

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



354

PARASHAS LECHLECHA

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Key to Children Is Tefillah

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

"Leave you astrological calculations that you have seen in the constellations that you are not destined to have a son." (Rashi, Bamidbar Rabbah 44:12)

The Mekubal, **Rabi Yosef Gikatilla** explained:

HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Avraham: Even though according to the constellations and astronomy, you cannot have a child, "כה" *yihyeh zaracha* – indeed, based on the power of nature you cannot have children, "except through the power of the *middah* called כ"ה which is the Gate of *Tefillah*, through which every petitioner can produce his request to change the power of the constellations. And that is what transforms the *Middas Hadin* to *Middas Harachamim*, and brings life in place of death, healing instead of sickness, children in place of barrenness." The secret of *Birchas Kohanim* is also concealed in the *middah* of "כה" as it says (Bamidbar 6:23): "Daber el Aharon...leimor ko sevarchu es Bnei Yisrael." *Shaarei Orah* 1

"Adon Kol Hama'asim"

"ויאמר ה' אלקים כמה אדע כי אירשנה" (טו ח)

Chazal say on this *passuk* (Brachos 7b): "From the day that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created the world, there wasn't a single person who called HaKaodsh Baruch Hu 'Adon' until Avraham Avinu came and called Him 'Adon'."

The *Noda B'Yehudah* explains:

In the early generations, people lived with the mistaken thought that it is not dignified for the Creator of the world to lead this lowly world Himself. Hence, they concluded that He only leads only the Upper Worlds, and handed over leadership of the lower worlds to His servants – namely the constellations and the *mazalos* (see *Drashos Hara'n*, ninth *drush*). Avraham was the first who worked to

Avraham Instilled Amen for Generations

"ויוצא אתו החוצה ויאמר הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים את תוכל לספר אתם ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך; והאמין בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה" (טו ה-ו)

Why specifically is this *emunah* considered a *tzedakah* on Avraham Avinu's part? Would anyone think that it was possible that Avraham would not believe a promise he received directly from Hashem?

Harav Avraham Yosef Kreiswirth, Hy"d, the Rav of Vaunitch, explained:

The words of Hashem, "*Ko yihyeh zaracha*" were not said as a promise, but rather as a *brachah*. Avraham answered amen to this *brachah*, and this was considered a *tzedakah* on his part, because by doing so, he established the mitzvah of answering amen to *brachos* for all the generations of his progeny. This is alluded to in the word "*vehe'emin*" [which is the 'hif'il' form of *dikduk*], meaning that he caused all those who came after him to also be strict about answering amen. HaKadosh Baruch Hu considered this chain of the mitzvah of answering amen for generations as a *tzedakah*.

Bais Avraham

uproot this thought from their hearts, and that is why he called HaKadosh Baruch Hu the Master, the Adon of the world. This is how he taught those in his generation that this world is also led and managed by Hashem Himself, and He supervises it closely Himself every single minute.

In order to imbue this fundamental concept of *emunah* that we inherited from Avraham Avinu into our own hearts, Chazal included in the *brachah* of *Elokai Neshamah* the praise: "*Ribon* [which is 'Adon' in Aramaic, *Onkelos Bereishis* 18:2] *kol hama'asim, Adon kol haneshamos*." This way we will internalize what Avraham Avinu taught his generation – that the same way Hashem is the 'Adon' in the world of *neshamos*, He is also the 'Ribon kol

hama'asim' – Master of every action done in this world.

Tzelach Brachos 7b

"Yishma K-l" – Without a Doubt

"ויאמר לה מלאך ה' הנך הרה וילדת בן וקראת שמו ישמעאל כי שמע ה' אל עניך" (טז יא)

Onkelos explains the words "*Shama Hashem es onyech*" as "*kabil Hashem tzelosach*, Hashem accepted your *tefillah*." If Hagar called her child Yishmael for the past, when her *tefillos* were accepted, she should have called him "Shama-el" and not "Yishmael" – which is in the future tense. Furthermore, where do we see that Hagar prayed?

Harav Avraham Monsonego explained:

Hagar's *tefillah* was not explicitly described in the *passuk* because she did not utter it with her mouth; it was a *tefillah* from the heart. Because the *tefillah* was accepted, the Angel said to her: You can call your son Yishmael because you are guaranteed that Hashem will hear your *tefillah* from today and forever. In fact, we can draw a clear lesson here: If Hashem listened to a *tefillah* that you offered in your heart, He will surely listen to you when you utter your prayer by mouth.

Shiyurei Mitzvah

A Non-Jew's Prayer Is Heard in Distress

"ויאמר לה מלאך ה' הנך הרה וילדת בן וקראת שמו ישמעאל כי שמע ה' אל עניך" (טז יא)

Why did the *passuk* say "*ki shama Hashem el onyech*" and not "*ki ra'ah Hashem es onyech*"?

The **Netziv of Volozhin** explained:

The *tefillah* of a Jew is heard and answered even when he prays for a friend, and he is not in any particular distress. But the nations of the world are only answered if they pray for their own personal trouble. That is what the Angel said to Hagar: "*Ki shama Hashem*" – He heard your *tefillah*, only because He saw "*el onyech*," your distress.

Ha'amek Davar

'אך צדיקים יודו לשמן' (תהלים קמ"ד)

Harav Yaakov Yehoshua Fruman of Lodz explained:

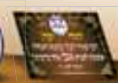
The holy *Zohar* (Tikkunei Zohar Chadash 132 1) explains that the word "*tzedakah*" alludes to the quota of four holy things that a person is obligated to do each day: ש' amens, ד' *Kedushos*, ק' *brachos*, ה' *Chumshei Torah*.

The Torah alludes to this in our *parashah*: "והאמין בה" – Avraham Avinu was careful to answer 90 amens, "*veyachsheveha lo litzedakah*" – and thus he fulfilled the obligation alluded to in the word "*tzedakah*."

Nachalas Yaakov Yehoshua, Parashas Shemos

Dear Yidden!

Being strict about rising to shul each morning to say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* is the key through which you merit to fulfill the *takanah* of Chazal – to answer 90 amens each day (see *Mishnah Berurah* 6 13). Join the tens of thousands of Bnei Emunim who have merited to illuminate the *emunah* in their hearts!



Birchos Hashachar (1)

One Hundred Brachos
Against Plagues

The Gemara says in *Maseches Menachos*: "Tanya, Rabi Meir said: A person must make one hundred brachos each day, as it says (*Devarim* 10:12): 'V'atah Yisrael mah Hashem Elokecha shoel me'imach'" (*Menachos* 43b). Rashi explains (ibid beginning with mah): 'The *passuk* says "מִי" but it should be read "מֵאֵל" or one hundred, meaning "Meah brachos Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach." Hashem is asking you for one hundred brachos a day.

We further find that the *passuk* calls Dovid Hamelech (*Shmuel* II 23:1): "Ne'um Dovid ben Yishai une'um hagever hukam al" – and Chazal explain (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:21): "ע"י" is numerically equivalent to one hundred. What is "ע"י" because in the days of Dovid Hamelech there was a plague where one hundred people died each day. Dovid Hamelech with his *Ruach HaKodesh* established a *takanah* in Am Yisrael that they should make one hundred brachos each day, and in the merit of that *takanah*, the plague stopped.

In order to reach the quota of one hundred brachos each day, the Sanhedrin in that generation instituted a series of *Birchos Hashachar* that we make each day. In these brachos we thank Hashem for the good things He does to us each and every day. These brachos are in addition to the rest of the brachos we are obligated to say, and through them we merit to complete the quota of one hundred brachos that Dovid established (*Prishah, Orach Chaim* 46 16).

The Bach further explains (ibid) that each day, the danger of the plague is renewed, and through keeping the *takanah* of *meah brachos* we preclude it from harming us.

Each Brachah at Its Time

The Gemara explains (*Brachos* 60b) that originally the *takanah* was to recite each of the *Birchos Hashachar* at the moment that we benefit from the particular good thing that the brachah is referring to. For example, one would recite "Asher Nasan Lasechvi" when hearing the sounds of rooster, and "Pokeach Ivrim" when open his eyes, and "Malbish Arumim" when getting dressed. But in our time, when we rise from sleep our hands are not clean, and we therefore make all these brachos at once, before davening (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 46 2).

Hanosen Lasechvi Binah

In the first brachah of *Birchas Hashachar*, we thank Hashem for the most wondrous of creations, the *binah*, the wisdom, which is the basic fundamental of all the good and pleasures in the world.

The concept of the brachah of *Hanosen Lasechvi* is derived from the praise that Ivov offered to HaKadosh Baruch Hu (38:36): "Mi shas batuchos chochmah oh mi nasan lasechvi binah, Who placed wisdom in the inward parts or who gave the rooster understanding." Rashi there explains (ibid): "Lasechvi" is a rooster in the language of the sages. Some say it is the heart which is שכינה, looks, watches and considers the coming events." As such, the Rishonim differ regarding the essence of this brachah:

Some think that in this brachah, we thank for the good that Hashem did with us by giving the rooster, which is called 'sechvi' (see *Rosh Hashanah* 26a), a special ability to discern between the hour when the night ends and the day starts. Through the rooster's call at that time, we can know

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam [asher nasan] hanosein lasechvi - the rooster [and some explain, the heart which is called 'sechvi'] binah to call when dawn breaks, and thus the creations know *lehavchin bein yom ubein laylah*.

Amen – It is true that we must thank Hashem for giving the wisdom to the rooster [and the person's heart] to discern between day and night.

when dawn breaks. (*Avudraham Seder Birchos Hashachar, Rabbeinu Manoach Tefillah* 4 4.) Based on this opinion, anyone who does not hear the call of the rooster does not make this brachah (*Pri Chadash Orach Chaim* 46 1).

During our lives we derive many good things from creatures that were created in our world. The reason we have a special brachah specifically for the call of the rooster is because it teaches us an important concept, and that is: With every mitzvah that is contingent on a certain time, we must make sure to fulfill it according to the time that is customary in the place where we are at that time. This is just like the rooster who issues his call whenever the dawn rises in the place where he is at that time (*Siddur Be'er Chaim* p. 30).

Gratitude for Binah

Alternately, some think that the word 'sechvi' refers to the heart of the person, and we are thanking Hashem that with the wisdom of the heart, a person can discern between day and night. However, it was instituted that we make this brachah when hearing the call of the rooster for two reasons: One, because the rooster also received the wisdom to discern between day and night, and two, there are places that the rooster is called a 'sechvi,' using the same term used for a person's heart. According to this opinion, even someone who did not hear the call of the rooster can make the brachah (*Rosh, Brachos* 9 23).

It would seem fitting that the praise for the greatest gift that we have, the wisdom that Hashem gifted us with, would focus on one of the many details that manifests its power. The ability to discern between daylight and the darkness of night is so simple, that even a simpler creation like a rooster is capable of doing it. If so, why did the sages choose to highlight specifically this aspect in the wording of the brachah?

The Alter of Slabodka says that the reason can be found in the *nusach* of *Birchas Hageshamaim*, brought in the Gemara in *Brachos* (59b): "Modim anachnu Lach al kol tipah vetipah shehoradeta lanu." Although our wisdom is the most remarkable creation of all, because it was formed with unfathomable Divine Wisdom, when we come to thank Hashem for it, it behooves us to remember that it is made up of countless 'tipos', drops of wisdom. We must thank for each and every one of those drops in their own right, just like we have to thank Hashem for every drop of rain that falls. Therefore, we choose this point, that seems to be simple, and mention it specifically in the brachah (*Lehodos Uleshabeach* p. 177).

Discerning Between
Good and Bad

The *Seder Hayom* (*Seder Birchas Hashachar*) writes that this brachah also expresses gratitude for the fact that Hashem put in the hands of man the power of *bechirah*, of choice – to discern between the good, compared to 'day' and the bad, compared to 'night.'

Sefer Divrei Yirmiyahu (*Tefillah* 7 3) adds that for this reason, the brachah of *Asher Nasan Lasechvi* is said right after *Elokai Neshamah* and *Birchas HaTorah*. It teaches us that only through the holy soul that is inside us, and the Torah that guides our lives, will we be able to discern between 'day' – symbolizing bright, good lives, and 'night' – which symbolizes the lives of the evil who walk in the darkness.

A Tefillah Is Never Turned Away

Pinchas K. grew up in Yerushalayim after World War Two in the veteran Batei Ungarin neighborhood. He was an only child of older parents, both survivors of the glorious Hungarian Jewish community.

His devoted parents made every effort to raise their only child to Torah and *Yiras Shamayim*. His father, a *talmid chacham*, learned with him for hours, while his pious mother shed copious tears for her only child, especially when lighting candles on Erev Shabbos.

Pinchas was quite young when, on his way to the *bais medrash*, he caught sight of his friends, who had gotten swept up in the "chalutzim" pioneering spirit that was rampant in those days and snared many of the prime religious youth. In time, the talented child with a brilliant Torah future was drawn after his unruly friends. He spent days and nights in the company, taking part in their 'courageous' activities of all kinds under the auspices of the organizations that fought against the Arabs and their British partners.

His parents noticed the change overcoming their precious son. They tried to do everything possible to bring him back to the right path, but it was too late. Pinchas had already gone quite far in the other direction, and it didn't take long until he came home to inform his parents that he was leaving home. He intended to move to one of the kibbutzim in the Sharon region.

His stunned parents tried to dissuade him. They cried and pleaded with him not to disappoint them and dash their hopes, and to refrain from taking a sure path to spiritual destruction. But the rebellious teen turned a deaf ear to their cries and absconded into the unknown.

Kibbutz life was very difficult for Pinchas, who was overcome with memories of the warm home he had abandoned. Friday nights were especially difficult, as he remembered his father's *zemiro*s and his mother's delicious food. His eyes would flood with tears, and he would retire to his room and wallow in his thoughts. This kept him distant from his friends and prevented him from desecrating Shabbos.

Not long after, Pinchas abandoned the kibbutz and moved to a nearby city, replacing the hard physical work with intensive studies.

Meanwhile, despite cutting himself off almost entirely from his parents, they continued with their efforts to bring him back. His mother even consulted with the Chazon Ish, z"l. After giving her a warm brachah, he instructed her never to stop davening for him, because we know that tears and *tefillos* are never turned away.

Shortly after that, the Chazon Ish passed away, and Pinchas' mother, who saw his words as a living will for her, decided to redouble her efforts in *tefillah*. After the Six Day War, she began to visit the Kosel and Kever Rochel regularly. She harbored the hope that the *passuk*, "Min'i kolech mibechi v'einayich midimah, ki yesh sachar lipuleasech veshavu banim ligyulam" would be fulfilled for her.

Meanwhile, her son grew into a successful lawyer with a large, well-known practice. In his drive to succeed, he all but forgot his elderly parents. He almost completely ignored their repeated appeals and pleas, and rebuffed their efforts to remain in touch with him.

Pinchas married and had two children. He especially loved the younger one, and it was evident from very early on that the child was gifted. Pinchas pinned high hopes that his son would succeed him in his law firm when the time came, and he began teaching him from a very young age.

One day, the phone rang in Pinchas's office. It was his elderly mother, telling him tearfully that his father was very sick and wanted to see him before his passing. Pinchas deliberated whether to come after being estranged for so long, and finally acceded.

He came with his son and daughter to the ICU in the hospital in Yerushalayim. It was the first time his father was seeing his grandchildren, and it was a very emotional moment. The grandfather took the hands of his son and grandson in his frail grip, as if he had never been disconnected from them. With his last vestiges of strength, the grandfather blessed his grandson, and then pulled out from behind his bed an old, faded velvet bag and gave it to his grandson. "These *tefillin* are extremely precious. They were written by a well-known *sofer*, one of the *tzaddikim* of Yerushalayim, Rav Nesanel Tfilinski. I

want to give them to you after my passing, as long as you promise to put them on from when you become bar mitzvah."

Father and son could not resist the older man's tears and promised to fulfill his request. Then the older man turned to his wife and said: "The Chazon Ish promised that *tefillah* does not get turned away, so continue to daven..." Those were his last words. When he finished, he took a cup of water, made a brachah, drank a bit and then closed his eyes forever.

Two months later, Pinchas held a gala bar mitzvah celebration for his son. As befitting his status, it was held in an opulent hall. At the height of the celebration, he presented his son with the *tefillin*, now nestled in a new, fancy *tefillin* case. The boy was very moved by the gift, and asked his father if he could go to shul for the next few days to be able to put them on. The boy's request niggled at his father's mind a bit, because he had never abandoned his dream of seeing his talented son following in his ways. Indeed, within a short time it became evident that his fears had been well founded...

In shul, the young boy became acquainted with one of the *mispallelim*, a young man who he asked to help him put on the *tefillin*. After a short conversation, the young man realized that while the boy was extremely bright, he was ignorant about anything related to Torah and *mitzvos*. He began to teach him a few basic Jewish concepts, and the boy was enthralled.

A short time later, the boy's parents traveled abroad for vacation for a few days, and offered him to join. They were most surprised when he declined, and offered his sister to go instead. He said he wanted to spend the days studying for his matriculation tests. His parents traveled without him – and this was the moment the boy had been waiting for. He called the young man from shul that he was in touch with and asked if he could come to his home for that Shabbos. The *avreich* was very happy to welcome the boy, who then experienced the first real Shabbos of his life. He could not get over the sublime scenes, beginning with *hadlakas neiros* and the davening, to the delicious meals and the spiritual pleasure of the *divrei Torah* and singing.

The light of Shabbos that ran like a thin wick from the grandfather, through his father – who abandoned the path of Torah – was now kindled in the boy's heart, and burst into a burning flame that lit up all the dark recesses of his soul.

It didn't take long for the young boy to approach his father and inform him that he had decided to draw closer to Torah and *mitzvos*. It's hard to describe the shock that the father felt. At first he tried to dissuade his son, describing the rosy future that the legal world held for him, and painting his future as a chareidi in grim shades of black. But the son had apparently inherited his father's stubbornness, and his father had no choice but to capitulate.

The boy began to learn in a yeshiva, investing his many talents in Torah learning, and made great strides. He grew into one of the yeshiva's star students. A few years later, he married into a prestigious family and established a beautiful home.

Now it was the father's turn to visit his son's house, with his wife and older daughter. Many years had passed since he'd experienced a genuine Jewish Shabbos, and the scenes awakened old memories from his childhood home. They infused him with renewed spirit and galvanized him to do complete *teshuvah*.

Pinchas deeply regretted that his elderly mother had already left this world and did not live to see her *tefillin* answered. He could not forget the scene in his father's hospital room, when he turned to his mother and told her his final words: "The Chazon Ish promised that *tefillah* does not get turned away, so continue to daven..."

When Shabbos ended, he asked his son to come with him to his parents' gravesites on Har Hamenuchos. With tears running down his cheeks, he said in a clear voice, "My dear father and mother, I ask forgiveness for the tremendous pain I caused you till the end of your lives. But know that your *tefillin* for me have brought me, at least at this point, to return to the light of Torah that you gave me as a child, and to be a father to a son and grandfather to grandchildren who follow the path of Torah."

Shabbos Supplement Vayakhel 5779