

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Moshe and Aharon Davened for Those Who Were Counted

"שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות כל זכר לגלגלותם...תפקדו אתם לצבאתם אתה ואהרן" (א ב-ג)

The **Ramban** wrote something remarkable in this *parashah* (1:45) in his explanation for the reason why the Torah commanded Moshe and Aharon to count Bney Yisrael:

"Because one who came before the Father of all prophets and his holy brother, and was known to them by name, would have merit and life through this, because he became part of the secret of the nation...And there is a *zechus rabbim* in their number, and there is a merit in the count conducted by Moshe and Aharon, because they would look at them with an *ayin tovah* and would ask for compassion for them: 'Hashem the G-d of your forbears should increase you a thousandfold, and should not diminish your numbers, and the *shekalim* are an atonement for your souls.'

Many learned from this Ramban about the source of the custom to visit the homes of *tzaddikim* of a generation and to mention themselves by name for a *brachah* and a *yeshuah*.

The question is then asked: If indeed those who were counted came before Moshe Rabbeinu, why did the Ramban write: '*Vehu noda aleihem bishmo*'? Didn't Chazal say (*Brachos* 34a, based on *Magen Avraham* 119 1) that one who *davens* for a sick person does not need to mention his name?

Harav Chaim Shaul Kaufman, Rosh Yeshivas Gateshead, explained:

Even though one who *davens* does not need to utter the name of the sick person in front of him, he must at least **know** his name. Therefore, here, as well, when Bney Yisrael passed before Moshe and Aharon, they informed them of their names so that the *brachah* could be bestowed upon them.

The Ramban then continues with a proof of his view that counting Am Yisrael was meant so that Moshe and Aharon could cast an *ayin tovah* on them and pray for them.

To Bask in the Presence of *Roshei Alfei Yisrael*

"אלה קרואי העדה נשיאי מטות אבותם ראשי אלפי ישראל הם" (א טז)

The record keepers noted:

"אנשי מטות אבותם" – is an acronym for amen. This is an allusion to the words of Chazal (*Shabbos* 119b) that the gates of Gan Eden are opened for one who answers amen and he merits to bask there in the presence of *tzaddikim* – "*roshei alfei Yisrael*."

Kerem Da"l

Don't Miss a Single Amen

"ואתה תפקד את הלויים... והלויים יחנו סביב למשכן העדת ולא יהיה קצף על עדת בני ישראל" (א נ-נג)

Harav Yaakov Abuchatzzeira, author of *Abir Yaakov*, explained:

"*Halevi'im*" is a language of connection, as it says (*Bereishis* 29:34) "הפעם ילוה אישי" – "אלי...על כן קרא שמו לוי הלויים". Likewise "הלויים" is numerically equivalent to amen. This is an allusion that the word 'amen' connects the Names of Havayah and Adnus – which together are numerically equivalent to amen. HaKadosh Baruch Hu instructed Moshe: "*hafkaed es haLevi'im*" – warn Am Yisrael not to miss a single amen with *kavanah*, and then they will be guaranteed: "*Velo yihiyeh ketzef al adas Bney Yisrael*" – the anger will be rescinded and their decree will be torn up, as Chazal said (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1): "one who answers amen with all his might, the decree of seventy years is torn up."

Pituchei Chotam

He bases his words on the *Midrash Rabbah* (which is not found today in our Midrash): "HaKadosh Baruch Hu told them to count each and every individual for *kavod* and *gedulah*. He told them, You should not say to the head of a family: 'How many are in your family? How many children do you have?' Rather they should all pass in front of you with awe and respect, and you should count them..." In other words, Moshe could have cut down the amount of time it took to count them by just asking the head of the family how many people

his family included. But because the objective of the count was "so that they should cast an *ayin tovah* on them and pray for compassion", therefore, Hashem commanded them that each member of Klal Yisrael should pass before them.

The Mashgiach, **Harav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler** added a lesson from this that the *tefillah* of a *tzaddik* and his *brachah* are only effective when the subject of the *tefillah* submits himself entirely, as the *Midrash* says: "They should all pass before you in awe and respect."

The reason is explained by Harav Dessler: The reason that the *tefillah* of the *tzaddik* for another person is accepted more than other *tefillas* is because the *tzaddik* submits himself and unites in *tefillah* with the other person to the extent that he appears to be *davening* for himself. Because this unification must come from both sides, it behooves the one asking for a *yeshuah* to submit himself entirely to the *tzaddik*. Only then will they be in complete harmony, which will generate power for the *tefillah* to be accepted.

Sichos Uma'amarim, p. 70; *Mish'chas Shemen*, *Toldos*

Each Man to His Camp, Each Man to His Nusach

"וחנו בני ישראל איש על מחנהו ואיש על דגלו לצבאתם" (א נב)

The **Ari Hakadosh** would say that just like in the desert, Am Yisrael camped in four camps – "*ish al machaneihu v'ish al diglo*" – similarly, to this day, Am Yisrael is divided into four sections – Sephard, Ashkenaz, Catalonia and Italy. So we find that the differences in *minhag* in Am Yisrael are not just a triviality, and therefore, each one needs to adhere to his '*degel*' and his customs, because "*Eilu v'eili divrei Elokim chaim*."

Harav Meir Shapiro of Lublin said on this subject: In the early part of *tefillah* there are various *minhagim*: some say *Baruch She'amar* before *Hodu* and others say it after, but they all thank Hashem and praise Him together in "*Yehi kevod Hashem l'olam*..."

Shelah, *Derech Chaim Tochachas Mussar* 35; *Ta'am Vodaas* 2 2



רחמנא
אדפך
לן קימה
דדוד
משיחא

Ahead of Shavuot, the *yahrtzeit* of Dovid Hamelech, let us strengthen the *takanah* that he established for generations as a salvation from plague in every generation:

The *Tur* wrote (*Oraich Chaim* 46, see *Midrash Rabbah* 18 21): "Dovid Hamelech a"h established 100 *brachos*, as it says (*Shmuel* II, 23:1): '*Ne'um Dovid ben Yishai une'um hagever hukam al*'. *Al* is numerically equivalent to 100, because each day 100 souls in Am Yisrael died and no one knew why until he realized through Ruach HaKodesh and established 100 *brachos* for Am Yisrael."

Bney Emunim – adhering to the quotas established by Chazal: 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*.

Taaneh Emunim

Insights into the Virtues of
Hashkamas Bais Hamedrash

Modeh Ani

The Source of Modeh Ani

Each morning, as soon as we open our eyes, we offer a short *tefillah* of praise to the Creator Who just returned our soul to us pure and clean, after we returned it to Him the night before, as we do each night.

This special *tefillah*, which is not mentioned in *Chazal* or in the *Rishonim*, was first mentioned in *sefer Seder Hayom (Seder Hayom Behakitzo Mishnaso)* by **Rabi Moshe ben Machir**, who was one of the *mekubalim* of Tzefas four hundred years ago. The custom to say it was determined as a *halachah* by the **Magen Avraham** (4, *Koach*) and in the **Mishnah Berurah** (18).

In essence, already in the *Gemara (Brachos 60b)*, on which the **Rambam (Tefillah 7:3)** based his ruling, we find that a special *tefillah* was composed to be recited immediately upon opening one's eyes, while the person is still in bed, and that is the *tefillah* of **Elokai Neshamah**. But the commentators on the *Rambam* note there that this *Gemara* was only practiced in the times of *Chazal*, when people would take care to keep their hands clean and pure. But in our times, a person cannot mention Hashem's Name before washing his hands. Therefore, the *Seder Hayom* rules to say the *tefillah* of *Modeh Ani*, which does not have Hashem's Name in it.

Why Do We Say Modeh Ani Immediately Upon Rising?

Why is it so important to say this *tefillah* the first minute when we awaken from our sleep? Why can we not wait a few moments until we wash our hands?

The *sefer Nefesh Shimshon* (on the *Siddur Tefillah* p. 9) offers a beautiful explanation: During the day, a person may stumble at various points. Sometimes, his *tefillah* is not recited properly. Other times, he speaks improperly or does not fulfill the *halachos* as he should.

If he stumbles as the result of an incidental mistake, then he can merit forgiveness. The Torah was not given to angels, and the *yetzer* is always trying to make the person stumble. But if the reason he transgresses something is because of a lack of knowledge of the basic obligation that a person has in this world, or lack of knowledge that the Creator is the Master of all creations and our souls are entrusted to Him, and therefore we are subservient to him in every act that we do – then there is a tremendous accusation against him!

Therefore, the first thing we must do when arising in the morning is to declare firmly that before anything we thank Hashem and recognize that He is the One Who gave us the merit and the strength to live in the world. Only afterwards can we begin the work of the day.

The Admission of the Litigant

The *tefillah* of *Modeh Ani* begins with a language of "admission." The **Pachad Yitzhak** explains (*Chanukah 2:2*) that in *lashon hakodesh*, the word "*hoda'ah*" has two meanings: the first is *hoda'ah al ha'avar*, gratitude to the One Who has benefited us, and the second is "*hoda'as baal din*", meaning that one agrees with the other's opinion.

With regard to matters of man and his fellow man, the nature of a person is to always strive to be self-sustaining and not dependent on another. When he needs to accept a favor from a friend and thanks him for it, the "thank you" also has a dimension of "*hoda'as baal din*," that this time, he did not succeed in realizing his aspiration and had to come onto a friend's favor. This may make it difficult for him to be thankful.

How much more so in everything related to man and Hashem, the word "*todah*" contains two types of "*hodaos*". When he thanks Hashem for his life that has been entrusted to Him, then it is an admission that he recognizes the fact that in essence, he is nothing on his own, and all his success is only with *siyata diShmaya*. This uproots from inside him the sense of "*kochi v'otzem yadi*", the power of his own hand, that is ingrained in him.

Rabbah Emunasecha

There is a beautiful concept brought in *Sefer Hapardes* by **Rashi** (Budapest Edition, p. 303): Our soul, which is a part of the *Chelek Eloka Mima'al* is very busy all day [batling the *yetzer hara*] and it has no peace. When it comes time to sleep, and it finally finds respite under the Wing of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, it does not want to return to its body in the morning. But HaKadosh Baruch Hu instructs the soul: "Return to your place! This person believed in Me and entrusted me with his *neshamah* last night on condition that I return it the next morning. I do not want to violate this trust." Therefore it says, "*Rabbah emunasecha*" – HaKadosh Baruch Hu is faithful and returns the souls in the morning that were entrusted to Him at night.

Maaseh Emunim

Pearls and Insights on
Birchas Hamazon

Asher Yatzar – The Gift of Life

At the end of Nissan, a time when we make a *brachah* to thank Hashem for the good creations that He planted in our world, **Harav Avraham Yeshayah Heber, zt"l**, passed away from coronavirus. This above-mentioned *brachah* can certainly be made for this extraordinary personality and his dedicated and groundbreaking work to save lives.

Rabbi Heber was known for his lifework, establishing the remarkable **Matnas Chaim** organization, through which he gave the gift of life to more than 800 Jews who were rescued from the torture of dialysis and returned to normal lives in good health.

With his trademark humility and refined nature, **Rabbi Heber** would promulgate the virtue of this great mitzvah, which until that time was rare and out of range for most people. To give the gift of life, part of your body, to another person who could then return to life as a result of that gift. His efforts bore fruit and he defied all odds. Today, the number of kidney donors keeps growing. Nations of the world marvel at the unique phenomenon and declare that indeed, "There is no nation like Israel!"

During the short period of illness that preceded **Rabbi Heber's** passing, at his wife's request, many undertook to strengthen themselves in the mitzvah of reciting *Asher Yatzar* with *kavanah* as a merit. This was not random: this *brachah* is known since very ancient times as a great *segulah* for a *refuah* for anyone who merits to say it with *kavanah*, slowly, from the written text.

During his life, **Rabbi Heber** would often speak about the importance of this *brachah*. As someone who experienced the suffering of dialysis patients, he felt it was doubly as important, especially in light of the fact that such patients hardly merit to recite this *brachah*.

During a speech, he once explained: **HaKadosh Baruch Hu** granted man with a pair of kidneys that have more than 150 vital jobs. The most crucial of those tasks is filtering the blood from all the toxins and excess liquids that have been added through the digestion process through which the body then rids itself of this excess fluid.

When *chalilah* there is a malfunction of the kidneys, one can immediately sense the unfathomable wisdom with which Hashem created a person, as the *brachah* states. Without functional kidneys, the waste in the blood is not ejected from the body, and the body becomes swollen and filled with fluids until, *chalilah*, it can be a threat to a person's life.

In order to replace the function of the kidneys, the patient has to go three times a week, for four hours per time, and be hooked up to a large machine that draws the blood out of his body, filters it, and then returns the clean blood to the blood system.

In order for the dialysis to cleanse the blood at a level as close to kidney function as possible, the blood must be filtered through the dialysis machine for seven cycles in rapid succession. This severely weakens the body. After all this, the process is still not the perfect replacement for the tiny kidneys that **HaKadosh Baruch Hu** granted us.

Dialysis patients have to forgo certain foods because the waste

formed by them cannot be removed by dialysis, although functioning kidneys can handle it. Likewise, dialysis patients are very limited in how much they can drink in a day. In addition, as opposed to kidneys, which operate while a person does whatever he wants, the dialysis machine forces the patient to sit next to it, hooked up, as it does its job.

"*Mibisari echezeh Eloka*", from my flesh I will witness Hashem. How powerful is the lesson we can learn from the proper function of one organ, and the *chesed* of Hashem that accompanies us always, without which we could not exist even one hour.

How great is the *chesed* of Hashem, that He granted a person a pair of kidneys, which provide double what the person needs to live. This way, he can give one of these kidneys to someone else who needs it without this being a risk to the donor. **Rabbi Heber** made hundreds of wonderful *Yidden* aware of this – and they merited to grant life to others.

Rabbi Heber shared one remarkable episode that sheds light on the special character of all kidney donors. There was a very learned *Yid* whose pure soul was far removed from the trivialities of this world. This person merited to choose to be one of the hundreds of kidney donors that granted life to another person through **Matnas Chaim**:

On the morning that the operation was scheduled to take place, this Torah scholar invited all ten of his children, *bli ayin hara*, to the hospital to accompany him in performing this rare mitzvah that he had been preparing for so long to carry out.

A few days earlier, the *talmid chacham* asked his wife to purchase a gift for the event – an expensive watch. This request was very out of character, as he usually eschewed all material luxuries. Indeed, at the time, the wife did not understand the meaning of his unusual request.

The mystery was solved when his ten children gathered around his bed, before he was taken to surgery. He was wearing his hospital gown, and to everyone's surprise, he took out a fabric satchel with an expensive, beautiful watch. He put it on his wrist, and then made the *brachah* with tremendous *kavanah* and emotion: "*Baruch Atah Hashem... shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigianu lazman hazeh*."

A moment later, he removed the watch from his hand and returned it to its place because one is not allowed into surgery with a watch...

It turned out that the father wanted the watch to be able to make a *Shehecheyanu* for this rare mitzvah that he was meriting to perform with his body. Needless to say, this incident remained etched deeply in the hearts of his children. They received a *chinuch* lesson in genuine giving and love for another Jew, as well as the *simchah* of doing a mitzvah.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu ordained it that **Rav Avraham Yeshayah Heber, zt"l**, was summoned to the Heavens in the prime of his life, leaving behind a void in the generation, as well as his legacy of exceptional giving.

Yehi zichro baruch.

Shared by the family

Michtavei Emunim

Letters from our Loyal Readers

To the editors of the *Vechol Ma'aminim* pamphlet,

We just learned in *Daf Yomi (Shabbos 62b)* that **Rav Chisda** said that in the merit of him being *mehader* in the mitzvah of *netilas yadayim*, and washing his hands with an abundance of water, He was granted an abundance of good from Above. The *sefer Erchei Yehoshua* (p. 127) brings an allusion to this: "מים" is an acronym for "מלא דינו". We can add that there is an allusion here to an additional *hiddur*, that the one who makes the *brachah* of *Al Netilas Yadayim* aloud so that others can answer amen, merits a special *brachah*. That is because מים, which is an acronym for מברכותך מלא דינו is also numerically equivalent to amen (with the *kollel*).

Respectfully, A.T.M. - Bnei Brak