

# Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### A Tefillah for Tefillah

“ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמור” (ג כג)

Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the Rav of Frankfurt, explained why the word “*leimor*” is written twice:

It says in *Maseches Brachos* (4b) that Rabi Yochanan established that before the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, the person davening should request that his *tefillah* should be fluent. He makes this request with the *passuk* “*Hashem sefasai tiftach, upi yaqid tehillasecha, Hashem, please open my lips and my mouth will say Your praises.*” (*Tehillim* 51:17). Likewise, when Moshe came to ask for mercy from Hashem, he first asked: “*Leimor*” – that his *tefillah* should be fluent, and that it should be willingly accepted (see *Brachos* 34b).

*Panim Yafos*

### Tefillas Ne'ilah: The Decisive Tefillah

“ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמור” (ג כג)

“This is one of the three occasions where Moshe said to Hashem ‘I will not leave You alone until You make it known to me whether You will do as I requested or not.’” (*Rashi* based on *Devarim Rabbah* 2 6)

The *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 11 1) explains that Moshe offered 515 *tefillos* – numerically equivalent to *ואתחנן* – to merit to enter the Land, and they were not accepted. It appears that this request - that Hashem should tell him if his *tefillah* was answered or not - was the final *tefillah* - the 515<sup>th</sup> one. After that, Hashem instructed Moshe (3:26): “*Rav lach, Enough for you! Do not go on speaking to Me any more about this matter.*” Why did Moshe wait until now to make this specific request?

The *Chasam Sofer* offers a beautiful explanation:

The reason it was decreed that Moshe would not enter the land was because he struck the well so that it should give forth water, which had stopped after Miriam’s passing

### Tefillah with Diction

“ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמור” (ג כג)

Rabbeinu Bechayei explains what “*leimor*” means here: “It was *tefillah* with diction” meaning that Moshe was careful to utter his *tefillah* with his mouth, and did not suffice with thoughts in his heart, as the *Gemara* says (*Brachos* 31a) that one who davens needs to “cut with his lips”. The *Chida* writes that this does not mean that he needs to daven aloud, but rather he needs to enunciate the words with his lips. The allusion to this is that the acronym of “*בעת ההוא לאמור*” is “הבל”, meaning that his words emitted breath, but not sound.

The Rishonim differ on the explanation of the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 119b): “When one answers amen with *kol kocho*, all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him.” *Rashi* (ibid beginning with “*kol kocho*”) explains: “with all his *kavanah*” and *Tosafos* (beginning with *kol*) explains: “aloud.” But the *Maharal* notes that if this was the case, why does the *Gemara* not say “*bekol ram*” or “*bechol kavanaso*”. Hence, he explained the words “*bechol kocho*” in their simple meaning: one should answer amen with clear diction and enunciation.

*Nachal Kedumim, Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Ha'avodah* 11

on 10 Nissan. Apparently, out of respect for Miriam, the water did not stop flowing right after her passing; it continued until the end of the *shivah* – on 17 Nissan. On that day, Moshe struck the rock and it was decreed that he would not enter the land. From that day on, he davened three times each day for the decree to be annulled– at *Shacharis*, *Minchah* and *Maariv*. If we calculate the days from that point on, then we find that the 514<sup>th</sup> *tefillah* is *Minchah* of Yom Kippur.

On that day, Moshe Rabbeinu established

another *tefillah* – *Tefillas Ne'ilah* - because he did not want Yom Kippur to end without the decree being annulled. As *Chazal* say (*Rosh Hashanah* 17b), a decree that is decreed on an individual on Yom Kippur is never rescinded. And that was the purpose of this 515<sup>th</sup> *tefillah*.

From here we can understand why specifically *ba'eis hahie* – at that time, Moshe wanted to know if his *tefillah* had been accepted or not, because of all the times he had davened until then, this hour was the one that determined whether his request would be accepted.

*Drashos Chasam Sofer* Vol. II p. 334

### ‘Like a Face Reflected in the Water, So Are the Hearts of One Person to Another’

“ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך” (ו ה)

The obvious question is asked: Isn't “*ahavah*” an emotion that is aroused in one's heart of his own accord? How can one be commanded to “love Hashem”?

Rabi Akiva Eiger explained:

Shlomo Hamelech teaches us (*Mishlei* 27:19): “*Kamayim hapanim lapanim kein lev ha'adam la'adam.*” In other words, just like the water reflects the face of one who looks into it, so, too, the hearts of people reflect one another. One who loves his friend – his friend then loves him in turn. And if one hates a friend, then his friend hates him as well. (*Rashi Yevamos* 117a)

If we internalize the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu truly loves us, then a love for Him will inevitably germinate in our hearts – “*kamayim, hapanim lapanim*”. For this reason, it was established to recite the *brachah* of “*Habocheh b'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah,*” before *Krias Shema* in *Shacharis*, and “*Ohev Amo Yisrael*” in *Maariv*. When we remember Hashem's love for us, it will be easier for us to fulfill the mitzvah of “*V'ahavta.*”

*Milim Chadetin*

“בִּי מִי גִּוֵי נִדְוָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרִיבִים אֵלָיו בְּה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכֹל קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו” (דברים ד ט)

Monday 13 Av (5589) is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Mordechai Banet.

His son Rav Yaakov Avraham testified about his holy practice each morning:

“All his life he did not daven in a *minyan* at home. He went each day, with alacrity to shul. Neither cold nor rain, heat nor sun could stop him, so that everyone should see him and do like he did. He was always one of the first ten people there, and he heard *Birchos Hashachar* from each person so that he could answer amen after them. Then he said the *brachos* himself, in a pleasant tone and with *kavanah*, before the *sha”tz* stood up to daven...”

(*Toldos Reb Mordechai Banet* p. 8)

**Bney Emunim - Get up early to say Birchos Hashachar**



Birchos HaTorah (3)

Torah Lishmah and Yedias Hashem

a covenant with us.

The nature of Torah is that it brings one who engages in it to recognize his Creator and to cleave to Him. Moreover, Chazal say (*Sifri Eikev* 11:22) that this is the purpose of Torah learning. That is why we ask in this *brachah* that we all merit to be “yodei Shemecha”, meaning that we should merit to cleave to the ways of Hashem through Torah learning. (*Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos LeR”Y Ben Yakar*, Vol. II p. 22; *Olas Tamid Chapter 10*)

In the words “*velomdei Torasecha lishmah*” we ask that we merit to learn Torah for the sake of learning, as Chazal say (*Sifri Eikev* 48): “Lest you say that I am learning Torah so that I can be called a wise man, so that I can sit in yeshivah, so that I can live many days in the World to Come, the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 11:13): ‘*Ahavah es Hashem Elokeichem*’ – learn in any case, and the honor will follow.” (*Avudraham*)

There are a number of views as to what ‘learning *lishmah*’ means:

1. Learning in order to fulfill the mitzvah of Hashem, Who commanded us to engage in His Torah (*Rashi Taanis 7a*, beginning with ‘*lishmah*’; *Rambam Teshuvah* 10 5)
2. Learning in order to fulfill all the mitzvos of the Torah (*Sefer Chassidim* 17; *Maggid Mishneh Talmud Torah* 10 3)
3. Learning ‘*l’shem Torah*’ – in order to know the Torah and understand it (*Rosh Nedarim* 62a beginning with ‘*vedaber bahen*’; *Nefesh Hachaim* 4 3)
4. Learning in order to cleave to Hashem (*Tanya Likutei Amarim* 5)

Kabbalas HaTorah – Three Times

The *Gra* says (*Imrei Noam Brachos* 11b): We find three times that [Am] Yisrael accepted the Torah, and we thank Hashem for all three in the *brachah* of *Asher Bachar Banu*:

1. “*Asher bachar banu mikol ha’amim*” – when He said to us on the second day of our camp at the foot of Har Sinai (*Shemos* 19:5): “*Ushemartem es brisi veheyisem Li segulah mikol ha’amim.*” And following that we accepted upon ourselves all the mitzvos of the Torah.
2. “*Venasan lanu es Toraso*” – the written Torah, at Har Sinai.
3. “*Baruch Atah Hashem nosein haTorah*” – the Oral Torah, which was given to us by Moshe Rabbeinu, for which he even forged

“Nosein HaTorah” To This Day

Chazal say (*Tanchuma Sisa* 17) that at the time of *Matan Torah*, the wellsprings of wisdom opened before Moshe, and aside for teaching him the Written and Oral Torah, HaKadosh Baruch Hu also revealed to him at that time all that the sages would be *mechadesh* over the future generations.

From this we learn that the spiritual abundance that descended upon Klal Yisrael during *Matan Torah* never ceased, and to this day, Torah scholars who learn Torah *lishmah* merit to be *mechadesh chiddushim* that are the truth of Torah. Therefore, we complete this *brachah* with the words “*Nosein HaTorah*” – in the present tense, and not in the past tense with which the *brachah* begins, “*asher nasan*”. This is because to this day, the Voice of Hashem that was heard at *Matan Torah* at Har Sinai, continues to bestow illumination upon Torah scholars. (*Toras Chaim Bava Metzia* 85a)

Amen after Birchos HaTorah

The *Pri Megadim* (*Teivas Gomeh Devarim* 32 3; *Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham* 215 6) writes that according to the *Ramban*, who says that *Birchas HaTorah* is a mitzvah *aseh* from the Torah, answering amen after it is likewise a mitzvah *aseh*. The source of the mitzvah of *Birchas HaTorah* is the *passuk* (*Devarim* 8:10): “*Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu godel l’Elokeinu*” and *Rashi* there explains that “before Moshe began *Shiras Ha’azinu* he said to Am Yisrael ‘*Ki Shem Hashem ekra*’ – by reciting *Birchas HaTorah*, before learning it, and you will then ‘*havu godel l’Elokeinu*’ by replying amen after it.” So we find that this *passuk* commands us about both *Birchas HaTorah* and about answering amen after it. Just like *Birchas HaTorah* itself is a mitzvah from the Torah according to the *Ramban*, then answering amen after it is also a mitzvah from the Torah. Hence, anyone who hears *Birchas HaTorah* and does not answer amen after it is negating a mitzvah *aseh d’Oraisa*.

In light of this, the *Pri Megadim* rules that when a person is standing before two others, and one wants to make *Birchas HaTorah*, and the other wants to make another *brachah* whose obligation is *d’Rabbanan*, he must first listen to the one making the *brachah* on the Torah and answer amen after it, because this obligation of amen is from the Torah.

**Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha’olam asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu la’asok with toil bedivrei Torah.**

**Veha’arev** – sweeten Na Hashem Elokeinu es divrei Sorascha befinu ubefiyos [ubefi kol] amcha Bais Yisrael venihiyeh anachnu vetze’etzaeinu – our children [and our children’s children] [vetze’etzaei tze’etzaeinu – and our children’s children] vetze’etzaei kol amcha Bais Yisrael kulanu yodei Shemecha – adhering to Your ways, *velomdei Sorascha lishmah* –for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of Talmud Torah. **Baruch Atah Hashem Hamelamed** – even in the present – **Torah Vamo Yisrael** – by helping them understand it clearly.

**Amen**, it is true that we must thank Hashem for sanctifying us with His mitzvos and commanding us to learn Torah, and helping us understand it, and *halevai*, may it be that we and our offspring should be those who learn Torah *lishmah*.

**Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha’olam asher bachar banu mikol ha’amim venasan lanu es Toraso. Baruch Atah Hashem nosein haTorah** in all the generations, because from the power of *Matan Torah*, a person merits to learn *lishmah*, and to be *mechadesh chiddushim* to this very day.

**Amen** – it is true that we have to thank Hashem for choosing us of all the nations and giving us His Torah.

A Yeshuah at the Income Tax Office

There is something unique about visiting the income tax offices. You walk through the long, winding corridors, from one waiting room to the next, scanning the small signs that let you know which clerk is sitting in which room. While the name may not say much to you, you know that the person in each of those offices is like a king in his domain.

No one visits the Income Tax Authority for leisure; anyone who is there must be there. So it’s not surprising to see that most people there walk around with a crease in their forehead and a perpetually worried or perplexed look in their eyes.

A visit to the Income Tax Authority is no pleasure for the average person. It’s even worse when the person has owned a home-based business for many years, and was compliant enough to avoid the prying eyes of the authorities, until one fine day, representatives of the law knocked at his door and made the most threatening statement: “Audit!”

That’s the story of Reb Asher, a chareidi Jew from Ashkelon who is known among his acquaintance as someone who can be trusted. Over the many years that he has worked as a real estate agent, he’s sold hundreds of apartments in his area, and his base of satisfied customers has grown steadily. Until the tax inspectors showed up...

Reb Asher never considered evading taxes, of course. He was careful to record his income and expenses carefully. But naturally, it is inevitable that there are errors, and over the years, those errors amounted to discrepancies that triggered the suspicion of the tax authorities. And so he found himself with a summons for questioning at the main offices of the Income Tax Authority in Tel Aviv.

The center of the city of Tel Aviv is not a recommended place to visit for a G-d fearing Jew, but there was no choice. After a number of warnings from the ITA, Reb Asher realized that he had to find time in his busy schedule to travel to the city to clear up this matter.

At first, he tried to push off the appointment, but he realized that the quicker he would deal with this issue, which was getting more complicated, the less damage he would incur. So he woke up early one day, and after he davened and learned, he went to the train station in Ashkelon. He presumed that this would be his quickest option, as the Shalom Station in Tel Aviv was very close to the tax authority headquarters.

A day earlier, Reb Asher had made inquiries as to the departure times of the trains. He figured that if he would leave at a certain time, he would arrive about an hour before the offices closed for the morning, and this way, he could finish the job and return home quickly. At the appointed time, he hurried to the station. But an unexpected delay arose, and he arrived just in time to see the trail of exhaust that the train had left behind.

Despite all his advance planning he had missed the train, which mean he would have to wait another hour for the next one – and then wait another few hours in Tel Aviv until the offices opened for their afternoon hours.

He didn’t have much of a choice. He waited for the next train, and, as

expected, he reached the ITA offices five minutes before closing. He dashed breathlessly into the corridor of the department he needed, but when he saw how many people were waiting, he realized that he would have no choice but to return in the afternoon. Disappointed, he turned around and entered the first elevator that opened with the intention of going down to the ground floor. There were a few people in the elevator, one of them a chareidi Jew. The elevator began to descend, and then the man grabbed his sleeve and asked: “Have you davened *Minchah* yet?”

“No,” Reb Asher replied. “It’s just about the first *zman* that we can daven.”

“So please, *tzaddik*, come complete our *minyana*,” the man pleaded, and Reb Asher could not refuse. He followed the man to the shul located on the building’s first floor. Reb Asher davened *Minchah* with great *kavanah*; this was much like a day of judgement for him. After he finished, one of the *mispallelim* banged on the *bimah* and asked: “Please wait one moment and say a chapter of *Tehillim* for my father who is hospitalized in serious condition.”

The *mispallelim*, some of them clearly in a hurry, began to leave, but Reb Asher decided to take action. He quickly walked up to the *amud* and began to recite a chapter of *Tehillim* with whoever was left, for the recovery of that person’s father. Then he recited a fervent *Mi Shebeirach* and everyone answered amen.

When he finished, the *mispallelim* came over and thanked him warmly. He marveled at how Reb Asher had done this for someone he did not even know. After a few polite words, they parted. The man went on his way, and Reb Asher remained to learn in the shul until the offices reopened. At least it was a good place to wait. After two hours of learning, Reb Asher headed back to the now open offices. He walked down the long corridors, and when he reached the right department, he suddenly saw his ‘friend’ from shul.

The man asked why he was visiting the Tax Authority, and when he heard the reason for Reb Asher’s visit, he invited him to come into his office. He spent an hour working on his case, until everything was worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

From moment to moment, it became clear that the man was one of the senior officials at the Tax Authority, and because of the complexity of Reb Asher’s problem, there was no way he could have gotten out of it if not for the clear *Hashgachah pratis* of this meeting between them, which ultimately led to the file being closed.

If that was not enough, the man was so grateful to Reb Asher that he gave him his personal phone number should Reb Asher ever need it. Indeed, a week later, when an unexpected issue arose with his file, Reb Asher called the number and his new friend resolved the issue quickly.

Mishnas Shel Torah Shelach 5779