

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



364

PARASHAS SHEMOS

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

One Scream Is Better Than a Thousand Sighs

"ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבדה; וישמע אלקים את נאקתם" (ב כג-כד)

The **Ohr Hachaim** explains the reason why the words "*min ha'avodah*" is repeated twice:

The Torah stresses that despite the fact that Am Yisrael's sighing was "*min ha'avodah*", from the work and pain of their enslavement, and not an organized *tefillah* to Hashem, still it was accepted willingly, as we see with the words "*Vata'al shavasam el ha'Elokim*."

Harav Eliezer Yitzchak Fried, one of the *roshei yeshivah* of Volozhin, explained the reason why in *Shemoneh Esrei* we ask simply "*shema koleinu*", and we don't detail "*shema tefloseinu ubakashaseinu*". This is because it is comparable to a father who hears his son's cries; even if they are not directed to him, surely he will not stand by. Rather, he will hurry towards him to find out the reason for his screams. Likewise, we ask our Father in heaven: Even when our cries burst forth from the depths of our troubles and are not directed specifically towards You, please, "*shema koleinu*" – listen to the sound of our cries "*kerachem av al banim*" and spare us. In contrast, **Rabi Azariah Figu** learns from this *passuk* the opposite lesson:

As long as "*vayei'anchu Bnei Yisrael min ha'avodah*" – their cries were not answered, but the minute "*vayizaku vata'al shavasam el ha'Elokim*" – when one cry was directed to Hashem, this was more effective than many sighs emitted as a result of "*min ha'avodah*" – and immediately "*vayishma Elokim es na'akam*... Hashem heard their cries."

Ohr Hachaim; Binah L'Itim Drush 62; Nitei Eitan [Seventh] p. 18

At Which Point Does a Child Merit Olam Haba?

"ויאמר משה אסרה נא ואראה את המראה הגדל הזה מדוע לא יבער הסנה" (ג)

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 110b) brings a few opinions of when a child merits a life of *Olam Haba*, among them: Rabi Meir says from when he answers amen, and Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says from when he receives a *bris milah*.

An allusion to this can be found in the *passuk* here: "Why does the bush not burn" – what merit does a person have to merit a life of eternity? In the merit of answering amen – which is the acronym of משה אסרה נא and in the merit of the mitzvah of *milah* – whose acronym is מדוע לא יבער הסנה.

Chachima B'remiza p. 85

A Brachah Established on a Brachah

"ויאמר אל תקרב הלם של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קדש הוא" (ה)

Harav Moshe Chagiz writes that besides the basic benefit of shoes, which make it possible for a person to leave his house and attend to his needs, there is another special advantage to them. They provide a barrier between a person's feet and the ground, which was cursed with the sin of Adam Harishon, as it says (*Bereishis* 6:17): "Cursed is the land for you." Therefore, when Moshe stood on "*Admas Kodesh*", which was not included in the curse, HaKadosh Baruch Hu instructed him, "Remove your shoes from your feet."

Based on these words, the Rebbe **Harav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov** explained the reason that *Chazal* instituted that in *Birchos*

Hashachar (*Brachos* 60b) we make a blessing for the shoes that are on our feet words "*she'asah li kol tzorki*" – even though this language seems to sound more like a general *brachah* for "all our needs."

According to Rav Chagiz, it can be reconciled that indeed, this is "all the needs" of a person – to distance himself from curse and cleave to blessing. So we find that by donning shoes through which a person distances himself from sin, it is as if all his needs have been taken care of.

Mishnas Chachamim 221; Agra D'Pirka 304

"Remove Your Shoes" So that Your Hands Do Not Become Impure

"ויאמר אל תקרב הלם של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קדש הוא" (ה)

We learn in *Maseches Sotah* (40a) that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai instituted that the Kohanim remove their shoes before going up to bless the nation. Consequently, the *Be'er Heitev* rules (*Orach Chaim* 128 6) that the Kohanim who have washed their hands before going up to *duchen* have to make sure to take off their shoes without touching them, because if not, they will need to wash their hands again.

Harav Reuven Margulies cited an allusion to this *halachah* from this *passuk*:

Usually, the Torah calls the act of removing shoes "*chalitzah*," as the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 25:6): "*Vechaltzah na'alo*." But here, HaKadosh Baruch Hu used the term "*shal*", meaning toss your "shoes from your feet" without touching them, so that you should not have to wash your hands in order to speak to Me.

Nefesh Chaya 128 3

"Al Timna Tov Mi'bealav"



"The *passuk* says (*Mishlei* 3:27) "*al timna tov mibe'alav behiyos le'el yadecha la'asos*," do not withhold good from the one who needs it when you have power in your hand to do it. One must be very careful to recite *brachos* aloud. If there are people who one knows want to answer amen, he should not withhold this good from them. He will have a greater benefit from it, because the *zechus* is greater for the giver... And from the one making the *brachah* and the one answering, Hashem's Name will be praised and they will be blessed with abundant blessing."

Pele Yoetz, Amen

Bnei Emunim: Complete every *brachah* with amen.



The Brachah of Hanosein Laya'ef Koach

Gratitude for Refreshed Strength

The *brachah* of *Hanosein Laya'ef Koach* is not mentioned in the order of *Birchos Hashachar* brought down in the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 60b). It was instituted after the Talmud was sealed, by the Gaonim, in gratitude for the renewal of strength that a person feels each morning after sleeping. It is based on the words of the *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 40:29): "*Nosein laya'ef koach v'ein onim atzmah yirbeh*, Who gives the tired strength, and to him who has no strength, He increases strength." The reason that the Gaonim established it at that point, after the Talmud was closed, is because they saw that a fatigue and weakness had descended on the world, and they felt it was appropriate to institute a special *brachah* about the strength that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives us to overcome this fatigue. (*Seder Hayom*, *Seder Birchos Hashachar*)

The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 46) cites with this *brachah* the words of the *Midrash* (*Tehillim* 25:2) on the *passuk* (*Eichah* 3:23): "*Chadashim labekarim rabbah emunasecha*, they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." Sometimes, a human being gives something to his friend for safekeeping and the friend returns it heavily used and broken. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepts the person's soul each night when it is tired, and He returns it new and calm. The greater the burden a person carries on his shoulders, the greater his gratitude should be when he rises from sleep. Aside for his tiredness from the day before being lifted, he is also given new strength to tackle the toil of his day. (*Siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham* p. 54)

In this *brachah*, we do not only thank Hashem for the renewal of energy in our body, but also for the renewal of strength for our soul. At night, before we go to sleep, it is not only the body that is tired from the toil of the day; the soul is weary as well. When we arise from sleep, not only do our physical strengths get replenished and refreshed, our nightly rest also gives strength to our soul, so that we can arise each morning and fulfill our tasks. (*Sifsei Chaim* – *Rinas Chaim* p. 60)

A Brachah Not Mentioned in Chazal

Some *Rishonim* are of the opinion that one should not make this *brachah*, because it is not in our power to add *brachos* after the Talmud was sealed. (See *Sefer Ha'agur*, *Brachos* 87, in the name of a number of *Rishonim*; the *Rambam* did not include it in his order of *brachos*, either; likewise, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules this way in *Orach Chaim* 46:6.)

However, some *Rishonim* included this *brachah* in the order of *Birchos Hashachar* (see *Semag* 27) and that seems to be the opinion of *Rashi*, who writes (*Sefer Hapardes* 5): "One should not worry about adding *brachos*, as it only states not to subtract, but to add we have permission to do, and to make a blessing when he feels gratitude for something." The *Rema* rules likewise (*ibid*). The *Bach* (*ibid* beginning with *od bracha achas*) also raises the possibility that this *brachah* is not instituted by the early sages, but rather it was copied in their *siddur* according to the edition of the *Gemara* that they had before them.

Today, the custom among the *Bnei Sephard* is that it is recited with Hashem's Name, in

Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam hanosein laya'ef koach – for giving our souls, tired from the day before, back to our body in a calm, refreshed state for the toil of the day.

Amen – It is true that we must thank Hashem for refreshing the strength of a person each day when he arises from sleep.

accordance with the *Arizal* (*Pri Eitz Chaim*, *Shaar Hatefillah* 2). As the *Chida* writes (*Tov Ayin* 7, beginning with *'umita'am*): "It has spread in a few communities to say the *brachah* of *Hanosein Laya'ef Koach* even though it is a *brachah* that is new, and the *Shulchan Aruch* rejects it. Because the *Arizal* wrote that it should be said, and explained its secret, it is worthy to do so, because surely if Maran would have known of the greatness of the *Arizal* who said to say it, he would have said so as well."

Additional Meanings of This Brachah

The *Targum Yonasan* explains the *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 40:29): "*Nosein laya'ef koach*" – to mean that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives wisdom to the *tzaddikim* who thirst for *divrei Torah*, as it says (*Tehillim* 63:4): "*Tzumah Lecha nafshi, kamah Lecha besari b'erez tziyah v'ayef bli mayim*." Based on this *Rav Chaim Palaji* explained that in this *brachah* we thank Hashem for the strength that He gives us to engage in *Torah* despite the burdens of the *galus*. (*Yafeh Lalev*, *Kuntres Acharon Orach Chaim* 46:9)

The *Olas Tamid* (9) writes: "He should also have in mind with this to give gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that often, a person feels weakness and fatigue, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives him strength and helps him do many things that he needs very much, both physical and spiritual, and he sees clearly how Hashem treats him beyond the course of nature."

The *Seder Hayom* further writes (*ibid*) that the meaning of the *brachah* also has a *tefillah* for the future – "that He should give us strength and wherewithal to engage in *Torah* and in the *mitzvos* properly and we should not refrain from doing all that we do with our hand."

The Placement of the Brachah of Hanosein Laya'ef Koach

The *Shaarei Teshuvah* (*Orach Chaim* 46:6) writes that according to *sod* one must take care to say this *brachah* after the *brachah* of *Malbish Arumim*. That is how it appears in the *Siddur Ha'Ari*. But the accepted practice is to say it before the *brachah* of *Hama'avir Sheinah*. The *Siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham* (p. 57), explains that because the *brachah* is not mentioned in the Talmud, therefore it is said after all the short *brachos*, and before *Hama'avir Sheinah*, which is a long *brachah*, in order to differentiate between the *brachos* mentioned in the Talmud and this one, instituted after the sealing of the Talmud.

A *Rav* in Poland once came to the Rebbe the *Yismach Yisrael* of Alexander. He told the Rebbe that despite the fact that he was weak, he still prepared extensively for davening, and because he was strict not to eat anything before davening, he did not eat until he finished davening – at about midday. When the Rebbe told him he had to take care of his health, the *Rav* replied, "I make the *brachah* of *Hanosein Laya'ef Koach* each morning, and I draw strength from that."

"If you appreciate the power of this *brachah* to such an extent," the Rebbe replied with veiled rebuke, "then please, daven earlier, so that you should be infused with strength and energy already early in the morning..." (*Agudas Eizov* p. 88)

A Tefillah That Separated Two Worlds

If you meet Harav Michael S., *shlita*, today, you wouldn't believe that behind this modest personality is an extraordinary life story that is a blend of the past and the present.

Rav Michael S. has spent many years being *mesirus nefesh* to do outreach to those who have gone astray. With *siyata diShmaya* and his captivating personality, he has been very successful. Hundreds of *Torah*-faithful homes in *Klal Yisrael* have been established because of his work. Many young people who did not know what *Yiddishkeit* was until they matured have become the heads of large families, and many of them are sitting and learning and are scrupulous about *mitzvos* in his merit.

In a sense, the stories of his mentees are also his own story.

Reb Michael was born in Morocco, and after he made *aliyah* at the age of seven, he settled with his family in a city in northern Israel. The family was traditional, but like many families of its kind, it didn't enter their minds to send their son to a school where he would receive a *Torah* education. So the seven year old boy found himself growing up detached from any significant *Torah* experience. When he was in sixth grade, two of the directors of *Pe'ilim* in those days landed like angels in his classroom. They launched an effort to persuade parents and students to think about their future and to transfer their children into a *Torah* school.

Michael was not even supposed to hear about these efforts, because it was intended only for older students, in the seventh and eighth grades. But somehow, he heard about it, and the latent spark in his soul was kindled. And so, without even understanding why, a desire began to burn in him to learn *Torah*. When he contacted one of the *Pe'ilim* and asked him for help in moving to a *Torah* school, he was met with understandable refusal. The *Pe'ilim* struggled to get permission to enter the schools, and when they finally did gain entry, it was conditioned on numerous restrictions. They did not want to put their work at risk by violating the rules that had been set for them. But Michael had no intention of giving up. He began to scream and insist that he also wanted to move to a *Torah* institution. The *Pe'ilim's* resolve began to waver, and ultimately, he received permission to join a day camp organized by the *Pe'ilim* for children all over the country. When all the children gathered, it became clear that he was the only boy in his school who had been persuaded to switch to a *Torah chinuch*.

At the time, his family also agreed with the step he took, albeit anxiously. All they wanted was the best for Michael. The directors of the *Torah* institution he began to attend tried to adapt themselves to the curriculum requests of the parents. Meanwhile, Michael's path to the *Torah* world seemed strewn with roses. The problems arose about two years later. Michael was a young adolescent living a completely *chareidi* life. It was clear to him that his next stop after eighth grade was a *chareidi* yeshivah. But he was surprised to find that his family was firmly opposed. For their part, it was clear that he was going to go to a proper high school where he could make use of his talents and skills and get an education that would help him acquire a profession that he could "live his life with" as they said.

Michael's tranquil world suddenly

became very tumultuous. On one side were the *Pe'ilim*, who continued to accompany him throughout the journey, and now tried to help him as best they could to realize his dream of attending yeshivah. On the other side were his family, who demanded that he attend a regular high school.

Ultimately, the family prevailed and Michael was transferred – almost forcibly – to a high school with a dormitory.

But if anyone thought that they could crush the spirit of this young man, they realized within a short time that they had a big mistake. Michael was stubborn, and he found a way to run away from school and came home. He tearfully pleaded with his parents to send him to yeshivah. But his family dug their heels in and insisted that he return to the high school. They warned him not to dare try and escape again. But this repeated itself many times, until Michael eventually reached the conclusion that this was not the way to realize his dream. Outwardly, he capitulated, but the desire to go to yeshivah continued to burn in his heart. When he realized that by course of nature, he had run out of options, he decided to use the best weapon: *tefillah*. He resolved to fast and daven to Hashem until He would have mercy and move him from his school to a yeshivah. The young, stubborn boy made good on his promise right away. For the next forty eight hours he did not eat or drink, and just sat and davened tearfully to Hashem to save him.

After two days of fasting, at which point he was already weak, salvation came in a surprising way. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door of his room. Standing there were two *Pe'ilim* activists who had helped him go into a *Torah* school. They said that since he had been forced into the boarding school, they had tried to locate him in any way possible. Only in recent days they had discovered where he was, and they had gone to one of the *gedolei hador* to ask them if they should take him out by force. The *gadol* instructed them to try and work to get the family to agree, and now, they had come to encourage him. When the *Pe'ilim* left, after speaking to the boy for a long time and offering *chizuk* and encouragement, they gave him some money and told him to use it as he pleased. They didn't dream for a moment how quickly he would use it. The next day they heard that Michael had used the money to travel to *Yerushalayim*, and had already managed to put himself into a yeshivah there.

At first, the *Pe'ilim* thought that they would have to arrange for Michael to leave the country to attend a yeshivah in France, which could cause a huge tumult. But in the end, a solution was found when one of the eminent rabbanim, who had an indirect influence on his family, heard about the story. With his wisdom, he saved the situation. After a long conversation with the family, they reached the understanding that they would not be able to oppose their son's will.

Michael remained in yeshivah and began to study diligently. He made great strides, and excelled until he became one of the leading *mezakei harabbim* in our generation. And all this is in the power of one *tefillah* said after all else had failed.

Kol Beramah 346