

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS YISRO

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Yisro Observed With "Open Eyes"

"וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה את כל אשר עשה אלקים למשה ולישראל עמו כי הוציא ה' את ישראל ממצרים" (יח א)

Harav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, Rosh Yeshiva of Be'er Yaakov, explained:

At Krias Yam Suf and Mattan Torah, all the nations of the world became aware of the Kingship of Hashem in His world. At the time of Mattan Torah: "A bird did not chirp, a chicken did not fly, an ox did not moo... The creations did not speak, and the entire world was silent" (*Shemos Rabbah* 29 9). At Krias Yam Suf it says "all the waters in the world split" (*Mechilta DeRabi Yishmael Beshalach Masechta De'vayehi* 4). However, while all the nations marveled at these 'natural phenomena' that took place in front of their eyes, they did not pay attention to the message that they contained. Only Yisro merited to open his eyes and his heart to look correctly at what was happening and to derive the necessary conclusions.

For this reason, we ask in *Shemoneh Esrei* for the *Geulah* using the words "*Vesechezenah eineinu beshuvcha leTzion berachamaim*." If, when the *Geulah* comes, our gaze will be focused on the miracles and wonders that will precede it, we will not be able to take heart and feel the actual *Geulah* rising like the dawn from the clouds and mist. That is why we ask "*Vesechezenah eineinu*" – let our eyes be open to see and comprehend the revelations of *Kavod Hashem* that will take place "*beshuvcha leTzion berachamim*, when You return to Tzion with compassion."

We merit these "open eyes" only

Amen – Only After *Shetargileinu BeTorasecha*

"ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכריה; ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלקי אבי בעשרי ויצלני מחרב פרעה" (יח ג-ד)

It would seem that Moshe should call his first son Eliezer, because he was saved from Pharaoh's sword in Egypt, before he fled to a foreign land.

Harav Mordecha Banet explained the reason why we do not answer amen after the *brachah* of *Hama'avir Sheinah*, and instead we say it after the completion of the *Yehi Ratzon* that comes right after it. Based on the words of Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 71b): "Sleeping for the evil – it is a pleasure for them [as they do not sin] and a pleasure for the world [as they cannot do bad to other people], and for the *tzaddikim* it is bad for them [as they cannot learn Torah] and bad for the world [as their Torah protects their generation]."

When a person rises from his sleep and thanks Hashem for removing the sleep from his eyes, we do not know if he is a *tzaddik*, for whom rising from sleep is good and for which we should make a *brachah*. Only after he asks "*Yehi ratzon... shetargileinu beTorasecha vedabkeinu bemitzvosecha v'al tevienu lo li'yedei cheit...*" do we realize that he is a *tzaddik* asking to cleave to Torah and *mitzvos*, and therefore, rising from sleep is considered for him a good thing that a *brachah* should be made for. And we can also answer amen to this.

Similarly, only after Moshe saw that he merited and remained a "ger" because he was in a "foreign land" and he did not learn from their bad deeds, was he able to call his son Eliezer, and to thank Hashem "that the G-d of my father was with me and saved me from the sword of Pharaoh." If *chalilah*, he would not have remained faithful to the legacy of his father, then it would have been preferable for him not to have been spared Pharaoh's sword.

Gevuras Shimshon [Rav S. Fisher]

through the power of learning Torah. Therefore we ask, '*Veha'er eineinu beTorasecha*,' that from the power of learning Torah we should merit "open eyes" through which we can gaze at events in life through the lens of Torah.

Zahav Mishva, Vayechi

Why Don't Kohanim Make a *Brachah* "*She'asani Kohein*"?

"ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש" (יט ו) Chazal (*Mechilta D'Rabi Yishmael, Masechta D'Bechodesh* 2) learn from this *passuk* that "all of Am Yisrael were worthy of eating the *Kodshim* as long as they did not make the *Eigel*. After the *Eigel* it [this privilege] was taken from them and given to the Kohanim." Based on this, the *Imrei Emes* explained the reason that the Kohanim did not thank Hashem each morning for their special *mitzvos* with the *brachah* "*She'asani Kohein*," the same way Am Yisrael thanks for the *mitzvos* that they are given in the *brachah* of "*Shelo Asani Goy*." It is because the Kohanim merited this unique status only because of something shameful that Am Yisrael did, and which they lost after they sinned with the *Eigel*. Therefore, the Kohanim do not make a *brachah* on this, because it would be considered "*miskabed biklon chavero*," reaping honor on account of his friend's shame.

Additionally, the *Imrei Emes* explained the words of the *Baal Haturim* here, that in the future, *Kehunah* will be restored to Am Yisrael. From here we learn that the virtue of the Kohanim is destined to be taken from them, and therefore, it was not instituted that they recite a *brachah*.

Likutei Yehudah

אז מסיני
נצטוו -

With the
Mitzvah
of Answering
Amen



In the commandment of "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*" – we are commanded to believe in Hashem with *emunah sheleimah* (*Sefer Hachinuch* 25). This is a *mitzvah temidis*, a constant *mitzvah* that a person must fulfill unceasingly every moment of his life. (ibid, Introduction)

Fellow Yidden!

The *mitzvah* of answering amen after *brachos* and *tefillas* was instituted so that we can fulfill this *mitzvah*, as Rabbeinu Bechaye says (*Shemos* 14:1): "And because *emunah* is the fundamental of the entire Torah, Chazal instituted that we say amen to *brachos* and in *tefillas*. Amen is derived from *emunah* and from a term of admission, that the person saying amen accepts the words of the person making the *brachah* and admits to them."

"The *ikkar* of *emunah* depends on answering amen." (*Megaleh Amukos, Parashas Ha'azinu*)

Yehi Ratzon After the Brachah of Hama'avir Sheinah (3)

**"Nisayon" and "Bizayon"
That Bring to Sin**

Dovid Hamelech says in *Tehillim* (11:5): "*Hashem tzaddik yivchan*, Hashem tests the righteous," to teach us that the higher a level a person reaches, the more difficult the challenges and tests he is given. Therefore, after asking that we should be elevated to a level where we should not stumble in *cheit*, *aveirah* and *avon*, it is thus worthy that we ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu not to bring us to *nisayon*, to a test of a sin in order to test us if we meet the level. And even if He does bring us to that test, He should help us withstand it so that we should not come to a state of "*bizayon*," of being shamed. (*Siddur HaShelah*)

Rav Yehosef Zecharyah Stern, known as the Gaon of Shavel, explains in the name of his grandfather-in-law, Harav Dov Ber Yaffeh, a *talmid* of Harav Chaim of Volozhin, that in the request of "*lo liyedei nisayon*" we are explaining our previous request of "*v'al tevienu liyedei cheit*." Because certainly HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not bring a person to sin, but what we mean is a *cheit* that is the result of a '*nisayon*' or '*bizayon*.' We say "*lo liyedei nisayon*" so that Hashem should not test us and through that we will come to a *cheit*, *chalilah*, as the *Gemara* explains (*Sanhedrin* 107a) that the test can bring even the greatest person to sin. "*Velo liyedei bizayon*", as the *Gemara* says (*Yoma* 86b, and in *Rashi* there) that it happens that HaKadosh Baruch Hu brings upon a person a sin in order to shame him, so that people should see his shameful state and should not learn from his actions. (*Zechar Yehosef*, in the exclusions, *Brachos* 60b)

How Can We Ask Not to Come to Nisayon?

Many have wondered how we can ask Hashem not to be faced with a test. Isn't the primary purpose of a person in the world to withstand the tests, as *sefer Mesilas Yesharim* writes (Chapter 1): "because the *ikkar* of the existence of a person in this world is only to do *mitzvos* and to withstand tests?"

Some explain that this request is connected to the request that follows it: "*V'al tevienu liyedei nisayon...v'al tashlet banu yetzer hara*." The meaning is that there are times when Hashem sends the Satan to test a person, as we find with the holy Avos, Dovid Hamelech and Iyov. Such a test is very great, and this is what we are asking for: not to be tested with such significant challenges. In contrast, the *Mesilas Yesharim* is referring to the difficulties and tests of a regular nature that we encounter each day while we fulfil Torah and *mitzvos*, and it is our job to conquer our *yetzer hara* and to withstand those tests. (*Tefillas Dovid* [the Aderes] *Birchos Hashachar*; *Shimah Tefillasi* p. 46)

They further explained: There are people who are not assisted from Above during their tests, such as the *rasha*, of whom *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 104a): "*Ba litma - poschin lo*," one who comes to be impure is granted entry. Therefore, we ask that we should not be brought from Heaven to such a challenge, and with each challenge that we have, we should be assisted from Above to withstand it. (*Leket Sichos Mussar* [Harav Yitzchak Eizik Sher] Vol. II p. 377)

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explained that this request is connected to the subsequent request of "*v'al tevienu lo liyedei nisayon velo liyedei bizayon*." The *nisayon* can bring a person easily "*liyedei bizayon*" – both if *chalilah* does not withstand it, and even if he does withstand

it, often, it involves shame. It is like the story brought in the *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 81a), about Rabi Amram Chasida, who in order to be spared from the *nisayon* needed to call loudly "*Nura bei Amram* [there is a fire in the home of Amram]." And this caused him shame. That is what we ask – that we not be brought to such a challenge at whose end we will get to a *bizayon*, shame, in one of the abovementioned ways. (*Siddur Iyun Tefillah* [Rav Y.M. Stern] P. 155)

**The Explanation of the Request of
"Velo Liyedei Bizayon"**

As noted, some explain that "*velo liyedei bizayon*" is part of the previous request. However, the *Rokeach* explained it as a new request, that we should not need other people and then come to *bizayon*, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 6b): "Because a person needs other people, his face changes..." (*Pirushei Seder Hatefillah L'Rokeach* Vol. I p. 14)

Sefer Nachalas Avraham (Rav Avraham Abba Herzl, *LeCh Lecha*) explains that it is known that wealth and poverty are both challenges that come upon a person [and as the *Mesilas Yesharim* writes (Ch. 1): "Because all the matters of the world, whether good or bad, are challenges for a person, poverty on one side and wealth on the other side"]. Therefore, we ask that Hashem should not bring us to the "*nisayon*" of wealth, nor to "*bizayon*" – the test of poverty that brings about shame.

We can learn about the difficult challenge of poverty from the chilling testimony of the Rebbe Harav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, who said: "I hereby testify that I saw with my eyes great *tzaddikim* who I was afraid to approach, and when they came to the test and tried to obtain money, and especially with *teviah bepeh*, demanding it verbally, they were emptied of everything and lost their virtues." (*Maggid Ta'alumach Brachos* 32a)

**"One Who Is Greater Than His Friend,
His Yetzer Is Greater Than Him"**

Chazal say (*Sukkah* 52a): "One who is greater than his friend, his *yetzer* is greater than him." If so, after we ask Hashem to help us reach great levels, we need more strength to overcome the *yetzer*, which is why we ask: "*V'al tashlet banu yetzer hara*." (*Siddur HaShelah*)

The request of "*V'al tashlet banu yetzer hara*" is not mentioned clearly in the *Gemara*, and is cited in the *Rif* (44a *Midapei RaHif*). Some write that one should not use this *nusach* for the request, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu certainly does not impose the *yetzer hara*'s rule over a person. We find that Dovid Hamelech was punished for using similar language (*Brachos* 62b). Rather, it was held that the *nusach* of the *brachah* should be "*V'al yishlot banu yetzer hara*." (*Tefillas Dovid*, *ibid*)

Some explain the *nusach* of "*al tashlet*" to mean that this request is a continuation of the opening request of "*shetargileinu beTorasecha*." *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin* 30b): "I created a *yetzer hara* – and I created for it Torah *tavlin*, Torah as a balm for it; if you engage in Torah – you are not given to him...and if you do not engage in Torah – you are handed to him." That is what we are saying: if You accept our request and habituate us to Your Torah, then that will ensure that the *yetzer hara* does not control us. (*Rinas Yitzchak*, *Tefillah L'Yemos Hachol* p. 38)

Velo liyedei nisayon that will be difficult for us to withstand **velo liyedei bizayon** if, **chalilah**, we do not withstand the test and we stumble in sin **v'al tashlet banu yetzer hara** rather, help us withstand his temptations.

The London Doctor's Amazing Secret

Rabbi Doctor A. is a well-known frum doctor who lives in London, but his reputation has spread far beyond. Over the many years he has been practicing, he has treated tens of thousands of patients, and he has acquired expertise in a number of medical fields. His clinic was constantly busy. Dr. A. had acquired a reputation of being a thorough, precise physician, whose diagnoses were clear and sharp. This drew streams of patients from all over the United Kingdom seeking cures for their ailments. His recommendations were accepted without any doubts.

Even today, at an advanced age, Dr. A. continues to engage in his profession, although more in a consultancy role than a clinical one. He continues to work, because he views his work as a mission. *Gedolei hador* in the past, such as the Steipler Gaon, *zt"l*, trusted him, and today as well, rabbanim from all over the world consult him on halachic-medical questions. They know that he is a *yarei Shamayim* and that he will not give them an answer before he weighs the halachic ramifications on the medical questions involved.

Many of his acquaintances, both doctors and laymen, wonder about his unique success. What is the secret through which he merits to bring reprieve to so many people? For years, they tried to understand, until it was revealed in a coincidental fashion. This story happened more than twenty years ago, when Dr. A. was at the peak of his activities, and it was related by the well-known doctor from Bnei Brak, Rabbi Dr. Meshulam Hart:

The S. family, patients of Dr. A., were traveling in their car late one night on the highway near London. Rabbi S., the father, was driving relatively slowly, when he noticed a vehicle on the shoulder of the road. The driver appeared to be frum.

"If a Jew is in trouble he needs to be helped," Rabbi S. said as he signaled and pulled the car over to the shoulder of the road and stopped a bit ahead of the 'stuck' car.

Rabbi S. got out of the car and took out his toolkit that he always carries. "The car must be stuck because of a flat tire or another technical issue," Rabbi S. thought to himself as he hefted the heavy kit out. Rabbi S. had a lot of experience in car mechanics, and he often found himself utilizing this ability to help people who were stuck on the way. Over the years, he had even put together a "rescue kit" – large bag filled with all the tools he needed for a "first aid" vehicle rescue. He was sure this was another one of those incidents.

He was very surprised that when

he approached the car, he saw that the driver was none other than Dr. A. He was seated in the driver's seat, his head leaning on the steering wheel, and his shoulders shook with sobs.

"Why is the doctor crying like that?" Rabbi S. wondered to himself. "Maybe he's been stuck here for a long time already?!" He quickly knocked at the window of the car.

The doctor sat up in alarm and opened the window. Red-eyed, he looked at his uninvited guest, wondering who would disturb him in such a quiet place. It took him a few moments to recognize the person. "Rabbi S.!" he called in surprise, "What are you doing here at this late hour?"

"I was sure the doctor was stuck with his car, so I thought I could help..." Rabbi S. said apologetically.

"Everything is fine, *baruch Hashem*," the doctor reassured him. He seemed to be deliberating whether to explain to Rabbi S. the real reason that he was parked on the shoulder of the road and crying.

Finally, Dr. S. decided that he would offer an explanation.

"I am on my way back from the hospital, where I was summoned urgently by one of my patients, a young man who is in a serious medical state, and needed to undergo a complicated treatment. The man wanted to consult with me before the treatment, and asked me to be present while it was being done.

"As I doctor, I can say that I did everything in my power to help the man get through the treatment in the best way possible. Regrettably, he is still in very serious condition. Because I have exhausted all the options in my capacity as a doctor, I have no recourse now other than to do for him with I think is the best *hishadlus* on his behalf – to daven from the depths of my heart, with tears, to the Healer of all flesh, to send him a *refuah sheleimah*, among the sick of Am Yisrael.

"I do that always," the doctor concluded, without realizing that by saying this, he was revealing the secret behind his success. All at once, the mystery that many had wondered about was solved. The secret of how the doctor has been a faithful emissary for so many was not clear.

The doctor did not suffice with mere expansive medical knowledge to help his patients. Knowing that the true key to healing was in the power of *tefillah*, he made sure to daven for each one of his patients, and it was his *tefillah* that bore the fruits of his success.

Rofei Urefuah, p. 80