

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Brachah of the 'Zahav' Is a Merit for Am Yisrael

ז'די זהב" (א א)

Rabbeinu Bechayei writes (*Shemos* 25:24) that the word "zahav" said in the Torah about the *Shulchan Lechem Hapanim* alludes to the three first brachos in *Birchas Hamazon* which we are obligated to say from the Torah: הארץ ובונה ה', הרושלים.

Based on this, Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, Av Bais Din of Shamlo, explained the reason why, after Moshe mentioned all the places where Bnei Yisrael had sinned (as *Rashi* explains here) he concluded his rebuke with the word "zahav." It is because mentioning *Birchas Hamazon* has the power to evoke a merit for Klal Yisrael. As *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 20b) when the Ministering Angels asked HaKadosh Baruch Hu why He was so kind to Am Yisrael, He replied: "And should I not be kind to Yisrael?! I wrote to them in the Torah 'v'achalta vesavata ubeiracha' [that only when they eat 'to be satisfied' will they be obligated in *Birchas Hamazon*] and they are strict with themselves [to bless even when eating] up to a kezayis and up to a kebeitzah!"

Tiyul Bapardes, Chelek Haremez 7

Rising Early to Shul – A Merit for a Long Life

ה' אלקיכם הרבה אתכם והנכם היום ככוכבי השמים לרב" (א י)

The *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 1 11) cites this *passuk* with the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (5:8): "V'ani berov chasdecha avo beisecha eshtachaveh el heichal kodshecha b'yirasecha." What is the connection between the two?

The Mekubal Harav Shimshon of Ostropolia explained:

The ancient *Sefer Karnaynim* (10) cites Rav Huna that saying the *passuk* "V'ani berov chasdecha..." effectively annuls *ayin hara*. It is possible that the sages of the *Midrash* meant that after Moshe said "Hashem Elokeichem hirbah eschem, Hashem made you multiply..." he then added this *passuk* in order to annul the *ayin hara* that might ensue as a result of his words.

Thus Harav Tzvi Yitzchak Abramowitz,

Moshe Established that We Recite 100 Brachos

ה' אלקי אבותכם יסף אליכם ככם אלף פעמים ויברך אתכם" (א יא)

In the *passuk* (*Devarim* 33:1): "Vezos habrachah asher beirach Moshe ish ha'Elokim" – the last three words form an acronym of מאה or 100. Rabi Yaakov Baal Haturim explained that Moshe Rabbeinu instituted the practice of reciting 100 brachos and, after it was forgotten over the generations, Dovid Hamelech reestablished it (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18 21; *Kad Hakemach – Brachah*). That is what Moshe promised Am Yisrael in this *parashah*: "Hashem Elokei avoseichem Yosef Aleichem kachem elef pe'amim" – if you say 100 brachos each day, you will merit one thousand gold coins, because the value of each brachah is ten gold coins (*Chullin* 87a).

Harav Yaakov Yehoshua Fruman of Lodz added that the fact that the acronym of the *passuk* "ויסף עליכם ככם" is numerically equivalent to 100 teaches us that this *passuk* refers to the reward of reciting 100 brachos. Based on this, he explains the *Baal Haturim* here and says: There is only one other time in *Tanach* where the word ויברך is *menukad* to be pronounced "vivarech" – in the *passuk* "Tehillas Hashem yedaber pi vivarech kol basar Shem Kodsho" (*Tehillim* 145:21). Hence, we can understand the connection between these *pesukim* – because they are both related to the subject of brachos.

Baal HaTurim Devarim 33:1; Nachlas Yaakov Yehoshua

Furthermore, the *Shach* writes (*Choshen Mishpat* 382 20) that only a brachah that is answered by amen is worth ten gold coins. This is also alluded to in this *passuk*, as the acronym of "עליכם ככם אלף" is numerically equivalent to 91 – which is amen.

the Rav of Chatzor Haglilit, explained *Rashi's* words in *Sefer Ha'orah* (Vol. I 56) that when a group of people gather to daven in shul and want to see if there are ten present, they should count themselves using the ten words of the *passuk* "V'ani berov chasdecha..." because counting the *tzibbur* may cause *ayin hara* (*Rashi Shemos* 30:12). Therefore, it is fitting to count them with a *passuk* that is effective against *ayin hara*.

Harav Yehudah Leib ben Rav Mordechai Holish explained this differently:

In *Maseches Brachos* (8a) it says that Rabi Yochanan wondered: How could it be that there are elders in Bavel? Wasn't the promise of (*Devarim* 11:21) "l'maan yirbu yemeichem v'yemei beneicham" only said "al ha'damah asher nishba Hashem l'avoseichem?" But after he was told that the elders of Bavel rose early to go to the *bais knesses* and then lingered there until darkness, he realized that this merit advocated for them.

By placing these two *pesukim*: "Hashem Elokeichem hirbah eschem" alluding to the brachah of "lema'an yirbu yemeichem" and "v'ani berov chasdecha avo beisecha", *Chazal* sought to allude that the merit of staying in shul is a *segulah* for living a long life.

Dan Yadin at *Sefer Karnayim* 11; Ta'am Hatzvi; Ma'amar Mordechai [Dyhernfurth 5479]

The Segulah of Crying During Elul

ואמץ את לבבו למען תתו בידך כיום הזה" (ב ל)

Harav Avraham Harari Rafal, one of the *rabbanim* of Aram Tzova, explained:

The acronym of the *passuk* "ואמץ את לבבו למען תתו" is "אלול תבכה" – This alludes to the words of the *Zohar* (*Zohar HaKadosh Chadash, Ki Seitzei* 59 1) from the *passuk* (*Devarim* 21:3): "Ubachsah es aviha v'es imah yerach yamim, and she cried for her father and her mother for one month" that in the month of Elul a person must cry and repent for his sins. The *passuk* alludes that one who does this is guaranteed that he will conquer his *yetzer hara* – "lema'an tito beyadcha kayom hazeh."

Imrei Avraham



תגבר פארי לעמוד פנקר לעטודת פוראו

The Ari Hakadosh would answer amen after those making *Birchos Hashachar* in shul - even if there were 100 people, he would answer after them."

Shaarei Teshuvah Orach Chaim 6 5

"V'imru Amen" - Answer amen as much as possible after *Birchos Hashachar*



Birchas HaTorah (2)

The "Eisek" of Torah

The first *brachah* in the order of *Birchos HaTorah* concludes with the words "*la'asok bedivrei Torah*" and not "*lilmod Torah*." This is because the principle virtue of Torah is engaging in it and toiling in it. The many *brachos* that we were promised in *Parashas Bechukosai* are contingent on '*amal baTorah*', toil in Torah, as Chazal explained (*Sifra Bechukosai 2*) "*Im bechukosai teleichu*" – to be *ameilim baTorah*". (*Bach Orach Chaim 47; Taz ibid 1*)

We can learn a piercing lesson from this: In order to merit a part in Torah it is not enough to learn Torah; it behooves us to conduct ourselves like the "*baal eisek*", the business owner. A business owner is completely invested in the success of his business, and in order to succeed he needs to constantly calculate his ways, and to clarify if his business is being managed properly and to always be under the scrutiny of the accountant who checks profits versus losses. Likewise, with Torah learning, a person must always make calculations and recognize his virtues and abilities and evaluate if he is learning in a way that suits his strengths.

Furthermore, just like a businessman is constantly busy with his business, and does not have time for anything not connected to his success, similarly, one who is engaged in Torah needs to invest himself into it completely, to toil on it day and night and not to turn his attention to matters of this world, which are very trivial when compared to his ultimate goal. (*Ohr Yechezkel, Vol. VI p. 193, in the name of the Alter of Kelm*)

The reason that we make the *brachah* "*la'asok bedivrei Torah*" and not "*la'asok baTorah*" is because the words "*la'sok baTorah*" means in Torah literally – to teach Torah *lishmah*. But "*divrei Torah*" includes learning that is not "*lishmah*" which is called "*petiata d'Oraisa*," (see *Yerushalmi Brachos 9 5*). Therefore, we are careful to use specifically these words, because who can guarantee that indeed we will learn "*lishmah*"? (*Tzidkas Hatzaddik 59*)

Sweetness of Torah

In the request of "*Veha'arev na*" we ask Hashem to sweeten the words of Torah for us, so that we should feel the pleasure and joy of learning, and we will learn out of love and not out of coercion. As Dovid Hamelech says in *Tehillim* (119: 97): "*Mah ahavti Torasecha kol hayom hie sichasi*," (*Rashi Brachos 11b* beginning with *ha'arev*.)

Indeed, it is worthwhile for everyone to review the wondrous words of the *Ohr Hachaim* on the passuk (*Devarim 26:11*): "*Vesamachta bechol hatov*": "Good is only Torah. If people would feel the sweetness and delight of Torah, they would lose their minds with excitement in pursuit of it and an entire world of silver and gold would not be worth anything in their eyes, because the Torah encompasses all the good in the world."

We specifically use this language to ask about Torah learning, because the feeling of pleasure is an integral part of the mitzvah of *talmud Torah*, as it says (*ibid 119:103*): "*Mah nimletzu lechiki imrasecha midvash lefti*, how sweet are Your words to my palate, more than

honey to my mouth." (*Olas Tamid, Chapter 10*)

Indeed, the *Eglei Tal* wrote in his introduction: "the principle of the mitzvah of learning Torah is to be happy and to rejoice, and to bask in the enjoyment of his learning, and then the *divrei Torah* become absorbed in his blood, and because he enjoys the *divrei Torah* he cleaves to Torah...When one learns for the sake of the mitzvah and basks in enjoyment of learning, that is learning *lishmah*, and it is all *kodesh*, because the pleasure is also a mitzvah."

"Tze'etzaeinu Vetze'etzaei Tze'etzaeinu"

Chazal say (*Bava Metzia 85a*): "If someone is a *talmid chacham*, and his son is a *talmid chacham*, and his son's son is a *talmid chacham* – then Torah does not stop from his children," as it says (*Yeshayah 59:21*): " 'As for Me, this is My covenant with them,' says Hashem. 'My spirit, which is upon you and My words that I have placed in your mouth, shall not move from your mouth or from the mouth of your seed and from the mouth of your seed's seed,' said Hashem, 'from now and to eternity.'"

Based on this, the Rishonim established that we should ask in this *brachah* for "our offspring and our offspring's offspring" because through that we will merit that Torah should not stop amongst our descendants. (*Sefer Hamanig Dinei Tefillah 19; Bach Orach Chaim 47*)

However, there are those who differ and say that in order to include our grandchildren in our request, it is not necessary to say "*tze'etzaei tze'etzaeinu*" because they are already included in the word "*tze'etzaeinu*." In fact, the *Targum* (*Iyov 21:8*) explains the word "*tze'etza'im*" as "*bnei bneiham*" [their children's children"]. (*Magen Avraham* beginning of 47)

HaKadosh Baruch Hu Helps Those Who Learn Understand Torah

The holy Torah is described in *Sefer Iyov* (11:9) as being "longer than the earth is its measure, and wider than the sea," (see *Eiruvin 21a*). So we find that only with special assistance from Above can we merit to understand the words of Torah. Therefore, we conclude this *brachah* with the words: "*Hamelamed Torah l'Amo Yisrael*," in the present tense. Because in every generation Hashem helps those who learn Torah to understand it, as we ask in the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah*: "*Vesein belibeinu Binah lehavin, lehaskil, lishmoa, lilmod ulamed...*" (*Siddur Yaavetz; Yeshuos Yaakov Orach Chaim 47 1*)

A *talmid* of the Maharil Diskin related that he often saw that when his Rebbi came across a *suva* that he could not resolve, he asked the *talmid* sitting in front of him to read aloud the words of the *Gemara*, word by word. And in the meantime he would walk back and forth in the room, deep in thought, until his wellspring of tears would open.

Then he would retreat to a corner and daven with a broken heart to Hashem to illuminate his eyes with the light of *is* Torah. After he recited *Viduy* and gave *tzedakah*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu would illuminate his eyes, and the *suva* would become crystal clear to him. (*Amud Eish p. 34*)

A Tefillah That Saved a Life and Changed a Life

"Oh Chavrusa Oh Misusa" – A Chavrusa or Death

This amazing story was sent by the person it happened to, who is a close friend and a very virtuous personality. If the man would not have included footage from the security camera it would have been hard to believe that such a miracle could really occur.

It was a routine morning in a peaceful southern Israeli town. Reb Yitzchak, a diligent and energetic *avreich*, walked confidently towards his car, which would take him to shul, to daven with the regular *minyán* he had been davening with for a number of years. Blessed routine had just been restored after a long period during which corona had precluded davening in shul, and Reb Yitzchak hurried in order to be on time.

Reb Yitzchak was carrying around a feeling of missed opportunity. He is one of the Yidden who had merited for a long time to make the *brachos* in the preferred fashion, reciting *Birchas Hashachar* with a *chavrusa* before davening. Prior to and during corona, he had davened together with his oldest son, and they served as *chavrusos* for one another. But now that times had changed yet again, father and son had not davened together for a while. Until he found a new *chavrusa*, Reb Yitzchak had to say the *brachos* to himself.

After driving for two minutes, Reb Yitzchak arrived at the shul. He wrapped himself in his *tallis* and donned his *tefillin*, and then went to his place to start davening. He was about to begin *brachos*, when suddenly, Reb Simcha, another regular *mispallel* at the *minyán*, wiggled two fingers at him, opening and closing them and winking with his eye, as if to ask... "*chavrusa...?!*"

Reb Yitzchak looked at him in disbelief. Simcha? *Chavrusa*?? These were an incongruous pair...Simcha had never been one of the people who said his *brachos bechavrusa*. On the contrary, he had occasionally voiced his opposing views about these 'new' *minhagim* that popped up every day...

In normal times, Reb Yitzchak would have been curious about the surprising change, but, another result of corona – he was silent. No one talks in shul anymore! He promised himself to clarify the matter after davening. Who knows – maybe there would be a good story here for Bney Emunim...

Meanwhile, the *avreich* standing across from him left him no time to wonder.

He simply opened his *siddur* and began reciting the *brachos*, word by word, with concentration and emphasis – the fitting way for *brachos* to be recited. Reb Yitzchak listened and answered amen. After missing his longtime practice for a number of days, the *brachos* were like music to his ears, and he was happy to be able to complete each one with an amen.

Simcha finished and Reb Yitzchak, at his turn, began reciting the *brachos*. There was a sense of renewal in the air. Today's *tefillah* was very different from yesterday's. A *tefillah* that begins with complete *brachos*, is recited with more *kavanah*, and is accepted more willingly, as Reb Yitzchak had already learned. When the davening ended, he turned to his other *chavrusa* – to learn the Daf Yomi.

Oops...Where was the *Gemara*? It was at home... That was very unusual for someone organized and efficient like Reb Yitzchak, but it could happen to anyone...Having no choice, he asked his *chavrusa* to wait a few minutes, and then dashed to his car to race home to get the *Gemara*.

As he came around a bend in the road, Reb Yitzchak noticed a gardener busy doing his work. Reb Yitzchak lives in a private house surrounded by a 'living fence' of shrubbery and trees. Naturally, such a fence gets wild sometimes and needs to be pruned and tended to.

The day before, he had called is regular gardener to come take care of the fence, so he wasn't surprised to see him working now.

From this point on, the security camera takes over the story:

The first second in the video shows the gardener doing his work. He is holding a heavy electric saw that is mounted on a telescopic arm about six feet long. He waves the saw high up to trim the top part of the fence. A shower of green leaves falls onto the sidewalk near the house.

In the second frame Reb Yitzchak enters the area covered by the camera, wearing a face mask. He stops for a few seconds to observe the gardener, who does not notice his arrival. Reb Yitzchak seemed to be deliberating whether to enter. The saw was dangerous and heavy and the gardener had to put it down from time to time to rest his arms. Reb Yitzchak cleared his throat – he had no time; his *chavrusa* was waiting... For some reason, he seemed to think that the gardener had noticed him

about to enter, and so Reb Yitzchak began tentatively walking towards the gate. But the deafening saw makes it necessary for the gardener to wear protective noise-cancelling headphones that disconnect him from what is going on around him. He did not notice Reb Yitzchak – with chilling ramifications.

The next few seconds are difficult to watch. One of Reb Yitzchak's feet was already in the courtyard, and at that second, the gardener decided to rest a bit. And he lowered the heavy – switched on – saw right into the eyes of Reb Yitzchak.

Brrrrrr...The sharp teeth of the saw are still in pruning mode, snapping open and closed wildly. This could only have one – tragic – outcome. But this time it was different.

The saw caught onto Reb Yitzchak's glasses, and both saw and glasses jerk into the pile of leaves that covers the sidewalk.

There was just a step between Reb Yitzchak and...*challah*.

The camera shows Reb Yitzchak stunned, rubbing his nose, as he and the gardener stare at each other in shock and horror. They both look frozen in fear, and then Reb Yitzchak bends down to lift his glasses, which have turned into a mangled mass of metal. The video ends here.

"The letters of amen are followed by the letters of *עז* by miracle," writes Reb Yitzchak, citing the *Kozhnutzer Maggid* (*Ner Yisrael, Chanukah*) – because answering amen is followed by miracles.

It was clear to him what had protected him this special morning, and he had to find out what had led his fellow *mispallel* to change his mind and approach him to give him the merit of answering *Birchos Hashachar*, specifically today.

Reb Yitzchak returned to shul and went over to tell Reb Simcha the story. Reb Simcha listened carefully and then said: "Now you understand why HaKadosh Baruch You gave you the merit of making *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* specifically today..."

"I actually wanted to ask you," Reb Yitzchak used the opportunity to clear up this question that was on his mind. "Why did you decide today to adopt this practice?" "The truth?" his friend replied, "I have no idea why I decided to approach you. It was totally unplanned..."

The ways of Hashem are hidden.