

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



369

PARASHAS MISHPATIM

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

A "Makkeh" Does Not Count for a Minyan

"וכי יריבן אנשים והכה איש את רעהו באבן או באגרף" (כא יח)

The *poskim* write that there is a "*cherem hakadmonim*," an excommunication decree by early sages that anyone who strikes another Jew is excommunicated from Am Yisrael and must not be counted for a *minyan*. He is only readmitted after he expresses remorse for his actions. (See *Rema Choshen Mishpat* 420 1; *Sema* ibid 4; *Aruch Hashulchan* ibid 2)

The *Chiddushei Harim* once noticed that one of the people close to him struck a young man after the latter harassed the person and prevented him from doing his job. When it came time for *Minchah*, the *Chiddushei Harim* asked that person to convene nine people into his room so that they could daven with a *minyan*. The man gathered eight people and brought them into the Rebbe's room, intending to include himself in the nine that the Rebbe had wanted in addition to himself.

The Rebbe looked around and wondered: "How can I daven if there are only eight people besides me in here?" Before the person could even react, the Rebbe continued: "Perhaps you think that you are part of them. That is not possible because you struck another Yid today!"

Me'ir Einei Hagolah, 546

"Hashochen Osam Besoch Tumasam"

"כי תראה חמור שנאך רבץ תחת משאו וחדלת מעזב לו עזב תעזב עמו" (כג ה)

In *Maseches Pesachim* (113a), the *Gemara* asks how it is possible for it to be "the donkey of **your enemy**"; isn't there a clear prohibition (*Vayikra* 19:17) "Do not hate your brother in your heart"? The

An Amen That Is a "Widow" or "Orphan" Should Not Be Answered

"כל אלמנה ויתום לא תענון" (כ בכא)

In *Maseches Brachos* (47a), *Chazal* warn of three types of amen that are not said according to *halachah*: "*amen chatufah*" – which is not enunciated properly with the right *nikud*, or that is answered to quickly before the one making the *brachah* has finished doing so; "*amen ketufah*" – in which one of the letters is swallowed and the word is not complete, and "*amen yesomah*" – when one answers without hearing the *brachah*, or answers after too much time has elapsed since the end of the *brachah*. (See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 124 8)

Harav Avraham Naftali Schier, Av Bais Din of Maintz, explained that Dovid Hamelech alluded to these three types of amens in the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 50:16): "*Ulerasha amar Elokim mah lecha lesaper chukai*." חקי is an acronym for קטופה יתומה (כ בכא).

Harav Eliezer Horowitz of Tarnigrad added that there is also an amen that is called an "*almanah*", a widow – and that is an amen that is answered without *kavanah*. This amen is called a widow because it is said as lip service, without any connection to the soul. This *passuk* alludes to this: "*kol almanah veyasom lo sa'anun*" – make sure not to answer an '*amen yesomah*' and an '*amen almanah*.'

A manuscript written in Ashkenaz four hundred years ago, published in the *Paamei Yaakov* compilation (*Kovetz* 52, p. 15), notes that "ויתום לא תענון" – the acronym of the last letter of each word is amen, an allusion not to answer an '*amen yesomah*.'

Turei Zahav, *Shir Hashirim* 4:8; *Noam Megadim* [Rav Eliezer of Tarnigrad]

Gemara answers: The *passuk* is referring to a Jew who is a sinner, and it is a mitzvah to hate such a person. Nevertheless, the Torah commands that if you see the donkey of your enemy collapsing beneath his burden, you need to set aside the hatred in your heart for him and help him unload the donkey. (See *Targum Yonasan*)

Harav Yehuda Leib Rabinowitz, one of the *roshei yeshivah* of Kochav MiYaakov – Tchebin, found this *passuk* to be a source of encouragement and comfort for every Jew who is in a state of trouble: The *Midrash Rabbah* in this *parashah* (30 9) says that HaKadosh Baruch Hu observes all 613 *mitzvos*, and He certainly fulfills the mitzvah of "*azov ta'azov imo*." Therefore, even at a time when we have sinned before Him, and distanced ourselves from Him, when we are in trouble, surely He will not withhold help from us.

Kerem Chemed

Tefillah – With Minyan; Birchas Hamazon – For an Individual as Well

"ועבדתם את ה' אלקיכם וברך את לחמך ואת מימך" (כג כה)

When the *Divrei Yoel* of Satmar was on a ship en route to Eretz Yisrael, the participants at his Shabbos *seudah* asked if they could go out and gather some more people to complete a *minyan* so that they could *bentsch* with the words "*Nevarech Elokeinu*." But the Rebbe prevented them from doing so, noting the words of this *passuk*: With regard to *tefillah*, the Torah uses the plural tense – "*v'avadetem*" – while with eating, the *passuk* is singular: "*u'beirach es lachmecha*," to teach us that one only needs to search for a *minyan* for *tefillah*, but not for *Birchas Hamazon*.

Masaos Yeshayah p. 48

Ha'aderes Veba'emunah Lechai Olamim

Monday, 3 Adar, is the *yahrzeit* of the Raavad of Yerushalayim, Harav Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz Teumim, zt"l, [the Aderes]. In his *sefer Nefesh Dovid* (23), he describes his strictness about answering amen. He writes:

"I was very very careful about answering amen, from my childhood, and I love and run with great fondness for this mitzvah, until it has become almost nature for me. I became used to hearing *Birchos Hashachar* each day from several people. Anyone who sees me doing this should learn from me to love answering 'amen' and 'amen Yehei Shemei Rabba', which at first, people are lax about, and people did not deem this mitzvah important... In this easy way, each person can acquire *Olam Haba*, and can fulfill hundreds of *mitzvos* each day, easily and tirelessly."

Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Yehi Ratzon After Birchas Ha'avir Sheinah (4)

To Be Saved From the Influences of Society

After asking about Torah and *mitzvos*, and as part of the request that we not come to sin, we need a special request that we should remain on the level that we have attained, without declining, *chalah*. Therefore, we add a request: "*Veharchikeinu*, distance us from a bad person and a bad friend." Being in bad company inevitably affects a person negatively, as the Rambam writes (*Dei'os* 6 1): "It is the way of creation of a person to be drawn in his thoughts and action after his friends, and he conducts himself like the practice of those in his land. Therefore, a person should connect to *tzaddikim* and dwell among wise people so that he should learn from their deeds. He should distance himself from evil people who walk in darkness so that he should not learn from their deeds. As Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei* 13:20): '*Holech es chachamim yechkam vero'eh kesilim yarua*, he who goes with the wise will become wise, but he who befriends the fools will be broken.'" (*Siddur Tefillas Yesharim*)

"Adam Ra" and "Chaver Ra"

It would seem that the request of "*mei'adam ra*" includes also the request of "*umichaver ra*, from a bad friend." Why do we detail both "from a bad person and from a bad friend"?

Some explain: An "*adam ra*", a bad person, is one who is corrupt and may harm us physically. Such a person also causes a lot of damage to our spirituality, because due to his bad behavior, we may transgress sins that are *bein adam lachaveiro*, such as taking revenge and bearing grudges and the like. A "*chaver ra*", a bad friend, is a person who treats us fairly and pleasantly, and connects to us, but we might be influenced by his bad behavior *bein adam laMakom*, his interactions with Hashem. (*Siach Yitzchak in Siddur HaGra; Siddur Tefillas Yesharim*)

The Rebbe Harav Yechezkel Shraga of Shineva explained: "There is a person who is not inherently an '*adam ra*', but our friendship with him may badly influence us. Therefore, we daven that we should be spared from someone who is not inherently bad, but as a 'friend' he is 'bad' for us. (*Mikveh Yisrael* 4, *Tefillah* p. 55)

Avodas Hashem - With Both Yetzarim

Even though we have already asked "*V'al tishlot banu yetzer hara*" – we then add a request "*vechof es yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach*, and force our yetzer to submit to You."

First we asked "and do not allow the yetzer hara to control us," about the spiritual yetzer hara, which is sent to goad the person and to intensify his *nisayon*, his challenges. Here we are asking regarding the physical yetzer hara – the physical nature of the body that is constantly drawing the person after its desires. This yetzer is necessary for a person to live, because without it, a person would not

at all be busy with physical matters that are vital for his existence, such as eating and drinking. As Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 9 7): " '*Vehinei tov me'od*' (*Bereishis* 1:31) – this is the yetzer ra! And is the yetzer hara very good? This makes me wonder?! But if not for the yetzer hara, a person would not build a home and would not marry a woman, and would not bear children, and would not do business."

But there are those who are controlled by their yetzer hara, and it drags them after their physical desires and brings them very low. Some control their yetzer and use it for positive purposes: their eating and their involvement in worldly matters is all only *l'Shem Shamayim*. Therefore, we daven: "*Vechof es yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach*." (*Darchei Noam, Brachos* 54b; *Siach Yitzchak in Siddur HaGra*)

For this reason, we ask, "*Vedabkeinu beyetzer hatov*" instead of using the words "*vehashlet banu yetzer hatov*," as a counter-request to "*ve'al tashlet banu yetzer hara*." This is because, as noted, even the yetzer hara is needed for a person, and one cannot ask that only the yetzer tov should control him. Therefore, we ask that we should cleave to the yetzer tov, and Hashem should compel our yetzer that we should use also the yetzer hara only for good. As Chazal say (*Brachos* 54a) on the *passuk* (*Devarim* 6:5): "*V'ahavta es Hashem Elokecha bechof levavcha*" – with both your yetzarim – the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara. (*Ein Yisrael, Brachos* 46b)

We Should Merit to Fulfill Mitzvos With Completion

Harav Raphael Hakohein of Hamburg explained the seemingly redundant request: "*V'al tashlet banu yetzer hara*" – "*vechof es yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach*": The first request applies to the '*sur meira*' – which is the yetzer hara that incites us to do bad, so that we should fear Hashem and not follow the yetzer hara. Now we are asking for an even greater level – the *asei tov*, that we should be one of those who serve Hashem with love. Through that, our yetzer hara should also be converted to good and should be submitted to the service of Hashem, as Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 9 5): "Avraham Avinu made the yetzer hara good, as it says (*Nechemiah* 9:8): "*Umatzasa es levavo ne'eman Lefanecha*." (*Marpei Lashon Amud Hateshuvah*)

The Baal Hafla'ah further explained: The way of the yetzer hara is that even after he fails in his effort to incite the person to an *aveirah* and to prevent him from doing a mitzvah, he still tries to incite the person as he does the mitzvah, so that he should do it "not *lishmah*," such as for the sake of honor or money. Therefore, even after we ask "*V'al tashlet banu yetzer hara, vedabkeinu beyetzer hatov ubema'asim tovim*" we still need the request of "*vechof es yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach*," that the yetzer hara should not incite us to fulfill the mitzvos and good deeds not for the sake of *l'Shem Shamayim*. (*Panim Yafos, Bereishis* 14:22)

Veharchikeinu mei- from the company of *adam ra* – who harms the other person, *umeichaver ra* – from a sinner who is friendly with us, from whose deeds we might learn *vedabkeinu beyetzer hatov* – that our thoughts should cleave to Hashem *ubema'asim tovim* – and we should fulfill the mitzvos of the Torah *vechof es yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach* – that the observance of the mitzvos should be with *shleimus* and *l'Shem Shamayim*.

The Power of an Innocent Prayer

Harav Yaakov Mutzafi, *zt"l*, the Rav of the Sephardic community in Yerushalayim, was known for his firm faith in Hashem. From an early age until his last day, he was constantly saying the words that served as his guiding light: "*ha'ikar, ha'emunah*, the main thing is faith!"

From time to time, when he wanted to strengthen others in their *emunah*, he would recount a remarkable story that he witnessed. This story was about an innocent *tefillah* said with pure *emunah* that led to a wondrous salvation. This is the story he related:

Amidst great joy, a son was born to a well-known family in the Jewish community in Baghdad, Iraq, in the community where Rav Yaakov was one of the eminent *rabbanim*.

The child was very good looking, and already from the first moment, captivated the hearts of his parents and relatives. When he was eight days old, he was given a *bris milah*. As most babies do, he began to cry during the bris, but unlike other babies, he did not stop wailing. Thus began a very trying time for him and his parents. He cried incessantly, day and night, before food and after, on Shabbos and during the week, inside the house and out. In short, life in his presence became torturous for his family.

And don't imagine that his was a quiet weeping...The child shrieked piercingly, and aside for a few hours of sleep they managed to snatch each night, his parents did not have one moment of peace.

What those parents didn't try to do for their suffering child! They went to the best doctors in their area, expert professors who had extensive knowledge in pediatric medicine. But they clasped their hands helplessly. The tests were all perfectly normal, and there was no disease or apparent pain that seemed to be causing the child to cry so much.

In distress, his parents also tried to visit various 'miracle workers.' They spent money on *kameios* of all kinds, and rare *segulos* that no logical mind can comprehend how they work. But it was all for naught.

The routine at home was totally upended, and everyone was at their wits' end. There was no day or night, no mealtime, no time to laugh or be sad...no time for anything. Everything revolved around the baby that did not know how to do anything but shriek.

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One day, the baby's mother made her way to the market, after she gained a few hours of reprieve. Her mother had agreed to take over watching the baby in her absence. When she passed through the alley leading to the market, she noticed a paper written in *Lashon Hakodesh* on the ground.

Like many women of that time, even distinguished ones, this woman did not know how to read and write, but she was able to figure out, based on the appearance of the page, that it was taken from a holy *sefer*. She picked up the paper and stuck it in her bag in order to put it in *genizah* when she returned home. But suddenly a surprising thought popped into her mind:

"We've given up on finding a medication to help our son. We've tried every medicine, *kameia* or *segulah* but to no avail. Who knows, maybe this page was

sent to me from Above so that through it, there will be salvation for my son..."

After she arrived home, she carefully dusted off the page and put it at the head of her child's bed. At the same time, she offered up a silent *tefillah*: "Master of the world! Although I do not know how to read or write, I do know that this paper that I found on the city street is holy. Therefore, may it be Your Will Hashem, compassionate King, have mercy on my child and on my family and send a *refuah sheleimah* for my dear son. Make his crying stop, and from now, we should hear only good things and happy sounds!"

She continued her prayer for a few moments, and when she left the room during the late evening hours, her eyes wet with tears, she did not even realize that her son had closed his eyes and fallen into a peaceful sleep.

Some time later, her husband returned from work, and was welcomed by a strange and surprising silence. He hurried to his son's room, somewhat alarmed. When he found him sleeping peacefully, he thanked Hashem in his heart and retired for the night.

In the morning, he awoke, and rubbed his eyes in alarm. It had been the first night in a very long time that he had slept so many hours straight. He turned to his wife, who was as surprised as he was, and asked, "What happened today? How did this miracle happen? Did you do something special yesterday?"

"Indeed!" she replied, and excitedly related what had happened the day before, and how she had found the holy paper in the market, and put it as a *kameia* under the baby's head, and had offered up a *tefillah* for his recovery. "The *tefillah* must have worked," she concluded.

When he heard this, the husband went over to his baby's bed. He found his son smiling and calm. He took out the paper from under the pillow and read it...

"Oy!" he cried. "What did you do?! You should know that this is a page from *Parashas Ki Savo*." Then the husband read out from the paper, now trembling in his hand, "Hashem will strike you with madness and you will be afraid night and day. In the morning you will say, when will it be evening, and in the evening you will say, I wish it would be morning..."

"You put these dreadful curses under our child's head...Who knows what will happen to him," he concluded, with fear in his eyes.

The woman was unruffled and replied, "My dear husband, how could I have known what was written on this page? All I knew is that it was a holy page from the Torah. I asked HaKadosh Baruch Hu that in the merit of the holy Torah and in the merit of the Holy Names written on the page, He should send a complete recovery to our son. Ultimately, you see that my *tefillah* was effective..." she concluded with pure innocence.

Rav Yaakov Mutzafi would conclude his story and tell his *talmidim*: "Look at the power of *tefillah* that comes from complete *emunah*. Such a *tefillah* can transform the *middas hadin* to *middas harachamim*, and to turn even the harshest curses to lofty and wondrous *brachos*."

Ari Alah MiBavel, p. 48