

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

"Service of the Heart" Done With the Mouth

"זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר דבר אל בני ישראל" (יט ב)

If Moshe was already commanded "*Leimor*", to say, why was he then commanded again to "*daber*, speak to Bnei Yisrael"?

Harav Eliezer Horowitz, the Rav of Tarnigrad, explained:

The Arizal says (*Likutei Torah, Tehillim* 65) that even though the primary principle of *tefillah* is in the heart, nevertheless, we were commanded to *daven* with our mouths because "Through the *tefillah* that a person *davens*, his friend sees him and also comes to *daven*." This is evidently what this *passuk* is alluding to: "*Zos chukkas haTorah asher tzivah Hashem leimor*" – the reason that we have to utter the words of *tefillah* with the mouth and not suffice with the thoughts of the heart is because "*Daber el Bnei Yisrael*" – so that the speech should arouse others in Bnei Yisrael to join the *tefillah*.

Noam Megadim

A Shul Full of Torah and Tefillah

"כל כלי פתוח אשר אין צמיד פתיל עליו טמא הוא" (טו)

Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the **Baal Hafla'ah** writes:

The *Zohar Hakadosh* says (*Tikkunei Zohar* 25 2) that *tefillah* and Torah learning need to be done with *dveikus* to Hashem, and if not – they will not rise on High. This concept is alluded to in this *passuk*: "*Vechol kli pasuach*" – any speech involving *tefillah* or learning that a person utters, "*asher ein tzamid pasil alav*, that has no cover connected to it" – without the connection and *dveikus* to Hashem, "*tamei hu*, it is impure" – and thus does not rise on High, to a place of purity and holiness.

It is told that the **Baal Shem Tov** was once about to enter a certain shul, but as soon as he reached the threshold, he pulled back and refused to enter. To the surprise of those

standing around him, he said, "How can I go in when this place is filled with Torah and *tefillah*?"

"On the contrary...?" the surprise of those with him mounted, and the Baal Shem Tov explained: "This shul is a place where they learn and *daven* without *dveikus*, and as such the Torah and *tefillah* remain inside the shul and do not rise on High. I do not want to enter such a place."

Panim Yafos; Shaar Bas Rabbim

Mibe'er Emunim

Sources in the Parashah About the Greatness of Amen

Obligation of the "Morim" to Warn about Answering amen

"שמעו נא המרים המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים" (כ י')

"נא המרים אמן" – the acronym of the letters at the end of each word is amen to allude to the "*morim*" – meaning the teachers – that they have to warn their students that they should answer amen to each and every *brachah* that they hear from someone. This also alludes to the *morei hora'ah*, the *rabbanim* in each city to rebuke and warn the masses to be very careful, because regretfully, most are them are not careful with this. It is incumbent upon them to speak publicly and inform the masses of the sin and the big blemish upon anyone who does not answer amen on a *brachah* that he hears someone make.

He also alluded here to someone who does not answer amen - who is called *meri vesarvan*, a rebel and a refuser, as the lamenting poet stated in the *kinah*, the lamentation "*Eichah yashvah chavatzeles hasharon*" – "remember a time when they replied *na'aseh venishma* and now they don't want to answer amen."

Chelek Yaakov [Rav Yaakov Leib Benjamin] Chukas

Did Moshe Recite *Birchos Hamitzvos*?

"קח את המטה והקהל את העדה אתה ואהרן אחיך ודברתם אל הסלע" (כ ח)

Harav Moshe Halevi Soloveichik of Zurich referenced all the places where Moshe alone was commanded to do something, seeking to discover if he made *Birchas Hamitzvos* before fulfilling that commandment.

It appears that a person who is commanded privately to do something alone does not have to recite *birchas hamitzvos* when fulfilling it.

Veha'ish Moshe

Ten Deaths Corresponding to One "Yud"

"שמעו נא המרים המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים" (כ י')

Rabbeinu Chananel explained that the sin of Moshe and Aharon was that they attributed the miracle of extracting the water from the rock to themselves, as they said "*Notzi*, we will take water out for you" and not "*Yotzi*, He will take water out for you."

Based on this **Harav Yitzchak Katz**, the son-in-law of the Maharal of Prague, explained the words of the poet (in *Ometz Adiri* said during *Mussaf* on the first day of Rosh Hashanah) about Moshe Rabbeinu: "ען אשר נוקש בעשר, נהרת בו מיתת עשר" – Moshe failed in that he did not say "*yotzi*" [with a *yud*, numerically equivalent to ten] but rather "*notzi*" and that is why his death is mentioned ten times in the Torah (see *Devarim Rabbah* 11 10). Therefore, Dovid Hamelech was precise when he said (*Tehillim* 114:8): "*Hahofchi hatzur agam mayim*, He transformed the rock into a lake of water"; he didn't say *ההופך*, but rather *ההפכי* – with an added *yud*, because this letter was lacking in order to testify that HaKadosh Baruch Hu extracted the water from the rock.

Ramban Bamidbar 20:8; Comments on Pa'aneach Raza by Rav Y. Katz ibid 11

Rabi Chaim Palagi writes in his *sefer Kaf Hachaim* (chapter 13): The reward of every amen is inestimable and therefore a person should make sure not to miss out on even one amen. He also adds a specific warning about answering amen after the *brachah* of *Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion*, recited in *Chazaras Hashatz*, as many are in a hurry to then recite *Modim D'Rabbanan*, and they miss the amen for this *brachah*. He adds that once, when there was an *eis ratzon*, an auspicious time Above to bring the *Geulah*, it did not happen because of the laxity in answering amen for this *brachah*, in which we ask for the *Geulah*.

Harav Moshe Chaim Mandel, זי"ל, (whose *yahrtzeit* falls this Sunday 4 Tammuz) once advised a person who needed a *yeshuah* to publicize these words as a *segulah* for salvation. (*Notrei Amen*, Vol. II, p. 215)

Birchos Hashachar Aloud With kavanah Bechavrusa



In the Palace of the King (2)

The Virtues of Davening
with the Tzibbur

Aside from the actual halachic obligation incumbent upon a person to daven with the tzibbur (see Pesachim 46a and Rashi there) Chazal placed a special emphasis on the virtue of tefillah recited betzibbur. They also said that the time of tefillah betzibbur is considered an *eis ratzon*, an auspicious time, as the Gemara says (Brachos 8a): "What does it mean when it says (Tehillim 69:14) "V'ani sefilasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon" – when is it an *eis ratzon*? When the tzibbur is davening.

Delving in a bit further, who among us does not want his tefillah to be said during an *eis ratzon*? Especially as it says in the Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 2 12) that tefillah of the tzibbur is not only an *eis ratzon*, it also "is never returned unanswered."

We have to know also that when an individual davens in a tzibbur his power is multiplied tenfold, as the Zohar Hakadosh says (Bereishis 234 1) on the words of the passuk (Tehillim 102:18) "Panah el tefillas ha'arar velo bazah es tefillasam." The tefillas ha'arar [in the singular] is referred to with "panah" while regarding "tefillasam" [plural] it says "velo bazah" – and He did not deride it. It is known that when an individual davens, the hostile forces, the mekatregim, undermine his tefillah. Therefore, his merits are examined before the tefillah is heard. But when many daven together, even if there are unworthy people among them, and even if there are tefillos not recited with kavanah, collectively the tefillah is still heard.

Thus the Rambam ruled, practically, (Tefillah 8 1): "Tefillah with a tzibbur is always heard, and even if there are sinners among them, HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not reject the tefillah of many. Therefore, a person should join a tzibbur and should not daven himself at a time when he can daven with the tzibbur."

Reasons for the Virtues of
Davening With a Tzibbur

The commentaries offered many reasons for the virtues of davening with a tzibbur, and we will cite several of them:

Rashi writes in his commentary on the Gemara (Sotah 33a, beginning with "yachid"):

"Yachid, an individual – needs the ministering angels to help him; a tzibbur does not need them, as it says (Iyov 36:5): "Hen K-l kabir velo yimas" – He does not reject the tefillah of many."

In the Sefer Hakuzari (3:19) Rabbeinu Yehudah Halevi explains:

It is virtually impossible to find an individual that has no sins, intentional or not. But when he davens with ten people, each one complements the flaws of the other "and from all of them, a complete tefillah with pure kavanah will be formed, and the brachah will be bestowed on all, and each one of the individuals will receive his share of it." That is because the benevolence of Hashem is like rain that satiates the land. Even though there are individuals in that land that are not worthy of it, they will receive the abundance in the merit of the many. But when it is directed at an individual in the land, then he will not merit it if he is not worthy.

Other explanations are offered in the Eitz Yosef commentary on the Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 2:12):

"[It is] because the Hashgachah on the klal, the general public, is much greater and larger than the Hashgachah on the individual person. Or because in the tzibbur there will surely be one individual that davens with great kavanah and that is why all of them are answered in his merit."

The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch writes (12:2) that when chalilah, the hearts in Klal Yisrael are separated below, then Above as well, there is no unification. But when they unite with their bodies below, with tefillah betzibbur, then their souls are unified Above, and through that, their tefillos are also unified. And when they are unified together they are more desirable before Hashem.

Tefillah Betzibbur – A Wellspring
of Amen

Aside for the abovementioned reasons, the most simple and special of the virtues of tefillah betzibbur is that through it, the person davening merits to answer many amens, Yehei Shmei Rabbah and other holy words, and the value of each of these is inestimable. (Oros Eilim [by the author of the Pele Yoetz] 569)

The Avudraham (Tikkun Hatefillos) writes in the name of Rav Avraham Even Shushan, who explained on the passuk (Tehillim 55:18): "Erev vavoker vetzaharayim asichah v'ehemeh vayishma koli." וְאֶרֶב וְאֶקְוֶה וְצַהֲרָאִים אֲסִיחָהּ וְאֶהְמֶה וְיִשְׁמָה כֹּלִי is numerically equivalent to 57, and the merit of the 57 (ר"ז or נ"ז) brachos that the person says in the three tefillos of Shemoneh Esrei, HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears his voice and sustains him and his family. The Avudaram writes that from here we can learn about the great reward for one who davens with the tzibbur, that with one tefillah it is considered as though he said 57 brachos and he merits the abovementioned reward.

How is this? In his quiet tefillah, he makes 19 brachos, and when he listens quietly to the tefillah betzibbur [Chazaras Hashatz], he is considered a "shomea k'oneh", hearing is like answering, so it's as though he made the 19 brachos himself. And when he answers amen after each brachah, then that is as though he made an additional 19 brachos, because "the one who answers amen is greater than the one making the brachah." (Brachos 53a)

The Chofetz Chaim, in his sefer Shemiras Halashon (Chasimas Hasefer 1) expounds on davening with a tzibbur. He notes that one who davens with a tzibbur merits to answer Barchu, Kedushah and Amen Yehei Shmei Rabbah, each of which a very significant matter in its own right (see his words there). And if we calculate all this, then we will certainly be aroused and act with alacrity to make sure to daven our tefillos betzibbur each day.

"Because on one day alone, from Shacharis and Minchah, he has 38 amens from the 19 brachos of tefillah. [And Chazal said that when someone is careful to answer amen, the Gates to Gan Eden are opened for him, as it says, "Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim" – don't read it emunim, rather amenim.] And eight times amen Yehei Shmei Rabbah. And sixteen more amens from Kaddish. And two Kedushos and Barchu. And all this is just from one day. If so, calculate how much he earns in one week, one month, and an entire year. There is no way to quantify the many merits he accrues by habituating himself to daven with a tzibbur."

A Desperate Tefillah in the Frozen Desolation

Harav Yitzchak Zilber, zt"l, was known for his observance and dissemination of Torah in Russia, and his mesirus nefesh to adhere to Torah and mitzvos even while living under the repressive Communist regime in the Soviet Union.

There are many stories about his mesirus nefesh, many of which are related in the book of his life, "To Remain a Jew." Among them is this one:

Upon finishing his studies at university, as obligated by the Communist regime, Rav Yitzchak immediately began working as a teacher in the village of Stolavitchi, which was about twenty kilometers from Kazan, where he lived. Working was necessary, because in Russia of those times, anyone who didn't work was a lost cause...

It was at the beginning of World War II. Dreadful hunger was rampant, and most citizens in Russia at the time were able to obtain only the most basic foodstuffs. For three years, most people did not see butter or sugar, not to mentioned more "luxurious delicacies."

Even in order to get dry, black bread, the residents of Russia had to spend hours, even days, on long lines. Every morsel of bread was calculated to the last gram.

Lacking money for transportation, Reb Yitzchak walked from Kazan to Stolavitchi and back. He spent the week in Stolavitchi and as Shabbos approached, he would return to his parents' home in Kazan.

It was the winter of 5702/1942 and after Shabbos, Reb Yitzchak set out from Kazan to Stolavitchi. He left the house at five in the morning, and because he knew that he was supposed to get his daily ration of bread in Stolavitchi – his official place of residence – he didn't eat anything in his parents' house before departing. The cold was numbing – temperatures plunged to minus 42 degrees Celsius. It was snowing heavily, and Reb Yitzchak ran frantically for the twenty kilometers, and was able to make it to Stolavitchi in just three hours.

At eight in the morning, Reb Yitzchak was already in school. Usually, he would find the fresh bread loaves there already but that day, he was in for a big disappointment. Apparently the local bakery had not baked bread that morning; the snow made the roads impassable and that prevented the fuel for the ovens from being delivered.

Moreover, not one student showed up for school that morning. While the teacher had forced himself to run twenty kilometers to teach them, they did not deem it necessary to even leave their homes.

If Rav Yitzchak thought he would get a day off to be able to rest and perhaps learn a few pages of Gemara, his hopes were quickly dashed. In Russia, they did let teachers sit idly, so the management of the school came up with a task for that day: they were to visit the

neighboring villages to register students for the next school year. Reb Yitzchak was assigned the village of Bolshaya Kabanja, located a "mere" five kilometers from Stolavitchi.

Reb Yitzchak's stomach rumbled with hunger as he searched for the familiar path that should have taken him to his destination. But because the path was covered in heavy snow, he could not find it.

Reb Yitzchak soldiered on through the deep snow, which reached above his knees, but with each step, it became harder and harder to walk. A freezing wind began to blow, and he felt his strange waning. The hunger began to take a toll, and he felt an overwhelming urge to just lay down where he was and rest.

But he knew that doing such a thing meant a certain death. On the other hand, he could not suffer anymore... If only I would have something to help revive me, Reb Yitzchak thought miserably, that would give me some new strength and I would be able to continue on my way...

A moment before collapsing he got a hold of himself. After all, he hadn't yet davened to Hashem for a yeshuah. So he began fervently davening to the Creator:

"Ribbono shel Olam, I am my parents' only child, I am young and have not yet managed to do anything. What will my parents do without me?" Reb Yitzchak focused his tefillah on his parents, truly thinking of the terrible anguish they would endure if he perished. And his tefillah was not turned away.

He stuck his hands into the pocket of his coat, and suddenly felt an object wrapped in paper. He took the packet out, opened the string that tied it and was surprised to discover a slice of halva, a delicacy he hadn't seen – and certainly not tasted – in recent years.

He didn't have time or energy to wonder where the halva had come from. He quickly made a brachah and ate it. Later, he would learn that his devoted mother had used her last few pennies to purchase the expensive delicacy from a neighbor. Having compassion for her son, she stuck it in his pocket. Reb Yitzchak finished eating the halva and felt a bit stronger. That slice of halva saved his life, plain and simple.

With his newfound strength he was able to navigate the snow and find the lost path. On the path itself it was easier to walk, and in time he arrived at the village. He registered the children and returned to Stolavitchi.

"The taste of that special tefillah said when a sharp sword was literally hanging over my neck is something I never forgot and will not forget until the end of my life." Rav Zilber later told his students.

To Remain a Jew, p. 85