

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

"The Voice of Yaakov" - With the Mouth and the Heart

"הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו" (כז כב)

Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz explains:

Eisav drew all his strength from the fact that he was scrupulous about the mitzvah of honoring his father. But the Torah testifies that he only did this as lip service, as it says (ibid 25:28): "And Yitzchak loved Eisav *ki tzayid be'fiv*" – in his mouth but not in his heart. It behooves us to learn from this that if we daven properly, with the right *kavanah* in our hearts, then our merits will overpower the merit of Eisav who honored his father with his mouth but not with his heart. By doing so, we will be spared from his descendants who seek to annihilate us. But if we say our *tefillah* only as lip service, without *kavanah* of the heart, how will we be able to overpower the merit of Eisav if we are doing the same thing?!

That is what this *passuk* alludes to: When "the voice is the voice of Yaakov" – a 'voice' without *kavanah*, then "the hands are the hands of Eisav." But when the *kavanah* of the heart is added, then the hands of Eisav cannot control Am Yisrael.

Ye'aros Dvash, Vol. I, Drush 3

Veyiten Lecha on Motzaei Shabbos

"ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים ומשמני הארץ ורב דגן ותירש" (כז כח)

In many communities it is customary to recite a series of *pesukei brachah* on Motzaei Shabbos that each begin with the *passuk* "Veyiten Lecha..." This custom is already mentioned in the *Zohar Hakadosh (Hakdamas Hazohar, 14 2)*. There are various reasons for this practice cited in the sources:

1. The *Shibbolei Haleket* says that it was customary to say these *pesukim* as a "*siman tov*, a good sign because it is the beginning of the week."
2. The *Levush* writes that these *pesukim* are said in order to extend the *tefillah* on

Yaakov Grasped Onto a Mitzvah That People Are Lax About

"וידו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב" (כה כו)

The *Kli Yakar* writes:

"This was a sign that in the future, Eisav would scorn the firstborn status as something that a person grinds with his heel and mocks. And Yaakov will grasp onto that same 'heel' – the same thing that Eisav 'grinds with his heel' Yaakov will grasp onto. The same is with all the easy *mitzvos* that people grind with their heel – meaning that they are lax about...Yaakov will grasp onto those, and will fulfill them."

Furthermore, the **Rema MiPano** explains the connection between Yaakov, whose *middah* was *emes*, and answering amen, which is also one of the *mitzvos* that people are lax about: יעקב (written with the *vav*) is numerically equivalent to *amen v'amen* [a phrase used a few times in *Tehillim*], while יעקב [without the *vav*] is numerically equivalent to twice amen.

Asarah Ma'amaros, Chikur Din 2 15

Motzaei Shabbos, because the Gehinnom rests on Shabbos and the evil are not returned to it until Am Yisrael finishes davening on Motzaei Shabbos.

3. Harav Yechiel Meir of Gustinin explained that at the time of the transition between Shabbos and weekday, the *yetzer hara* tries to overpower a person and take control. Because we need a special *brachah* in order to prevail over him, it was instituted to recite the *brachos* of "Veyiten Lecha."

4. The *Likutei Mahari"ch* explains this according to the words of Chazal (*Shabbos* 119b): "Two ministering angels accompany a person home on Friday night from shul. One is good and one is bad..." The *Magen Avraham* explains (262 1, see *Machatzis Hashekel* ibid) that these angels remain with the person until Motzaei Shabbos. Therefore, as Yaakov said

to the angel that he struggled with (*Bereishis* 32:27): "I will not let you go unless you bless me," so, too, before the bad angel departs, we say *pesukim* of *brachah* so that he should affirm them and even bless us.

Shibbolei Haleket, Shabbos 129; Levush Orach Chaim 295 1; Marom Hari"m p. 8; Likutei Mahari"ch, Tefillas Arvis Motzaei Shabbos

Eisav Arrived After the Brachos

"ויהי כאשר כלה יצחק לברך את יעקב והיה אך יצא יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו ועשו אחיו בא מצידו" (כז ל)

While the Rebbe the **Mekor Baruch** of Seretz Vizhnitz was serving as Rav of the city of Seret, he would daven each Shabbos morning at a different shul in the city.

One Shabbos, when he entered the shul he had selected that week, he saw that for some reason, they had begun to daven earlier than the original time, without informing him. When he arrived, they had already recited *Birchos Hashachar*. To the consternation of the *mispallelim*, the Rebbe left right away, intending to go daven at a different shul. The *gabbaim* were upset, and asked the Rebbe that once he had already walked all the way to them, to please remain and daven with them. But the Rebbe firmly declined, and as he left the shul he remarked with a smile, "I am not Eisav..."

When he saw the surprise on their faces, he explained succinctly: "Eisav came after the *brachos*..." And he went on his way.

Another time, the **Mekor Baruch** came into a shul and saw that there was a sign noting the time for *Birchos Hashachar*, followed by the time for *Hodu*. This appeared to make it possible for anyone who missed *brachos* to know what time he could come to still make it for *Hodu*. The Rebbe was displeased with this, and remarked on a similar note: "One should arrive to *tefillah betzibbur* from *Birchos Hashachar*. That is what was customary in all the earlier generations. Only Eisav came after the *brachos*..."

Noam Habrachah p. 84; 177

Ubesifsei Tzaddik Tisbarach

Thursday, 10 Kislev, marks 100 years since the passing of the Sifsei Tzaddik of Piltz, zy" a. In a *sefer* about his life, scheduled for release in the near future, (in the chapter "Vehechinu es Asher Heviu") there is a reliable testimony of his adherence to the practice of answering amen after *Birchos Hashachar* each day: "The Sifsei Tzaddik was *makpid* to recite *Birchos Hashachar* standing, out loud, in front of another person who listened and answered amen to each *brachah*. All those who davened in his *minyán* had to stand before him and make the *brachah* aloud, and Rabbeinu would answer amen with great awe."



The Brachah of Malbish Arumim

From Pokeach Ivrim to Malbish Arumim

After Adam and Chava ate from the *eitz hadaas*, the *passuk* states (*Bereishis* 3:7): “The eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked. They sewed together fig leaves and made for themselves loincloths.” Therefore, after thanking Hashem in the *brachah* of *Pokeach Ivrim* for the opening of the eyes, which led to the realization of the need for clothing, we then thank Him for the clothing that He has given us with this *brachah* (*Peirush Siddur Hatefillah L’Rokeach* p. 12).

To explain the *passuk* (*Devarim* 13:5): “*Acharei Hashem Elokeichem telechu*,” *Chazal* cites the *Gemara* (*Sotah* 14a): “Follow the *middos* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu – just like He is a *Malbish Arumim* as it says (*Bereishis* 3:21): ‘And Hashem Elokim made for Adam and his wife leather coats and He clothed them,’ you should also dress those who are unclad.” These words of *Chazal* are the basis upon which they instituted that we bless Hashem each morning for being a ‘*Malbish Arumim*’ (*Avudraham Seder Hashkamas Haboker Ubirchos Hashachar*).

The Favor That We Thank for in This Brachah

In this *brachah*, we thank HaKadosh Baruch Hu for instilling within us the wisdom to prepare clothing for ourselves (*Rabbeinu Manoach Tefillah* 7 4). We also thank for the fact that we are able to derive benefit and pleasure from our clothes, unlike Dovid Hamelech, who did not enjoy his clothes at the end of his life. The *passuk* states (*Melachim* I 1:1): “And King Dovid was old in his days, and they covered him with clothes and he did not get warm” (*Siddur Ohr Hachamah*, p. 17).

The *Olas Tamid* (Chapter 9) writes in the explanation for this *brachah*: “*Malbish Arumim* is gratitude to Hashem for the clothes that He provides for a person. And you should feel on an individual level how Hashem provided for you all the garments that you need. In the winter, give thanks to Him specifically for the warm clothes and a thick outer garment that He provides for you.”

Aside for the garment’s purpose in keeping one warm and modest, another benefit is that it contributes to a person’s dignity and honor. We find that Rabi Yochanan called his clothing “*mechabdosai*”, those that honor me (*Chulin* 94a), because the garment dignifies the wearer. Likewise, we find that *Chazal* obligated us to wear more respectable clothing on Shabbos than during the week as a way of honoring Shabbos (*Shabbos* 113a). The *Olas Tamid* writes (*ibid*) that on Shabbos and Yom Tov one should have in mind when saying this *brachah* to thank Hashem for giving us the possibility of designating special clothing for Shabbos and Yom Tov.

We can also thank Hashem in this *brachah* for having a sufficient variety of clothing to be able to change, and that we do not need to be like the members of Reb Yehuda Bar Ila’i’s generation, about which the *Gemara* relates (*Sanhedrin* 20a) that they could not buy themselves an outer garment to go out in public with,

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha’olam Malbish Arumim – that You provided our clothing for us.

Amen – It is true that we must thank Hashem for providing us with our clothing.

so six of them purchased one garment together and used it each for a set time (*Nefesh Shimshon, Siddur Hatefillah*, p. 121)

A Brachah for Spiritual Clothing

Another *kavanah* for this *brachah* is brought down in the name of the Ari Hakadosh, (*Shaar Hakavanos Drushei Birchos Hashachar*): Sinning causes the garment of holiness to be stripped from the soul of the sinner, and it is replaced with impure cladding. To what extent this occurs depends on the level of the sin. With a serious transgression, the entire spiritual cladding is shed, while with a minor sin, it will only be weakened but not entirely removed.

The two *brachos* of *Malbish Arumim* and *Hanosein Layae’if Koach* were instituted to correspond to these two levels. Every person entrusts his soul at night to his Creator: The one whose spiritual garments have been completely stripped is given a new garment for his soul in the morning. Therefore, he recites *Malbish Arumim*. Someone whose spiritual garments have only weakened needs to strengthen his spiritual clothing and that is why he says “*Hanosein Layae’if koach*”.

The author of *Seder Hayom* (*Seder Birchos Hashachar*) explains that we thank Hashem in this *brachah* for our spiritual garments, and he writes: “And He dressed those that were naked to dress us in *bigdei yesha*, the faith in His Torah, and may it be that we never deviate from our *emunah* all our lives and He should remove from us the soiled garments – bad thoughts or difficult musings, and we should follow Him with pleasant and clean clothes so that Hashem should not distance us from Him.”

Malbish or Hamalbish

The Acharonim differ on the wording of this *brachah*:

The *Sdei Chemed* (*Pe’as Hasadeh Clalim Maareches Habayis*, 37) writes that one should recite “*Hamalbish arumim*” – with the *hey* at the beginning. He bases his words on the *Tosafos* (*Brachos* 38b, beginning with ‘*vehilchesa*’) in the name of the *Yerushalmi* that the reason it was instituted to say “*Hamotzi lechem...*” and not “*Motzi lechem...*” is so that the one making the *brachah* should not swallow the “*mem*” at the end of the word “*ha’olam*” with the “*mem*” that begins the word after it “*motzi*.” Doing so would make them sound like one word: “*Ha’olamotzi*.” In this *brachah* as well, we must say “*Hamalbish Arumim*” so that the letters should not get swallowed together and it won’t sound like we are saying “*ha’olamalbish*.”

But the *Shu”t She’ilas Yaakov* (Vol. 1, 98, 13) writes that one should not be concerned about swallowing the letters. He notes that in the *brachah* of *Hamotzi* referred to by the *Yerushalmi* it happens because a person is anxious to begin eating the bread so he might hurry and then combine the two words. But in *Birchos Hashachar* it should not be concerned that he will swallow letters, and therefore, it is correct to make the *brachah* as it appears in the *siddurim*, “*Malbish Arumim*.”

Minchah in the Sunshine State – Before Sunset

The state of Florida in general, and the city of Miami in particular, are a very popular vacation destination for American Jews during the cold winter months. The freezing temperatures in the northeast, where most frum Jews live in America, drives many of them – especially the older ones – to migrate south, to the state of Florida, about a two-hour flight from New York. There, the winter climate is warm and dry, and people can spend a pleasant winter in good health. It is not for naught that Florida is known as the “Sunshine State.”

This story contains an important lesson about the special *siyata diShmaya* experienced by someone who is careful to daven on time. It took place a few years ago, and was related by Rabbi Dovid Shlomo Shaffer of Yerushalayim:

“My father, Reb Shaul Shaffer, *zt”l*, was very careful to daven on time. Wherever he went, he was strict about davening with a *minyan*, on time. This was even the case when he had to travel to Miami for my sister’s wedding.

Florida is home to many frum Jews, and therefore, although the wedding was scheduled to take place close to the *shkiyah*, sunset, when my father entered the shul he was surprised to find it empty of *mispallelim*. He sent me to ask the Rav when *Minchah* would take place, and the Rav replied that it was too early and that I should try to come back about half an hour later, when the first *Minchah minyanim* would begin.

When my father heard this, he was stunned. “After *shkiyah*?” he asked. “How can you daven *Minchah* after *shkiyah*!?”

But the Rav replied that this was the practice there. “Here we hold *shkiyah* is as per *Rabbeinu Tam*, which is much later than the regular *shkiyah*.”

My father asked if there was anywhere else in the area where they davened *Minchah* before the *shkiyah*, but he was told that because the people in the area return late from work, they were used to davening *Minchah* as late as possible. That is how the practice evolved. There were no *Minchah minyanim* before *shkiyah* in the entire area where we were.

My father had nothing to say. What could he, a passing visitor, tell the local Rav?! He certainly could do nothing to change an existing custom no matter what he thought of it.

Still, my father did not even consider giving up his regular practice. He asked the Rav if it would bother him if he organized an earlier *minyan* for *Minchah* at the shul. The Rav replied that he was more than welcome to organize a *minyan* whenever he wanted. “I don’t think you have a chance of finding a *minyan*...but if you have nine people, I’ll gladly join you as the tenth.”

The minutes ticked by, and besides the Rav, myself and my father, no one else was in the shul. A short time before *shkiyah*, my father said: “Let’s go out to the street, and we’ll stand there and call ‘*Minchah!* *Minchah!*’ maybe we’ll manage to get a *minyan* together.”

I thought he was being pretty

unreasonable. “Abba, this is not Meah Shearim or Bais Yisrael. This is a resort area, and most of the people here are not even Jewish. There’s no chance anyone will pay attention to our calls. At most, they’ll look at us with pity because they’ll think we’re crazy...”

But my father was not cowed. “We have the obligation of *hishtadlus*, to try, not necessarily to achieve the result!” he declared. His eyes burned with the fire of *emunah*. “We will do exactly what Basya bas Pharaoh did. When she saw that the *teivah* was too far out of her reach, she still stuck out her hand and HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed a miracle and extended her hand so that it reached the *teivah*. We will do the same – we will stretch out our hand” and HaKadosh Bruch Hu will do as He sees fit.”

We went down the stairs, as the Rabbi followed us with his compassionate gaze. We left the building and walked to the nearest intersection. We were both dressed like Yidden from Eretz Yisrael, and we definitely stood out in our colorful surroundings. We stood on the corner and began to call, “*Minchah! Minchah!*” It was growing darker and we’d almost resigned ourselves to the fact that Hashem wanted us to daven after the *shkiyah*. And then, at the last minute, when we were about to turn back, a van suddenly screeched to a halt in front of us.

Someone inside stuck his head out and asked: “Where can we daven *Minchah* here?”

“How many are you?” I asked, not even trying to conceal my excitement.

“Seven!”

“Seven people,” I repeated hollowly, as I was in shock. Seven people, myself and my father made nine, and the Rav promised to be the tenth.

“We have a *minyan*!” I told my father. I urged the driver to park and ushered our seven ‘angels’ sent from Above into the shul. As we entered, we told the Rav we’d gotten a *minyan*. He could not conceal his surprise: “*Minchah* in Florida before *shkiyah* – unbelievable!” And he joined us, as promised.

In the interim, four of my brothers-in-law suddenly turned up and joined us, so we were fourteen people who davened *Minchah* before the *shkiyah*.

We davened with the great joy of having merited to be able to keep our practices even so far from home. After davening, we asked the passengers of the van how they had turned up here suddenly. It turned out that they had come to Florida for the *yahrtzeit* of a grandmother who is buried there. They were on the way back to the airport and had assumed they would daven there, but when they saw us they decided to join us.

So we merited a tremendous revelation of *Hashgachah pratis* to be able to daven on time. We saw with our own eyes how one who is careful about *tefillah* on time, at all costs, merits special *siyata diShmaya*. We also saw how, with a bit of effort, one who has *bitachon* can merit special *siyata diShmaya*.

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