

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



375

PARASHAS VAYIKRA

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Virtue of a 'Tefillas Nedavah'

“אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה” (א ב)

“This sections speaks of *korbanos nedavah*, voluntary sacrifices...” (Rashi)

It would seem that it is more necessary to explain the laws of the obligatory *korbanos*. Why did the Torah begin with the laws of the voluntary *korbanos*?

Harav Yosef Tzvi Dinner, the Raavad of London, explained:

The Torah first explained the details of the *Korbanos Nedavah* to teach us about the great virtue of one who brings them. His actions prove that he does not observe the *mitzvos* only to fulfill his obligations. Rather, he does everything he can to engage in more *mitzvos*, to bring pleasure to his Creator.

The same is with *tefillah*, which today take the place of *korbanos* (see *Brachos* 26b). There is a special importance to chapters of *Tehillim* and *tefillos* that a person adds to his regular prayers, because through those he shows that he is ready to make an effort in his *avodas Hashem* beyond what he is obligated to do.

Darkei Yosef Tzvi, p. 54

This is the place to praise one who is strict about adhering to the ancient practice of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, in a group of people who answer amen to a different one of the group who says the *brachos* (see *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 6 4). Through this practice, he begins his day with a declaration that he does not serve his creator in order to fulfill an obligation, but rather he seeks to engage in more *mitzvos*, with *shleimus*, even in a place where *halachah* does not stipulate that he must do this.

'Min Habeheimah' We Can Learn About the Level of a Jew

“אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה” מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם” (א ב)

One Small Word – Tremendous Power

“ויקרא אל משה” (א א)

Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, the Nasi of Bnei Emunim, explained:

“*Vayikra*” is an acronym for *ויקרא אל משה* which is an allusion to the words of the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 119b) that one must answer amen “*bechol kocho*” with all his might which means “*bekol ram*” – out loud (see *Tosfaos* *ibid* beginning with “*kol haon'eh*”).

Why was the letter aleph [which alludes to amen] written small? In order to remind us that answering amen is a small action, yet with ease, a person can accrue countless *mitzvos* through it.

Harav Shlomo of Radomsk explained:

“*Adam*” – a regular person, “*ki yakriv*” – who wants to become closer to Hashem and elevate himself in his *avodah*, “*min habeheimah...takrivu es korbanchem*” – from the animal he can understand how much higher his level is, and through that, he can get closer to Hashem. At the time when the Beis Hamikdash was standing, even the simplest of people was able to transform the essence of the animal – just by word of his mouth, and without any physical action – from a regular animal to one that was holy for the *Mizbeach*. If that is the tremendous power of speech that a Jew has, how much more so is the power of the *divrei Torah* and *tefillah* that one offers to his Creator!

Tiferes Shlomo

'Vechof Es Yitzreinu Lehishtabed Lach'

“אם עלה קרבנו מן הבקר זכר תמים יקריבו אל פתח אהל מועד יקריב אותו לרצנו לפני ה'” (א ג)

Chazal (*Rosh Hashanah* 6a, based on *Rashi* there) honed in on the fact that it says here “*yakriv oso*” even though it says previously, “*yakrivenu*.” If the one making *neder*

refuses to bring his *korban*, it behooves *beis din* to force him to uphold the pledge. But because he has to bring the *korban* “*lirtzono*”, therefore, “they force him until he says, ‘I want to.’”

The *Sfas Emes* wrote that we find an allusion in the *Gemara* to the fact that a person wants to submit himself to the yoke of *mitzvos* can ask that from Above, he should be forced to choose good. It is similar to the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 69a) that the *yetzer hara* of *avodah zarah* was given to the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*. Indeed, this is what we ask each week: “*Vechofes yitzreinu lehishtabed Lach*,” and during the *Yamim Noraim* we daven “*uvechen ten pachdecha...ve'eimascha all kol ma shebarasa...to do Your Will with a whole heart.*”

Sfas Emes, Vayeira 5632, *Rosh Hashanah*, 5647; *Mipi Sofrim Usefarim*

Twice “Asham”

“אשם הואשם אשם לה” (ה יט)

Harav Yitzchak Mejallad, one of the sages of Baghdad, explained:

The *Mishnah* (*Brachos* 33b) explains that “if one says *Modim Modim* – hush him.” The *Gemara* (*ibid*) explains that this is because when he doubles the term of praise, it appears like he is thanking two deities, *chalilah*. Therefore, the *Gemara* adds that even one who says “*shema shema*” should be hushed, because it appears like he is accepting upon himself two deities. The *Yerushalmi* (*Megillah* 4 10) adds that for the same reason, we should silence one who says “amen amen.”

The three words that *Chazal* forbade from doubling are *אמן*, *שמע*, *מודים* – which are an acronym for *אשם*. This alludes to this prohibition, as it says “*אשם*” three times in the *passuk*, meaning that saying “*asham ashame*” – doubling the words *אשם*, *אשם* is then “*asham* [a sinner] *hu l'Hashem*.”

Tzelach Rechav

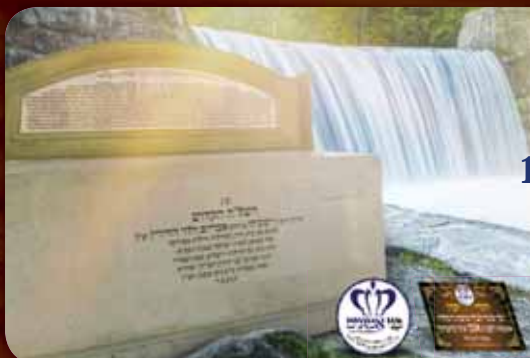
Wednesday, 11 Nissan, is the *yahrtzeit* of the **Shelah Hakadosh**. In his *sefer*, *Shnei Luchos Habris*, he expounded on the great virtue of answering amen. He wrote:

1. “The Upper Worlds and lower world are dependent on the word amen, and that is the *ikkar* and the root and foundation upon which all the worlds are established.” (*Maseches Tamid* 80)

2. “Anyone who has *kavanah* for each and every *brachah* that emerges from the mouth of the *mevarech*, and answers amen with *kavanah*, causes tremendous holiness On High, and an abundance of good for all the worlds, because he opens the Upper Source, the *Mekor Mayim Chaim*. It is like he opens a wellspring to water all those who need watering...” (*ibid*)

3. “It is true that amen is very great in its own right, and its greatness cannot be fully researched.” (*ibid* 81)

Bnei Emunim – amen to every *brachah*.



Yehi Ratzon After Birchos Hashachar (4)

'And Hashem Will Remove All Illness from You'

In the *Yehi Ratzon* that concludes *Birchos Hashachar* some added requests that were not cited in the *nusach* of the *Gemara*. Some are of the opinion that there is a boundary that one should not make more than eleven requests corresponding to the eleven components of the *Ketoress* (*Shalmei Tzibbur, Dinei Birchos Hashachar* 12). We will explain all the requests that appear in the various *siddurim* in this *Yehi Ratzon*.

Chazal teach (*Bava Metzia* 107b) that *ayin hara* is the cause of all disease, and said that this is why it states (*Devarim* 7:15): "**Vehesir Hashem mimcha kol choli**," meaning that He will remove the *ayin hara* that causes all ailments (see *Toras Chaim* *ibid*). The *Gemara* (*ibid*) relates that Rav once went to the cemetery and checked what the reason of death was for the people buried there. He found that of every one hundred dead, ninety-nine died before their time because of *ayin hara*, and only one died in a timely manner – not from *ayin hara*.

Therefore, we make a special request in this *Yehi Ratzon* that we should not be harmed in any way as the result of an *ayin hara*. As the *Pele Yoetz* wrote (*Ayin*): "**Tefillah** is beneficial for everything, because Hashem is compassionate, and hears the *tefillah* of every mouth, and He saves His nation Yisrael from *ayin hara*, and from every bad thing..."

The reason we say "*ayin hara*" in the singular and not "*einayim ra'os*" is based on the teachings of Mekubalim, that one who wants to cast an *ayin hara* on his friend has to close one eye, because as long as both eyes of a person are open, he cannot cast an *ayin hara* on his friend (*Chasdei Avos* [Chida] 2 11).

Rabi Shalom Mashash, the Rav of Yerushalayim, would say that in this request, one should have in mind that we should merit to fulfill the Torah's commandment (*Bamidbar* 15:39): "**Velo sasuru acharei levavchem v'acharei eineichem**, and you should not wander after your hearts and after your eyes," and we should not falter and see forbidden sights. (*Orach Shel Yerushalayim*, p. 47)

Lashon Hara Kills Three

One of the things that is liable to harm a person in the worst way is *lashon hara*. When a person speaks *lashon hara* about another, he is being scornful of him, and makes him hated by others. Not only that, but *Chazal* say (*Eruvin* 15b) that *lashon hara* kills three people: the one who relates it, the one who hears and accepts it, and the one who the *lashon hara* is about. Therefore, we ask, "**Vehatzileinu... milashon hara**" – that others should not harm us by speaking *lashon hara* about us (*Eitz Chaim, Mahar"i Tzalach*). Some added that in this request we should have in mind not only that we not be harmed by *lashon hara* said against us, but that we should also merit to guard our own tongues from speaking *lashon hara* about others. (*Ashishos Chaim, Brachos* 17a)

There is a special connection between being careful about speaking *lashon hara* and *tefillah*, as *Chazal* say (*Zohar, Metzora* 56 1) that every time one speaks *lashon hara*, his spiritual power of speech is weakened. Therefore, one who does not guard his tongue from *lashon hara* does

not have his *tefillah* rise to be accepted willingly by Hashem.

Malshinus That Brings to False Testimony

We also ask that we should be spared from "*malshinus*," informing. We need this request each morning also, because every type of informing might bring bad upon a person. We say it next to the request to be spared from "*eidus sheker*," false testimony, because sometimes in order to back himself up, the informer relies on false witnesses. (*Kerem Pesachya Birchos Gefen* 76)

The following story can shed light on the extent of the severity of informing on another: When the Vilna Gaon undertook to exile himself from his home, he hired a Jewish wagon driver to bring him to a town he wanted to visit on his sojourn. During the trip, as he passed along the border of a field, the carriage swerved from the path and trampled some vegetable plants that grew in the field. The wagon driver hurried to hide, and the field owner, who was a violent gentile, ran towards the carriage to beat the person sitting inside. Even though it was the wagon driver's fault, the Gaon absorbed his blows silently and did not say word. Then he explained to those close to him, "If I would have said to that gentile that the wagon driver was to blame, it would have been classified as '*malshinus*,' because I would have caused the wagon driver to sustain blows that he did not deserve." (*Shem Olam*, end of Vol. II, in the *hashmatah* of *Shemiras Halashon*)

'Save Us from All Harsh Decrees'

Chazal (*Avos* 3:10) say: "**Kol sheruach habrios nochah heimeni, ruach HaMakom nochah heimeni**, one who is pleasing to his fellow men is pleasing to Hashem." The *Chovos Halevavos* explained (*Shaar Yichud Hama'aseh* Ch. 10) that *Chazal* did not intend to instruct a person to take actions in order to endear himself to people. Rather, the Creator is the One Who grants a person favor in another's eyes, and endears him to them. Therefore, they said that anyone who is liked by others, that is a sign that Hashem is pleased with him as well, and that is why He put it in the hearts of other people to like him. This is what we ask for here, that we should be spared from "*sinas habrios*," the hatred of others, and rather, people should be pleased by us, and through that, we should be spared from "*alilah*," libel, that people should not speak badly about us to cause us harm.

We also ask that when our time comes, we should not leave this world in a gruesome way, and rather, through a natural death. A *misah meshunah* is death by sword, hunger or some type of catastrophe, in contrast to death from old age or disease, which is considered to be natural (*Rashi Taanis* 11a, beginning with *misah*). Likewise, we continue to ask that we should not fall ill with "*chalayim ra'im*," bad illnesses that torture the body (*Rashi Avodah Zarah* 55a, beginning with *ra'im*), and that if "*mikrim ra'im*" happen in the world, we should merit special protection that we should not be harmed by them *chalilah*.

Mei'ayin hara – that Hashem should remove it from me so that it should not control me, **milashon hara** – that people should not speak *lashon hara* about me, **mimalshinus** – that others should not slander me, **chalilah**, **mei'eidus sheker** – that others should not say false testimony about me, **sinas habrios** – that I should not be hated by others, **me'alilah** – that others should not accuse me libelously in order to do bad to me, **mimisah meshunah** – from a gruesome death that is not the natural way, **mei'chalayim ra'im** – from bad illnesses that torture the body, **mimikrim ra'im** from bad things that come upon the world.

Kaddish With a Minyan of Two People and Eight Neshamos

This story was heard firsthand by Harav Yisrael Meir Lau, *shlita*, who was present when it occurred. It is being publicized now, ahead of Shabbos Hagadol, to mark 76 years since it took place on Shabbos Hagadol 5706. He related:

It was towards the end of the dreadful war, after millions of pure Jews had been slaughtered *al Kiddush Hashem*. The handful of survivors, myself among them, were mired in the horrors of the notorious Buchenwald camp.

At the time, not one of us dreamed that within three weeks, we would experience the beginning of the end of our suffering with the liberation. At the time, we lay on our bunks on the verge of despair. We already knew that we were mere remnants, survivors of a world that had been decimated. We had no idea what we were supposed to look ahead to.

I was just three years old when the war broke out. Now, as an eight year old child, I didn't remember much from before... I knew that I was from the town of Piotrkov, where my father served as the Rav. I knew that in the next hut over, near my older brother, were a father and son from that town, Reb Leibel Psighorski and his son Moshe.

As the war neared its end, Reb Leibel grew weaker. That Shabbos Hagadol, his tortured soul ascended to the Heavens. He left behind his son Moshe, who was now orphaned of both parents, and alone in the world.

Despite the fact that in the five years of horror that had passed we had seen everything, we could not help but shed a tear at the sight of poor Moishele, who was brought to the hut to bid his father a final farewell, before the body was sent to the unknown. We all gazed at him sadly, but then, the unexpected happened. Just before the body was taken out of the hut, Moishele stood in the doorway and shouted to the small crowd standing there:

"It is true that my father will not merit a *levayah*, and that I will never know where he is buried, but I am his son, and I will not forego the *Kaddish* that I am obligated to say for him. Give me a *siddur*!"

"Who can bring me a *siddur*?" the boy asked again – even though he had not opened a Jewish book in five years. "I don't know *Kaddish* by heart," he continued. But we had no way to help him. In a place like Buchenwald, one couldn't even dream of finding a Jewish text.

"Don't worry," someone tried to reassure him. "The war will be over soon and we'll all go home. At home you can say *Kaddish* for your father properly..." But Moshe was not at all calmed by this. It was doubtful that he believed that a day would come when he would return home. There was a reasonable chance, he knew, that this would be his first and last opportunity to say *Kaddish* for his father, and he did not want to give it up.

"Get me a *siddur*, I must say *Kaddish*!" Moshe said. He suddenly burst into weeping, and the heartrending sobs made us try to go the extra step for him. Finally, one of the people standing there approached and whispered in his ear. "Listen, on the edge of the camp there is a laundry room where they wash the dead prisoners' clothes so that they can be given to other prisoners. Since the camp opened, it has been managed by a fine Jew from Germany. They say he came here at a time when it was still possible to smuggle such things into the camp. Go over and ask him – but make sure that the area is clear of hostile ears. Perhaps he can help you."

Moishe'le, armed with a steely

determination to get what he wanted, did not wait. He ran to the laundry room, checked to make sure no one but the launderer was there doing his work, and then approached and asked in a choking, pleading voice: "I was orphaned of my father a short time ago. I need to say *Kaddish* and to do that I need a *siddur*. Please give me your *siddur* for just a few minutes; I'll read the *Kaddish* and I'll give it back."

The Jew, who was apparently taken aback by the direct nature of the request, tried to evade at first, as he screamed at the boy: "Are you crazy? Does this look like the shtetl to you? You're in Buchenwald, my friend, there are no *siddurim* here. Stop talking nonsense!"

But apparently, the refusal only intensified the boy's tenacity. He dug into his pocket and pulled out the ultimate weapon, the only possession he had in Buchenwald, and waved it in the laundryman's face: his daily ration of bread, on which his life depended. "Today is Shabbos and I know that on Shabbos we are not allowed to fast, but still, the mitzvah of *kibbud av* is more important. For my father's honor, I'm ready to give my life. Please take this slice of bread, and give me the *siddur* for a few minutes."

At this point, the older man's heart broke. His eyes filled with tears and he said to the boy, "I'm an old man, and I'm not sure I will get out of here alive. Take your bread and eat it. Wait till I get back. If someone comes in, tell them I went out for a moment."

Ten minutes passed until the man returned. He looked around furtively to make sure no one saw, and then pulled out a small, faded *siddur* and handed it to Moishele.

Suddenly, the older man gasped. "Hey, we have a problem! To say *Kaddish*, we need a *minyan*. Where are we going to get a *minyan* here in the laundry room?"

But the boy already had an answer. "While I was waiting, I thought of that as well," he said.

Then he pointed to the striped prisoner pajamas hanging on the line to dry. "These clothes served Jews who were killed *al Kiddush Hashem* just yesterday. The souls of these *Yidden* are surely hovering in the air. We have eight sets of pajamas, and together with us two, we have a *minyan*."

The innocent idea found favor in the eyes of the older man, and there in the laundry room in Buchenwald, with a *minyan* comprised of two Jews and eight pairs of pajamas, the youthful cry was heard: "**Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei Rabba!**"

Rav Lau continued the story:

Decades passed. One day, I was informed of the passing of the *mechanech*, Reb Moshe Psighorski, *zt"l*, and I was asked to deliver a *hesped* at his *levayah*. It was well attended by many *chassidim* and his large family.

Instead of a *hesped*, I began to tell the assemblage the story of the *Kaddish* that the *niftar* had said that unforgettable Shabbos Hagadol for his father. Then I turned to the *mitnah* and I said:

"Moishe'le, look, your children are standing around you with *siddurim*, and they do not have to give up their portion of bread to say *Kaddish* for you..." With those words, I concluded the *hesped*, and then, with great pride, amidst hundreds of *Yidden*, his sons cried: "**Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei Rabba!**"