

Ve'chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



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PARASHAS VAYEIRA

תשפ"ב

Pearls of Emunim

Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

Tefillah for Hachnassas Orchim

"והוא עמד עליהם תחת העץ ויאכלו" (י"ח ה)

Harav Yeshaya of Przedbórz, a *talmid* of the Chozeh of Lublin, explained the word of the *passuk* "omed" according to the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 6b) "Ein Amidah ela tefillah" – that the word *amidah* refers to *tefillah*, as follows: Avraham Avinu – the pillar of *chesed* – stood and davened to Hashem to merit to fulfill the mitzvah of *hachnassas orchim* properly – that his guests would want the food he served them, and that he should have enough food to satisfy them.

Otzros Hachen [Harav N.G. Weintraub]

Lot Instituted Tefillah Vasikin

"ויאמר לוט אלהם אל נא אדני; הנה נא מצא עבדך חן בעיניך ותגדל חסדך אשר עשית עמדי להחיות את נפשי ואנכי לא אוכל להמלט ההרה פן תדבקני הרעה ומת" (י"ט י"ח-י"ט)

There is a well-known statement by Chazal (*Brachos* 26b): "*Tefillos avos tekanum*," the *tefillas* were instituted by the Avos. The *Avudraham* (*Tikkun Hatefillas*) wrote that the second letter of the name of each of the Avos alludes to the *tefillah* that he instituted: אברהם is *boker*, morning; יצחק is *tzaharayim* – or afternoon and עקב is *erev*, evening. The **Chiddushei HaRim** added that the *tefillah* of *vasikin* was instituted by Lot, and this is also indicated by the second letter of his name לוט – *vasikin*.

Harav Shaul Moshe Silberman, the Av Beis Din of Viershov, brought proof of the Chiddushei HaRim's words from the words of *Rashi* here (and in the *Targum Yonasan*) that by saying "הנה נא..." – Lot had in mind to daven to Hashem to recant on the destruction of Tzoar, and to give him a chance to flee to that city. This *tefillah*, which

The Brachos of Avraham Will Accompany His Guests L'Asid Lavo

"ויטע אשל בבאר שבע ויקרא שם בשם ה' א-ל-עולם" (כ"א ל"ג)

Chazal differed (*Sotah* 10a, cited in *Rashi*) regarding the explanation of "eshel." Some explain it as an orchard, while others say it was an inn. *Rashi* (*Sotah*, *ibid* ad loc. *pundak*) explains that one who thinks that "eshel" is an inn is relying on the acronym ל"ויה שתייה ל"ויה - eating, drinking and an escort. Because in the inn that he established, Avraham Avinu would provide his guests with food and drink, and then would escort them on their way. The rest of the *passuk*, "*Vayikra sham beShem Hashem*," is explained by Chazal (*ibid* b, cited in *Rashi*) that through the אשל Avraham Avinu would cause the Name of Hashem to be on everyone's lips. Because when his guests wanted to bless him after eating and drinking he said to them: "Did you eat from mine? It is from the Master of the World that you ate! Thank and praise the One who said, and the world was created."

Harav Mordechai Rothstein, one of the *dayanim* of Halmin, added an explanation for the word "*levayah*": The holy *Zohar* states (*Eikev* 271 1) that if one recites *Birchas Hamazon* with *kavanah*, then at his passing, his *brachos* escort him and announce that he made *brachos* to Hashem with *kavanah*. Because Avraham Avinu would educate his guests to make blessings on their food, he gave them the merit of *brachos* that were destined to escort them after their passing.

Bais Va'ad L'Chachamim

was eventually answered, was offered by Lot at daybreak, the time of *vasikin*, as it states (*passuk* 23): "The sun emerged on the land and Lot came to Tzoar."

He'aros Hagrasha"m at the beginning of *Sefer Pardes Yosef*, Vol. II

'Ka'asher Amar' – Against the Mekatregim

"וה'פקד את שרה כאשר אמר ויעש ה' לשרה כאשר דבר" (כ"א א)

What is the meaning of the emphasis on "*ka'asher amar*" – as he said? Is it surprising that HaKadosh Baruch Hu fulfills what He said He would?

Harav Yitzchak of Vorka would say that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to do good to Am Yisrael, He precedes by declaring His intentions before the *mekatregim*, the prosecuting forces, can jump in with the claim that Am Yisrael are not worthy of Hashem's benevolence. After the words have already been declared by Hashem, the *mekatregim* can no longer try to prevent this, because Hashem's words do not remain unfulfilled. This is what we are referring to in the *tefillah* of the Shalosh Regalim: "*Ka'asher ratzisa v'amarta levarcheinu*" – as You "wanted" our good, therefore immediately "*amarta levarcheinu*", You said to bless us, so that the prosecuting forces could not prevent this.

Based on this, **Harav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin** explained the meaning of the emphasis in the Torah in this *passuk* of "*V'Hashem pakad es Sarah*." He explained that although through this a lofty soul such as Yitzchak descended to this world, the *mekatregim* could not prevent this, "*ka'asher amar*" – because the promise had already been made (*Bereishis* 18:14): "*lamoed ashuv eilecha ka'eis chayah uleSarah ben*."

Divrei Avi"v



Harav Raphael Baruch Toledano 18 Cheshvan 5731

Harav Raphael Baruch ben Rabi Yaakov Toledano was the Rav of Meknes, Morocco. In 5723, he made aliyah to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Bnei Brak. He passed away on 18 Cheshvan 5731 and was buried in the Ponevezh cemetery in Bnei Brak.

So that they should remember to answer amen...

Harav Toledano was known for his efforts to raise the awareness of answering amen according to halachah. Once, when he happened to daven in a distinguished shul, he noticed that some of the people davening there did not answer amen properly after the *brachos* of *Chazaras Hashatz*. At the end of davening, he climbed onto a bench, and began to rebuke the *tzibbur* for not being careful about amen. In response to a question by his grandson why he was not more mindful of his dignity, he replied: "I wanted them to remember my rebuke, and because Chazal said (*Chulin* 75b) that people remember strange things, why should I worry about my dignity and not the Dignity of my Creator?!" (*Mekabitzel*, Issue 33 p. 539)

They Gates of Gan Eden Are Opened for Him 3 A Compilation of Insights

Chazal (Shabbos 119b) promise wonderful reward for one who is careful to answer amen properly. They say: "Reish Lakish said: Anyone who answers amen with all his might has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2): 'Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim' – do not read it 'shomer emunim' but rather 'she'omrim amen.'" In this segment we will present additional insights and explanations from the *gedolim* through the generations about the essence of this reward and its special connection to the mitzvah of amen.

A Ticket to First Class

Chazal (Shabbos 119b) revealed to us that with a bit of effort, a person can merit to have the gates of Gan Eden opened for him; by being strict about an easy mitzvah like answering amen, he merits an entry card to the place where he will merit unfathomable closeness to Hashem. But despite that, many of us do not seem to sufficiently internalize the wondrous virtue that they can merit, and are not aware enough about answering amen properly. We can illustrate this with a beautiful parable attributed to the Chofetz Chaim:

There was a villager who needed to go to the big city. He prepared to hitch up his rickety wagon, but his wife stopped him and revealed to him that there was a new train line from the nearby town to the big city. It could help him get to the city quickly and with little effort. This villager, who had never heard of something called a 'train', needed an expansive and detailed explanation before he was convinced to abandon his wagon and to head for the rail platform in the next town.

A short time later, the villager was standing at the line in front of the ticket office. The platform was bustling with people, and he felt a flutter of excitement in his heart, which was fitting for someone who was about to travel on a train for the first time in his life. When his turn came, he went over to the ticket seller, with a pounding heart, and when the man asked him which class he wanted to purchase a ticket for, the villager was silent. He had no idea what the differences were. Instead of an answer, he handed the ticket seller his bundle of cash, and without thinking twice, the ticket seller counted out the money needed to purchase the most expensive ticket, for first class.

With the expensive ticket in his hand, the villager hurried toward the train. He didn't know where he had to go, and when he saw a big group of people pushing into one of the cars, he realized he had to push along with them. He had to use his elbows and expend quite some effort, but it was worth it when he was finally able to get onto the train, and even to find an empty seat next to a person wearing similarly simple clothes to himself.

A loud ringing of a bell warned that the conductor was coming. Everyone hurried to pull out their tickets, our villager among them. Apparently, his seatmate was as big a "maven" on trains as the villager, and when he saw that the villager's elegant ticket was different to the simple one most of the other passengers were holding, he warned the villager that it would be wise for him to hide in a corner, before the conductor came and banished him from the rail car.

When he heard this, the villager became alarmed, and bent down and stuffed himself under the bench. He thought that the conductor would not see him there. But while he was huddling down there, and trying to keep his feet out of sight in the narrow hiding place, he heard a thump. Unfortunately, it was none other than the heavyset conductor, who had tripped on his feet; he fell and became bruised. When he was finally able to get up, he dragged the villager out of his hiding place, shaking with fury: "Where is your ticket?!" he thundered.

The villager dug into his pocket and took out his creased ticket. Now the conductor's anger was replaced with pity and scorn. He was stunned at the boorishness of the villager, and mocked him, "Fool that you are! You have a ticket for the beautifully outfitted first class car! You can go to a much more dignified seat. Instead you sat in this cheap class, and if that's not enough, you even hid under the bench, literally at the feet of the others sitting here?!"

The lesson is a piercing one. Each and every one of us has an entry ticket to first class. How careful we must be so that we should not be like that villager who does not recognize the value of the unbelievable gift in his hand. We must value this gift, which opens the gates of Gan Eden for us, and try to answer amen at every opportunity that arises for us. (Notrei Amen, Vol. I, p. 49)

The Payment Demanded by the Grandfather of His Grandson

The *tzaddik* Harav Raphael Baruch Toledano, *zt"l*, was known for his Torah learning and piety. For decades, he served as the revered Rav of the city of Meknes, Morocco, and towards the end of his life, was able to move to Eretz Yisrael.

While serving in Meknes, he worked tirelessly to protect his community from the ravages of the *haskalah*, which had infiltrated from Europe in an effort to cut off the glorious heritage of Northern African Jewry and to erode their spiritual levels. In order to prevent the foreign influences from breaking into his community, Rav Raphael Baruch established a large network of education institutions that included a Talmud Torah, school and yeshivah. He also established aid organizations to provide anything the community could need.

Rav Raphael Baruch was known for his fiery love of Torah, as expressed in his renowned *piyut* "*Ashorer shirah lichvod haTorah...*" Anyone who reads this poem clearly sees that its words were uttered by a pure heart saturated in love of Torah. He also worked to persuade his followers to send their children to study Torah in the holy *yeshivos*. This way, he was able to save many souls from deteriorating to spiritual depths.

He also guided his progeny on the path of uncompromising *ahavas Torah*. During their childhoods, he selected the best *melamdim* for them. Later, he sent them out of Morocco, to the best *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisrael.

Late in his life, he made aliyah and settled in Bnei Brak. His days in Eretz Yisrael were filled with Torah and *chessed*. Despite his advanced age, he would make the effort to travel from town to town, spreading the word of Hashem to His people further afield. In his speeches, he focused on subjects such as *tefillah* and answering amen. He did this without being concerned for his own dignity and strength, and he had just one goal in his mind – to strengthen Klal Yisrael on these matters that are of such paramount importance.

His grandson, Harav Yehoshua Toledano, *shlita*, of Yerushalayim, related:

"When I was a young *bochur*, I applied to Yeshivas Ponevezh. But when I got to the interview with the Rosh Yeshivah, they had to turn me away, noting that the dormitory of the yeshivah was packed. They also could not provide me with food. And as such, they could not accept any more *bochurim*.

Disappointed, I turned to my grandfather's home, and told him of the response I had gotten. He listened, and then stood up and set out for the Ponevezher Rav's home.

"If the problem is a lack of place to sleep and eat, then I'm ready to take upon myself to provide it for him. The *bochur* will sleep in my home and eat at my table. It is all worth it if he merits to learn Torah and make great strides in your yeshivah!" the grandfather told the rosh yeshivah

confidently.

When my grandfather returned home, I was happy to hear that the Rav, *zt"l*, had acceded to his request to accept me to the yeshivah, on condition that my grandfather would provide for all my material needs.

I happily returned to my parents' home, packed up my things, and made my way to Bnei Brak. As soon as I was welcomed warmly by my grandparents, my grandfather's face became serious and he said, 'You should know, my boy, that in this house, there is no free food. You will have to pay dearly for it!'

I was very surprised to hear these words, but my grandfather immediately continued to explain: 'The hospitality in this house is contingent on the fact that the guests are always strict not to make a *brachah* unless there is someone to answer amen, and they will also have to make every effort to answer amen to my *brachos*.'

Of course, I readily agreed. Indeed, from that day on, I merited to answer dozens of *amens* each day after the *brachos* my grandparents made. I also merited to have them answer amen to my *brachos*.

I will note that my grandfather's *brachos* were renowned. He never just mumbled a *brachah* distractedly. When he needed to make a *brachah*, he made sure to do it sitting down, slowly and with emphasis. Some of my most distinct memories are waking up each night, long before dawn, to the sound of him reciting *Birkos Hashachar*.

For my grandfather, *Birkos Hashachar* were an *avodah* in and of themselves. Saying them took him many long moments. He would rise at an hour when many others were just going to sleep. Right after washing his hands, he stood up to recite *Birkos Hashachar*, as I listened from my room and answered amen. Each *brachah* was very important to him. Between each *brachah*, he would pour out various requests relating to that *brachah* that he had said, to benefit his family and Klal Yisrael."

Another grandson, *shlita*, added:

Savta, *a"h*, who merited to live a very long life, almost till the age of 100, was also very scrupulous about this special *minhag*, and even towards the end of her life, when she was very weak, she insisted that a few grandchildren come each morning to her house. Before they left for yeshivah, she would recite *Birkos Hashachar* for her so that she could answer amen, and they would then answer amen to her *brachos*.

During her final days, when she could hardly speak, she asked her progeny to be strict about this practice, and even in her weak, ailing state, she would answer amen in a whisper to their *brachos*.

That was the way of these *gedolim* when they raised their children to pure *emunah*. May it be Hashem's Will that we merit to learn from their ways.

Heard first-hand