

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Seven Hundred Brachos Each Week

"ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה" (לה ב)

Sefer Matamin Hachadash (Inyanei Shabbos 21) writes: One who is careful to make one hundred brachos a day merits to accumulate seven hundred brachos over the course of the seven days of the week. The name of the day of Shabbos alludes to this as שבת is an acronym for ברכות [700] ת"ש that are completed on this day.

Harav Yitzchak Avraham Shlomo Mijalled of Baghdad, added that one can find an allusion to this in this *passuk*: "Sheishes yamim tei'aseh melachah ubayom hashvi'i..." – ימים is numerically equivalent to 100. If you make *meah* (100) brachos on the six days of creation and on Shabbos, then "yihiyeh lachem kodesh Shabbo"s shabbason l'Hashem," on Shabbos, which completes the week, you will have accrued ברכות ת"ש.

Tzelach Rechav

Tefillah Without a Trace of Pride

"המלאכה היתה דים לכל המלאכה לעשות אתה והותר" (לו ז)

This *passuk* seems to contradict itself. On the one hand it says: "Vehamelachah haysah dayam" – that the material brought was exactly enough, and on the other hand "vehoser" – there was material left over, so there was more than was needed for the work of the Mishkan.

The Rebbe **Harav Yaakov Tzvi of Porisov** explained a beautiful concept from this:

Because the objective of building the Mishkan was for it to be a dwelling place for the Shechinah, it was not enough for Bnei Yisrael to just build it properly. They also had to make it possible to have the Shechinah dwell among them by conducting themselves with humility, because one who is arrogant and prideful is

Shabbos and Amen Bring the Geulah

"אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתם" (לה א)
Chazal say in *Maseches Brachos* (53b): "One who answers amen is greater than the one making the brachah." We can explain this as follows: Because amen is an acronym for "K-l Melech Ne'eman" (*Shabbos* 119b), we find that while the *mevarech* mentions only the "K-l Melech" [in the nusach of the brachah] the one who answers amen also adds the description of "Ne'eman" which means – we are trustful that He will redeem us quickly, as he promised us. Therefore, the virtue of the one who says amen is greater than that of the *mevarech*.

When Bnei Yisrael were commanded about Shabbos, in this *passuk*, it included their obligation to believe in the coming of the Geulah – a day that is called *Yom Shekulo Shabbos*. That is why this *passuk* alludes to answering amen, which symbolizes our faith in the Geulah, in the words "Eileh Hadevarim" which are numerically equivalent to 297, which is numerically equivalent to amen, when written *malei*: מ"ם נו"ן.

Bas Ayin

considered to push away the Shechinah (see *Brachos* 43b). Therefore, HaKadosh Baruch Hu ordained it that Am Yisrael should bring to the Mishkan more than was needed, and by doing so they all were in a low mood. Each person worried that perhaps because there were so many donations, his particular contribution would not be needed for the work of the Mishkan and he would not be part of it.

That is what this *passuk* is saying: "Vehamelachah haysah dayam" – it was done completely in a way that the Shechinah could dwell in the Mishkan. But because

of "vehoser" – that Bnei Yisrael brought more than they needed to, their hearts were humbled, and that is why the Shechinah was able to dwell there.

In this context, we learn that the Rebbe **Harav Yirmiyah of Opele**, had a practice that even when he struggled to gather a *minyan* to daven *betzibbur*, he insisted that eleven people should gather, and he did not suffice with ten. He explained: "Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 39a) 'The Shechinah dwells wherever there are ten people [a minyan],' and I don't want any of the *mispallelim* to feel pride that it is because of him that the Shechinah dwell among us, because *ga'avah* affects that dwelling of the Shechinah in a negative way."

Atarah Lerosh Tzaddik; Mipi Sofrim Usefarim

"Ve'yehi Noam" In Preparation for the Shechinah

"ויברך אתם משה" (לט מג)

"He said to them, May it be His will that the Shechinah rest on the work of your hands. Ve'yehi noam Hashem Elokeinu aleinu..." (*Tehillim* 90:17) (*Rashi*)

Based on the words of *Rashi*, the *Ta"z* explained the connection between the request of *Ve'yehi Noam* and the *tefillah* of *V'Atah Kadosh*, said right after it on *Motzaei Shabbos*: At the end of the work of the Mishkan, the Shechinah dwelled there after Moshe blessed Am Yisrael with "Ve'yehi Noam." Similarly, we first say "Ve'yehi Noam" before reciting the *passuk* "V'Atah Kadosh yoshev tehillos Yisrael," which describes the dwelling of Hashem's Shechinah on His nation Yisrael. For this reason, the *tefillah* of "Ve'yehi Noam" and "V'Atah Kadosh" are dependent one on another. When one does not say "Ve'yehi Noam" on *Motzaei Shabbos*, he also does not say "V'Atah Kadosh."

Ta"z, Orach Chaim 295 3

This Friday, 6 Nissan, is the *yahrtzeit* of the holy Rebbe, the Baal Shomer Emunim.

In his *sefer*, *Shomer Emunim* (*Ma'amr Pischu Shearim* end of chapter 3) he wrote regarding the words of the *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1): "There is nothing greater to HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Am Yisrael answer?" "And...the words of this *Midrash* are not an exaggeration *chas veshalom*, that there is nothing more important to Hashem than the answering of amen...And who is the obstinate person who sees all this and his heart does not melt to be careful about answering amen?"



Yehi Ratzon After Birchos Hashachar (2)

Extra Protection from an "Adam Ra"

Further along in the *Yehi Ratzon* after *Birchos Hashachar*, we ask that Hashem should spare us from an "Adam ra, [yetzer ra], *mechaver ra umishachen ra*." We ask this even though we have already requested in the previous *Yehi Ratzon*: "*Veharchikeinu*, distance us from a bad person and from a bad friend." This is because in the previous *Yehi Ratzon* we asked for matters relating to the soul, that we should not be drawn after sinners, while here we are asking about physical matters, that a bad person or bad friend should not cause any damage to our body or possessions. (*Siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham*, p. 64)

The Rebbe Harav Aharon of Belz explained that in the first *Yehi Ratzon* we daven for those whose bad can be discerned, as proven from the words "*Veharchikenu*" – that we recognize them, and we ask Hashem to help us keep a distance from them. But here, we add a request regarding those whose evil is not evident, and therefore, there is a great danger that we will become close to them and learn from their deeds. So we ask Hashem to save us from them. (*Pshat V'iyun Brachos* 16b)

Harav Chaim Palagi wrote that in the request of "*Vehatzileinu...mei'adam ra*" we should have in mind also to be saved from all kinds of poverty in the world, as the words "מאדם" are an acronym for the six names of the poor person: *misken, evyon, dal, mach, rash, ani*. (*Yafeh Lalev*, Vol. II, 46 8; see also *Vayira Rabbah* 34 6)

Woe to the Evil Person, Woe to His Neighbor

The sages of the *Mishnah* have taught us about the low value of the "*shachen ra*" in *Avos* (1:7): "*Nitai Ha'arbeli* said, distance yourself from a bad neighbor." Our obligation to distance ourselves from a bad neighbor is not only from the fear that we might learn from his actions, but also due to the concern that we might be punished for his sins. We can see this in the *halachos* of *nega'im*, when the entire wall of the house of the affected person is destroyed, even when a *tzaddik* lives on the other side of the wall. This is because "*oy lerasha* – woe to the evil person and woe to his neighbor." (*Avos D'Rabi Nosson* 9 1; *Rav Ovadia Mibartenura Avos* ibid). Therefore, we ask in a special request to be spared from a "*shachen ra*." (*Avudraham Birchos Hashachar*)

Additionally, Harav Aharon Levin of Reisha explained according to the *Mishnah* (*Shabbos* 54b): "The cow of Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah would go out on Shabbos with a strap between its horns against the will of the sages" [who thought that the strap was considered like a load]. The *Gemara* (ibid) explains that certainly Rabi Elazar did not disobey the sages, but rather, this cow belonged to his neighbor, and "because he did not object – it was called in his name." Based on this we can say that we have in mind "*vehatzileinu ... mishachen ra*" that when our neighbors do bad things, others might think that we agree to it and blame us for their sins, so please spare us from this. (*Birchas Aharon Brachos* Chapter 2, 128)

A Shachen Ra Can Become a Shachen Tov

While we can distance ourselves and disengage from an *adam ra* and a *chaver*

Mei'adam ra [miyetzer ra], *meichaver ra* who might harm my body or my money *umishachen ra* – that I should not be punished for his bad deeds, *umipega ra* – from the "*pigei hazman*" the mishaps that might happen through the course of the day.

ra, the bad neighbor is right next to us, and therefore, we need this special request to be saved from him. (*Brachah Veshalom* 8:13)

Maseches Brachos 10 1) brings the story of Rabi Meir, who lived next to hoodlums who often harassed him. Wanting to be spared from them, he davened for them to die. His wife, Beruriah, said to him: If you're davening for them to die, daven for them to do *teshuvah*.

Rav Naftali Katz, author of *Semichas Chachanim* (*Kedushah Ubrachah* ibid) explained that Rabi Meir did not explicitly pray for his neighbors to die. Rather he davened: "*Shetatzileini...mishachen ra*." Rabi Meir was sure that this *tefillah* could only be effective in the literal meaning as long as the bad neighbor did not yet come to live next to him. But these people were already living there, and harming him, and he believed there was no other way to be spared from them except if they would die. But Beruriah, his wife, enlightened him that even after the *shachen ra* had come to live near him, he could pray that they should be transformed to good neighbors by doing *teshuvah*.

Hatzileinu Mipega Ra

The *Avudraham* (*Birchos Hashachar*) explains that the request to be saved from a *pega ra* is directed towards things that happen relating to time, meaning mishaps that can occur throughout the day, as it says (*Mishlei* 27:1): "*Ki lo seida mah yeled yom*, you cannot know what the day will give rise to." But some explain that this request is directed towards a harmful element that cannot be taken to a *din Torah*, such as (*Bava Kama* 87a): a deaf person, a fool and a minor, of whom it says that their damage is great, and one who harms them – is obligated, and when they harm others – they are exempt." (*Siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham*, ibid)

There is another explanation that this request is regarding the *yetzer hara*, according to the words of *Chazal* (*Sukkah* 52b): "*Tanna Devei Rabi Yishmael: Im paga becha menuval zeh – moscheihu lebeis hamedrash*." *Pegiah* is a term that refers to the initial interest in doing a sin, and we daven that already at that stage we should be saved from the *yetzer*. (*Siddur Birchos Avos*, p. 14)

The Shefa Chaim of Sanz was once returning from Meron, where he had davened a whole night. At dawn, the car carrying the Rebbe and his escorts drove through the entrance to the "red city" of Haifa, known as a bastion of the left, and seculariry.

Before entering the city, the Rebbe said: "A person must habituate himself to see only the good in everything. We also were given a special *tefillah* for this: "*shetatzileini...mipega ra*." We should never meet or encounter the bad part of anything, and we should always see only the good things."

The Rebbe's words seemed puzzling at first, but those with him quickly realized, that in contrast to their expectations, when they entered the city which was known for abandoning religion, the first thing they saw were three religious Jews who had risen early, and were hurrying towards shul for the *neitz minyan*, with their *tallis* and *tefillin* bags tucked under their arms.

When he saw this, the Rebbe exulted: "Look! When a person wants to see only good, from Above it is ordained that he see only the good..." (*Lapid Ha'eish* Vol. II, p. 651)

An Extension Built "Bechavrusa"

This letter was recently sent by an *avreich* who lives in Central Israel, who describes an inspiring chain of events that led to a surprising salvation from his plight. He attributes the wonderful results to the fact that he continued to fulfill the ancient *minhag* of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, even when shuls were closed and minyanim were held in yards and open areas. This is his letter:

To Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*, and the staff of Bney Emunim,

I am sending you this letter with feelings of great emotion and gratitude to HaKaodsh Baruch Hu, and with special *hakaras hatov* to you, His wonderful emissaries, after I merited a special *yeshuah* through you. After many years of efforts and struggle, we merited reprieve and are now living in comfort.

Baruch Hashem, my family and I have just finished a project to extend and renovate our apartment. Now, *bechasdei Hashem*, we have enough room for our eight children to sleep comfortably, after years of living in very crowded conditions.

We have been living in the same apartment we bought after our marriage. It's a small apartment that is typical of the city where we live. Over the years, our family grew, and living in the apartment, which had once been sufficient for our family, became more and more uncomfortable.

We were very used to the area and pleased with our neighborhood, and we did not want to move far away to a larger apartment, as many suggested we do. We preferred to think along the lines of expanding our current apartment.

Three years ago, we began the exhausting bureaucratic process that is familiar to anyone who wants to make changes in his apartment. After tremendous investment and effort, we completed that stage. Then we had to move on to the next stage – which we thought would be the easiest: asking our neighbors to approve the building plan.

The building we live in is considered a paragon of harmony and mutual concern for one another. Everyone agreed graciously, except one: the neighbor who lived right on top of my apartment. He was a distinguished, elderly man who had married off all his children, and therefore did not need to expand his own home. He firmly declared that my expansion would disturb his quality of life, and therefore, he objected.

I was taken aback by his refusal, but I tried my best to maintain my respect for him. At first, I tried to persuade him by explaining how necessary this expansion was for me. But nothing helped; the man remained firmly entrenched in his refusal. The neighbors also tried to help me persuade him, but the man did not budge. "If you want a bigger apartment, move," was his response.

I did not have a reasonable option of moving to another apartment – and building without taking this man's concerns into consideration was also not something I intended to do. I had no choice but to daven fervently to Hashem to put it in the mind of my neighbor to soften his objections.

I davened for this every single day, and naturally, I had special *kavanah* in the request of "*Yehi Ratzon*" after *Birchos Hashachar*: "*Shetatzileini hayom uvechol yom...mishachen ra*." Of course, I did

not consider my neighbor to be "bad," but these words reminded me to ask that Hashem should put it in the heart of my neighbor to be benevolent to me and to allow me to extend.

Meanwhile corona landed on the world. The courtyard of our building became the site of a local *minyan*, and we began to daven there three times a day. My elderly neighbor also davened with us. As the result of Bney Emunim's activities to raise awareness of this matter, I had long been saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* in the shul where I daven. So when this new *minyan* began, I looked for a new *chavrusa*. I timidously suggested the idea to that neighbor, and I was pleased when he agreed.

We began to say *Birchos Hashachar* together each morning, and this *chavrusa* drew us closer, and even began to chat here and there about different matters. When the neighbor decided, upon his doctors' advice, not to leave his house, he asked me to come to his door each morning so that we could maintain our *chavrusa*. I was very careful to ask how he was each day and to offer assistance. From time to time, he asked my children to do some shopping or errands for him.

Half a year ago, I was surprised to hear knocking at the door early one morning. My neighbor was standing there, and after we said *Birchos Hashachar*, as we usually do, he explained his visit:

"We've been saying *Birchos Hashachar* together for a long time. You can say that as a result of that, and of the conversations we've had, I got to know you much better. I am full of admiration for you and your family. I'll tell you that recently, as I listen and answer amen to the *brachah* of *She'asah LiKol Tzorki* that you say, I feel uncomfortable. I know how hard the crowding in your home is for you and your large family.

"After considering the matter at length, I've come to tell you that I wholeheartedly – with the agreement of my wife – have decided to remove my objection to your construction. In addition, because I know what a financial undertaking such a project is, we want to share some of the expenses."

When he finished, he handed me an envelope with a generous sum of several thousand shekels – which certainly would help with the myriad expenses that I faced.

The neighbor did not want to linger outside his home, and I was so stunned at the turnaround, that I could hardly utter my thanks before he disappeared back into his home.

I saw the tremendous *Hashgachah pratis*. A vehement objector to my construction was transformed to a partner. One fine day, my *tefillah* that I said every day in *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* was answered, and I merited a "*shachen tov*."

Now, after the job has been finished, and we are finally comfortable in our new-old apartment, I have the time to send you this letter to express *hakaras hatov* that I feel to you for being good emissaries from Above to draw us closer.

Each year, I feel deep gratitude in the *brachah* of "*She'asah Li Kol Tzorki*" when you distribute shoes before Pesach, now I have redoubled gratitude for this

brachah – in your merit!
Gratefully, S.A.