will remember the day of his death, and this way, the *seudah* will not cause him to become arrogant.

Another reason that it was established in *Boneh Yerushalayim* is explained by the Ben Ish Chai, based on the *Midrash* (*Eichah Rabbah* *ibid*) that although the city of Beitar survived for fifty-two years after the destruction of Yerushalayim, it was ultimately destroyed, because its residents rejoiced in the destruction of Yerushalayim because the people of Yerushalayim would harass them and steal their fields when they would be *oleh regel*. After Beitar was destroyed, the sages of Yerushalayim who had been exiled to Yavneh established this *brachah* next to the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim* so that no one should say that they were happy about the destruction of Beitar, the way Beitar had rejoiced with the destruction of Yerushalayim. On the contrary, right next to a *tefillah* about rebuilding Yerushalayim, there is a reference to the destruction of Beitar, and there is gratitude to Hashem that the martyrs were ultimately brought to a Jewish burial. (*Ben Yehoyada Brachos* 48b)

Why a Brachah Particularly for This Miracle

The *Tzelach* (*Brachos* *ibid*) explains that the reason it was established to recite *Hatov Vehameitiv* particularly for this miracle is that we should not mistakenly think that the burial of the martyrs of Beitar is not such a big miracle, because ultimately they did not decompose despite not being buried. Burial is a need for the soul, and although the body still existed, there is a tremendous virtue in being buried, because as long as the physical part of the body does not return to the ground, the soul does not return to Hashem. (See *Koheles* 12:7). Therefore, *Hameitiv* was established because they were allowed to be buried.

Maaseh Emunim

A Weekly Story About
Amen and Tefillah

Thirty Years of Tefillos

A young man with a secular appearance walked into a yeshivah for *baalei teshuvah* in Yerushalayim. The Rav was in the midst of giving a *Gemara shiur* on the beginning of *Maseches Megillah*. The young man took a seat, looked around wide eyed, and immediately began firing questions: "What does the word *megillah* mean?" he asked. "*Megillah* is a *klaf*," the Rav replied.

"What is *klaf*?" the boy asked, and the Rav explained, "*Klaf* is the hide of an animal that is processed so it can be written on."

"What does that have to do with this?" the boy didn't give in.

"The miracle of the Purim that is written about in this *masechta* is written on *klaf*," the Rav replied patiently.

And so forth, throughout the *shiur*, the young man did not stop asking questions. He knew nothing, but his yearning to know and understand was insatiable. After the *shiur* ended, the Rav was surprised to see that he remained in his seat, reviewing what he had learned. This seemed like an absolute contradiction to his secular appearance, and the Rav realized that there must be an interesting story here. He hoped that he would be enlightened, and in the meantime, waited patiently.

Over the next few days, the boy arrived diligently to the *shiur*, coming earlier and leaving later each day. He reviewed the material from the *shiur* extensively. At the same time, he slowly altered his appearance, and began to look *frum*. Within a few weeks, he appeared like a yeshivah *bochur*, with a white shirt tucked into black pants, a black yarmulke, and even small *peyos* that had begun to grow.

About six weeks later, the phone in the Rav's house rang; on the other end was this young man inviting him to a *seudas mitzvah* in his parents' home in honor of a *siyum masechta*...on *Megillah*. Unbelievable – a month and a half earlier he hardly could read a *Gemara* and now he was ready to make a *siyum*.

Willpower is truly a remarkable thing, the Rav thought to himself, and confirmed his attendance. At the appointed time, the Rav arrived at the home of the boy, and was happy to see that a large number of the *bochurim* from the *bais medrash*, as well as local residents, seated around the table. Then the father entered – bareheaded and with a rather distant look – and also sat down at the table.

The *bochur*, wearing a suit and hat, began to read the last few lines of the *masechta*, and then recited the customary requests said at a *siyum*. After reciting *Kaddish*, he launched into a *drashah* that lasted a full forty minutes.

It was nothing short of a miracle. A *bochur* who, less than two months earlier did not know what the inside of a *Gemara* looked like was suddenly riveting a large audience of Torah scholars.

After he finished, the young man honored his uncle, his father's brother, to speak. The uncle began:

"My parents were Holocaust survivors who married at an older age. They had two sons: Binyamin, my brother sitting here, and myself.

"Binyamin was a very special child, and from his early years in *cheder*, and later in *yeshivah ketanah* and his first years in *yeshivah gedolah*, he was our parents' pride

and joy. He was successful in his learning and brought them much *nachas*.

"In the middle of *shiur beis* of yeshivah *gedolah*, the turnaround happened, and it was rapid and shocking.

"One winter morning, Binyamin called my parents and told them flatly: 'I've left the path of Torah. I'm leaving yeshivah, and the house, and setting out on a new life.'

"My father – stunned at this announcement – tried at first to speak to him, but although his words emerged straight from the heart, they did not penetrate the heart. Binyamin closed his ears, and even cut off all ties with my parents.

"Binyamin cut off all ties, but my mother did not give up on him for even a minute. For eighteen years, until her passing, each Erev Shabbos after lighting candles, she *davened* for him tearfully, for forty whole minutes, to repent. However, it seemed that the gates were locked. She passed on from this world without seeing the fruits of her efforts.

"My father, who during the first years tried to soothe my mother and encourage her to be comforted by her second son, felt obligated to continue this practice after her passing. For the seven and a half years from her passing until his, he continued with her practice and after lighting Shabbos candles he *davened* for Binyamin to do *teshuvah*.

"After my father passed away, I decided to accept this 'will' on myself and to continue my parents' custom. So since then, each Friday, at candle lighting time, I *daven* for no less than forty minutes for my brother Binyamin.

"More than thirty years of *tefillos* passed and it appeared that there was no result. The connection with Binyamin was totally cut off, until yesterday..."

"Yesterday," the uncle said, his eyes filling with tears, "I got a surprising phone call. Ofir, Binyamin's son, was making a *siyum masechta*. Now I heard him give a *drashah* for forty minutes, citing *Gemaros* and *Midrashim* like he's experienced at this.

"Now I can declare wholeheartedly: there is no *tefillah* that is rejected! Even if it looks like the *tefillah* is not effective, the time will come when it will bear fruit. One must never give up, never desist..."

The uncle could not speak any more. The listeners also all had tears in their eyes upon hearing his emotional words. And Binyamin...tears also began to pool in his eyes, pure tears, tears of *teshuvah*.

A few months later, Ofir married a G-d fearing, religious young woman. At the wedding, the guests were treated to a breathtaking sight: father and son, hugging tightly, dancing together. The son looked like a full-fledged *ben Torah*, while on the father's head, a black yarmulke rested firmly and comfortably. Yes, he had done complete *teshuvah*.

The lesson from this story is a powerful one: Never despair and give up on *tefillah*; even if it looks like it's no use, never stop asking. You need diligence, dedication and a great measure of patience, but in the end, the *yeshuah* will come.

Thirty years of *tefillos* finally had an effect and brought an errant son back to his roots.

Doreah Tov, Succos p. 666