

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



334

PARASHAS BEHA'ALOSECHA

תש"פ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

On Shabbos There Is a Spiritual Joy

"וביום שמחתכם ובמועדיכם..." (במדבר י')

From the *nusach* of *Tefillas Mussaf* on Shabbos, "*Yismechu bemalchuscha shomrei Shabbos vekorei oneg...*" it appears that there is a special mitzvah to rejoice on Shabbos. The source is cited by the *Shibbolei Haleket* (Inyan Shabbos 82) in the name of **Harav Avigdor Katz**, from a *drash* of the *Sifri* (Beha'alo'secha 77) on this *passuk*: "*Ubeyom simchaschem*" – this is Shabbos." It is clear that Shabbos is also defined as a day of *simchah*. The *Baal Haturim* added a *remez* to this: the word "*simchaschem*" is numerically equivalent to "גם ביום השבת".

But then we need to reconcile this with what the *poskim* bring down (see *Rambam Shv'as Yom Tov* 16-17), that the mitzvah of *simchah* is practiced only on Yamim Tovim, while on Shabbos we have only the obligation of *oneg*.

Harav Avraham Chaim Schorr explained:

Indeed, we were commanded to feel physical joy only on the Yamim Tovim, but on Shabbos we were commanded to feel spiritual joy, which means: *simchah* in Hashem and His Kingship over us, which is evident from the words of the *tefillah* "*Yismechu bemalchuscha shomrei Shabbos*."

Toras Chaim, Chulin 26b

"Vayehi Binsoa" Against Harmful Forces

"ויהי בנסע הארץ ויאמר משה קומה ה' ויפצו איביך וינסו משנאיך מפניך" (י' לה)

The Rav of Yerushalayim, **Harav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, offered a beautiful reason for the custom of saying the *parashah* of *Vayehi Binsoa* when taking out a *Sefer Torah* for reading (see *Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim* 134 4). He cited this reason at the *chanukas habayis* for Yeshivas Sfas Emes in Tammuz of 5686:

It is known that the more the power of *kedushah* is aroused, the more harmful

Volunteering to Answer Amen Protects from Enemies

"וכי תבאו מלחמה בארצכם על הצר הצר אתכם והרעתם בחצצרת ונזכרתם לפני ה' אלקיכם ונושעתם מאיביכם" (י' ט)

Even today, when we do not blow the *chatzotzros* (see *Magen Avraham* beginning of 576; *Shu"t Igros Moshe Orach Chaim* Vol. I 169) we have a wondrous mitzvah that is *mesugal* to bring about the fulfillment of the promise of "and you will be saved from your enemies" – and that is the mitzvah of answering amen.

Chazal explained (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah* 10) on the *passuk* (*Shoftim* 5:2): "בפרע" – "Through whom does Hakadosh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael from the nations of the world? In people who go to the *bais knesses* and *bais medrash* in the morning and evening and answer amen."

Thus, **Harav Chaim Katz**, a grandson of the *Sem"e*, explained the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (12:2): "*Hoshiah Hashem ki gamar chassid ki pasu emunim mibnei adam*" – "Hashem send salvation" even though "*gamar chassid ki pasu emunim*" – we do not have people among us who are careful about, and cherish, the mitzvah of answering amen, in whose merit we are guaranteed to be spared from our enemies. The Rebbe **Harav Moshe Yechiel of Ozherov** added an explanation that when we hone in on the words of *Chazal*, we see that the main point of the protection that answering amen provides is when it is answered to a *brachah* that the person was not obligated to hear. This is like "those people who got to the *bais medrash* morning and evening" in order to answer amen after those who make *brachos*. As the *passuk* says "*behisnadev am barchu Hashem*" – when the person volunteers to bless Hashem with 'amen' even when he is not obligated to do so.

Eretz Hachaim [Rav C. Katz] *Tehillim* 12:1; *Be'er Moshe Shoftim* p. 165

forces are strengthened in order to prevent the holiness from spreading. The holy *Zohar* (*Vayakhel* 206 1) brings down that the time during which the *Sefer Torah* is taken out of the *aron* is auspicious specifically to ask for holy matters and for *avodas Hashem*. It is like those sublime requests mentioned in the *tefillah* of *Brich Shemei*, which are brought in the *Zohar* there, and which are said when opening the *aron*. Therefore, we first ask: "*Kumah Hashem veyafutzu oyvecha veyanusu mesanecha miPanecha*," Rise Hashem, and Your enemies will scatter, and those who despise You will flee from Your face, to correspond to those harmful forces that have awakened against us, and then we will merit to have our requests answered.

Chochmas Chaim

Lest We Waste an Auspicious Time on 'Potatoes'

"האספסוף אשר בקרבנו התאוו תאווה וישבתו ויבכו גם בני ישראל ויאמרו מי יאכלנו בשך" (יא ד)

In one of his discourses to the yeshivah, the **Chofetz Chaim** related:

When the Bolshevik Revolution broke out in Russia, during which the Russian Tsar Nikolai was deposed and imprisoned in Podolsk, his official request to his captors was publicized: he asked that two potatoes be added to his daily ration. At the time, everyone laughed: the great Tsar, whose table had featured every delicacy in the world, did not find anything to ask for at an auspicious time but two potatoes?

The **Chofetz Chaim** derived a piercing lesson from this:

"My dear ones! We are the sons of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. And there are times when we can ask our Father for anything we want. Each person should introspect into himself to ensure that he is not missing out these opportunities by asking for trivial material matters..."

Michtavei HaChofetz Chaim, Dugma Misichos Avi 39

20 Sivan is a day when the Cossack pogroms against Jews, *Hy"d*, reached a peak during the years of Tach Veta – 5408-5409.

The *kuntress* *Mora Mikdash* cited at the beginning of *sefer Rav Yeivi* says that during those times, it was revealed to the *Tosafos Yom Tov* that all this happened to Am Yisrael because they spoke during *davening* and *leining*, and therefore, it was established to recite a special *Mi Shebeirach* for those who are careful not to speak during *davening* and the Torah reading.

Dear Yidden,

At this time, let us undertake not to speak during *davening* and *leining*, and to take care to answer amen on the *brachos* that are said in *tefillah* and the Torah reading. In this merit we should be blessed with all the *brachos* specified in the *Mi Shebeirach* established by the *Tosafos Yom Tov*, *venomar amen!*



Taaneh Emunim

Insights into the Virtues of
Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash

Birchas Asher Yatzar – Rofei Kol Basar (Introduction)

The Body – A Wonder Machine

Each morning, when we arise from a night's sleep and stand up on firm, stable legs, we remember the wondrous machine that the Creator put at our disposal so that we can serve Him and fulfill his *mitzvos* without obstacles. That is, of course, the remarkably complex body that Hashem granted us in His great *chesed* and compassion.

This system does not have one superfluous detail. Each and every component is a world unto itself, both with regard to the benefit that it brings us and with regard to the Divine Wisdom and complexity with which it is designed. The wisdom with which the human body was created indicates and proves the love that the Creator has for His Creations. (*Ye'aros Dvash*, Vol. I, 14)

In order to thank Hashem for this great gift in a suitable fashion, we make a special *brachah* – *Asher Yatzar*. In it, we praise HaKadosh Baruch Hu for creating our bodies with wisdom and thank Him for the tremendous *chesed* that He does with us each and every moment, especially the ability to conduct our bodily needs, and the body's systems all work normally, in amazing synchronization, so that we can continue to serve Hashem in good health, physically and emotionally. (*Chazal* established the *nusach* for someone who conducts his needs, as brought down in *Brachos* 60b. With regard to the *halachah* of saying it for someone who arose in the morning and did not take care of those needs, see *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 4:1.)

The *Yalkut Me'am Loez* (*Bereishis* Vol. I p. 88) addresses this subject: "Anyone who introspects into the secret of the creation of the person and his body parts will see that a person must serve Hashem Yisbarach with his heart and soul even without getting rewards, and only because of the tremendous *chesed* He did for us – creating us in such completion. Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed such a tremendous *chesed* by creating man with all his limbs intact, we must bless Hashem and praise Him for this good that he did for us."

Birchas HaGomel Each Day

Because the essence of this *brachah* is explicit gratitude for the proper function of the bodily systems in general, and the digestive system in particular, the *Rishonim* write (see *Shu"t Min Hashamayim* 34) that saying it has a similar obligation to the *brachah* of *Hagomel* that a sick person says upon recovering. That is because there is no greater ailment than someone whose digestive system is not working properly.

The *mashpia*, **Harav Eliyahu Roth**, would always tell his students: "Do you understand why you are obligated to say *Asher Yatzar*?! You just underwent a complex, difficult operation during which waste was cleared from your body. Instead of this operation taking

place under anesthesia, with lots of pain, the greatest Doctor in the world had compassion on you – and did it in the easiest way possible, with no payment. Is it not worthy for us to praise Him for that with great *kavanah*?!" (*Hamevarech Yisbarech* p. 64)

Aside for that, the *mashgiach*, **Harav Yechezkel Levinstein**, said: the actual fact that for decades, our body works in the same form, without any change, is a miracle. Because even the best machine in the world breaks down from time to time because of heavy use. How much more so our bodies, which are made up of hundreds of small, sophisticated "machines" ... And yet, it does not stop working every day, for many years. (*Ohr Yechezkel*, *Emunah*, p. 21)

With Kavanah and Simchah

The *Seder Hayom* (*Kavanas Habrachos*) wrote: "And he should make the *brachah* with *kavanah*, and should say it word for word, and have in mind the great *chesed* that Hashem Yisbarach is doing with the person each and every hour that he conducts his bodily needs, and expels what he ate, and can stand up. Because if not for this, all the money in the world would not be able to cure him, and he would die. HaKadosh Baruch Hu in His great compassion makes machines and ... other matters in the body of a person so that he can ingest and egest properly, and absorb the nutrients and expel the waste, and to heal his body to be ready and able to serve Him all his life.

"And if a person is complete in his mind, and enunciates each word carefully, he will not fall ill all his life and he will not need a doctor or his healing. If so, it is certainly worthy to make the *brachah* with utmost *kavanah* and concentration to the Rofei Kol Basar uMafli La'asos... And from a person's *brachos* it is evident what his nature is, whether he is a Torah scholar and *Yarei Shamayim* or if he is a fool in his service of Hashem."

The *sefer Damesek Eliezer* (letter aleph, *Asher Yatzar*, 2) writes:

If we have an obligation to make all the *brachos* in awe and love, how much more so this one. We see people around us who experience so much pain and angst over the bodily functions that seem so simple, while we merit to conduct these same acts with ease and no pain. Hence, how can we make this *brachah* without paying attention, washing our hands as we murmur it, or worse, totally being distracted and forgetting to make the *brachah* in the first place?

Therefore, one who fears the Word of Hashem will take care to make the *brachah* with great joy, *yiras Hashem* and love of Hashem. It is enough if he has *kavanah* to understand the simple meaning of the words he is uttering, and certainly he will be rewarded by Hashem.

Maaseh Emunim

Pearls and Insights on
Birchas Hamazon

Tefillah By 'Mistake' That Was Answered

1939. The Rebbe Harav Meshulam Yissachar Ashkenazi of Stanislav, *zt"l*, a descendent of the Alesker dynasty, had managed to escape from Vienna, the capital of Austria, where he lived, a short time before the authorities closed the borders. He moved to London, where he later established his *bais medrash*, which drew hundreds of the city's Jews to bask in his light. Rav Meshulem Yissachar did not rest on his laurels; he looked around him, and when he saw that the situation of the *chinuch* in the *chadarim* in London needed some improvement, he decided to get involved.

Among his other activities to strengthen Yiddishkeit, the Rebbe saw that the Jewish schools in London began teaching children to read aleph-bais only at age five, the way the secular schools did. This touched his heart greatly, because he viewed as a dangerous deviation from the path of pure *chinuch* that has been passed down to us through the generations. He reached out to the principals of the Jewish schools, and invested hours of time in persuading them, until he succeeded in reinstating the traditional Jewish way of *chinuch*: three-year-old children were brought to *cheder* for the first time in their life wrapped in a *tallis* to start learning the letters already at this young age.

The Rebbe fully believe that the practice of beginning *chinuch* at a young age was a firm foundation for a Jewish life. Rav Meshulem Yissachar considered this of paramount importance until his final days. Throughout his life, he considered this accomplishment to be a big *zechus* that would accompany him to the Heavenly Court. This was to such an extent that he instructed in his will to inscribe on his *matzeivah*, after 120 years, that he had restored the glory of the *minhag*, and had given the Jewish children of London the merit of starting to learn the *aleph-beis* at age three.

Indeed, his *matzeivah*, in the Enfield cemetery on the outskirts of London, states:

"He merited to bring the merit to Jewish children, *tinokos shel bais rabban*, that they should start learning *aleph-beis* at age three... offer up a *tefillah* for his soul, and in this merit, his holy forbears will advocate good for you as well."

His son and successor, Harav Uri Ashkenazi of Stanislav, *zt"l*, who recently passed away from corona, related the following story about this:

A family in London had a smart, talented six-year-old son who did not want to learn the holy letters of the *aleph-beis* under any circumstances. His parents, fearing for his future, tried to urge him in any way possible. The invested time and effort, and even enlisted

leading experts. But nothing was effective. It was as though the child's mind was closed off: he refused to try, and certainly did not succeed.

The boy's mother was an *erliche* woman. When she saw that her efforts were bearing no success, she decided to try another angle. She rose early and left her house, heading for the Enfield cemetery, where he she planned to pour her heart out, and recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim* at the *kever* of the many *tzaddikim* buried there. She hoped that the sages would advocate for her son On High, that he should learn to love *divrei Torah* and the holy letters, and thus he could grow up to be a *talmid chacham*, as his parents hoped he would.

Early in the morning, she stood at the gates of the cemetery, and began *davening*. For several hours, she walked from the *matzeivah* of one *tzaddik* to the next, her lips murmuring *tefillos* and *Tehillim*, until she came to the *ohel* of my father, Harav Meshulem Yissachar of Stanislav, *zt"l*.

She was tired by the time she got there, and she perused the old headstone, her eyes resting on the words etched as per his will: "He merited to bring the merit to Jewish children, *tinokos shel bais rabban*, that they should start learning *aleph-beis* at age three..."

The woman could not read the rest of the epitaph. She realized that it must be a *kever* of a *tzaddik* who had served as a *melamed*, and this was like a sign from Heaven for her. Her tension began to dissipate, and she burst into tears, speaking to the *tzaddik* from the bottom of her heart.

"Honored *tzaddik* who is buried here, only you who merited all your life to engage in the *chinuch* of Jewish children, teaching them the holy letters, can understand the great pain that overwhelms my heart as my son, a pure Jewish child, has already completed his sixth year, and has yet to absorb the forms of the holy letters. Please, pour out your heart before the One Above and plead for him to merit to finally learn to read the letters."

After saying a few chapters of *Tehillim*, the woman turned to leave. She felt a sense of relief spread through her body, and had full faith that she had come to the right place and that her *tefillos* would be heard by Hashem.

Indeed, remarkably, as soon as she returned home, she already saw a tremendous improvement in the child's overall behavior. A short time later, she tried again to teach him the letters, and for the first time in his life, it was evident that he was enjoying learning them. Not long after that he was able to read like other children his age.

Dirshu, 9 Teves 5778

Michtavei Emunim

Letters from our Loyal Readers

Dear Bney Emunim,

Thank you for this new section that is a platform for readers to express their ideas. As I saw that those preceding me connected Daf Yomi to amen, I thought that I would also write about an idea I had while learning Daf Yomi:

In *Maseches Shabbos* (77b) it says: The turban that the *talmidei chachamim* would wrap their heads in was called a "*sudra*", for the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 25:14): "Sod Hashem *l'yereiav*." I calculated that the acronym of this *passuk* is numerically equivalent to amen, because being careful about answering amen imbues a person with *Yiras Shamayim*.

Respectfully, Rabbi Y.P.A. - Modiin Illit