

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS KI SEITZEI

תש"פ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

An Unwanted Tefillah

"כי תהיין לאיש שתי נשים האחת אהובה והאחת שנואה וילדו לו בנים האהובה והשנואה והיה הבן הבכור לשנואה" (כא טו)

Chazal (Tanchuma 1) learn from the fact that the Torah placed this *parashah* next to the one of the *Eishes Yefas Toar*, that the 'hated' one mentioned in this *parashah* is the same '*eishes yefas toar*' that the *passuk* permitted a person to marry after she converts. The *passuk* is alluding that in the future, the man will come to hate her.

Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz added that this is why it says "and the firstborn will belong to the hated one." Chazal say (Yevamos 64a): "Why were our Avos barren? Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires the *tefillos* of *tzaddikim*." The kosher wife is withheld from giving birth so that she should daven to Hashem for it, while the '*yefas toar*' gives birth without any delay.

Tiferes Yehonasan

Personal Example in Tefillah and Brachos

"כי יהיה לאיש בן סורר ומורה איננו שמע בקול אביו ובקול אמו ויסרו אתו ולא ישמע אליהם" (כא יח)

The Ari Hakadosh (Likutei Torah, Tehillim 65) says: Although HaKadosh Baruch Hu knows our thoughts, we were commanded to utter the words of *tefillah* with our mouth and not to suffice with thinking them in our hearts, so that others will see and will also be aroused to daven. The Ari found an allusion to this from the *passuk* in Tehillim (65:3): "*Shomea tefillah*" – the reason that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to 'hear' the *tefillos* uttered by mouth is because as a result "*adecha kol basar yavo'u*, to you all flesh shall come" to daven as well.

The Rebbe Harav Tzvi Hirsh of Munkacz brought an allusion from this *passuk*: "*Ki yihyeh l'ish ben sorer umoreh*" it is because "he does not hear to the voice of his father and his mother" – the *tefillos* and *brachos* in his parents' house are not recited aloud with *kavanah*. As such, even when they rebuke him – "*veyisru oso*" – "he will not listen to them" because without a role model, the rebuke will not help.

Tiferes Banim

This is an apt place to quote Harav

Answering Amen Wins the War

"כי תצא למלחמה על איביך ונתנו ה' אלקיך בידך ושבת שבי" (כא י')

"Rabi Yosi says: 'the one who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*.'" Rabi Nehorai says: "*Hashamayim* [a term of oath]! This is the case. Know, that in war, the simple soldiers start the war, and the strong ones win it." (*Brachos* 53b). In war, the simple soldiers start the battle, and the elite soldiers follow them towards the end of the battle to complete the victory. Similarly, answering amen at the end of the *brachah* is more important than the *brachah*. Why did they choose to compare the *brachah* and amen to war?

The Maharsha explains: Chazal say (*Pesachim* 118a): "The sustenance of a person is as hard as splitting the sea." Indeed, it would seem that the person's sustenance should come to him with great difficulty and scarcity, because of the curse that Adam Harishon was cursed with (*Bereishis* 3:17): "The soil will be cursed because of you." But if a person is careful to make *brachos* and answer amen according to *halachah*, the *brachos* and the amens become advocates for him, and present merits against the prosecutors who seek to have the curse of Adam Harishon fulfilled. Thus, a person has the merit that HaKadosh Baruch Hu should bestow upon him *parnassah* in abundance and with ease.

This is how the war on the prosecuting angels is fought. With the power of the *brachah*, a war begins against the prosecutors, and the amen answered after it tips the scales in favor, like those elite soldiers who decide the battle.

Maharsha, Vol. I, Nazir 66b

The record keepers presented an allusion from this *passuk*: "כי תצא" is an acronym for "כל יום", each day you should answer 90 amens [the quota that Chazal established (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* Vol. II p. 83 1)] and in this merit you should prevail over the prosecutors: "*Venasano Hashem Elokecha beyadecha*."

Yaakov Meir Shechter, *shlita*, Rosh Yeshivas Shaar Hashamayim, in his introduction to the *sefer Hamevarech Yisbarech*:

"Bring *brachah* into your dwellings and get your sons and daughters used to making the *Birchas Hanehenin* in the beginning and at the end, as well as the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*, in a clear and pleasant language. Habituate all the members of the family to answer amen aloud. It should also be practiced each morning that one of the members of the house should make all the *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, slowly, and the others should answer amen. Through this, *brachah* will come into your home.

It is very good and fitting that parents and teachers should be a role model by themselves, making *brachos* aloud and with *kavanah*. The youth will then learn to do this and will draw down from Above an abundance of life and peace, so that there should be no more wailing heard in our camp, for eternity."

One Hundred Brachos Overturn the "Klalah"

"ולא אבה ה' אלקיך לשמע אל בלעם ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את הקללה לברכה כי אהבך ה' אלקיך" (כג ו')

Harav Moshe Kahana of Gibitsch explained:

The word קללה written backwards makes הלל – an allusion to the mitzvah of *meah brachos*, in which we were commanded to praise Hashem one hundred times each day. The Torah promises: "And Hashem will overturn the *klalah*, the curse for you." If you transform the *klalah* into a *brachah*, by making sure to praise Hashem 100 times a day, then Hashem will act measure for measure, and will turn your *klalah* into a *brachah*.

Dovid Hamelech alludes to this by saying (*Tehillim* 109:17): "*Vaye'ehav klalah vatevoeihu velo chafetz bibrachah vatirchak mimenu*, and he loved a curse, and it came upon him; and he did not desire a blessing, and it distanced itself from him." Someone who loves the *klalah* – written in this form, then *vatevo'ehu*, because if he would want *brachah*, then he would be careful about 100 *brachos*, and thus he would transform the *klalah* into הלל.

Derech Moshe for day 11



בְּרִיךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִהַעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן

Wednesday, 13 Elul is the 17th *yahrtzeit* of Rav Chaim Ben Tzion the son of Rav Aharon Tzvi Marmorstein, *zt"l*, who was a *shomer emunim* all his life: he waiting expectantly to be able to answer amen, especially after *Birchos Hashachar*.

His son, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, implemented the Bney Emunim revolution in his memory and in his name. Through it, tens of thousands of people now start their day with reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

Please dedicate your recital of *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* on 13 Elul to his memory.



Birchos Hashachar, aloud, with *kavanah*, bechavrusa.



Breisa of Eilu Devarim (1)

The Uniqueness of Mitzvos Between Man and a Fellow Man

The *Breisa of Eilu Devarim* lists ten *mitzvos*, and they are unique because one who fulfills them receives reward for the actual mitzvah in the World to Come, and yet, he still gets rewarded for them in this world. The reward in this world is described by the *Breisa* as “*peiroseihem*,” literally, their fruits, because it is compared to fruits of the tree – even after they are eaten, the tree remains intact.

Why are these *mitzvos* unique and why is it specifically for them that we receive a reward in this world as well?

The *Rambam* (*Peirush Hamishnayos Peah* 1 1) explains that the *mitzvos* of the Torah are divided into two types: those between man and Hashem, and those between man and a fellow man. HaKadosh Baruch Hu pays the reward of a person that does *mitzvos* only in the World to Come (*Kiddushin* 39b), but with *mitzvos* *bein adam l'chavero*, a person derives benefit in this world as well. That is because when a person benefits his friend, then the other person treats him the same way. This is what the *Breisa* calls “*peiroseihem b'Olam Haze*.”

The Maharal of Prague explains this differently (*Chiddushei Aggados Shabbos* 127b): One who fulfills a mitzvah between man and Hashem fulfills the Will of Hashem, but he did not provide any benefit for other people. In contrast, when one does a mitzvah *bein adam l'chavero*, aside from fulfilling the Will of Hashem, Who commanded him to do so, he also brings benefit to other people. Therefore, for fulfilling the Will of Hashem, his reward is paid in the World to Come, while for bringing pleasure to people in this world, he gets his reward in the place where he brought benefit – in this world.

Most of the *mitzvos* listed in the *Breisa* are *mitzvos bein adam l'chavero*. Some are written explicitly, and others are included in the mitzvah of *gemilus chassadim*, which is also mentioned in this *Breisa*. (See *Peirush Hamishnayos LaRambam* *ibid.*)

Kibbud Av V'Eim

The Torah commands a person to honor his father and mother and to help them provide for their needs with a kind demeanor (*Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240 4). It even details the reward of a person who merits to fulfill this mitzvah – reward given to him in this world and in the Next World, as it says (*Devarim* 5:15): “Honor your father and mother as Hashem Elokecha commanded you so that you should live long days and so that it should be good for you on the land that Hashem gives you.” *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin* 40a according to *Rashi* there): “*ya'arichun yamecha*, you should live long days” – refers to Olam Haba, and “*yitav lach*, it should be good for you” – is in this world.

Chazal expound on the reward for this mitzvah and say (*Tanchuma Kedoshim* 15): “Come and see the mitzvah of *kibbud av v'eim* and how precious it is to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, that He does not withhold the reward [of one who fulfills this mitzvah], whether he is a *tzaddik* or a *rasha*. How do we know? From *Eisav* the wicked; he honored his father and Hashem rewarded him with so much honor... and if the wicked person gets that for honoring his father...how much more so is the reward for one who honors his father and does other *mitzvos*.”

Rabbeinu Bechaye says on this subject: “The mitzvah of *kibbud av v'eim* is so great, it can be proven, like gold [whose value can be proven], and the creations see with their eyes that it has a reward in this world: either with tranquility and success that Hashem gives to the person in all his actions, or with a long life, which is the regular reward for this mitzvah.” (*Kad Hakemach, Kibbud Av V'Eim*)

Gemilus Chassadim

The Torah commands a person to treat other people with *chesed* and compassion and to be benevolent to them, and we find that many *mitzvos* in the Torah are about these subjects. The concept of “*gemilus chassadim*” is a general term for all kinds of *chesed* and assistance. The well-known statement by Shimon Hatzaddik (*Avos* 1:2) indicates the importance of this mitzvah in this Olam Hama'aseh: “The world stands on three things, on Torah, on *avodah* and on *gemilus chassadim*.”

After the *Breisa* states the obligation to engage in *gemilus chessed* in general, it then details four well known acts of *chessed*: *hachnassas orchim*, visiting the sick, helping a *kallah* get married and *halvayas hameis*, escorting the deceased to their resting place. The *Rambam* (*Eivel* 14 1) writes that the obligation to do these acts of *chessed* is included in the mitzvah of “*v'ahavta le'reiacha kamocha*” (*Vayikra* 19:18) – “all the things that you want others to do to you, you should do to your brethren with Torah and *mitzvos*.”

The mitzvah of *hachnassas orchim* obligates a person to bring passersby into his home, and to give them to eat and drink, and then to escort them on their way out (*Rambam* *ibid* 2). This mitzvah is defined by the *Rambam* (*ibid*): “it is the *chok* that was enacted by Avraham Avinu and it was the way he practiced *chessed*.”

The mitzvah of visiting the sick obligates a person to visit a sick person, take care of his needs and pray for his recovery (*Nedarim* 40a; *Rambam* *ibid*). We can learn about the importance of this mitzvah from the words of Rabi Akiva: “Anyone who does not visit the sick is considered to have shed blood.” (*Nedarim* *ibid*)

With the mitzvah of *hachnassas kallah*, a person must escort a *kallah* to the *chuppah* and make sure to gladden her, and to provide the needs of a poor *kallah* so that she can get married (*Rashi Sukkah* 49b beginning with *hotzoas*, and *Megillah* 29a beginning with *l'hachnassas*). We also find (*Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim* 702) that immediately upon the creation of the world, HaKadosh Baruch Hu engaged in this mitzvah, as it says (*Bereishis* 2:22): “And Hashem Elokim built the rib that He took from the man into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”

In the mitzvah of *halvayas hameis*, a person is obligated to accompany the deceased to his burial. *Gemilus chessed* with the deceased is called “*chessed shel emes*” as Yaakov said to Yosef when he asked him to bring him for burial to Eretz Yisrael (*Bereishis* 47:29): “And you should do with me *chessed shel emes*.” (*Bereishis Rabbah* 96 5)

Hachnassas Kallah Protects Against Halvayas Hameis

When Harav Chaim Kreiswirth became seriously ill, he went to the Kehillos Yaakov to ask for a *brachah* and for advice. He told the Kehillos Yaakov: Each day we say in the *Breisa of Eilu Devarim* the *mitzvos* in the following order: “*Ubikur cholim, vehachnassas kallah, ulevayas hameis*.” Why did *Chazal* not put *bikur cholim* next to *halvayas hameis*, and instead put *hachnassas kallah* in between them?” We can say that *Chazal* want to teach us the power of the mitzvah of *hachnassas kallah* to thwart the disease, so that one should not come, *chalilah*, to “*halvayas hameis*”.

Rav Chaim understood the inference and immediately accepted upon himself to work hard for the mitzvah of *hachnassas kallah*. Indeed, miraculously, a short time later, his disease stopped progressing. From that day until the end of his life, he threw himself into the mitzvah of *hachnassas kallah*, and merited to help build thousands of home in Klal Yisrael. (*Orchos Rabbeinu*, Vol. IV, p. 179)

The Story of Reb Amram Deutsch

This story is also from the collection of Rabbi Yoel Gold, *shlita*, a Rav in Los Angeles, California, who is also a prolific story teller:

I will never forget the day I began serving as the rav of the Bais Naftali shul in Los Angeles. A day earlier, the *gabbaim* had told me that *Shacharis* took place at 6:15, and as part of my job, I was expected to daven at that *minyan*. I arose early. But I got to shul a minute late...The digital clock on the wall at the entrance showed 6:16 when I arrived, but when I walked in, I had the shock of my life. I noticed that most of the elderly members of the community were already seated in their places, wrapped in their *tallis* and *tefillin*, waiting for the Rav so they could start davening.

The thought that flitted through my mind at that second was “Yoel, what is going on here??” Where I had grown up, being a minute late could mean being half an hour early...But I didn't have much time to think. I quickly donned my *tallis* and *tefillin* and began to daven.

After davening, I was in for another shock, when one of the *mispallemim*, who looked to me to be about ninety, came towards me from the back of the shul. He offered his hand in greeting and introduced himself as “Amram Deutsch.” With dignity, he welcomed me warmly and congratulated me on my appointment as Rav. He wished me all the best. Then he said gently, “Rabbi, I noticed that you were late this morning. Dear Rabbi, it really pains me to see people coming late to davening. Please, make the effort to come on time tomorrow.”

I was so embarrassed that I decided on the spot to come the next morning half an hour earlier. Deep inside, I was determined to do everything to come before Reb Amram Deutsch. I had no idea at the time that Reb Amram was the one who opened the shul each morning at five. So when I arrived at a quarter to six the next day, he was already sitting in his place, learning out of his *Mishnayos*, saying *Tehillim* and drinking coffee calmly.

I had no chance of catching up to him...

An entire year passed until I understood Reb Amram's secret – what *tefillah* means to him. It was a Shabbos in the afternoon, when I was already quite friendly with him. We chatted – not for the first time – about his experiences during the Holocaust. And then Reb Amram said to me:

“I was fortunate to escape the valley of death of Auschwitz to a labor camp called Buna. I will never forget the slogan that accompanied me when I

emerged from Auschwitz and when I entered Buna– *Arbeit macht frei*...At night, I had to share a wooden bunk with three prisoners. In the bone chilling Polish winter, we warmed one another with the bit of body heat we could generate.

One night, one of my friends whispered to me something that changed my life: “Amram,” he said, “I'll tell you a secret that even our two bunkmates don't know about me, and I ask that no one but you should know it. Under the barracks there is a little hollow. There's a pair of *tefillin* waiting there for me...I'm going to go down, pretending that I'm going to the latrine. Follow me a few minutes later. You'll have two minutes to put on the *tefillin*, say *Shema Yisrael* and come back to the barracks.

From that day on, for the six months until we were transferred to Bergen-Belsen – to where we could not take the *tefillin* with us – we got up fifteen minutes before everyone. We crawled into the little space under the barracks, put on *tefillin* and said *Shema* and then went to the morning roll call. We finished davening as we marched in the morning to work.

I risked my life with my friend each morning, so that even in the darkness that enveloped us, we could say thank you to the Ribbono Shel Olam and declare our faith in Him. “*Shema Yisrael*...” It was the most wonderful gift I had ever received, and I had it for those unforgettable six months.”

Rabbi Gold continues:

Today, Reb Amram is in the second half of his tenth decade, may he live to be 120. He still opens the shul each morning at five, and from time to time, he even chides me with a smile if I'm a minute or two late... When I observe him putting on *tefillin* on his arm with a number tattoo I cannot help but marvel and hope that our children, the younger generation, should learn the meaning of sacrifice from these special people. I wish they could learn from them to be proud of their Judaism, and to cleave to *mitzvos* like these people do.

When our children look at the remnants of the previous generation, perhaps they will merit to understand what it means to “be a Jew”, to grow with such pure faith in the Ribbono shel Olam, and to take advantage of every moment of life to cleave to Hashem, His Torah and *tefillah*.

Those Jew are for us like a road sign, that despite the tragedy, despite losing everything you had, if you remained a live, that's a sign you had to continue, to daven, thank and hope.