

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



371

PARASHAS TETZAVEH

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Only Binyamin "Has a Mouth"

(והטור הרביעי תרשיש ושהם וישפה" (כח כ)

Harav Shimshon Chaim Nachmani explained:

The last stone, the "ישפה" was inscribed with the name of the last of the Shevatim, Binyamin (*Shemos Rabbah* 38 8). It can be explained: "ישפה" can be read as "ישפה" – i.e. there is a mouth, alluding to the fact that of all the Shevatim, Binyamin was the worthiest to have his *tefillos* accepted. *Chazal* say (*Yalkut Shimoni*, *Vezos Habrachah* 957) that the reason the Bais Hamikdash was built in the land share of Binyamin was because he was not part of the actions of the other Shevatim, who were involved in the sale of Yosef and didn't listen to the pleas of their brother and did not have mercy on him. Hence, they were not worthy of compassion from Above to have their *tefillos* answered. Binyamin, who was not a partner to the sale of Yosef, was worthy of having a house of prayer and a place for the dwelling of the Shechinah in his share of the land.

Zera Shimshon

"The Departure of a Tzaddik Leaves an Impression"

"ונשמע קולו בבאו אל הקדש לפני ה' ובצאתו ולא ימות" (כח לה)

Chazal say (*Megillah* 29a): "One who enters a shul to daven has a mitzvah to do it *kapandaria*" [a shortcut, i.e. that he should shorten his route by entering through one doorway and leaving from another]. The *Ra"n* explained this mitzvah (ibid 9 2 *Midapei HaRif*) that when a person traverses the length of the shul in order to emerge from the other side, he shows that he loves the shul.

Harav Shmuel Aryeh Zack, the Rav of Biala, explained that there is a deep concept in this mitzvah:

Putting "Deah" At the Beginning of the Brachah

"וירכסו את החשן מטבעתו... להיות על חשב האפוד" (כח כח)

Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg explained:

"*Eifod*" is numerically equivalent to "amen." The words "*cheishev ha'eifod*" allude that it behooves a person to invest thought in answering amen, and to answer it with *kavanah*, according to *halachah*.

Harav Yitzchak Hutner, Rosh Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, would make those who came to his home aware of the fact that answering amen has several meanings, and the amen answered after one *brachah* does not have the same *kavanah* as amen answered to a different *brachah*. Therefore, we need to carefully listen to the *brachos* in order to know which of them to answer. By way of *melitzah* he would say: "*Im ein deah – havdalah minayin*" (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 5 2) – if we do not know which *brachah* we are answering amen to, how will we be able to discern (*l'havdil*) between the meaning of amen of this *brachah* to the *kavanah* of amen of a different *brachah*?! This is what *Chazal* allude to when they say (*Sanhedrin* 92a): "*Gedolah deah shenitnah b'techilas brachah*" – when we put our minds to listen from the beginning of the *brachah*, then we can answer amen properly to it.

Divrei Shmuel Parashas Tetzaveh; Kesser Meluchah p. 272

One who davens and learns in a shul needs to absorb the holiness of the site in a way that the *kedushah* will remain with him for the rest of the day. This way, even when engaging in his work, he should remember

his purpose in this world, and his deeds should be *l'Shem Shamayim*. That is what *Chazal* mean when they instructed us not to leave from the same doorway that we entered the shul – that a *mispalles* should not leave from the shul like he entered. Rather, when he leaves, he should be like a different person, who carries with him a load of *kedushah* that he absorbed in the shul.

This concept is alluded to in this *passuk*: "*Venishma kolo bevo'o el hakodesh*" – aside for the fact that a person's voice needs to be heard in *tefillah* with *dveikus* in the shul, he must make sure that even "*betzeiso*," when he leaves the shul, "*velo yamus*" – the impression of holiness that the place left on him should not die.

Rimzei D'Chochmasa, Maseches Brachos; Yagdil Torah

A Fixed Place for Davening

"עלת תמיד לדרתיכם פתח אהל מועד לפני ה' אשר אועד לכם שמה לדבר אליך שם" (כט מב)

"When I will set a time of meeting to speak to you that is where I will set it." (*Rashi*)

Harav Shmuel Berenbaum, Rosh Yeshivas Mir in America, said: From the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu established a place from which to speak to us, each person needs to learn to establish or himself a place where he can pour out his heart to his Creator. *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 6b): "When one establishes a place for his davening – the G-d of Avraham helps him."

The Mashgiach **Harav Yechezkel Levenstein** related what he saw in his youth while learning in Yeshivas Radin: His *Rebbi*, the Chofetz Chaim, set aside for himself a special place where he davened for the thousands of people who sent him letters on a daily basis to daven for them.

Bekarei Shemo

Yesod Veshoreish Ha'avodah

Tuesday 18 Adar is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Alexander Ziskind of Horodna, zy"l, the author of *Yesod Veshoreish Ha'avodah*. In his *sefer*, he expounds on the praise and virtue of answering amen with *kavanah*. Regarding saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* he writes:

"*Birchos Hashachar*, from "*Hanosein Lasechvi Binah*" until "*Hagomel Chasasdim*" should be said in the shul with the rest of davening, so that others can answer amen after the *brachos*, because the virtue of the *brachah* is so great when amen is answered after it. As the Zohar says (*Eikev* 271 1)... Therefore it is fitting that a person should take care to say his *brachos* as much as possible in front of others, so that they can answer amen after the *brachah*."

Birchos Hashachar Aloud With *kavanah* *Bechavrusa*



Yehi Ratzon After the Brachah of Hama'avir Sheinah (6)

"Chassadim Tovim" – Not Based on the Value of the Deeds

At the end of the *brachah* of Hama'avir Sheinah, we ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu, "Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim." In the first *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* as well we describe HaKadosh Baruch Hu as "Gomel Chassadim tovim". The question is obvious: Are there *chassadim* that are not good?

Rav Y. Bar Yakar explains that when we say "chassadim tovim" we are asking that He grant us more *chessed* than we deserve based on the value of our deeds. As Chazal explain in the *Midrash (Tanchuma Mishpatim 15)* on the *passuk* (Mishlei 19:17): "Ugemulo yeshalem lo, He will repay him his reward," that when one gives a penny to poor man who was about to die of hunger, HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not repay him only for giving a penny to *tzedakah*, but rather as one who saved a soul in Am Yisrael. They write: "HaKadosh Baruch Hu says: the soul of this poor man was convulsing in hunger, and you gave him sustenance and revived him, I promise that I will return to you a soul for a soul. In the future, your son or daughter will come to the point of illness or death, and I will remember for them the mitzvah that you did with the poor person and I save them from death." (*Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos* Vol. II, p. 15)

The *Shelah Hakadosh* explains that "chassadim tovim" are *chassadim* that are not diminished by the merits of the person who receives them. We find that Yaakov Avinu prayed as his brother Eisav came towards him, (*Bereishis* 32:11): "Katonti mikol hachassadim...asher asisa im avdecha." Chazal explain (*Shabbos* 32a) that he was afraid that perhaps his merits had diminished because of the many *chassadim* performed for him. Similarly, we ask: "Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim" – that our merits should not be diminished because of these *chassadim*. (*Siddur Hashelah*)

It should be noted that despite the explanation of the *Shelah*, we ask that these *chassadim* should not be given as a reward and payment for our merits. This does not contradict the term "vesigmeleinu", [which means to repay] because the *Radak* explains (*Yael* 4:3) that the expression "gemul" does not necessarily express payment for any specific act, and that it can also be interpreted as giving or doing an act for no reason.

Chassadim Tovim – With Good That Is Revealed to the Eye

When Yaakov davened to Hashem to save him from his brother Eisav, he mentioned the promise given to him at Har Hamoriah (ibid 32:13): "V'Atah amarta heitev eitiv imach." The reason this language is doubled – "heitev eitiv" – is explained by Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev: There are "chassadim" that, despite being good for the person, appear to him to be bad. Yaakov Avinu wanted Hashem to grant him *chassadim* whose good is revealed to the eye – that he should be spared from his brother Eisav – and therefore he used the double language "V'Atah amarta heitev eitiv imach" – did you not promise me to give me good that is apparent even to the human eye?

Based on this, the *Pri Megadim* explained the request of "Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim" to mean that we are asking that Hashem grant us *chassadim* whose good is revealed to our eyes, and not those whose good is concealed from the human eye (*Eishel Avraham, Orach Chaim* 46:5)

One Shabbos, a young grandson of Harav Bunim of Peshischa passed away. Throughout the entire Shabbos, the Rebbe controlled his emotions in a masterful way, and there was no apparent difference to any other Shabbos. Only on Motzaei Shabbos, after he made *Havdalah*, did he burst out crying and said, "Although we believe the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 60b) that 'kol mah d'avid Rachmana letav avid,' everything Hashem does is for the good – Hashem should spare us from these kinds of good things. I ask You, Ribono shel Olam, from now on, as You promised Yaakov ('Heitev eitiv imach') – You should also be good to me in a way that I should clearly see the good." (*Chashavah Letovah, Likutim*)

Chassadim Tovim – Perfect Good

The *meforshim* on *tefillah* offer additional explanations for the request of "Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim."

There are *chassadim* whose end is bad, as it says (*Kohes* 5:12): "Yesh...osher shamur l'be'alav le'ra'aso, there are...riches kept for his owner for his harm." That is why we ask that we merit *chassadim* that are good from the beginning until the end. (*Peirush Siach Yitzchak in Siddur HaGra*)

Another explanation: There are two kinds of *chassadim*: There are some *chassadim* that a person wants to receive over and over, while others are only good for that time. An example is someone who is in prison and merits early release. The man merited a huge *chessed*, but he certainly would not want to be imprisoned again in order to once again merit this *chessed*...That is why we ask that Hashem should grant us *chassadim* that are 'good' in essence, and not those that a person needs because of a troublesome situation that he has gotten into. (*Baruch She'amar*, p. 32)

Another explanation: It states in the *Mishnah (Brachos* 54a): 'For *besuros tovos* one says: *Baruch hatov vehameitiv*.' Chazal explain (ibid 59b) that this *brachah* is said only for a *besurah* that it also good for others, when it is worthy to say "hatov" – for him and "vehameitiv" – for others. But for news that is good only for that individual, the *brachah* of "hatov vehameitiv" is not recited; the *brachah* of "Shehecheyanu" is said. Similarly, we can explain that with the request of "Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim" – we ask for *chassadim tovim* so that we can do good to others through the *chessed*, as that is the most perfect benefit. (*Telalei Oros – Beirei Tefillah* Vol. I, p. 257, in the name of Harav Shimon Schwab)

Chassadim Tovim – L'Amo Yisrael

As mentioned, the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim* 46 1) rules like the *Rishonim* that hold that this *brachah* is considered a "brachah aruchah," a long *brachah*, that begins with "Hama'avir Sheinah" and continues with the request of the *Yehi Ratzon* and then concludes with the *brachah* of "Hagomel Chassadim Tovim L'Amo Yisrael." As such, the *Tosafos* asks (*Brachos* 46a, beginning with *Kol*): Isn't it a *halachah* that one needs to conclude every *brachah aruchah* with words that are related to the opening of the *brachah* (see *Pesachim* 104 b)? What connection is there between "Hagomel chassadim tovim" to "Hama'avir sheinah"? They explain: The *gemilus chessed* mentioned at the end of the *brachah* includes the tremendous *chessed* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does with the person by removing the sleep from his eyes and renewing the strength of his body and soul each morning.

Based on the words of the *Tosafos*, we can also understand why we emphasize at the end of the *brachah* "Hagomel chassadim tovim L'Amo Yisrael" even though it would seem that HaKadosh Baruch Hu grants all of Am Yisrael *chassidim tovim*. [Indeed, see *Sma* k (151) which says that we should say "Gomel Chassadim Tovim L'Brisav."]

The explanation is that only for Am Yisrael is lifting the sleep [included in "chassidim tovim" according to *Tosafos*] classified as "chassidim tovim" because when they are awake they engage in Torah and *mitzvos*. But for the nations of the world – the evildoers, on the contrary: sleep is the best thing for them, because at least then, they do not sin. As Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 71b): "sleep for the evil – is a benefit for them and a benefit for the world, and for the *tzaddikim* – it is bad for them and bad for the world." (*Siddur Tzelosa d'Avraham*, p. 42, in the name of the Rebbe, Rav Avraham of Chechanov)

The *Ba'ch* further explains (*Orach Chaim* 46): In this *brachah* we ask that we should be saved from the *yetzer hara*, and that we should cleave to the *yetzer tov*. *Chassadim* like these that Hashem grants are only for "Amo Yisrael" whose souls are extracted from beneath the Kisei HaKavod, and they are "etzem hakedushah vehataharah, the essence of holiness and purity." Therefore, deep in their hearts they want to cleave to their Creator. But for the nations of the world, who are the "essence of tumah, and a part of the *yetzer hara*" it does not help to be spared from their *yetzer*. Therefore, we emphasize at the end of this *brachah* "Hagomel chassadim tovim L'Amo Yisrael."

Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim – whose good is overt and that our merits should not be diminished because of them. *Baruch Atah Hashem Hagomel Chassadim Tovim* and helps us overcome the *yetzer*, exclusively *L'Amo Yisrael* because their souls are extracted from a holy place.

Tefillos Answered After Despair

Harav Chaim Yirmiyahu Flensburg, zt"l, known as the Gaavad of Shaki, for the Lithuanian city where he served as the Rav, was one of the giants of his generation. During his tumultuous life, he was known for his valiant battle against the Maskilim, his brilliant *drashos*, and his *sefarim* that illuminated the Torah world. Among them were *Divrei Yirmiyahu al HaTorah, Shu"t Sheilos Chaim* and others.

Reb Chaim Yirmiyahu was descended from very prestigious families. His righteous mother, Temma, a"h, was descended from the author of *Seder Hadoros*, who could trace his lineage back to Dovid Hamelech.

Reb Chaim Yirmiyahu was born to his parents late in life. His birth came about through a miraculous story that can teach us about the power of *tefillah*, which is never rejected.

As a young woman, his mother married a distinguished Jew, who aside for his Torah learning, was very successful in business. He purchased a large estate that included fields that yielded generous crops. It was located on the outskirts of the city of Yurburg, near Kovno. The couple settled there and lived in peace for many years.

The life of this couple could have been very happy, if not for one thing that hung like a cloud over their happiness and marred their lives: they did not merit children.

This fact troubled them both, but while the husband drowned his grief in his business affairs, which grew constantly, his wife spent hours alone at home, which was customary at the time. As such, she had plenty of time to dwell on her painful state.

As the years passed, and naturally their chances grew more dismal, the woman constantly was aware of the fact that it was possible that she would leave this world, and there would be no one to recite *Kaddish* for her. This caused her untold grief in addition to her current troubles.

She was so righteous that she did not get depressed or capitulate to despair, *challilah*; she hoped endlessly for a *yeshuah*, and she did many things to accrue merits. Any poor person who came to her home was welcomed warmly and assisted in every way possible. She was known to be the first to step up to fill any need that arose.

She did myriad good deeds, but especially immersed herself in her *tefillos*. She davened tearfully three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening, to the Master of the World, to grant her home with salvation and compassion by giving them a child. But as the years passed and salvation did not come, her life grew more bitter, to the point that all her wealth, and the 'good life' that she lived, meant nothing to her. Because if she didn't have children – what was it all worth?!

As her thirtieth anniversary approached, thoughts of despair began to run through her mind. "Who knows," she thought to herself. "Perhaps if I divorce my husband and marry someone else there is a chance that I will merit a child to light up the darkness of my life."

This dismal though dominated her mind for a few days, and eventually, she just could not keep it to herself. One day, while eating dinner with her husband, she tremulously expressed her deepest respect for him. And then, she suggested, in a weak voice:

"Neither of us know the reason why we are undergoing this turmoil in our lives. Who knows, perhaps for the benefit of us both, so that we should not leave this

world without children, it is better for us each to go our own way. You will rebuild your home again and I will remarry as well, and perhaps we will both merit to have perpetuation in this world, and at least we will live out our days in peace."

When he heard this, he recoiled and was stunned into silence. He never could have imagined such a thought being raised in his home. Finally, he said, "You are almost fifty years old. At this age, it is very possible that you will destroy your life for no reason, and you will end up getting the raw end of both options..."

But she had a ready answer for this: "As long as I am still in my forties, my hope has not yet been lost. Therefore, I really ask that you do not prevent me from fulfilling my wish."

"I am not asking you anything more than this," the woman continued to plead. "I am ready for you to send me with empty hands. I will leave all our wealth and I will just go myself."

At first, her husband did not want to comply with her request. But as the days passed, and she did not stop pleading with him, his refusal softened, and ultimately, he agreed to divorce her.

So after thirty years of wealth and honor, the woman left her husband's home poor and bereft of everything – but filled with hope and prayer that her most fervent wish would come to fruition.

Some time later, she married a pious widower named Rav Avraham Flensburg. He was happy to remarry a woman who was known for her *Yiras Shamayim* and her sterling *middos*.

From the day they got married, the woman pleaded constantly with Hashem that her sacrifice should not be for naught, and that she should finally merit children. But a year after their marriage, as she neared the age of fifty, despair began to gnaw at her. The thought that she may have destroyed her previous life for naught caused her tremendous pain.

Without wanting it to happen, her predicament began to overtake her entire being. She constantly looked sad, and she invested all her time only in davening. She fasted often, and gave her last few pennies to *tzedakah*, but there was no salvation in sight.

It happened one evening when her husband went to learn in a friend's house, leaving his wife weeping in prayer to Hashem from her *Tehillim*. Eventually, she leaned her head on the table and cried until she fell asleep.

As she slept, she had a dream. An elderly, reverent looking figure came to her, and held in his hands a bowl that was covered. He said to her: "I am Yirmiyah HaNavi. Do not cry anymore. Hashem has heard your prayers and He will give you a son and a daughter."

The man concluded his short message and disappeared from view, and the woman awoke in alarm. A few moments passed until she recovered and understood what had happened. Her heart was suddenly flooded with new hope.

Less than a year later, the whole city celebrated at the *bris* of the baby boy, who was named Chaim Yirmiyahu – Chaim for his mother's father, an Yirmiyahu, for the Navi who was sent from Above to tell the woman that her many *tefillos* had been accepted.

Two years later, she gave birth to a daughter, and together with her older brother – who grew up to be one of the *gaonim* of Lithuania – were a source of comfort to their parents for the rest of their lives.

This teaches us the power of *tefillah*...

Mathea Shel Avraham Vol. II, p. 43