

“על פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחנו”

A wonderful segulah for success in whatever you do: Say before and after every action that its achievement is b'ezras Hashem

This week, we will attempt to explain the pessukim that discuss the protective Heavenly clouds that resided among Klal Yisrael throughout their years in the midbar. These clouds also served to guide Klal Yisrael as to the proper time and place to begin their travels.

The pessukim (9:15) in full:

“וביום הקים את המשכן כסה הענן את המשכן לאהל העדות, ובערב יהיה על המשכן כמראה אש עד בוקר, כן יהיה תמיד הענן יכסנו ומראה אש לילה, ולפי העלות הענן מעל האהל ואחרי כן יסעו בני ישראל, ובמקום אשר ישכן שם הענן שם יחנו בני ישראל, על פי ה' יסעו בני ישראל ועל פי ה' יחנו, כל ימי אשר ישכון הענן על המשכן יחנו, ובהאריך הענן על המשכן ימים רבים ושמרו בני ישראל את משמרת ה' ולא יסעו.”

ויש אשר יהיה הענן ימים מספר על המשכן על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו, ויש אשר יהיה הענן מערב עד בוקר ונעלה הענן בבוקר ונסעו או יומם ולילה ונעלה הענן ונסעו, או יומים או חודש או ימים בהאריך הענן על המשכן לשכון עליו יחנו בני ישראל ולא יסעו ובהעלותו יסעו, על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו את משמרת ה' שמרו על פי ה' ביד משה.”

What we notice first is how the phrase “על פי ה'” recurs no less than seven times. We know that the Torah does not waste words; nor is it bound by a certain frame. Therefore, any lessons to be found within its words are as applicable today as when they were first relayed to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai. Thus, we can now ask, do the words “על פי ה'” have a hidden lesson for us to learn from today? What can we take from their apparent repetition? Come, let us take a journey together to understand the meaning of these words.

**For every action a person,
should say “with Hashem’s help.”**

According to the Shelah Hakadosh, these very pessukim are a source for the obligation to always say “with Hashem’s help.” These are his words in Hebrew:

“על פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחנו (במדבר ט, יח), ואחר כך כתיב (שם ט כ), על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו. יש רמז מוסר בכאן, על כל פעולה או תנועה שהאדם עושה, יאמר אם ירצה השם או בעזרת השם. למשל בלכתו בדרך יאמר, הנני נוסע בעזרת השם יתברך, ובדעתי לחנות במקום פלוני בעזרתו יתברך אם ירצה, וכשבא למקום החניה אז יחזור ויתן שבח ויאמר, הנה בעזרת השם יתברך באתי הנה, ובדעתי ליסע לזמן פלוני בעזרתו יתברך אם ירצה, נמצא שם שמים שגור בפיו בשעה שעולה במחשבתו ובשעת מעשה, ככה בכל פעולותיו.”

For every action taken, one should say “with Hashem’s help.” Before one leaves home; before one arrives in a new location; before he leaves to return home; and right before he actually arrives home once more, he should always say “with Hashem’s help.”

We should delve into this a little; why is it so important to repeat these words so many times? Shouldn’t it be enough to say it once upon leaving to reach any destination?

A person must know that the yetzer hara is always lying in wait. One way to counterbalance the evil inclination is to always have Hashem’s name on one’s lips. If the yetzer hara is always standing idly by, waiting for man to fail, then man’s secret weapon should be to remember that Hashem is with him at all times.

Everyone who goes to work must remember that his success is only through Hashem’s Will. One must actively fight the terrible concept of “I have accomplished” or “it is my doing.” The Torah warns us that as we gain in success, we should not become haughty and forget that Hashem is the true source for what we have achieved.

“השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' אלקיך, פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת, ובקרר וצאנך ירביון וכסף וזהב ירבה לך וכל אשר לך ירבה, ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים, ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה, וזכרת את ה' אלקיך כי הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל.”

If the yetzer hara does not at first succeed in making the person forget Hashem's constant presence as he leaves for his trip, he does not stop his battle, but tries again when the person returns. This is why we must constantly say "with Hashem's help" not only when we embark on a trip, but when we return as well.

Every night we say the words in **והסר** (ברכת השכיבנו) **שטן מלפנינו ומאחרינו**: "remove the yetzer hara from before us and after us." This too we can explain to mean before we leave and after we return, because the yetzer hara never gives up. Therefore, we should not stop reminding ourselves that our success is dependant upon Hashem's help.

A person should be familiar with this concept of the Shelah Hakadoesh because this is the way to win the battle against the yetzer hara. Upon embarking upon a trip, he should say "I am traveling with Hashem's help. With Hashem's help I will get to place x..." Upon reaching his destination he should again thank Hashem and say "With Hashem's help I have arrived" and then again remind himself "with Hashem's help I will leave once more and return home."

This pissuk, **על פי ה' יסעו ועל פי ה' יחוו** – According to the word of Hashem they would leave and return," has timeless implications, and with its understanding and acceptance comes the blessing of having the Heavenly clouds reside among us still today.

The name of Hashem that precedes the 13 attributes

(שמות לג יג): **ועתה אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך הודיעני נא את דרכיך ואדעך למען אמצא חן בעיניך וראה כי עמך הגוי הזה, ויאמר פני ילכו והניחותי לך". (שם לד ו): "ויעבר ה' על פניו ויקרא ה' ה' אל רחום וחונן ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת, נוצר חסד לאלפים נושא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקמה וגו'.**

We can now try to explain the hidden meaning behind Moshe Rabbeinu's request when he wanted "to know Your ways," as well as the response he received from Hashem, which was the listing of Hashem's thirteen attributes.

Literally, Moshe was asking to be taught how one can be successful in having Hashem accompany him upon all his journeys. **דרכיך** does not mean not "Your ways," as in how Hashem runs the world, but is rather interpreted as "Your way," or "How can I make my typically mundane travels into a journey accompanied by You, Hashem?" The preparation for that type of trip would guarantee that one would not succumb to the entreaties of the yetzer hara of "I have accomplished" or "It is my doing."

Hashem's answer to Moshe was "My presence will go and provide for you rest." With our introduction, we can reread these words to mean that when one remembers and places Hashem (My presence) before his travels (will go) then he will merit success (rest).

The only way to win against the thoughts "I have accomplished" and "It is my doing" is by being able to perceive that Hashem is responsible – "According to the word of Hashem they would leave and return."

We can add that there are different opinions among the sages regarding how to enumerate the thirteen attributes. The Arizal says that the first two words of "Hashem Hashem" are a preface and root to the thirteen attributes and not counted among them (accordingly, the first middah is Keil).

Based on what we have just learned, "Hashem Hashem" has a different definition: it refers to the two times one must mention "Hashem" in the phrase "with Hashem's help" – before he leaves on his trip and upon his return. Looking at it a different way, saying this phrase appropriately is the starting point upon which to win the battle against the yetzer hara and to ensure that "with Hashem's help" one will merit being on the receiving end of the thirteen attributes.

In other words, saying "with Hashem's help" makes Hashem our "guide" on how to keep the yetzer hara from affecting our "trip," thus earning the merit of having the thirteen attributes of mercy descend upon us.

The tzaddik only goes where Hashem shows Himself

The Meor V'Shemesh (Parashas Vayeitzei) writes of a fascinating concept that he heard from his "great rabbis" that "when a tzaddik travels, the name of Hashem appears before him, and the tzaddik follows the name even when he is unsure of where he is headed."

The sefer Mikvah Yisroel (page 65) quotes the holy Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Kalovv zi"l, who explains the pissuk **משלי יח** **"מגדל עוז שם ה' בו ירוץ צדיק ונשגב"** – "the Name of Hashem is a tower of strength; the tzaddik runs toward it and is safe." He does so by citing a parable: when cities want travelers to know where they are, they build a tall tower so that people can see it from a distance; so, too, when righteous people travel, they see a tall tower from a distance. What is that tower? The tzaddik follows the tower that he created in his mind – the name of Hashem – which is before him; i.e., when he sees the Name of Hashem, he runs toward it and knows where to go, but when

he does not see it he does not go forward, for he knows that it is not a safe place to be.

This is the meaning of the words of Dovid Hamelech **שויתי** ,**ה' לנגדי תמיד**," – place Hashem before your eyes." Every place you want to go, try and see if you can picture the name of Hashem first. This is how we can copy the people of the desert, about whom the Torah testifies that they traveled "according to the word of Hashem."

Even though we are not on the spiritual level of the tzaddik who can see the name of Hashem before his eyes, we can still fulfill the words of the Shelah Hakadosh and say "with Hashem's help I arrived and with Hashem's help I will leave."

You, Hashem, know all my ways

Rav Yeshaulah of Belz zy" a explained the words of Dovid Hamelech (Tehilim 139:2): **"אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי"** – "You, Hashem, know when I sit and when I stand." Because Hashem is truly everywhere, how can the human attempt to do any action without first requesting permission? How can one do mundane things before the presence of the King?" He answers that the only way is for one to continue to request permission for every act he does. Therefore, Dovid Hamelech said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu: "You, Hashem, know when I sit and when I stand," because Dovid never sat down or stood up without Hashem's permission.

Based on the words of the Shelah Hakadosh, when one will continually reminds himself: "with Hashem's help I arrived and with Hashem's help I will leave," it is as if he requests permission before every move.

Nature (teva) is numerically the same as Elokim midaas hadin

We can extend this thought with important words from the Ropshitzer Rav:

"פעולת המתקת הדינים הוא על ידי שלא יאמין בדרך הטבע כלל, כי אלהים גימטריא הטב"ע, וצריך להאמין בלמעלה מהטבע בחינת ה' ניסי, להאמין בהשגחתו הנפלאה שלא על פי הטבע... אבל כשח"ו אינו מאמין כך ונופל בדרך הטבע אל השכל, אדם שמשיג רק הטבע אז ח"ו דינים מתגברים עליו משם אלהים גימטריא הטב"ע."

His words are explained with the phrase "one creates his own reality." When one believes in the natural order of the world, then Hashem leaves the person to be guided by that natural world. But every Jew must know that there is a Higher reality: the one run by Hashem and His ability to alter nature and perform miracles.

The Ramak helps us better understand this. The natural world is governed by the name Elokim (which is numerically the same as teva – nature), which represents Hashem's strict justice; but the Divine Name of Hashem is above the natural laws and is run with mercy.

The Akeidah explains that this is why we find that the first words of the Torah use the name Elokim, because the world was originally set up that it should be run with strict justice and swift punishment. Only when Hashem saw that the world could not survive that way did He use the Divine Name of Hashem, which added the element of mercy (2:4).

The reason for this is that nature has no choice but to follow the rules and laws dictated to it by Hashem, but Hashem, Who gives power to everything, can alter things to help us survive. The addition of the Divine Name of Hashem into the mix together with the name of Elokim helps create mercy in the face of strict justice.

Now let us return to the words of the Ropshitzer. In truth, the world was created in a way that necessitates man working in the physical world. These acts are under the natural order, and therefore also become governed by the laws of strict justice. The only way for man to rise above this and create his own reality of mercy is to believe in the Power of Hashem – the same Power that can alter nature and perform miracles.

One who wants to be successful should not limit himself to being under the laws of nature; rather, he should bring in the Divine Name of Hashem and therefore be able to rise above the derech hateva. With Hashem's intervention, anything can happen. One can help himself be successful even if according to "strict justice" he would not be worthy by recognizing "with Hashem's help I arrived, and with Hashem's help I will leave."

This thought pertains to much more than monetary success, as expressed by Rav Tzvi Hirsh of Ziditchov, in his sefer Sur Mei'ra Va'aseh Tov. When one relies on doctors and their worldly remedies, he places himself in a position where he will be governed by the laws of strict justice. Thus, the best advice is for one to place all of his trust in Hashem and His ability to alter nature and perform miracles. With this newfound trust, one can create mercy in the face of strict justice.

This concept explains the words in Tehillim (32:10): **"כפירים"** **רשו ורעבוודורשי ה' לא יחסרו כל טוב** – "There are plenty of pains to the wicked and the believer in Hashem has mercy surround

him". The wicked believe in the natural world, and therefore become subject to its laws and its strict justice, but the believer in Hashem knows that there is a higher reality, and is therefore surrounded with mercy.

This, too, is how we interpret the words in Tehillim: "Young lions go hungry, but the searchers for Hashem are not missing in goodness" (34:11). "כפירים" – young lions – can be interpreted as "heretics." They are the ones who lose out, for they are judged with strict justice, but the searchers for Hashem are not missing in goodness.

Be careful to not forget Hashem, Your G-d

This holy concept explains the pessukim mentioned above (Devorim 8:11): "השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' אלקיך". The Torah warns us not to forget to mix the Divine Name of Hashem with the name Elokim. When one does so, he is danger of forgetting what the source of his success really is. He starts to believe that "I have accomplished" and "it is my doing."

"פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת, ובקרך וצאנך ירביין וכסף וזהב ירבה לך וכל אשר לך ירבה, ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלקיך המוציאך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים, ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה."

The only way to win this battle is to remember Hashem and mix the Divine Name of Hashem with the name of Elokim. "וזכרת את ה' אלקיך"

Now we should understand why we need to say "with Hashem's help" both before and after a journey. When one begins a trip, he is being governed by the natural world, and that allows him a potential fall into the world of strict justice. Therefore, one must constantly remember that he needs Hashem's guidance, for the combination will help him gain mercy.

Certainly, when one heads off to travel he must be extra careful, for as the Yerushalmi states (Brachos 4:4): "כל הדרכים כנח" - "all roads are considered dangerous places." The Midrash Tanchuma (Vayigash 1) adds that the yetzer hara entices people when in dangerous situations: "השטן מקטרג בשעת הסכנה". To eliminate that danger we should memorize

the words of the the Shelah Hakodesh and say: "הנני נוסע בעזרת השם יתברך, ובדעתי לחנות במקום פלוני בעזרתו יתברך אם ירצה".

(We can add that the words "ע"ל פ"י הוי"ה" numerically equal the value of "גבור" – strength, because always saying "with Hashem's help" lessens the power of strength and strict justice. "דר"ך [road] also equals the value of both names of Hashem "הוי"ה אלהים" times 2, and that is why we should say it two times – once when we leave, and once again when we return, in order to mix the names both times.)

The two recitations of Shema mornings and nights

I hesitantly add that with all of this we can now understand the idea to say the Shema in the morning and at night. Hashem wants us to accept His authority both in the beginning of the day, before we go out, and at night, when we return. In Shema we try to see the mixture of the Names and create awareness that "Hashem is One." We open and close each day with this hope.

This idea can be seen in the words of the Dubna Maggid (Sazria), who connects the saying Shema morning and night – the beginning of the day and in the end, with the pissuk in Yeshaya (44:6): "כה אמר ה' מלך ישראל וגואלו ה' צבאות אני ראשון: "ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלקים". Hashem says: "Ani rishon vani acharon" - If I will be the first and the last on your mind - mornings and nights, then you can be assured that "umibalodie ein elokim" – you will have only me in mind all day long. This is the reason why Hashem wants us to accept through the saying of Shema that we are subservient to Hashem in both the beginning of the day (first) and at night (last).

Based on what we have said, the end of the pissuk becomes clearer – when we do say the Shema we protect ourselves from falling under the natural order, because recognizing Hashem as the true source is a way to ensure that there will be no אלקים ruling us alone, but rather there will be the addition of mercy mixed in.

The secret to be truly successful is to always say "with Hashem's help," because then Hashem will help!

