

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS CHUKAS

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Torah Lishmah Purifies the Impure

"זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה" (יט ב)

Many have raised the question of why the Torah begins the *parashah* of *Parah Adumah*, which addresses purifying the impure, with the words "*zos chukas haTorah*." Wouldn't it seem more apt to begin with the words "*zos chukas hataharah*", similar to the beginning of the *parashah* of *Pesach* (*Shemos* 12:43): "*zos chukas haPesach*"?

Harav Kalev Feivel Schlesinger, the Rav of Topoltchan, explained:

Chazal (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 19 1) emphasized the remarkable paradox that exists in the laws of *Parah Adumah*: while it purified the impure, it also made those who were pure impure, as all those who are involved in its preparation become impure. If one looks closely, he will see that we find a similar contrast regarding the influence of Torah learning. *Chazal* say (*Taanis* 7a): "When one engages in learning *Torah lishmah*, his Torah becomes the elixir of life...and when one engages in Torah not *lishmah* [in order to annoy his friend (*Tosfos* ibid ad loc. *vechol*)] it becomes for him a deathly poison." That same Torah learning that purifies and revives the one who learns *lishmah*, also causes one who learns not *lishmah* to become impure, and even to death.

In order to reconcile this contrast, the Torah begins the *parashah* of *Parah Adumah* with the *passuk* "*zos chukas haTorah*", to say – the one learns [*Parah Adumah*] should not wonder about this contrast in its laws, because even with Torah learning itself, we find a similar contrast.

Moreover, learning Torah that is not

'Eifer, Metzora, Nidchei – Amen'

"ואסף איש טהור את אפר הפרה" (יט ט)

The *Baal Haturim* explains that there are two additional *pesukim* where the word "*v'asaf*" is used. The first is "*v'asaf hametzora*" (*Melachim* II 5:11) and the second is "*V'asaf nidchei Yisrael*" (*Yeshayah* 11:12). He explained the connection between the three *pesukim*: When we will merit that the words "*v'asaf nidchei Yisrael*" will be fulfilled at the time of the Redemption, then "*v'asaf hametzora*" – then all the diseases will be eradicated from the world, including *tzara'as*, and death will also be suspended forever (*Yeshayah* 25:8). Hence, the words "*v'asaf ... es eifer haparah*" will also be fulfilled, because there will not be any more need to purify those who become impure because of contact with the deceased.

Harav Meir Zev Hakohen Zelcer, a *dayan* in Munkatch, added that the acronym of the subjects mentioned in these *pesukim* "אפר, מצורע, נדח" is "amen" – to teach us that in the merit of being strict to answer amen we will merit the Geulah and the promises alluded to in these *pesukim*.

Divrei Meir [Rav M.Z. Zelcer]

lishmah is so severe that it brings about the death of a person. Therefore, it was instituted that we ask each morning in *Birchas HaTorah*: "*Venihyeh anachnu... velomdei Torasecha lishmah*." Because only if we merit to learn Torah *lishmah* will the Torah be an elixir for life for us.

Toras Bar Nash

Tefillah Where the Heifer's Ashes Are Buried

"וכבס האסף את אפר הפרה את בגדיו וטמא עד הערב והיתה לבני ישראל ולגר הגר בתוכם לחקת עולם" (יט י)

The *Gemara* (*Niddah* 6b, according to *Rashi* ibid, ad loc. *chevraya*) explains that during the times of the Amoraim, many years after the Churban, there were still Sages in the Galilee who were strict to make their wine and oil in purity. This was so that if the *Bais Hamikdash* would suddenly be rebuilt, they should have oil for the *menachos* and wine for the *nesachim*. The *Rishonim* (*Ra"sh*, *Challah* 4 8; *Rosh*, *Halachos* 35:14) proved from that that during the times of the Amoraim it was still possible to obtain ashes from the *Parah Adumah*. If not, how were those Sages able to purify themselves from *tumas meis*?

The *Chida* wrote something wondrous on this subject: "And I humbly [suggest] and it is clear to me that the Arizal was purified with the ashes of the *parah* by Eliyahu *zachur latov*, and then he was bestowed with unbelievable *Ruach Hakodesh*. And although I didn't see or hear any *remez* of this, my heart tells me that the Rav, ז"ל, went to great lengths to conceal this."

When the *Divrei Yechezkel* of Shineva visited Eretz Yisrael, he came to one of the mountains between Tzefas and Teveriah he lingered in prayer for a long time. Harav Shmuel Heller, the Rav of Tzefas said, that he had a *kabbalah* that this was the place where the ashes of the *Parah Adumah* were buried, and apparently the *Divrei Yechezkel* sensed that with his *Ruach Hakodesh* and therefore he stood there and davened.

Midbar Kedmos, Ma'areches 26; *Divrei Naftali*

A Brachah Without Amen - Is Like Half a Body

This Monday, 11 Tammuz, is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe Harav Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, who was called by the sages of his generation the 'Sar Bais Hazohar.' In his *sefer*, *Pri Kodesh Hilulim* (*Shaar Habrachos* Chapter 4) he calls on all to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each day. He writes:

"One should say *Birchos Hashachar* in shul, so that each one can answer amen to his friend's *brachah*. And a *brachah* without amen is literally like half a body..."



Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Taaneh Emunim (10): The Ninth Principle – Eternality of Torah

This Torah Will Never Be Replaced

The ninth principle obligates us to believe that the Torah that we have is eternal; HaKadosh Baruch Hu will never replace it with a different Torah, and will not alter, add or detract from it, as it says (*Devarim* 13:1): “Everything that I am commanding you – be careful to fulfill it; do not add to it, and do not subtract from it.” Therefore, the Torah commanded that any Navi who includes in his prophecy a directive to change something in the Torah is a *navi sheker*, a false prophet, and is punished by *chenek*, strangling. (*Rambam, Peirush Hamishnayos, Sanhedrin*, Introduction to Chapter 10; *Yesodei HaTorah* 9 1)

This principle is a continuation of the previous one, in which we declared our faith that the entire Torah was given to Moshe from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. In this principle, we declare that this Torah, not only has not changed until now, but it also will never change.

One who denies this principle and says that the Torah can be changed, *chalilah*, with even one tiny letter, is denying the Metzui Hashem. This is because “*Kudsha Brich Hu v'Oraisa chad hu*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu and the Torah are one,” (see *Zohar Acharei* 73 1). Just like there is no change in the Creator, likewise, the Torah will never change. (*Minchah Belulah Bashemen* [Budapest 5688] Vol. II, p. 6)

Including Torah Sheba'al Peh

This principal also applies to the Oral Torah. The *Rambam* writes (*Peirush Hamishnayos* ibid): “This Torah was copied down from the Creator, and no other. It must not be added to or subtracted from, not in the Written Torah nor the Oral Torah.”

It should be noted that the directive not to add or subtract from the Oral Torah does not relate to the *gedarim* and *seyagim*, the boundaries and stringencies that Chazal instituted in order to strengthen the observance of the *mitzvos*. That is because the Sages have been instructed to institute these additions, as the *Me'iri* writes (*Chibbur Hateshuvah, Chelek Meishiv Nefesh*, 1:8): “In our holy Torah, which should not be added to or subtracted from – except *gedarim* and *seyagim* – not to renew the matter, only to preserve its ways and establish its structure, as it says (*Moed Kattan* 5a): ‘*Asu mishmeres lemeshmarti*.’”

Harav Baruch of Kossov says that this principle that establishes that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah are eternal is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Mishlei* 12:19) “*Sfas emes tikon l'ad*.” The word שפת אמת is an acronym for שפת אמת, the Oral Torah, and אמת is an acronym for אמת, the Written Torah. Therefore, both the Written and Oral Torah, “*tikon la'ad*,” are eternal, without any changes or additions. (*Nechmad Vena'im, Likutei Amarim* 36)

Reality Is Submitted to Torah

The exceeding importance of this principle has been evident throughout the generations, notably during the period of the Haskalah, when there were those who tried to claim that the Torah had to be adapted to the reality of life that has changed over the generations. *Gedolei Yisrael* waged valiant battles against these views. The justness of

Lo yachalif ha'Kel – one of the *mitzvos* in the Torah for another one *velo yamir daso* – and He will not change the Torah that He gave to His Nation Yisrael *l'olamim* for eternity *lezulaso* to another Torah.

this war became clear within a short time, when it was proven to all how far those misguided people had fallen, not to mention those who followed their ways.

A human king has limited wisdom, and he may alter his decrees in accordance with the circumstances. *L'havdil*, the Creator foresaw all the generations from the start, and with His tremendous wisdom, created the Torah in a perfect fashion to be suitable for every single person at all times. Therefore, it is impossible to change it to adapt to the times, because the reality that exists at any time, and the holy Torah, were created by the same Creator, Who surely knows to adapt the reality to the Torah, and Torah to the reality. (*Rosh Amanah* [Abarbanel] Ch. 13)

One of the heads of the Maskilim once came to Harav Tzvi Hirsh, the Av Bais Din of Berlin and tried to suggest his distorted ideas to nullify some of the *mitzvos* in the Torah. Instead of an answer, Rav Tzvi Hirsch said: You are like that wagon driver hired by a merchant to cart his goods to the fair. It was the middle of the winter, the roads were filled with mud and the carriage slid and tipped over into the shoulder of the road; the merchandise inside was lost. The merchant summoned the wagon driver to a *din Torah*, and the *dayan* ruled that the wagon driver had to pay. “Where did you learn that from?” the wagon driver angrily asked the *dayan*, who replied, “From our holy Torah.”

“Ahhhh...” snickered the foolish wagon driver. “Now it is all clear. Our Torah was given in the summer, when the roads were dry and paved. If I would have lost control of the wagon during the summer, then I would indeed, have to pay. But now it is winter, and the Torah did not speak about such days...” (*Yalkut Lekach Tov, Beha'alo'secha*)

The early Yemenite songster, Rabi Yichye Altzahari, said it in his witty words: “Strange times, and it will not be changed for eternity.” (*Techalel L'Simchas Torah, Piyut Emunah Yetzarah*)

Hashem Will Not Change His Religion

In the *piyut* of *Yigdal*, the singer writes this principle as follows: “*Lo yachalif ha'Kel velo yamir daso l'olamim lezulaso*.” Hashem will not change or alter His religion for any other one, for eternity. Thus, the poet addressed the two points that are emphasized in this principle: Aside for “*lo yamir daso l'olamim lezulaso*”, meaning that Hashem will never change the entire holy Torah for another Torah, He also will not change any of the *mitzvos* that are written in the Torah. (*Maggid Tzedek in Siddur Sha'ar Harachamim*)

Why does it say “*lo yamir daso l'olamim... lezulaso*”? According to the rules of *dikduk*, it should have said “*lezulasah*” – because the word “*das*”, religion, is *nekeivah*, female.

One explanation is that the wording of this principle relates to the previous principle. Because the Torah was given to us by Moshe, the father of all *Nevi'im*, surely “*lo yachalif ha'Kel velo yamir daso*” – He would not give the Torah to any other Navi aside for Moshe Rabbeinu. (*Dover Shalom in Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*)

A Yeshuah at the Right Time and at the Right Place

This remarkable story, which seems to be more typical of the era of the holy Tannaim, was related by the Rav of Ramat Elchanan, Bnei Brak, Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, *shlita*. It sheds light on another facet of the personality of his grandfather, Harav Aryeh Levine, *zt"l*, who, in addition to his erudition and piety, exceptional *chesed* and Torah knowledge, was also a remarkable *baal bitachon*.

Harav Silberstein, *shlita*, writes that he was so surprised by this story that he wondered if it should be published, but after consulting with his brother-in-law, Harav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, the latter instructed him that he could and should publicize the story. This way, the members of this generation would learn what a high level of *bitachon* one can reach, and how great is the virtue of a *refillah* that emerges from the depths of the heart.

The story took place towards the end of the British Mandate rule in Eretz Yisrael. At the time, Rav Aryeh served as the *menahel* in the famed Eitz Chaim *cheder*, where the children of Yerushalayim were given a pure *chinuch*.

These were the years following World War Two, during which tens of millions of soldiers and civilians lost their lives, and when many cities were decimated – among them European Jewry, which was nearly annihilated. The world was in a deep financial crisis, and this directly affected the residents of Yerushalayim Shel Ma'alah and its *mosdos*, as many of them had been almost completely supported by donors from abroad.

The signs of the crisis were evident at the Eitz Chaim *cheder*. The *cheder's* coffers were empty, there was no money coming from abroad, and the parent body, most of whom where *avreichim* who subsisted on meager *kollel* stipends, could not pay even the nominal tuition fees that the *cheder* requested.

As a result, the *cheder* could not pay the *melamdim* their salaries. As *Chazal* say “If there is no *kemach*, flour, there is no Torah,” and there was great concern for the spiritual future of the children. The situation needed to be addressed immediately, and Rav Aryeh galvanized to help the administration of the *cheder*.

As noted, at the time he served as a *mashgiach*, and as part of his job, he was responsible to transfer the salaries for the staff members of the *cheder*. He did not carry the financial burden, but anyone who knew him was aware that there was no such concept as “there is none.” He volunteered to help the *hanhalah* in their difficult hour, and threw himself into doing so.

After trying various options with no success, Reb Aryeh did not give up; on the contrary, his *bitachon* in Hashem was stronger than ever. He envisioned the words of the *passuk* “*Al tivtechu b'nedivim...*

do not place your trust in the generous...*Ashrei she'Kel Yaakov b'ezro sivo al Hashem Elokav*.” He decided to go to the place from where the Shechinah never moves, to the Kosel, to pour his heart out to Hashem and plead with Him to open His treasury of abundance and send assistance from Above so that the *cheder* could pay its salaries and so that the sound of Torah should not be stilled for even a minute.

Reb Aryeh spent a long time davneing, and when he finished, his heart felt calm and confident. He was enveloped with a feeling of certainty and all the tension dissipated. He stepped back from the Kosel, as is customary, and was about to leave the site, sure that the *yeshuah* was at hand.

He had just about emerged from the Kosel plaza to the alleyways of the Mugrabim neighborhood that was adjacent to it at the time, when a young Arab approached him on a donkey. He handed him a package wrapped in old newspapers and said, “Take, take this...”

Reb Aryeh took the package and the Arab and his donkey disappeared from view without another word.

When Reb Aryeh opened the package, he was shocked to find it filled with money. He hurriedly closed the package, for fear that someone would notice, and hurried towards the *cheder* offices on Jaffa Road.

He climbed up the paths of the Mugrabim neighborhood and crossed the Jewish Quarter to Jaffa Gate; he emerged to Jaffa Road, and within a short time, was in his office in the *cheder* building. Only then did he begin to count the money. When he finished, he nearly fainted: the value of the bills was the exact sum of the shortfall that the *cheder* needed to pay the *melamdim's* salaries.

The family heard about this story in a very unusual way, and Rav Chaim Kanievsky, the grandson of Rav Aryeh Levine – son-in-law of his son-in-law Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, *zt"l* – instructed that it be publicized. He wanted to emphasize the message of the story, that when a person davens from the depths of his heart, and believes with all his being that only Hashem can save him from his troubles, his *yeshuah* will come quickly from the most unexpected place.

Hishtadlus, effort, is our obligation, but the *yeshuah* is only in the Hands of Hashem, and He alone will find the right way to send salvation to His beloved children.