

Kinder Torah®

Parashas Bamidbar

בס"ד

No Hope for Evil

"Which number blessing of the *Shmoneh Esray* have we now reached, Abba?"

"Number nineteen, Avi."

"Nineteen? The words *Shmoneh Esray* mean eighteen (blessings). Besides that, we are in the middle of the blessings, not at the end."

"Very astute observation, Avi. We are up to the blessing of '*vi'la'malshinim*', the twelfth of the nineteen blessings of the *Shmoneh Esray*. The Anshei Kineses HaGedola originally composed eighteen blessings, hence the name *Shmoneh Esray*. However, there arose a new danger to Klal Yisrael later in Rabban Gamliel's time. The heretics of the day sought to lead Jews astray through example, persuasion, and slander to the anti-Semitic Roman government. Rabban Gamliel composed this blessing in Yavneh and placed it in the *Shmoneh Esray* so that the populace would be aware of the danger.¹ Therefore, '*vi'la'malshinim*' is chronologically the nineteenth blessing, although it is placed number twelve in order."

"Was it effective in stopping the heretics, Abba?"

"Yes, Avi. Those enemies of the Jewish people against whom this prayer was originally directed disappeared within a short time.² However, we still retained it as part of the liturgy, because there are always heretical elements threatening Klal Yisrael, even to this very day."

"Please teach me more about this blessing, Abba."

"With pleasure, Avi. The first thing we must realize is the difference between the sinners and their sins. The blessing is worded, 'May all wickedness perish instantly' – the wickedness and not the wicked ones.³ '*Visachniem*' – humble them (so that they will do *teshuvah*) – rather than destroying them.⁴ This is a recurring theme in many *tefillos*. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we pray, 'And all wickedness will evaporate like smoke – the evil; not the perpetrators of evil. Hashem, let them do *teshuvah*, and every created being will know that You created and formed it.'⁵

"The Gemora (Brachos 10a) cites the verse (Tehillim 104:36) 'Let sins be terminated on earth and the wicked will be no more.' It recounts a compelling story to explain the verse. Some lawless men lived in Rebbe Meir's neighborhood. He suffered so much from them that one day he wished for their death. His wife Berurya remarked to him, 'How do you justify such a wish? Is it because you interpret the verse to mean, "Let sinners be terminated on earth"? The verse does not read "sinners" rather "sins". Besides, the conclusion of the passage, "and the wicked will be no more" implies that the first half

of the verse is referring to sin itself. Pray on their behalf that they may repent so that the wicked will be no more.' He prayed for them, and they repented their evil ways."

"Abba, I see from all of this that we are praying for the end of the evil sins. May the people do *teshuvah*, and they will no longer be sinners."

"Precisely, Avi. Let us go one step further. One who fears and loves Hashem is compelled to detest and defile evil with an absolute hatred, as the verse states, 'Lovers of Hashem, despise evil!' (Tehillim 97:10). Anyone who relates positively to the evil, in the end will be influenced by it."⁶

"Abba, Why did Rabban Gamliel place the blessing here after the blessing of restoring justice?"

"The Levush answers your astute question, Avi. Once we re-establish the Sanhedrin and execute judgment on the wicked ones, the '*malshinim*' (informers to the government) and the '*zaydim*' (troublemakers) will no longer perpetrate evil deeds. And so, we pray that there should be no hope for their evil! It should vanish in a minute! The enemies of Hashem (those who harm Klal Yisrael⁷) should be quickly cut off! Swiftly uproot them – stop their influence! Break down their ability to do any more evil! Cast them down – so they

have no hope of recovering! Knock down their false honor completely! Do all of this speedily in our days! May it come so fast that we will see in it the *Kovod* of Hashem! Blessed are You Hashem, Who crushes the enemies, and subdues the insolent."
"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

Rabban Gamliel composed a prayer against the perpetration of evil in Klal Yisrael. We, who love Hashem must hate evil with all of our hearts. Why? It lowers His *Kovod* in this world. Therefore, we pray that it be destroyed. How? May those who commit wicked deeds do *teshuvah*. May they abandon their evil ways and return to Hashem. May they all become *tsaddikim*! Then sins will cease and the *Glory* of Hashem will be restored to the world. Speedily in our days, amen!

Your Number

"Sir how much do these potatoes cost?"

"Three shekels per kilo."

"How many potatoes are in this sack?"

"I don't know young man. I sell the potatoes by weight, not number."

"You don't know how many potatoes you have in these sacks?"

"Not really."

"Can I ask you a personal question, sir?"

"Go right ahead, young man."

"How many children do you have?"

"Eight."

"You know how many children you have, but you don't know how many potatoes you have?"

"Young man, there is a bit of a difference. Every child is a person. A whole world. Each one needs my person attention and supervision to grow up to be a normal, productive person. Potatoes are just potatoes. Although they are different shapes and weights, we eat them all just the same."

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"Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 1:2). Hashem wanted a precise number. The Keli Yakar explains that this number distinguishes the Jewish people. Things that are numbered are important. Each Jew is very important. So important, that he is guided by *hashgacha pratis* (Hashem's personal supervision). The number expresses that we are important enough to warrant *hashgacha pratis*. The Ramban stresses the same point when he explains the word "*tifkidu*" – you shall count (Bamidbar 1:3). This word illustrates

that Hashem remembers and supervises. As the verse states, "Hashem *pokad* (remembered)

Sara" [to grant her a child] (Bereshis 21:1). A *pikadon* (from the same root word) is an object that someone watches and supervises for you. Hashem is watching and supervising each Jew individually.

Kinderlach . . .

Did you eat a delicious meal today? Chasdey Hashem (an act of kindness from Hashem). Did you do well on your test? Chasdey Hashem. Did Imma give you a big, warm, loving hug? Chasdey Hashem. Did you bang your toe? Chasdey Hashem. Did someone embarrass you? Chasdey Hashem. Why are the last two things chasdey Hashem? They are very unpleasant. Because Hashem is personally supervising our lives. Everything that He does is for the good. There are very good reasons for even the unpleasant things. If you hear news about unpleasant things happening to the Jewish people you must know that it is all chasdey Hashem. He is taking care of us, as He has for the past 3800 years.

¹ Artscroll Siddur

² Metsuda Siddur

³ Chayei Odom 24:17

⁴ Kavannas HaLev

⁵ Iyun Tefillah cites the Vilna Gaon

⁶ Kavannas HaLev cites Olam HaTefillah

⁷ Rashi on Bamidbar 31:3