



## DVAR TORAH PARSHAS VAYECHI



By: Rabbi Noach  
Peled

### The Grand Finale

The **Rashbam** writes (47:29) that **we are particularly sensitive to the final idea left planted in our minds from the weekly shabbos leining**, and are therefore careful about how we conclude each individual parsha. Sometimes, says the Rashbam, we will even end a parsha a few pesukim “early” or “late” – we even “borrow” what would have been the 1st passuk or pesukim of the next parsha, **so as to finish the parsha on a particular note**. (Incidentally, says the Rashbam, this is the case in our parsha. For whatever reason, last week’s Vayigash ends with what should have been the 1st passuk of Vayechi, such that what we have as the beginning of Vayechi, really should be the 2nd passuk)

If this sensitivity is true about an individual parsha’s end, **then all the more so regarding the concluding words of one of the five chumashim** which, like the conclusion of the whole torah, is divinely ordained, not man-arranged. **The parting words of an entire “sefer” of the five chumashim have deep significance and impart a meaningful message.**

Our parsha brings an end to sefer Bereishis. As such, we must pay close attention to its final last words so that we hear this important message.

The parsha & sefer concludes with Yosef’s passing, and ends with the words "ויישם בארון במצרים" – “and he (Yosef) was placed in a casket in Mitzrayim”.

**What message** might these parting words convey? Perhaps **the most glaring implication** is that in the very end, after all was said and done, as with all men, Yosef too ended up no different, it all came to an end and he was placed in a box.

**Even Yosef**, after all he had achieved, after being sold to slavery by his own family yet persevering and ultimately rising to sovereignty, after making it to the very top with his brilliant big time economic stratagem which made him king of the financial castle, after saving hundreds of thousands internationally from starvation, and in turn becoming the most famous spoken-of person in the world, after all of that, like all mankind, Yosef was no different in that **eventually life’s proverbial shot-clock runs out, and the lifeless body is stowed away. All that lives on is the eternal spirituality, formerly generated by the body.**

Perhaps this is **the final parting message of sefer Bereishis** – that despite one’s physical and financial achievements, as great and as many as they may be, one day it all comes to an abrupt staggering halt, and at that stage none of it will matter anymore. The physical will be laid to rest, and all that will matter is one’s spiritual accomplishments.

May HKBH aid us in taking inspiration from this idea; that we resolve to increase our spiritual achievements, the only everlasting achievements we will have.



By: Rabbi Arveh Gitlin

# HALACHA CORNER



## A WHISPER FROM HEAVEN: UNDERSTANDING BARUCH SHEM

**Why do we say Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso Le'olam Va'ed quietly during Krias Shema?  
Why is Baruch Shem said aloud on Yom Kippur?  
Why is Baruch Shem sometimes said aloud in tefillah, but not during Shema?**

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> relates that Yaakov Avinu wished to reveal the end of days to his sons. Suddenly, the Divine Presence left him. Yaakov feared that perhaps one of his sons was unworthy. His sons responded together, Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad. Yaakov then answered, Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso Le'olam Va'ed.

The Gemara asks whether this verse should be part of Krias Shema. Moshe Rabbeinu did not include it when he wrote the Shema in the Torah. Yaakov Avinu did say it. The Gemara concludes that we recite Baruch Shem quietly. This ruling is codified in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>2</sup>.

The Midrash teaches that Moshe Rabbeinu heard the angels praising Hashem with Baruch Shem when he ascended to Heaven. He brought these words down to Klal Yisrael. Since this praise belongs to the angelic realm, it is not recited aloud. The exception is Yom Kippur, when we are compared to angels. Therefore, the Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup> rules that Baruch Shem is said aloud in the Shema of Yom Kippur, both at night and in the morning.

The Tzalach<sup>4</sup> asks why Baruch Shem is said aloud in other parts of tefillah, such as after Ana B'Koach. If saying it aloud is problematic, it should always be avoided. He answers that the concern applies only within Krias Shema. Saying Baruch Shem aloud interrupts the structure of Shema as written by Moshe Rabbeinu. This interruption exists only between the first pasuk of Shema and V'ahavta. Outside of Shema, there is no problem saying it aloud.

The Chochmas Shlomo<sup>5</sup> disagrees. He argues that if the concern is changing the structure established by Moshe Rabbeinu, then our angelic status on Yom Kippur should not permit this change. Even if we are like angels, we do not have authority to alter the structure of Shema. Therefore, he concludes that throughout the year Baruch Shem should not be said aloud at all, even outside of Shema. Yom Kippur is the sole exception, instituted by Chazal.

A difficulty remains. According to the Gemara's reasoning, Baruch Shem should never be said aloud. According to the Midrash, it is said aloud on Yom Kippur. How are these views reconciled?

The Abarbanel<sup>6</sup> explains that Baruch Shem expresses a very deep level of understanding of Hashem's unity. Moshe Rabbeinu heard this level from the angels but did not reveal it openly to the masses. Yaakov Avinu revealed it to his sons because they were on an elevated spiritual level.

The Kesef Mishneh<sup>7</sup> explains that we whisper Baruch Shem during the year to show that it is not part of the Torah's text of Shema, while still preserving it as a quiet expression of this deeper emunah. On Yom Kippur, when we rise to an angelic level, we say it aloud.

During Krias Shema throughout the year, Baruch Shem is recited quietly.  
On Yom Kippur, Baruch Shem it is recited aloud.  
In other parts of tefillah, there is a machlokes whether Baruch Shem may be said aloud.

1. Pesachim 56a
2. O.C 61:3
3. O.C 619:2
4. Pesachim ibid.
5. O.C 61:3
6. Devarim 6:4
7. Hilchos Krias Shema 1:4

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