

# VeChol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS LECH LECHA

תש"פ

## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Avraham Dwelled in a Place of Tefillah

"וישא לוט את עיניו וירא את כל ככר הירדן כי כלה משקה... כגן ה' כארץ מצרים באכה צער" (יג')

The *Chasam Sofer* explains:

Lot chose to settle in Sodom which was "like a garden of Hashem like Eretz Mitzrayim". HaKadosh Baruch Hu had blessed Egypt with the Nile River, which would flood its banks and irrigate the fields, because He did not want them to pray to Him for rains. Likewise, He blessed the land of Sodom, because He did not want their prayers. But Avraham Avinu chose to settle particularly in "Elonei Mamrei that was in Chevron" (13:18), which was rocky ground (*Kesubos* 118a), so that he would always have to turn to Hashem in *tefillah* for rain.

*Chasam Sofer*

### Tefillah for a Metziah Kesheirah

"ויאמר אברהם אל מלך סדם הרמתי ידי אל ה'... ואם אקח מכל אשר לך" (יד כב-כג)

The words "*harimosi yadi el Hashem*" are translated by *Onkelos* as "*Aramis yadi bitzelo [in tefillah] kadam Hashem.*" What did Avraham daven for?

**Harav Avraham Tzvi Gintzler, Hy" d**, one of the *dayanim* of Humena, explained:

The *passuk* (*Tehillim* 32:6): "*Al zos yispalel kol chassid Eilecha l'eis metzo rak lesheitef mayim rabim eilav lo yagi'u*" was explained by Rav Naftali Katz, author of *Semichas Chachamim* in the name of his father, Rav Yitzchak Hakohen, according to the *halachah* brought in the *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 21b). The *halachah* says that one who finds an object that was carried from his friend's field by the waters of a river that flooded its banks does not have to be returned it even if it has a sign on it. But the Rema ruled (*Choshen Mishpat* 259 7) that "It is in any case better and honest to return it." That is what this *passuk* in *Tehillim* says: "For this every *chassid* should daven" – as he seeks to learn Torah without the burden of *parnassah*, "*Eilecha l'eis metzo*" – that Hashem should present before him something kosher from which he can earn a livelihood. "*Rak lesheitef mayim rabim eilav lo yagi'u*" – but not something that

### "Amen" on the "Magen Avraham"

"ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה" (יב ב)

Regarding the promise of "*Veheyeh brachah*", *Rashi* brings the *drashah* of *Chazal* (*Pesachim* 117b) that although the three Avos are mentioned in the first *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we conclude the *brachah* only with Avraham, by saying "*Magen Avraham.*"

The *halachah* is that there are three *kavanos* in answering amen: On a *brachah* that is only praise, we have in mind "this *brachah* is truth." For a *tefillah* or request we concentrate that "May it be Hashem's will that the words of the one making the blessing be fulfilled." And for a *brachah* that has both praise and a request, we have in mind both: that the *brachah* is the truth and that it should be fulfilled. As such, the *Bach* rules that the *brachah* of *Magen Avraham* requires one to concentrate on that it is truth, because it is all praise.

But the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that from the words of the [*sefer*] *Magen Avraham* it seems that one should have in mind in *Magen Avraham* also that it should be fulfilled. He explains that this *brachah* contains a request to bring the Geulah closer, as it says: "*Vezocher chasdei avos umeivi goel livnei bneiheim*". Hence, the *Magen Avraham* is of the opinion that when answering amen on this *brachah* one should have in mind both that it is truth and that it is a request that should be fulfilled.

*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 124 6; *Bach* ibid; *Magen Avraham* ibid 10; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 25; *Biur Halachah* ibid

was carried by the flood of the river from his friend's field, because as he is a '*chassid*' he will have to return it, *lifnim mishuras hadin*.

Back to this *parashah*, Avraham Avinu tells the king of Sodom: I always prayed like the prayer of the *chassid*, that I should not come across a finding that I have to return *lifnim mishuras hadin*. Now that such a thing came to me during the war of Sodom, I will not benefit from it at all.

*Kedushah Ubrachah* [Rav N. Katz] *Brachos* 8a; *Yatzev Avraham*

### One Who Has a Regular Place – Changes His Mazel

"ויוצא אתן החוצה ויאמר הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים אם תוכל לספר אתם ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך" (טו ה)

**Harav Yaakov Halevi Kopstein**, the Rav of Nementzin, explained:

Although *Chazal* established (*Moed Kattan* 28a) that "*chayei banai umezonei ... bemazla talya milsa* [are contingent on the person's mazel in the celestial spheres], one who persists with *tefillah* can change his mazel for the good. Here, HaKadosh Baruch Hu told Avraham, that he should not take into account that according to his mazel he could not have a child.

That is what *Chazal* had in mind when they said (*Brachos* 6b): "Anyone who is *kovea* a place for davening – *Elokei Avraham* comes to his aid." One who believes in the reign of mazel always tries to change his place, as perhaps that will benefit him. That is what Bilam did when he changed his place time after time in an effort to overpower the mazel and curse Am Yisrael (see *Bamidbar* 23). But "*hakovea makom litefillaso*" declares by doing so that he recognizes that Hashem can send him salvation despite his mazel and that "*Elokei Avraham*" – who changed Avraham's mazel, will be "*b'ezro*" – will aid him and change his mazel for the good.

*Bais Halevi, Introduction*

### Tzaddikim Don't Want to Bother

"ותאמר שרי אל אברהם הנה נא עצרני ה' מלדת בא נא אל שפחתי אולי אבנה ממנה וישמה אברהם לקול שרי" (טז ב)

**Harav Yehoshua Ibn Shu'ib**, a *talmid* of the Rashba, wrote:

"And why is it that he did not daven for Sarah when she was barren, like Yitzchak davened [as the *passuk* says (*Bereishis* 25:21): "And Yitzchak prayed to Hashem in front of his wife because she was barren"] and took for himself a servant? Because *tzaddikim* do not want to bother Above, unless the need is very great. Yitzchak davened because he was not allowed to take a servant, as he was a pure offering."

*Drashos Rabi Yehoshua Ibn Shu'ib*  
*Al HaTorah, Chayei Sarah*

"Answering amen is part of the *brachah*... Through answering amen, the *brachah* becomes more important."

(*Mishnah Berurah* 167 20)

*Birchos Hashachar*



Aloud



With kavanah



*Bechavrusa*



## Birchas Hamazon – Hatov Vehameitiv (2)

### “Umalchuso Beratzon Kiblu Aleihem”

As explained in the last segment, the main point of this *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* – gratitude for the miracle of the martyrs of Beitar – was then augmented with mentions of Shem Shamayim and other terms denoting praise and request. These include “3 *gemulos*, 3 *hatavos* and 3 *malchuyos*” (*Brachos* 49a; *Tosafos Pesachim* 104b, beginning with *Hatov*), which are “*Hu gemalanu, Hu gomleinu, Hu yigmeleinu*”; “*Hu heitiv, Hu meitiv; Hu yeitiv*”; and “*Melech ha’olam...Malkeinu...HaMelech Hatov*.”

Mentioning the three *Malchuyos* in this *brachah* is intended to make up for the two Names of Hashem [referring to His Kingship] not present in *Birchas Ha’aretz* [*Nodeh*] and *Boneh Yerushalayim* [*Rachem*], which do not mention a Name of Malchus. Although according to the *din* it was not required to mention Hashem’s Kingship in these *brachos*, because they are a “*brachah semuchah lechavertah*,” still, because the *brachah* of *Rachem* mentions the Kingship of a human king [= *v’al malchus bais Dovid meshichecha*], it is therefore appropriate to also mention the Kingship of Hashem. However, in actuality, we refrain from mentioning Malchus Shamayim so as not, *challilah*, to compare it to the kingship of a human being mentioned in the same *brachah*. Therefore, the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* that was established later includes mentions of *Malchus Hashem* for the two previous *brachos* (*Tur Orach Chaim* 189).

Another reason for mentioning *Malchus Hashem* in the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* is brought by the *Avudraham* according to the *Midrash* (see *Midrash Shmuel* 13:4). He says that in the time of King Rechavam’s reign, Am Yisrael rebelled against three things: *Malchus Shamayim*, *Malchus Bais Dovid* and the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore, it was decreed that they would not be redeemed until they repented and asked for these three things to return.

Therefore, it was established that we ask for three things in *Birchas Hamazon*: “*Al Yerushalayim irecha v’al Malchus Bais Dovid meshichecha*” – in the *brachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, and for *Malchus Hashem* in the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv*. Each time we ask for these three things we express our regret for rejecting them in the past, and state that we are now accepting them willingly, and as such, we hope to merit once again to see them with the arrival of the *Geulah*.

### The Way of the Benevolent Is to Bestow Good

The *brachah* begins with a list of descriptions that we use to refer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu: “*Ha-kel, Avinu, Malkeinu, Adireinu...*” The *Maharal* explained (*Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Ha’avodah* 18) that this *brachah* is different from its

predecessors. The three previous *brachos*, which are an obligation *d’Oraisa*, were established as an expression of gratitude for all the good HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestows upon us each day: The *brachah* of “*Hazan*” is relates to basic benefits that we need to exist, such as food, without which we cannot subsist. The *brachah* of “*Ha’aretz*” is for extra benefits that He compassionately bestows upon us, such as a “good and expansive land”, and other things that are not vital for existence. The *brachah* of *Yerushalayim* is about the tremendous virtues that He granted us with, out of lofty lofty goodness, so that the blessing should be perfect in its essence, and this is manifested through the Bais Hamikdash, through which the *brachah* in this world is perfected and brought to completion.

These three *brachos* are all a form of praise for sustenance, which manifests the abundance that Hashem grants His creations. But the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv*, in contrast, was established as gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu being inherently “good”. Because the way of the good is to benefit others, He constantly bestows good and benevolence upon this world, irrespective of the needs of the creations. This is the way most of the good we merit is expressed, because it all stems from the fact that Hashem is Good, and through that He bestows upon us a constant abundance of goodness. That is also the case with the martyrs of Beitar: Even at a time when judgment ruled in the world, Hashem was especially benevolent to Am Yisrael, both by not allowing the bodies to rot and smell, and because they were brought to burial (as explained in the previous segment).

### The Decline of the Generations in Gratitude

Some offer an original explanation for why *Chazal* saw it fitting to add another *brachah* to the *brachos* that are obligated from the Torah, expressing gratitude for the benevolence of Hashem. Until their time, when people ate food, they could sense their absolute dependence on the benevolence of Hashem, without which they could not survive. After the generations declined, *Chazal* realized in their wisdom that a blessing thanking Hashem for food was not sufficient to recognize this fact. As such, they felt it was right to establish another special *brachah* for the many miracles. As the *Rambam* says (*Shemos* 13:16): “*And from the great and famous miracles, a person thanks for the hidden miracles.*” When the great miracle of the martyrs of Beitar occurred, and everyone recognized the *Hashgachah* of Hashem, *Chazal* saw that as an opportunity to establish the *brachah* of a general gratitude for the tremendous benevolence that He showers upon us each day. (*Mei Zahav* [Rav Y.P. Goldwasser] *Eikev*, in the name of Harav G. Nadel, *zt”l*)

## Blessed Is He Who Restores Sight to the Blind

This story, which took place many years ago, during the British Mandate era in Israel, was told by the renowned Maggid Rav Shabsi Yudelevitz, *zt”l*, who heard it from the person it happened to:

Yosef was considered the paragon of success by all who knew him. At a relatively young age, he already held a senior position in a prominent government office, and at the same time, began to dabble in business, trading stocks and dealing in real estate. Yosef was just starting out in life, and before he managed to accumulate any significant wealth, his world went black – literally.

One fine morning, Yosef awoke, opened his eyes and...nothing. Everything was black. He frantically tried to rub his eyes, hoping it was just a dream, but he quickly realized the bitter reality: from one minute to the next, with no apparent reason, he had lost his sight.

At the time, Professor Avraham Ticho, a world renowned famous eye doctor, was living in Yerushalayim. Yosef quickly made an appointment at his clinic. When his turn came, Professor Ticho looked into his eyes and quickly grasped the situation. He decided to hospitalize Yosef in his clinic and began performing comprehensive tests and administering initial treatment.

It took just two days to diagnose Yosef’s ailment. “There’s nothing for you to do in an eye clinic,” the professor told the frightened Yosef. “The reason for your sudden blindness is not due to a problem in your eyes, but rather because of a growth in your head. It apparently is touching the nerves that control vision, and that made you lose your vision.”

These words were like a thunderbolt to Yosef’s ears. At the time, medical care was not advanced like it is today, and all Professor Ticho could do was send Yosef to Berlin, Germany, the global medical capital. The renowned Jewish Professor Tzundak lived there [a relative of the well-known doctors, the Tzundak brothers, including Professor Shmuel Tzundak, who served as the director of Bikur Cholim Hospital and as the personal physician of several *gedolei Yisrael*.]

Yosef had no choice but to empty all his savings – and to borrow more money for expenses – and to set out by ship to Germany.

When he arrived at the hospital, in Germany Professor Tzundak greeted him cordially and began to treat him with great dedication. In light of Yosef’s serious condition, he was quickly taken to the operating room for a long and complicated surgery. The professor opened his head, removed the growth and left the wound open, covered in glass, to prevent an infection, so the doctors could keep an eye on the healing process.

Yosef lay on his hospital bed for three months, hardly moving during that time. According to the doctor, any move was liable to damage his brain and cause immediate death. All Yosef could do was lie in his bed and listen to what was going on around him; he realized that those around him were carefree, fortunate people, and this thought weighed heavily on his mind.

Three months of pain and suffering elapsed. Yosef was finally allowed to rise from his sickbed, and with Hashem’s help, recovered in a short time. The growth was gone and did not return. But at the same time, while it had been removed, Yosef’s vision was not restored. After an exam, Professor Tzundak told him that in order to regain his vision he would need another surgery to implant a certain component that would connect between the brain and the vision nerves so that he could see once again. In order to do this, the professor explained to Yosef, he would have to have a very expensive surgery, and endure another long hospitalization.

With the other option being blindness, Yosef didn’t have much of a choice. Assisted by the helpful doctor, he appealed to an array of charity organizations and generous people until he was able to raise the necessary sum. With the money in hand, Yosef was admitted to the hospital again for about two months, during which he was operated on. Then his eyes were bandaged for a long recovery period.

It’s hard to describe the pain and suffering that Yosef endured until finally, the moment arrived: Professor Tzundak informed him that the following morning, *b’ezras Hashem*, the bandages would be removed and he would be able to see again.

“I would like,” the G-d fearing professor said to the excited Yosef, “that the first object you see should be an item used for a mitzvah. I will stand in front of you when the bandages are removed, and I will specially wear my *tallis kattan* over my clothing so that you can perform the mitzvah of ‘*Ure’isem oso*’ - And you shall see it...so that you should remember and do all My mitzvos.”

Yosef could not sleep that entire night. At eight in the morning, the bandages were carefully removed from his eyes. His body was trembling with excitement, and it was as though in a dream that he saw a venerable looking person, wearing a *tallis kattan* and fingering the *tzitzis* on it. This caused him to burst into tears. “Thank you, thank you...” Yosef almost fell at the feet of his doctor. He was so overcome that he could not say another word.

A short time later, he was sitting comfortably in Professor Tzundak’s office. The professor began, “My dear Yosef, many months have passed since that day when you woke up that morning and did not see.

“You surely can fill a whole volume with all you have endured since then, about the suffering of your body and soul, and the huge sums of money you paid and the long months during which you had to lay still in bed. Now that you are so moved and emotional with gratitude about your wondrous recovery, as I heard from you a short time ago, try to imagine the many Jews who can see properly without having to endure all that suffering. Surely they need to thank Hashem for this with great enthusiasm that should be no less than your expression of gratitude that comes after all this suffering.

“How surprising it is, then, that many say the *brachah* of *Pokeach Ivrim* by rote, quickly, without *kavanah*. What a shame it is that they do not feel with the recital of the *brachah* how miraculous and powerful the ability to see is.

“I ask you, dear Yosef, remember these moments forever. Take them with you as a memento to love Hashem and to thank Him with all your heart and soul for all the benevolence that He bestows upon you every minute of every day. And when you say the *brachah* of *Pokeach Ivrim*, think about each and every word and offer thanks to the One Who created the world and brought you to this moment.”

The doctor concluded his moving words, which emerged from a warm and believing Jewish heart. Yosef parted from the doctor with effusive gratitude and returned to Eretz Yisrael. From that day, he became a complete *baal teshuvah* and *yarei Shamayim*. He later married and established a Torah home, and raised generations of progeny who followed the path of Torah and implemented the doctor’s powerful lesson.

Lehagid, Parashas Shelach