

# Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



## IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

## Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

### Tefillah – Even When the Yeshuah is Guaranteed

"ופרעה הקריב וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם והנה מצרים נסע אחריהם וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה'" (ד י)

In his commentary on the *passuk*, *Rashi* cites *Chazal* (*Tanchuma* 9) that Bnei Yisrael cried out because they "grasped the trait of their fathers." The question is, do we need to find a reason why Bnei Yisrael cried out at that time? Were they not in great distress?

We can say that indeed, despite the troubles that afflicted them at the time, they did not cry out because of their pain, because they trusted the promise of Hashem that He would perform miracles and wonders. Therefore, *Rashi* explains that their cries stemmed from the fact that they grasped their fathers' trait to be aroused to *tefillah* because of the troubles. This teaches us that every time a person is afflicted by troubles, even when his *yeshuah* is guaranteed, it behooves him to cry and pray to Hashem.

*Niftaas Chadashos [Pietrkov 5657]*

### Silence Is Appropriate at a Time of Plague

"ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחרישון" (ד יד)

The *Ari Hakadosh* said that the Torah refers to the plague as "dever" – from the term "dibur" – speech, to teach us that the harmful forces that cause death at a time of *mageifah* are created from the sin of speaking in shul. Based on this, the early *mochiach* (rebuke) *Harav Moshe Kahana of Gibitzch* explained the words of *Chazal* (*Bava Kama* 62a): "Dever ba'ir, when there is a plague in the city, an individual should not enter the shul, because the Angel of Death leaves his tools there." Why of all places was the shul chosen as the place to store the tools of the Angel of Death? Because, as

### "Amen" Brings Down the Shechinah and Hastens Healing

"כל המחלה אשר שמת' במצרים לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רפאך" (טו כו)

The *Rebbe Harav Aharon Roth*, author of *Shomer Emunim*, explained:

When Am Yisrael answer amen, immediately the holy Shechinah descends on that place, and complete healing comes to a person, both physically and emotionally. This is alluded to in this *passuk*: "Ki Ani" is numerically equivalent to "amen", and *Hashem Rofecha* – the Shechinah of Hashem dwells and the person merits a *yeshuah*.

The *mashpia*, *Harav Eliyahu Roth*, would tell his students:

"Know that through answering amen properly, we bring upon ourselves good influences in *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*, and we banish disease from the house. Every person needs to make the calculation– what is more important to him – to go and seek out doctors or to answer amen aloud? Because it is a wondrous *segulah* to be spared from all that and to bring a *yeshuah* and *hatzlachah* in all areas."

*Imrei Aharon; Ish Chassid Hayah, p. 231*

stated, those harmful destroyers during a time of plague were first created in the shul, from idle speech of the *mispallelim*, and these are the 'tools' of the Angel of Death.

The *mochiach* of *Gibitsch* cites a beautiful allusion regarding the importance of refraining from speaking in shul, based on this *passuk*: When will "Hashem fight for you" against those who rise up to harm you? When "v'atem tacharishun" – you will be quiet and not speak in shul. And if,

*chalilah*, you speak idle speech in the shul, then with your own mouths, you create the destroyers that will harm you.

*Derech Moshe for Day 8*

### "Vehu" Yoshienu Veyigaleinu

"ויאמר כי יד על כס קה מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדר" (ז טז)

"Why is it written כס and not כסא? And also the Name is cut in half (ה-ה)? Hashem swore that His Name will not be whole, nor will His Throne be whole, until the name of Amalek is totally obliterated. And when his name will be obliterated, the Name will be whole and the Throne will be whole." (*Rashi*)

*Rabi Yitzchak Halevi*, one of the *Baalei Hatosafos*, explained:

The missing letter in כסא, the aleph, and the missing letters in the Name "Havayah" – the hey and vav, come together to make the word הוי. This is what we ask for in the *Kedushah of Kesser*: "veHu yashmienu berachamav sheinis l'einei kol chai" – that Hashem should quickly obliterate the descendants of Amalek from the world, and with that, He will make us hear the letters of הוי which complete His Name and His Throne, and then the Geulah will come.

*Harav Moshe Leib Shachor*, one of the sages of *Yerushalayim*, added an explanation to what we say after *Krias Shema* of *Shacharis*: "Ledor vador Hu kayam uShemo kayam vekiso nachon." "Ledor vador" – when the "milchamah l'Hashem b'Amalek midor dor" will be completed, "Hu kayam" – the letters of "Hu" that are missing in the word *Kisei* and the Name *Havayah* will be added and as a result "Shemo kayam" His Name will exist in Its entirety, "vekiso nachon" and His Throne will be complete, and therefore, "Malchuso v'Emunaso la'ad kayames."

*Paaneiach Raza; Avnei Shoham*

## A Brachah Without Amen - Like Half a Body

Wednesday 21 Shevat is the *yahrtzeit* of *Harav Yechiel Yehoshua* of *Biala, zy"ta*, who was very strict about reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, as brought down in his practices (*Seder Hayom* 50).

"And to say *Birchas Hashachar* in front of people who will answer amen, as is known from the holy ones that a brachah without amen is like half a body."

*Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* - complete gratitude to the King of the World.





Yehi Ratzon After Hama'avir Sheinah (2)

From "Asei Tov" to "Sur Meira"

Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b): "The yetzer of a person overpowers him every day and seeks to kill him [by causing him to sin]...if not for HaKadosh Baruch Hu helping him, he would not be able to withstand it." Without Divine assistance, we would not be able to choose good – to cleave to Torah and mitzvos, and certainly we could not withstand the temptations of the evil inclination, and to remove ourselves from bad and refrain from sin. Therefore, after we've asked Hashem to help us with "asei tov", doing good "shetargileinu beTorasecha vedabkeinu bemitzvosecha", we then continue and ask, "v'al tevienu lo li'yedei cheit." Please help us from Above to do the "sur meira" as well. (Avudraham, Seder Birchos Hashachar; Sifsei Chaim – Rinas Chaim, Biurei Tefillah, p. 64)

We then need to explain the connection between the two requests, based on what Chazal say (Yoma 72b): "What does the passuk mean (Devarim 4:44): 'Vezos hatorah asher sam שם Moshe [from the term סם] If he merits [and learns Torah lishmah] then it becomes an elixir of life [סם החיים] for him, and if he does not merit [and learns for the sake of pride or spite] then it becomes a poison pill for him." (Based on the Maharsha, ibid, and Tosafos Taanis 7a, beginning with "vechol.")

Therefore, right after we ask "shetargileinu beTorasecha", we add a request that we should merit to be among those whose Torah is an elixir of life for them, and not of those whose Torah is a poison pill, and brings them to sin and transgressions. (Siddur Ohr Hachamah p. 19)

"Al Tat Libi Ledavar Ra"

Many have queried about the wording of the request of "v'al tevienu lo li'yedei cheit." Does HaKadosh Baruch Hu bring a person to sin? Isn't choice in the hand of a person whether to do bad or good?

One writes that indeed, this is not the wording that should be used. Rather we should say "vetishmereini milavo li'yedei cheit." (Ateres Zekeinim Orach Chaim 46 6) But the Gemara (Brachos 60b) brings the nusach that is printed, and in Sefer Tehillim we find a similar request as it says (ibid 141:4): "Al tat libi ledavar ra."

The Tosafos Yom Tov explains that in this request we ask Hashem that He should not treat us like those evildoers whose heart He hardens so that they should commit evil, and he locks out the paths to teshuvah for them. As the Rambam writes (Teshuvah 6:3): "It is possible for a person to sin a great sin... and teshuvah is withheld from him and he is not given permission to repent from his evil, so that he should die and be lost for the sin that he did...Therefore, the Torah writes (see Shemos 4:21): "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Because he sinned of his own accord first, and was evil to Am Yisrael who lived in his country, as it says (Shemos 1:17): 'Havah nischakmah lo,' the decree was given to prevent him from repenting until he was punished. Therefore, Hashem hardened his heart." (Maadanei Yom Tov, Brachos 9, 23, 2)

The Shelah Hakadosh further explains: Chazal say (Shabbos 104a): "Ba litma poschin lo." Therefore, we also ask that even if we stumble and sin, chalilah, He should not open an opening from Above for us to continue to sin, and instead, we should be assisted in going on

V'al tevienu – help us overcome the yetzer hara and this way we will not come lo li'yedei cheit – unintentionally velo li'yedei aveirah – which comes from the overpowering of the yetzer v'avon – done intentionally.

the right, straight path. (Siddur HaShelah)

The Meaning of the Term "Li'yedei Cheit"

The reason that the word "li'yedei cheit" is used is because the primary work is not to fall into the "hands" of the sin. This can be compared to two people struggling with one another. The minute the first one topples his rival to the ground, then the latter is in the former's hands and he can do with him as he pleases. That is the main request here – that we should not fall into the "hands" of the sin, after which it is very hard to disconnect. (Tefillas Chana p. 69)

Another explanation is that "li'yedei cheit" is the hands of the angel that is created through the sin, because that is the concept of "one sin leads to another" (Avos 4:2). The angel created by the sin always wants to prevent a person from doing teshuvah, because through repentance, the angel's essence is nullified. Therefore, he draws him with all kinds of temptations from one sin to another. (Nachal Yitzchak, Tetzaveh)

Furthermore, we find that there is a concept of "yados nedarim", in which he does not say the nusach of the neder in full, and he recites a much shorter form and says only part of it (see Ra"n Nedarim 2a, beginning with "kol"). Likewise, with regard to sin, we ask that we should not stumble on any "yados aveirah" so that the evil inclination should not have control to tempt us to even begin with the act of sin that then leads us to the aveirah itself. (Ruach Chachamim [Rav M. Wigder], Minchas Yehuda, p. 2)

Cheit, Aveirah and Avon

In this request, we ask that we should not come "lo li'yedei cheit velo li'yedei aveirah v'avon."

Aveirah means a sin that is done because the evil inclination overpowers us, and not because of contempt or scorn. It is the average level between "cheit", which is by mistake and "avon" which is an intentional sin done with contempt. (Iyun Tefillah in Siddur Otzar Hatefillos)

We find that we begin with the greatest request, that we should not come even to a "cheit" that is unintentional. Then we add a request that even if that request is not accepted, we should not come to "aveirah", and ultimately, at least we should not stumble with "avon", done intentionally. As Rashi writes (Bereishis 24:55), that the way of those who ask is first to ask for the greater request, and to continue with smaller requests. (See Birchas Ish, Chayei Sarah)

Siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham further explains: "aveirah" means the nullification of a mitzvas asei, a positive commandment. In this request we ask that not only should we not stumble in the sin of "lo sa'seh" by mistake or intentionally [cheit and avon] but that we should not even come to nullifying a mitzvas asei, and that is how we will cleave to the mitzvos of Torah.

Some explain that both "aveirah" and "avon" are sins done intentionally, but the difference is that avon is a distorted action, and even if we were not commanded about it in the Torah, the mind obligates us to do it. An aveirah is an action that we would not be careful about if not for being commanded to do so by the Torah, as the word "aveirah" implies – la'avon, to transgress the laws of Torah. (Biur Shemos Hanirdafim BeTanach, p. 247)

Sparks of Emunah in the Darkness

The horrific days of the Holocaust were a serious test for the emunah of Am Yisrael. Yet, the dreadful conditions in the camps, the constant suffering and loss, alongside the clouds of smoke from the crematoria did not dull the glow of the emunah, which continued to throb in the hearts of tens of thousands of Yidden who endured the valley of death in those times.

Sapped and grieving, one from a city, two from a family, with a long road full of obstacles ahead, the survivors of the furnaces departed from their homelands that had betrayed them. They set out to build new lives, with the memories of their former lives etched deep in their hearts.

For the first few decades after the war, they were busy rebuilding new lives, and establishing families that would prove that the "eternity of Am Yisrael does not lie". The fiend who intended to annihilate the last remnant of Klal Yisrael no longer existed to witness the revival of the eternal nation.

Only when they reached their older years, and their lives became more tranquil, did many of the survivors find time to put their memories into writing, to serve as an eternal commemoration for a generation that was nearly wiped out.

One of those survivors was Harav Yaakov Yisrael Krieger of Netanya, a native of Lodz and a descendant of the eminent Rebbe of Poland. Towards the end of his life, he published his memoirs of the Holocaust, "Chiyesani", in which he shared this story.

"There is one thing I am proud of today," he writes by way of preface. "That throughout all my years in the Holocaust, I did not forget my G-d for a moment, and I never questioned His actions."

Rav Krieger drew his strong emunah and hope from a tefillah that he recited every day. Each morning he huddled with the rest of the prisoners for the morning roll call – that with typical Nazi brutality sometimes lasted hours irrespective of the weather. During that time –without missing a day - he would murmur tefillas Shacharis quietly, which was always accompanied by tears that streamed from his eyes, which refused to lose hope.

"Al tira," he would whisper to himself at the end of the tefillah, "don't be afraid, and be strong in the face of the difficulties. The day is not far off that you will merit to see the downfall of the evildoers, to make Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael and to join the builders of Yerushalayim."

Erev Shabbos in Birkenau: Like every day, towards evening, the prisoners received their daily slice of bread. Despite his hunger, Reb Yaakov Yisrael, did not hasten to eat his portion. On Friday night, he would make Kiddush on the half a slice and ate it as

his Friday night seudah. He saved the second half to be able to make Kiddush on Shabbos morning. Saving a piece of bread in a place where hunger had absolute control was no easy feat. He had to hide the slice in his clothes, and to sleep with it on his person. In the morning he had to run with it to roll call, at which time he also davened, and only then could he make Kiddush and eat.

He relates: "One Shabbos, when I began to daven Shacharis, I realized that there was an elderly Jew beside me with a bitter expression on his face. Apparently he sensed that throughout the roll call I was murmuring throughout, and he wanted to express his dissatisfaction at the scene, and he muttered loud enough for me to hear, 'Poor guy, so young and already talking to himself...'

"Because I was in the middle of davening I could not answer him at that moment. When I finished the part of davening I was saying and could speak, I said to him, 'you are mistaken sir, I'm not speaking to myself. I'm speaking to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. I was davening to Him. It is Shabbos today!'

"What?" the man was stunned. "It is Shabbos today and you davened?!" He grabbed onto me with two hands and cried to me pleadingly, 'Dear Yid! Regretfully, when I was young, I grew distant from the ways of Hashem, and I haven't davened in twenty years. Please, I ask that if you continue davening, please daven a bit louder so I can say after you some of those holy words that I have already forgotten!'

"I slowly continued davening, and raised my voice a bit. The man beside me tried to repeat each word that I uttered. I finished davening as the roll call came to an end. When I returned to my barracks, I noticed the man waking after me. When I reached my bunk, I took out the half a slice of bread for my pocket and made Kiddush. But this time, I broke it into two pieces. I ate one piece myself and gave the other half to my new friend.

"He firmly refused to take it. He claimed that eating from my bread was like murder in his eyes, and he could not agree. I pleaded with him that eating it was like drinking wine from Kiddush. Only after I persuaded him that this was my personal oneg Shabbos, that even in this horrible place I could host a Jew at my table, he agreed and ate with me.

"It was an unforgettable seudah. The giving infused me with new strength, physical and spiritual. Despite the meager rations, despite the setting, I felt like I was sitting at a royal feast. I forgot everything around me and my soul rose high up. Those were moments of M'ein Olam Haba that will never return."

Ner LeShulchan Shabbos, 629