

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim



Pearls of Emunim

Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

'Because He Commanded and They Were Created' - Against the Opinion of the Errant Ones

"וילך ויעבד אלהים אחרים וישתחו להם ולשמש או לירח או לכל צבא השמים אשר לא צוית" (זג)

Harav Yechezkel Abramsky explained:

Rashi explains: "asher lo tzivisi" – "I avdam. That I did not command – to worship them." But from the words of Chazal (Megillah 9b) we can learn that those who worship the constellations distorted the simple meaning and explained "asher lo tzivisi" – I did not command that they should be created. As if to say that the celestial worlds were created against the Will of Hashem. As a result, they erroneously believe that these celestial bodies have divine powers.

It is against these distorted views that we declare each morning in *Shacharis*: "Haleluhu shemesh veyarei'ach, praise Him sun and moon; praise Him all stars of the night, ki Hu tzivah venivra'u, because He commanded and they were created" (Tehillim 148:3,5). We can therefore add that there is also a special virtue to davening *vasikin* – that as soon as the sun rises, we can declare that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the One Who created it, and it is only Him that we may worship.

Chazon Yechezkel, Tanach p. 360

'That I Not Err in a Matter of Halachah' – to Say 'What Is Impure Is Pure'

"ובאת אל הכהנים הלויים ואל השפט אשר יהיה בימים ההם ודרשת והגידו לך את דבר המשפט" (זז ט)

A question was presented to Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg regarding the kashrus of an animal that had been slaughtered in his city. The Rebbe looked at the cut of meat placed before him, and although it seemed halachically kosher, he could not bring himself to render it so. He asked to see the other parts of the animal.

Indeed, one of the other parts turned out to have a different problem which rendered the whole animal *treif*.

'Tzedek' Must Be Pursued to Fulfill It

"צדק צדק תרדה" (טז כ)

Harav Eliyahu Horoshevsky, Rav of Drohobitch, explained:

The hoy *Zohar* (Tikkunei Zohar Chadash 132 1) explains that the word *tzedakah* alludes to the quota of four holy things that a person must do each day and they are צ' amens, ד' kedushos, ק' brachos and ה' Chumashim of Torah – which are an acronym for צדקה.

Every person can take part in Torah learning by supporting those who learn (see *Tur Yoreh Deah* 246), but the *brachos*, amens and *kedushos* must be recited by the person himself. This is what the *passuk* alludes to here: "tzedek tzedek tirdof" – the three things alluded to in the word צדק are things you must pursue yourself in order to fulfill them – and don't rely on others.

Eizor Eliyahu

Based on this story, the *Chiddushei Harim* explained the seemingly redundant language in the *tefillah* of Rabi Nechunya ben Hakanah, when he entered the *beis medrash* (*Brachos* 28b): "And I should not fail on a matter of *halachah*...and I should not say of something impure that it is pure, and something pure that it is impure." It would seem that if he already asked, in general, not to stumble and fail on a matter of *halachah*, why did he need to add the sentence about not mixing up pure and impure?

The above story illustrates that aside for Rabi Nechunya asking "not to stumble on a matter of *halachah*", that I should rule incorrectly on a question presented to me, he then added, "and I should not say of something impure that it is pure" – even if a

question comes before me that appears to be 'pure' but for another reason that I cannot see it is actually impure, then I should not stumble and rule it "pure."

Shemen Hatov, Sippurim, Vol. II, 4; Meir Einei Hagolah 298

Yaakov's Tefillah Depends on Observing Mitzvos 'As He Conspired'

"ולא תחוס עינך...; כי תצא למלחמה על איבך וראית סוס ורכב עם רב ממך לא תירא מהם כי ה' אלקיך עמך המעילך מארץ מצרים" (יט כא; כ א)

The *Chasam Sofer* explained:

From the fact that the Torah placed the commandment of "velo sachos einecha" which requires punishing an *eid zomem* "ka'asher zamam la'asos l'achiv, as he conspired to do to his brother" next to the *passuk* "ki seitzei lemilchamah al oyvecha, when you go to war against your enemy," we learn that if Am Yisrael has compassion on *eidim zomemim*, and do not treat them according to the law in Torah, then they are punished by war, *chalilah*. (See *Yalkut Shimoni, Shoftim* 523)

The *Chasam Sofer* explained the reason they are punished for this specifically this way, according to the words of Chazal (*Megillah* 6a) that Yaakov Avinu davened to Hashem: "Al titen Hashem m'avayei rasha zemamo al tafek, do not grant the desires of the wicked; do not let his thoughts succeed" (*Tefillim* 140:9). This refers to the descendants of Eisav who connived in their hearts all the time to destroy us. If not for Yaakov's *tefillah* "they would have destroyed the entire world." So now we can say that this punishment is given 'measure for measure.' As long as Yaakov's descendants are careful about the laws of *eidim zomemim*, Hashem stops the designs of Eisav's descendants against them. But if, *chalilah*, they are not careful about this, then Hashem does not stop their enemies from carrying out their plans.

Toras Moshé

"שִׁחַר אֲבִיקָשְׁךָ צוּרִי וּמְשַׁנְבִי"

"Avinu Malkeinu ein lanu Melech ela Atah"

Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b) that the three letters of the word אמן refer to the three words נאמן. Rashi explains (*ibid ad. loc. Kel*) that one who answers amen "testifies of his Creator, that He is Kel Melech Ne'eman."



"Avinu Malkeinu kera roa gezar dineinu"

Chazal say (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1): "One who answers amen with all his might has his decree of seventy years torn up."



Fellow Yid! Do you want to increase your merits ahead of the Day of Judgment?

Come early to shul each morning to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and you can accumulate more and more amens, which are so valuable and will serve as a merit for you on the Yom Hadin.



**‘Gadol Ha’oneh Amen Yoser Min Hamevarech’
Compilation of Explanations (4)**

Chazal say (Brachos 53b): “Rabi Yosi says: ‘The one who answers amen is greater than the one making the brachah.’ Many have asked: Wouldn’t it seem that the mevarech is the initiator who begins the mitzvah, and without him there is no brachah and no amen? Why, if so, does Rabi Yosi say that the one answering is greater than the one making the brachah?”

In previous segments we presented numerous explanations from Chazal. Upon perusal, it is evident that each explanation clarifies and hones in on a specific point regarding the virtue of amen. Together, these explanations create a powerful spotlight that illuminates the sublime value of answering amen.

15. Amen – ‘He Is Not Commanded, Yet Does It’

Chazal say (Kiddushin 31a): “The one who is commanded to do something and does it is greater than the one who is not commanded and does it.” In other words, the reward of one who performs a mitzvah that he is obligated to do is greater than the reward of one who volunteers to perform a mitzvah he is not obligated to do. That is because the one who is commanded to do something and does it has a more powerful yetzer hara to transgress, and he needs more strength to fight it. (Ritva ibid)

Based on this, Harav Shlomo Kluger explained: One who makes a brachah from the Birchos Hanehenin is considered an ‘eino metzuveh v’oseh’. After all, he could choose to refrain from this pleasure, and then he would not be obligated at all to make the brachah. In contrast, one who answers amen is classified as a ‘metzuveh v’oseh,’ who is commanded to do something and does it, because when he hears a brachah, he is obligated to answer amen. Therefore, “the one who answers amen is greater” – because he is a metzuveh v’oseh in all the brachos “yoser min hamevarech,” – than the one who made the brachah, who for many brachos is an “eino metzuveh v’oseh.” (Shu”t Shenos Chaim, Kuntress Derech Hachaim, Derech Chamishi)

16. Amen – Gratitude for Another Person’s Good

The Tiferes Shlomo explained: When Yisro came to the camp of Bnei Yisrael after the great miracles that occurred to them on their way out of Mitzrayim, he said (Shemos 18:10): “Baruch Hashem asher hitzil eschem miyad Mitzrayim umiyad Pharaoh.” Chazal explained (Sanhedrin 94a): “This was a reproach to Moshe and the 600,000 who did not say ‘baruch’ until Yisro came and said ‘Baruch Hashem.’” This seems puzzling: Didn’t Bnei Yisrael praise Hashem effusively with a long song that they said after Krias Yam Suf, what difference does it make if they did not praise Him using the term ‘baruch’? It can be explained that even though, indeed, in Shiras Hayam, each one of Bnei Yisrael thanked Hashem with all his heart for his personal miracle of salvation, Yisro added something new: It is fitting for a person to also thank Hashem for the salvation of another person, evidenced by the fact that he was not saved with them from the bondage of Egypt, yet he still praised Hashem and said, ‘Baruch Hashem asher hitzil eschem – blessed is Hashem Who saved you.’

We must learn that the principle of a person thanking Hashem does not have to focus on the personal good that Hashem has done for him, but rather on the good that Hashem bestows on all His creations. There are two reasons for this: 1. When he focuses on his friend’s good, he shows that he is not behaving selfishly, and rather, he is happy with his friend’s good. 2. When expressing gratitude for good done to a friend, he increases the praise and loftiness of Hashem, Who does not only do good for him, but also to all His creations.

So we can explain as follows: In many brachos,

the mevarech thanks and praises Hashem only for the person good that Hashem has bestowed upon him. For example, in Birchos Hashachar, the mevarech thanks Hashem for the many good things that He blesses him with each day. But he only thanks Hashem for his personal good. In contrast, the one who answers amen, joins and thanks Hashem for the good bestowed upon his friend, so his level of gratitude is higher than that of the mevarech. Therefore, Chazal said that the one who answers is greater than the mevarech. (Tiferes Shlomo, Sha’ar Hatefillah)

17. Amen – Thanks from the Bottom of the Heart

Harav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzimin compared answering amen to the kol simchah heard from a person who merits to marry off his child. During the simchah, his emotions mount, and he feels with all his being the tremendous chessed of Hashem that has accompanied him throughout the years, from when his child was born until he merited to bring him to the chuppah. But he does not stand and talk about the many chasdei Hashem; instead, his simchah erupts from deep inside with a cry of joy and a dance. The sounds of joy express without words the miracles and chassadim of Hashem that he has experienced over the years. This type of gratitude is intense and valuable, because if he would stand and detail all the yeshuos of Hashem he has merited thus far, his emotions would cool down, and the gratitude and joy would not stem from the depths of his heart.

The one who makes the brachah details and expounds on his gratitude. The many words dull the sense of gratitude, and they do not emerge from the depths of his heart. The one who answers amen, in contrast, reduces all the emotions of his gratitude into one word, and that is why it erupts with joy and gratitude from the depths of his heart. That is why the level of gratitude of the one who answers amen is greater than the one of the mevarech. (Bikkurei Avi”v, Ki Savo)

18. Amen – Yiras Harommemus

There is another explanation: It is known that there are two levels in yiras Shamayim. There is yiras ha’onesh, fear of punishment, and yiras harommemus – fear of the loftiness of Hashem. Fear of punishment is straightforward – a person fulfills the mitzvos of the Torah because he fears the punishment that those who transgress them deserve. This fear is easy to attain, because it is human nature to fear the bad and to try and ward it off. In contrast, yiras Harommemus means that a person fulfills the mitzvos of the Torah because he is concerned about the Kavod of Hashem and His Loftiness. Such fear is harder to attain because it requires a person to constantly be conscious of his own lowly state as compared to the greatness and loftiness of the Creator. (Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 24)

On a practical level, these forms of fear are also different: The person who fears punishment will usually do the mitzvos exactly how he is obligated to. He will not be mehader, and certainly will not seek to do mitzvos that he is not obligated to do. This way, he fulfills what he is obligated to do, and he can be sure that he will not be punished. In contrast, someone who merits to have yiras harommemus will fulfill each mitzvah with the maximum hiddur, and will even seek to do mitzvos that he is not obligated to perform, in order to continue to add to Hashem’s Rommemus.

Hence, one who seeks to hear more brachos so that he can add more amens, even though he is not obligated to do so, reveals that he has yiras harommemus in his heart. In contrast, one who makes the brachah is only doing what is incumbent on him, and his action can also stem from the lower level of yiras ha’onesh. Therefore, answering amen is greater than making the brachah. (Tzitzis Hakanaf [Rav A.D. Bloch] p. 17)

The “Unmissed” Meeting Because of a Late Tefillah

Harav Binyamin Mendelsohn, z”l, the Gaavad of Komemiyus, was known for his dedication to the observance of the mitzvah of shemittah in Eretz Yisrael during a time when strict shemittah observance in the land was at a nadir. He established the renowned Keren Hashvi’is with the goal of supporting those who observe shemittah in Eretz Yisrael.

During the years when the Jewish yishuv was being resettled, even of the farmers who were aware of the mitzvah of shemittah, only a few were willing to observe it by completely letting their land lie fallow. Most of them relied on various leniencies that enabled them to continue working their land during the seventh year as well. The plows continued digging up the land, which yearned for some rest, as the Torah informs us.

The situation pained many yerei Shamayim and that galvanized them to take action and do what they could to persuade as many farmers as possible to observe the mitzvah of shemittah with all its stringent details. Harav Binyamin Mendelsohn went beyond explaining the value of shemittah to the farmers and urging them to observe it. He understood the tremendous financial challenge faced by those who let the land rest, and established special fund to support them financially for the entire year so they could fulfill the Will of Hashem.

In addition to his dedication to explaining the mitzvah of shemittah to the farmers, Reb Binyamin worked tirelessly to educate the greater public that was not involved in farming and urged them to take part in this mitzvah by supporting Keren Hashvi’is, which gives financial backing to the farmers. With siyata diShmaya, his efforts were successful, and as more farmers undertook to keep shemittah, the financial obligations of the fund grew commensurately. Rav Mendelsohn had no choice but to travel abroad to solicit funds from Diaspora Jewry.

One year, Reb Binyamin traveled to London, accompanied by his right hand man, Reb Yisrael Posner, z”l. They planned to meet a number of affluent Jews who they hoped would support Keren Hashvi’is’ operations. In the short time that they had in London, they had to visit a few homes, most notable among them the home of Reb Yudel, a well-known philanthropist.

Reb Yudel was one of the wealthiest chareidi Jews in London. On previous trips on behalf of Keren Hashvi’is, the members of the Keren had tried repeatedly to set up an appointment with him, to no avail. This time, they had managed to arrange an appointment and they had high hopes for it. The philanthropist had made up to meet them in his office at twelve noon. Because the trip by train from the station close to where Rav Binyamin was staying to the stop near the office of the potential donor was supposed to take more than an hour, they had to leave no later than ten thirty in the morning.

The morning of the meeting arrived. Rav Binyamin rose early to go to shul, as he always did. He arrived before davening began, and started to daven slowly, word by word. Towards the end of davening, Reb Yisrael, who was accompanying Rav Binyamin, began to take off his tefillin. He glanced at

his watch pointedly, as if to show how late it was. But he had to wait patiently until the Rav completed his davening. The Rav was pouring his heart out to Hashem, and did not seem to be in any hurry at all.

The Rav only finished davening at eleven o’clock, long after the rest of the mispallelim. Reb Yisrael hastily pointed out that they were going to miss the meeting, but perhaps if they hurried they would yet make it. But the Rav replied patiently that he could not yet leave, as he had to put on Rabbeinu Tam tefillin; only then could they set out.

When the Rav took off hi Rabbeinu Tam tefillin it was extremely late. There was no way – by nature – that they could get to the meeting on time. But the Rav, known for his middah of bitachon, decided that they had to fulfill the mitzvah of hishtadlus, and that they could depart now as well.

Rav Mendelsohn and his companion hurried to the train station. By the time they reached the home of the gvir it was already the late afternoon. The house was dark, a sign that Reb Yudel was not there, but they decided to ring the bell anyway.

When no one answered, the two decided to return to their lodgings. Reb Yisrael was brokenhearted about being late to the meeting, and bemoaned the loss that was caused to them. But the Komemiyuser Rav gave him chizuk, and mentioned an early Yiddish saying, “Der mentch geit, ober ‘Mei’ Hashem mitzadei gever konenu – shteit.” In other words, a person goes on his way, but we know that it says that the steps of a man are planned by Hashem.”

“HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranges for a person the exact moment that he will reach his destination,” the Rav said with confidence. As he spoke, an elegant car pulled up; the door opened and none other than Reb Yudel himself emerged. When he noticed them, he began to apologize profusely that he had completely forgotten about their meeting that was supposed to take place at twelve. “Who knows how long the Rav is waiting for me outside!” Reb Yudel fretted regretfully. But the Komemiyuser Rav reassured him that they had just arrived.

“Still,” the gvir said, as he led the Rav and Reb Yisrael to his office, “you made the effort to come all the way here. You knocked on the door of the house and I did not answer, and that must have caused you a lot of aggravation. I must compensate you for that.”

“I will give you double what I had planned to give,” the gvir said as he sat down at his desk. As he spoke, he pulled out a checkbook and wrote a check for a huge sum to Keren Hashvi’is.

“Nu, as I told you from the start, ‘mei’ Hashem mitzadei gaver konanu,’” the Rav said to Reb Yisrael as they emerged from the house. “If we would have come at the right time, we would not have met Reb Yudel nor would we have received even the amount he had planned to give. Now, because we were late because we were so careful about our tefillah, we received double the reward from Above.”

Be’er Hagan, Parashas Behar