

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



392

PARASHAS V'ESCHANAN

תשפ"א

Pearls of Emunim

Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

Moshe's Tefillah Was Delayed

"ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר...; ויתעבר ה' בי למענכם ולא שמע אלי" (ג כג;כו)

Chazal say (*Devarim Rabbah* 11 10) that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu informed Moshe that it had been decreed that he would not enter the Land, Moshe treated it as a minor matter, because he was sure that he would easily be able to annul the decree with the power of his *tefillah*. He made a comparison and said, "Yisrael sinned terribly a number of times, and when I asked for mercy for them, Hashem accepted my *tefillas*...I, who have never sinned since my youth, will certainly be answered when I pray for myself. Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw that Moshe took this lightly, and did not begin immediately to pray, He issued an oath that Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael."

Rabi Eliyahu Hatzarfati, a disciple of the Ohr Hachaim and one of the leading sages of Fez, found proof of the words of this *Midrash* from this *passuk*, as Moshe said: Because I pleaded with Hashem to annul the decree only 'ba'eis hahi,' at that time, and I did not awaken myself to *tefillah* immediately when the decree was rendered, therefore, "Hashem grew angry at me...and did not listen to me," – to accept my *tefillah*.

Kol Eliyahu

Through Tefillah, Moshe Merited Wider Vision

"עלה ראש הפסגה ושא עיניך ימה וצפנה ותימנה ומזרחה וראה בעיניך כי לא תעבר את הירדן הזה" (ד כז)

The *Ohr Hachaim* writes that because Chazal say (*Vayikra Rabbah* 10 5): "Tefillah accomplishes half," therefore, here, too, half of Moshe's *tefillah* was answered.

He asked for two things (*passuk* 25): "E'ebrah na ve'ereh, please, I should

'Shortened Days' Because of Dearth of Tefillah and Amen

"שמרת את חקי ואת מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום אשר יטב לך ולבניך אחריו למען תאריך ימים על האדמה אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך כל הימים" (ד מ)

Chazal (*Brachos* 54b) promised one who prolongs his *tefillah* that his days and years will also be extended. Based on this, Harav Asher Anshel Ben Moses Baer, explained the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 102:24): "Inah baderech kochi kitzar yamai, He has afflicted my strength on the way; He has shortened my days." Chazal say (*ibid* 3:2): "One who davens on the way, davens a short *tefillah*," so we find that because "He has afflicted my strength on the way," I was prevented from prolonging my *tefillah*, and therefore, "my days were shortened."

Similarly, the Rebbe Harav Eliezer Zev of Kretchnif added that the shortened days caused to those who travel because of their shortfall in *tefillah* is also caused by the fact that on their travels, they unwittingly lose out on answering many amens. Amen is also a tremendous *segulah* for a long life, as explained in Chazal (*Brachos* 47a): "Anyone who prolongs with amen – his days and years are extended."

Chidas Shimshon [Furth 5545] p. 8b; Olamo Shel Abba, p. 437

pass and I should see." One part of his *tefillah* was answered: "Ure'eh, and see with your eyes."

The *Imrei Emes* asked: Moshe did not need to daven to merit to see the Land, because he had already been told before he asked "e'ebrah na v'ereh," as it says (*Bamidbar* 27 12:13): "Go up to this Avarim Mountain and look at the land that I have given to

Bnei Yisrael; after you have seen it, you too, will be gathered to your people." In what way then, was his *tefillah* answered?

He explained: As long as he did not daven for it, Moshe was promised regular vision, like someone who looks out from the height of a mountain and sees everything that his vision allows him to take in. But after he davened, and thus accomplished half of his request, additional vision was given to Moshe, as Chazal says (*Yalkut Shimoni V'eschanan* 823) that with this vision "Hashem showed him the far as if it was close, and what is not openly visible as visible, and all that is called Eretz Yisrael."

Ohr Hachaim; Imrei Emes 5692

Tefillah Influences the Type of Closeness

"כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו כה" אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו" (ד ז)

Why did the Torah write "krovim Eilav..." in the plural?

Harav Avraham Chaim Schorr, author of *Toras Chaim*, explained:

The concept of 'kirvah,' closeness, in terms that humans can relate to, does not necessarily describe family relations, because there is also closeness generated by the circumstances, such as the closeness between a master and his servant. Similarly, HaKadosh Baruch Hu treats us with varying levels of closeness. Sometimes He answers our *tefillas* like a father answering his children, and sometimes like a master answering his servant – all depending on the way we offer the *tefillah*.

This is what the *passuk* says: "Ki mi goy gadol asher Lo Elokim krovim Eilav" – in a number of levels of closeness, "k'Hashem Elokeinu" Who answers us "bechol kra'einu Eilav" – based on the manner of our *tefillah*.

Toras Chaim Sanhedrin 38b

Shomrim Laboker

Erev Shabbos Parashas V'eschanan (14 Av) is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Tzvi Hirsch of Liska, zy" a. He wrote in his *sefer Shaarei Hayashar* on *Tehillim* (130:6) about the virtue of answering amen:

Answering amen out loud protects a person and nullifies bad decrees. This is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 130:6): "Nafshi l'Hashem mishomrim laboker." "Nafshi l'Hashem" – if the soul of a person will praise Hashem when answering amen "mishomrim laboker" and he is careful to answer amen aloud, then he will merit "shomrim laboker" – that his soul will be protected from harsh decrees.

Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



'One Who Answers Amen Is Greater Than the One Who Makes the Brachah'

A Compilation of Explanations (1)

There is a famous statement om the Talmud, in two places, that teaches us the great virtue of answering amen. The first mention is in *Maseches Brachos* (53b) and the second is *Maseches Nazir* (66b):

"Rabi Yosi says, 'The one who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the brachah.' Rabi Nehora'i says, 'Hashamayim [a term of oath]! This is the case. Know that in war, the simple soldiers start the war, and the strong ones win it.' (*Brachos* 53b) In war, the simple soldiers start the battle, and the elite soldiers follow them towards the end of the battle to complete the victory. Similarly, answering amen at the end of the brachah is more important than the brachah.

Why did they choose to compare the brachah and amen to war?

The *Maharsha* explains: *Chazal* say (*Pesachim* 118a), "The sustenance of a person is as hard as splitting the sea." Indeed, it would seem that the person's sustenance should come to him with great difficulty and scarcity, because of the curse that Adam Harishon was cursed with (*Bereishis* 3:17) — "The soil will be cursed because of you." But if a person is careful to make *brachos* and answer amen according to *halachah*, the *brachos* and the amens become advocates for him, and present merits against the prosecutors who seek to have the curse of Adam Harishon fulfilled. Thus, a person has the merit that HaKadosh Baruch Hu should bestow upon him *parnassah* in abundance and with ease.

This is how the war on the prosecuting angels is fought. With the power of the brachah, a war begins against the prosecutors, and the amen answered after it tips the scales in favor, like those elite soldiers who decide the battle.

Many have asked about these words of the *Gemara*: It would seem that the *mevarech* initiates and he is the one who begins the mitzvah. Without him, there is no brachah and no amen. Why, then, is the one who answers amen greater than the one who made the brachah?

Following is a compilation of beautiful explanations from *gedolim* throughout the generations, who each explain, in their way, what is the virtue of amen that makes it more important than the brachah.

1. Amen - Fulfillment and Signature

The *Rashba* explains: The *mevarech* is not coming to establish facts, rather to detail, through the brachah, what he is expressing his thanks for. In contrast, the one who answers amen establishes a fact, by declaring assertively that the words of the *mevarech* are truth. So we find that the amen adds to the brachah the *kiyum*, the continued existence, that it needs, and therefore, it is more important than the brachah itself.

Rabbeinu Bechayei (*Shemos* 14:31) compares the recital of the brachah and the answering of amen to a testimony:

One who makes a brachah testifies with his brachah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu

is the Source of all blessing and the King of the world. But he is only one witness to this, and the Torah tells us (*Shoftim* 17:6): "Al pi shnei eidim...yakum davar," two witnesses are necessary to establish something. So when the one answering amen joins this testimony, then there are two witnesses. Just like the testimony is affirmed by the second witness, likewise, the one who answers amen affirms the testimony of the *mevarech* and therefore his virtue is greater than that of the *mevarech*.

The *Kli Yakar* compares the brachah to the writing in the body of a document, and the amen to the signature. One writes a document granting a gift to a friend. But if he does not sign that document, his wishes will have no validity. Here, too, just like the signature affirms what is written in the document, answering amen affirms the words of the *mevarech*, and therefore, the one who answers is greater than the *mevarech*. (*Olelos Ephraim* Vol. III, 460)

2. Amen - Completion

The *Rosh* explains: *Chazal* say (*Sotah* 13b): "Anyone who does something and does not complete it, and someone else comes and completes it, the passuk considers the [person] who finishes as if he did it [entirely]." Based on this we can say that while the *mevarech* begins the mitzvah, the one who answers — completes it. And because the mitzvah is called in the name of the one who finishes it, therefore, "the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*." (*Tosafos HaRosh*, *Brachos* ibid)

3. Amen - Service of the Heart

The *Me'iri* explained: *Chazal* (*Tannis* 2a) describe *tefillah* as "avodah shehi balev," because it requires *kavanah* of the heart. The way of the world is that the listener is able to concentrate on things that he hears and to reach a state of *kavanah* of the heart more than the one who is uttering the words. Because it is usually easier to have *kavanah* when listening than when speaking, the virtue of the listener of the brachah who answers amen after it is greater than the one actually making the brachah. (*Bais Habechirah LaMe'iri*, *Nazir* ibid)

4. Amen - Complementing Hashem's Name

Some explained this according to what *Chazal* learn (*Pesachim* 50a) from the *passuk* that a person must not utter the special Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the Shem Hav-ayah, the way it is written. Rather, it should be pronounced as if it is written with an *aleph*, *dalet*, *nun* and *yud*. (*Pesachim* 50a).

They explain: One who makes the brachah only utters the Name of Adnus, but with amen, the Shem Hav-ayah is also alluded to. This is because amen is numerically equivalent to 91, which is equal to the Hashem's Name as it is written [Hav-ayah], and as it is read [Ad-nai], and together they equal 91. So we find that amen completes the Name of Hashem and therefore it is more important than the brachah. (*Harokeach*, *Hilchos Seudah* 330; *Baal Haturim*, *Devarim* 27:26)

Tefillah That Brought the Vocal Chords Back to Life

The *mussar* giant and paragon of sterling *middos*, the *meshgiach* of Kfar Chassidim, Harav Eliyahu Lopian, *zt"l*, used to dedicate a significant portion of his *drashos* to convey to his students the importance and virtue of *tefillah*. In his role as the *menahel ruchani* of Yeshivas Kfar Chassidim, he would require that each of his *talmidim* learn the practical *halachos* of the importance of *tefillah* with *kavanah* as a tool that could be used to break down barriers. He would especially expound on the importance of *tefillah* recited with tears and weeping. He used to cite the *Sefer Chassidim* (130): "There is a person who does not have merits to deserve to have Hashem accept his *tefillah*, yet he prays with intensity and tears in his eyes; even though he does not have merits and good deeds, Hashem accepts his *tefillah* and accedes to his request."

He was very strict about his *tefillah* being recited properly. His *talmidim* would stand in awe each day anew as they watched him daven to Hashem like a son conversing with his father, completely detached from the world around him.

Among the *talmidim* in the yeshivah there was a well-known story that took place while the yeshivah was in Knesses Chizkiyahu in Zichron Yaakov. Rav Elya served as the *masghiach* there. One day a simple farmer happened upon the yeshivah during davening. When he emerged, he was asked about his impression of the yeshivah, and he innocently replied:

"I saw everyone davening, except one person — an elderly man who stood near the eastern wall, next to the *aron kodesh*, and he was deeply engrossed in conversation with someone..." That elderly Yid was none other than the *meshgiach* Harav Elya Lopian; when he davened he appeared to be speaking, *kaviyachol*, with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Rav Elya practiced what he preached, and thus merited to see his *tefillos* answered. There are many stories of *yeshuos* experienced by his *talmidim*, which they attribute to the power of his *tefillah*; due to its purity and sincerity, it was accepted by Hashem.

One of those stories was shared by the person it happened to, the renowned Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, Harav Chaim Shmuelewitz, *zt"l*, which he related in his emotional *hesped* for the *Mashgiach*:

Rav Chaim began the *hesped* by apologizing, and noting that truthfully, there was no one in the generation who could eulogize Rav Elya, and as such, we are not obligated to do so, because in any case we are not capable of it. Rav Elya would have been considered a *tzaddik yesod olam* even three generations earlier, he said, and no *maspid* in the world could have described for members of our generation the concept 'Reb Elya.'

"To give a *hesped* and to describe to you Reb Elya's personality is not something I can do," Rav Chaim said emotionally. "But there is one thing I must tell you: About eight years ago, I was dangerously ill, and was near death. Do you know who saved me? Do you know whose *tefillos* spared me? Rav Elya's *tefillos*!"

"I cannot share the details of the story, but I do know with certainty that Reb Elya's *tefillos* saved me. And because I never thanked him for this, I feel that it

behooves me to do so now, in public."

The *Mashgiach* of Kamenitz, Harav Moshe Aharon Stern, *zt"l*, who was very close to Rav Chaim, added:

After I heard Rav Chaim's *hesped*, in which he revealed a bit but left so much more unknown about Rav Elya's power of *tefillah*, I was curious to hear the full story. Reb Chaim was hesitant to expound and share all the details, but after I asked his family and close confidants, I heard the full story in all its detail.

It was eight years before Reb Elya's passing, when one fine day, Rav Chaim's voice suddenly went silent; he could not speak. For Reb Chaim, who was one of the biggest disseminators of Torah in his generation, losing his voice was like a death sentence. The spiritual lives of hundreds and thousands of *bnei yeshivah* depended on his deep *shiurim* and his *sichos*, which were renowned and beloved.

Rav Chaim sought the advice of doctors, and after a series of tests, they discovered that his vocal chords had become paralyzed. Because this was a rare and very unfamiliar condition in the medical world at the time, the doctors did not have an inkling about how to treat it. They were compelled to tell Rav Chaim that they were unable to provide any solutions for his issue.

Distraught, Rav Chaim traveled from Yerushalayim to Kfar Chassidim, accompanied by a relative, to consult with Rav Elya about what to do. When Reb Elya heard the story from the relative, he sighed deeply, conveying his empathy for the Rosh Yeshivah's pain. Then he said:

"I cannot imagine a possibility that the Ribono shel Olam will not give Rav Chaim Stutcher [as Rav Chaim was known in the yeshivah world] the opportunity to deliver more *shiurim*. Your job is not yet over; there are so many *divrei Torah* and *mussar* that you must still give over to the world, and I'm sure you will merit to continue to say them very soon."

Rav Elya then asked Rav Chaim for his mother's name, and said that he would daven for him from then on.

Rav Chaim returned home to Yerushalayim confident in Rav Elya's power of *tefillah*. Indeed, a short time later, the yeshivah resonated with the news that Rav Chaim had ascended to the podium as always, and had begun to deliver a deep *shiur* in the *sugya* being studied, as though nothing had happened... From that day on Rav Chaim grew stronger. Careful to comply with the *Mashgiach's* every word — that had so much more *divrei Torah* and *mussar* to convey—he added to his regular *shiurim* in Torah and *mussar*. He began to deliver regular *mussar sichos* and *shiurim* in *machshavah*.

A few days later, Rav Chaim returned to the office of the professor who had diagnosed his condition as irreversible. The professor examined Rav Chaim's throat, and he looked truly shocked. He did not believe that this was the same patient he had seen and diagnosed just a short time prior.

The *tefillos* of the *Mashgiach* were effective and Rav Chaim's vocal chords became active once again.

Hamashgiach D'Kamenitz, p. 203