

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



350

PARASHAS HA'AZINU

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The "Shamayim" Should Listen So that the Land Should "Hear"

"האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי" (לב א)

The Munkatcher Rebbe, author of *Darchei Teshuvah*, explained:

The Ari HaKadosh says (*Likutei Torah, Tehillim* 65:3) that although HaKadosh Baruch Hu knows our thoughts, we are commanded to utter the words of *tefillah* with our mouths, and not just to think them in our heart. We do this so that others should see and learn from us how to daven.

This concept is alluded to in this *passuk*: "*Ha'azinu haShamayim*" – even though Above, the thoughts of our hearts are heard, "*v'adaberah*" – I will speak them with my mouth in order that "*vesishma ha'aretz imrei fi*" – those who dwell in the world should hear my *tefillah* and learn from me to daven.

The *Darchei Teshuvah* adds on this *passuk*:

When the community – those who live in '*ha'aretz*' – see that from Above, the *tefillos* of the *tzaddik* are heard and his requests are accepted, then his stature rises in their eyes. As a result, they listen to his words of *mussar* and guidance and accept them with a whole heart. This is what Moshe Rabbeinu asks: "*Ha'azinu haShamayim v'adaberah*" – when Above, my *tefillos* will be listened to, then the people dwelling in the land will listen to '*imrei fi*, the words of my mouth' when I teach them the ways of life.

Tiferes Banim

If "The Land Will Hear" Then the Heavens Will Also Listen

"האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי" (לב א)

The Bais Avraham of Slonim explained:

One who wants his *tefillos* to be heard On High, should make sure "that the land should hear" – that his body on this earth should participate in his *tefillah*, by arousing his heart to delve into and listen to the words of the *tefillah* that are uttered by his mouth.

Bais Avraham

A Brachah Out Loud Is a Perfect Brachah

"האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי" (לב א)

The Rebbe Harav Yechiel Yehoshua of Biala said:

One who wants his *tefillos* to be heard Above should make sure to make *brachos* aloud – "*vesishma ha'aretz imrei fi*" – because only this way will the listeners be able to complete the *brachah* with amen.

Chelkas Yehoshua

May Our Enemies and Prosecutors Disappear – Amen

"כי חלק ה' עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו" (לב ט)

The Rebbe, author of *Shomer Emunim*, wrote:

The *passuk* states "*Yaakov chevel nachalaso*" to teach you that when the descendants of Yaakov are careful to answer amen as one man and one heart, then a 'rope' is weaved from those amens that ties all the prosecuting forces so they cannot negatively affect Am Yisrael. As the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 149:8): "*Le'esor malcheihem bezikim* [*azikim*], to bind their kings with chains", and in *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur we ask: "*masfin* – *bakebel assur*, the Satan is tied with a rope."

The prosecutors seek constantly to disconnect this 'rope' that prevents them from prosecuting, by making Am Yisrael be lax in the mitzvah of answering amen. This is alluded to in the *passuk* (ibid 2:3): "ננתקה את מוסרותימו" [=the rope] which is an acronym for 'amen.' Am Yisrael has to know, however, that if they merit to overcome those forces by being *moser nefesh* to answer amen, they will prevent this *kitrug*, this prosecution from hovering over them.

Shomer Emunim, Maamar Pischu Shearim Ch. 15

Twenty One or Eighty Five

"כי שם ה' אקרא הבו גדל לאלקיני" (לב ג)

From the beginning of *Parashas Ha'azinu* until the Name of Hashem is mentioned in this *passuk* there are twenty one words, which are comprised of eighty five letters. The *Targum Yonasan* writes that Moshe Rabbeinu waited on purpose this length of time before mentioning Hashem's Name.

Harav Aryeh Leib Gordon points something out in his compilation *Tikkun Tefillah* that fits in with the *Targum*: In *Kedushah*, according to *Nusach Ashkenaz* [*Nekadesh es Shimcha...*] there are twenty one words before the Name of Hashem. But they do not have eighty five letters. In contrast, in *Nusach Sefard* [*Nakdishach vena'aritzach...*] there are eight five letters before Hashem's name, but there are more than twenty one words.

Siddur Otzar Hatefillos p. 163

Why Wasn't Moshe's Tefillah Accepted?

"ומת בהר אשר אתה עלה שמה והאסף אל עמיך כאשר מת אהרן אחיך בהר ההר ויאסף אל עמי" (לב נ)

Harav Chaim Vital explained that HaKadosh Baruch Hu explained here the reason why Moshe's many *tefillos* to enter the Land were not accepted. "*Vehe'asef el amecha ka'asher meis Aharon achicha*" – the decree not to enter the land will be fulfilled with you because it was already fulfilled with your brother Aharon. If you would have davened to annul the decree before the passing of Aharon, your *tefillah* would have been accepted. But because all your prayers were offered only after Aharon's passing, it is not worthy that the decree should be fulfilled with Aharon but annulled for you.

Rosh Dovid [Chida] V'eschanan

"כי חלק ה' עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו"

The *Shomer Emunim* (*Pischu Shearim*, Chapter 15) writes:
By answering amen a rope is formed, which is used to tie up the prosecutors and libelers of Am Yisrael. That is why they seek to prevent Klal Yisrael from answering amen; they want to cut off this rope, as it says "ננתקה את מוסרותימו" – whose acronym is amen. When Am Yisrael overcome these efforts and are careful to answer amen, they are guaranteed that they will overcome and prevail over those that seek to do them harm.

Avinu Malkeinu kaleh kol tzar umaftin mei'aleinu.

Mah Tov (2)

Ahavti Me'on Beisecha

In the *passuk* (Tehillim 26:8) "*Hashem ahavti me'on beisecha umekom mishkan Kevodecha*", Dovid Hamelech declares that he does not come to the House of Hashem out of habit, but rather out of his love for the place where Hashem's holy Shechinah dwells (*Malbim* *ibid*). Today, due to our sins, we do not have a Bais Hamikdash, and the Shechinah dwells in the *batei knesses* and *batei medrash*. As Chazal explain (*Megillah* 29a) the *passuk* (*Yechezkel* 11:16): "*V'ehi lahem lemikdash me'at b'aratzos asher ba'u sham*, I have become for them a minor sanctuary in the lands where they have come." "These are the *batei knesses* and *batei midrashos* in Bavel." Therefore, we need to learn from Dovid Hamelech's words and visit these places out of respect and love.

Indeed, in *Maseches Megillah* (29a) Abaye explains this *passuk* with regard to *kedushas bais haknesses* and say: At first, I would learn in my house and pray in the *bais knesses*. But from the time I delved into Dovid Hamelech's words in the *passuk* "*Hashem ahavti me'on beisecha*", I do not learn at home; I do so in the *bais knesses*.

The *Maharsha* (*ibid*) explained the *pesukim* in *Tehillim* (122:3-4): "*Samachti b'omrim li Bais Hashem nelech; omdos hayu ragleinu bisharayich Yerushalayim; Yerushalayim habenyah k'ir shechubrah lah yachdav*" as follows: A person should rejoice when he goes to the *bais knesses* as if he was going to the Bais Hamikdash itself. When his feet stand in the *bais knesses*, he should feel as though he is standing "*bisharayich Yerushalayim*" – in the Bais Hamikdash itself. Because *l'asid lavo*, in "*Yerushalayim habenyah*" all the shuls in the world are destined to join together into one entity and become part of the Bais Hamikdash, may it be built speedily in our day. This teaches us the tremendous holiness of the *bais knesses*, and the preparation that is required before we come there to daven there.

Eshtachaveh, V'echre'ah, Evrechah

The *passuk*, "*V'ani eshtachaveh v'echre'ah evrechah lifnei Hashem osi*" is not stated explicitly in *Tanach*. But those who arranged the *tefillas* worded it this way, in the singular form, based on the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (95:6) that is said in the plural: "*Bo'u nishtachaveh venichre'ah nivrechah lifnei Hashem oseinu*."

This *passuk* contains three terms of submission: "*eshtachaveh, echre'ah, evrechah*." The *Radak* explains (*Tehillim* *ibid*): "*Hishtachavayah*" is complete prostration on the ground including hands and legs. "*Kriah*" is done by bowing the head and body, as we bow in *Shemoneh Esrei*. "*Brichah*" is bending on the knees. However, some explained *hishtachavayah* in this *passuk* to mean only bowing the head. According to this view, the bowing is listed in ascending order, from bowing only of the head until getting down on one's knees. (*Nora Tehillos* *ibid* based on *Ibn Ezra*)

Chazal say (*Tanchumah Ki Savo* 1) that the three terms of prostration in this *passuk* correspond to the three *tefillas* that Chazal established that we recite each day. The *Sfas Emes* (*Ki Savo* 5655) explains that the reason there is a different from of bowing with each *tefillah* is because beginning with rising in the morning, a person is obligated to firmly entrench in himself submission this Creator, so that by the time he recites *Tefillas Arvis*, his submission should be absolute. Bearing this in mind, *hishtachavayah* corresponds to *Shacharis*, and it means bowing only of the head; *kriah*, which corresponds to *Minchah* also includes bowing of the body, and *brichah*, which corresponds to *Arvis*, symbolizes complete submission, as when a person bows down on his knees.

Mah tovu how much good is bestowed from *ohalecha* – the *batei medrash* of the seed of Yaakov, *mishkenosecha* – and the *batei knesses* of Am Yisrael: *V'ani berov chasdecha* that You have done for me, *avo beisecha* – I merit to thank You and daven before you, therefore *eshtachaveh el heichal kodshecha beyirasecha* – with fear and submission: *Hashem ahavti* to come to *ma'on beisecha* – the *bais knesses, umekom mishkan Kevodecha* – the place where Your Shechinah dwells: *V'ani eshtachaveh* by prostrating arms and legs, *v'echre'ah* – by bending my head and body, *evrechah* – and I will bow on my knees *lifnei Hashem osi* – my Creator, Who took me for His Chosen Nation: *V'ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem* that the time of my prayer should be an *eis ratzon*, and then I am guaranteed: *Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b'emes yishecha* – that I should merit a true *yeshuah* that lasts for eternity.

With the words "*lifnei Hashem osi*" we thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu not only for creating us, because all creations in the world are obligated to give this gratitude. We are also thanking Hashem for choosing us from all the nations, and making us His Am Segulah, His Chosen nation. (*Malbim* *ibid*)

Eis Ratzon

In the last *passuk* of this passage (*Tehillim* 69:14): "*V'ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b'emes yishecha*", Dovid Hamelech asks HaKadosh Baruch Hu that this hour, when he stands in *tefillah*, should be an *eis ratzon*, a time of willingness (*Rashi* *ibid*). There are others who explained that Dovid Hamelech said as follows: I am offering a "*tefillasi Lecha Hashem*" at all times and at every hour, with the hope that one of my *tefillas* should be said at an *eis ratzon*, and then I will merit that "*berov chasdecha*", You will not turn to my sins, but rather "*aneini b'emes yishecha*." (*Radak* *ibid*)

Chazal (*Brachos* 8a) say on this *passuk*: "When is an *eis ratzon*? At the time that the *tzibbur* is praying." The *Maharsha* explains (*ibid*) that according to Chazal we can learn from this *passuk* that even one who davens alone [*tefillasi* – in the singular] should daven "at the time when the *tzibbur* is davening" because that is the hour that is an "*eis ratzon*."

The Chida explained the words of Chazal on this *passuk* using a parable: There was a king who made a surprising announcement to his subjects: In honor of his birthday he was willing to fulfill any request brought before him. When they heard this announcement, many subjects came, and one after another, presented their requests. The king did not disappoint them – they received whatever they asked for. Towards the end of the day, the king's closest friend came into the room. The king was happy to see him and asked what his request was. In his wisdom, the friend asked: "I ask that from today on, any request that I make of the king, at any time and at any hour, should be accepted willingly..."

Dovid Hamelech asked for this as well (69:14) when saying "*V'ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon*" – at an auspicious time, when we are davening with the *tzibbur*, I ask that even when I will not be able to daven with the *tzibbur*: "*Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b'emes yishecha*." (*Chomas Anach, Tehillim* *ibid*)

Aneini B'Emes Yishecha

The meaning of the words "*emes yishecha*" is "in Your true *yeshuah*." This can be explained as follows: a *yeshuah* delivered by a human being is limited, and for a set time. That is not the case with a *yeshuah* given by HaKadosh Baruch Hu, which is a true and complete *yeshuah* that lasts forever. (*Metzudas Dovid, ibid*)

The holy Zohar explains (*Vayeilech* 285 2) that when Am Yisrael answers amen with *kavanah*, the gates of Heaven are opened and their *tefillas* are accepted. The president of Bnei Emunim, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, added that these words are alluded to in this *passuk*. When we answer amen to *brachos* we have in mind "*emes*, this *brachah* that the person is making is truth..." (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 124 6). Through "*aneini b'emes*" that we answer amen with *kavanah*, the "*eis ratzon*" is generated, and our *tefillas* are accepted with compassion and willingness.

It should be noted that the *Shu"t Maharshal* (64) said that he skipped this *passuk* because in the *Midrash* it says that the right time to say it is in *Minchah* of Shabbos.

My Father's Machzor

On Yom Kippur 5711, at the height of those dark days of the Stalin regime, Rabbi Moshe Greenberg, who later became one of the leading *askanim* in Chabad, was a prisoner at one of the 're-education' camps in Siberia. He davened the *tefillas* of the holy day with *mesirus nefesh*, and managed to complete them all – except for the *tefillah* of *Kol Nidrei*.

This is what happened, as related by his son, Reb Zusha:

Reb Moshe was then a 21-year old *bachur*, and had been sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment with hard labor in a Soviet labor camp in Siberia. His 'terrible crime' was his attempt to flee from Russia to Eretz Yisrael, where he hoped he could finally observe Torah and *mitzvos* openly.

During his attempt to escape, he was caught by the authorities and given a life sentence. Reb Moshe was forcibly separated from his parents and sisters. His only brother had already been imprisoned in a different camp for a similar 'crime.' Reb Moshe was then sent on a long, arduous journey to the remote camp in the Siberian steppe.

Around one thousand people were incarcerated in camp. They were assigned to hard labor, building a regional electric station. Only about 20 of them were Jews, and they decided to band together to plan how they could celebrate the upcoming Yamim Tovim.

They came to terms with the fact that they did not have a shofar, *Sefer Torah* or even *talleisim*, but they hoped to at least find a *Siddur* so that they could daven the *tefillas* of the holy days.

Reb Moshe cleverly managed to locate someone from 'outside' who was not a prisoner but was employed at the camp as an engineer for various projects. For some reason, Reb Moshe thought that the man might be a Jew, and he waited for an opportune moment to approach him with his request.

"*Efsher kenst mir helfen, perhaps you can help me?*" Reb Moshe whispered in Yiddish cautiously to the man when he felt it was a good moment. At the time, most of Russia's Jews spoke a fluent Yiddish, and Reb Moshe, who noticed a spark light up in the engineer's eye, realized he had not been wrong. So he continued:

"We are about 20 Jews hoping to daven together during the upcoming holidays. Perhaps you can help us by finding a *Machzor* containing the prayers for the month of Tishrei that we can use?" Reb Moshe asked the man. The man was reluctant. They both knew that such an act could put their lives in peril. The engineer hesitated, but ultimately agreed to try. A few days passed. "Are there any developments?" Reb Moshe asked the man when he met him again.

"I have good news and bad news..." the engineer replied. "Although it was very difficult, I was able to find such a *Machzor*

in a relative's home. But when I dared to ask him for it, he became furious that I dared ask him for the only holy book that he possesses."

But Reb Moshe had no intention of giving up. "Try to ask him if he would agree just to lend me the *Machzor* so I can copy what it says, and then I'll return it to him even before Rosh Hashanah," Reb Moshe urged. He had no idea how he would find time to carry out this difficult task.

The idea apparently found favor in the eyes of the owner of the *Machzor*, because the next day, the engineer appeared with a package under his arm. He secretly gave it to Reb Moshe, who immediately got to work. With tremendous *mesirus nefesh*, at the end of each workday, Reb Moshe crawled into a hidden space that he had constructed next to his hut. There, he spent as much time as he could hastily copying the *Machzor*. He worked assiduously until he finished copying the *Machzor* and it was returned to its owner. He had managed to copy over all the *tefillas* of the High Holidays except one, which was missing from the original *Machzor*: *Kol Nidrei*.

The prisoners worked very hard to keep track of the Jewish dates. When Rosh Hashanah arrived, they bribed the guards with cigarettes to allow them to remain the camp to pray together.

With the *Machzor* in hand, Reb Moshe served as the *chazzan*. He recited from the handwritten *Machzor*, and his friends repeated after him. Seven days later, they met again at the onset of Yom Kippur for the *tefillah* of *Kol Nidrei*. But because of their difficult situation, not one of them was able to remember the exact words of the holy *tefillah*, and they had to suffice with saying what each one remembered.

It took seven long years until Reb Moshe was released from the labor camp after Stalin's death. The only object he took with him when he was liberated was the handwritten *Machzor*. He returned to his family, which lived on the outskirts of Moscow. A short time later, he married and made Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael – with the *Machzor*.

Reb Moshe did not often speak of his memories of those difficult years in Siberia. But on the rare occasion that he did, he always pointed to the *Machzor*, and with tears in his eyes, he declared that the words hastily written on whichever paper he could get his hands on indicated the horrible conditions under which it was written. "From then until now," Reb Moshe would say "I never attended *tefillas* as laden with emotion and significance as those in the years of my horrible incarceration."