

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

A Partner in Creation

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ" (א א)

The *Kolbo* writes:

This *passuk* is comprised of seven words and 28 letters. The lofty praise of "Yehei Shemei rabba mevarach l'olam ul'olmei olmaya" is also made up of seven words and 28 letters. This is an allusion to the words of Chazal (see *Sotah* 49a) that anyone who answers "amen yehei Shmei rabba mevarach" with *kavanah* is considered to be a partner with HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the creation of the world.

This is also what Chazal were referring to (*Shabbos* 119b) that "Anyone who answers amen yehei Shemei rabba bechol kocho (כל כחו) has his decree torn up" – meaning that one who has *kavanah* and is careful with all 28 (כל כ"ח) letters in this praise merits to have his decree torn up.

Harav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov added that the word "bereishis" also alludes to the obligation to answer "amen yehei Shemei rabba" with all his might; "בראשית" is an acronym for "אמן יהא אמן יראתה בקול בבכה".

Kolbo 7; *Igra D'Kallah Tzirufei Bereishis* 180

Oros M'Ofel Amar "Vayehi"

ויאמר אלקים יהי אור ויהי אור" (א ג)

We have a rule: "Wherever it says 'vayehi' it denotes distress" (*Megillah* 10b). Why did the Torah use the word "vayehi" with regard to the creation of light?

Harav Menachem Mendel of Vishiva explained:

The *Gemara* (*Chagiga* 12a) says that the light that was created on the first day was hidden by HaKadosh Baruch Hu so that the evil people should not enjoy it. Then He gave us the light of the celestial bodies. The first light that was created was real light, while the 'natural light' that exists in our day is only considered 'light' as opposed to dark. Therefore, with its creation, the Torah used a language of distress.

This is how he explained the words at the

A Brachah Aloud – An Amen Aloud

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ" (א א)

The *Baalei Hatosafos* write: בקול רם אברך שם יי תמיד is an acronym for "Bereishis", to teach us that the *chazzan* should say all the *brachos* out loud. "ברא" is an acronym for אמור ברכות רם אמור.

Similarly, the *Chida* quotes the disciples of the Arizal: "Bereishis is an acronym for "bekol ram avarech Shem Hashem tamid", and this is an allusion that one must make a *brachah* aloud so that they answer amen." The *sefer Chasdei Dovid* added an explanation about the obligation of saying amen on *brachos* from the word "Bereishis" itself, which is an acronym for "תמיד יברך בקול". רם שיענו אמן. Rabi Yehudah Hachassid writes that one who says *brachos* in a whisper is robbing the public of the mitzvah of answering amen. The *Ohr Zarua* brings an awe-inspiring story about the virtue of saying *brachos* aloud:

"And I knew a Jew from Worms, and his name was Reb Bunim, and he was an old man and worked burying the dead. I heard reliably that once, he rose early to go to shul and saw a person sitting in front of the shul with a crown of grass on his head, called a 'tzeppel' [a grass with a very good smell], and he was frightened, thinking he was a *shed*. He called to him and said: 'Aren't you Ploni who recently passed away and I buried you?' And he said, 'Yes' And he said, 'How are you in that world?' and he said, 'Very good.' And he said, 'Which merits do you have? You were just a regular person?' And he said, 'only due to the merit that I said *brachos* out loud in a pleasant voice in shul, in that merit I was brought to Gan Eden and I am honored! And this is a sign that I am speaking to you, because you will see the sleeve of my robe that is torn, because you tore it when you donned my burial shrouds.' He asked, 'What is on your head?' and he answered, 'This is grass that is in Gan Eden and I put in on my head in order to neutralize the bad smell of this world. I wrote this down so that a *Yarei Shamayim* should see it and pay attention and say the praises of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in a pleasant voice and with *kavanah* and will merit Gan Eden."

Tosafos Hashalem 51; *Ohr Zarua Hilchos Shabbos* 42 6; *Sefer Chassidim* 254; *Nachal Kedumim* 6; *Chasdei Dovid*

beginning of the *Yotzros* for Yamim Nora'im: "Ohr olam b'otzar chaim – oros m'ofel amar vayehi". "Ohr olam" – the first light, was hidden by the Creator in "otzar chaim" – and because in its place He created "oros m'ofel" –light that is considered light only when compared to darkness, therefore upon its creation "amar vayehi" – He used a term denoting distress.

Harav Nosson Lubart, one of the *gaonim* of Yerushalayim, cited the *Rambam* (in the next *passuk*) on this subject that says that this is why it says "vayehi ohr" with the creation of light and not "vayehi kein" like it says on the other days. This is because the first light that was created was concealed and it became dark, and from the darkness that ensued the light of the celestial bodies we have today was created. Based on this, he explained the words of the *passuk* (*Yeshayahu* 45:7): "Yotzer ohr uborei choshech" – that the light that was created in our day was created out of the darkness that Hashem created on the first day.

According to this, he also explained the wording of the abovementioned *Yotzros*: "Ohr olam" – the first light, was hidden in "otzar chaim" – and because after it, Hashem created "oros m'ofel" – out of the darkness, therefore "Amar vayehi [ohr]" and not "vayehi kein."

Siach Zekeinim Vol. II, p. 168; *She'eris Nosson*

"Chemdas Yamim" In "Maaseh Bereishis"

ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה" (ב ב)

Harav Simchah of Vitri, a disciple of Rashi, writes that the *Targum Yerushalmi* translates the word "vayechal" as a "vechamad", that Hashem desired the seventh day. *Rashi* offers the same explanation for the words of the *pesukim* "Nichsefah vegam kalsah nafshi" (*Tehillim* 84:3); and "Kalsah litshuascha nafshi" (ibid 119:81) [as both have the same root as *vayechal*].

Thus he explains the meaning of the *tefillah* on Shabbos: "Chemdas yamim oso karasa" – where do we find that Hashem called Shabbos "chemdas yamim"? In this *passuk*.

Machzor Vitri

Bereishis is an acronym for בקול רם אברך שם יי תמיד (Tosafos Hashalem)

At the beginning of the day - in *Birchos Hashachar*, we are all careful to recite *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, and to give those who hear us the merit of answering amen.

לעיני כל ישראל
בראשית



Birchos Hashachar



Aloud



With kavanah



Bechavrusa



Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa (3)

'Go Out in Pursuit of the Sheep'

To conclude the series of articles about the order of the morning *tefillas* in general, and about the custom of reciting *brachos bechavrusa* in particular, we felt it fitting to share with readers some of the material in *sefarim* about *Gedolei Yisrael* who adhered to this custom throughout the generations, so that the members of this generation should hear about it and learn to do so. As the *posek hador* Harav Shmuel Halevi Vosner, *zt"l*, noted at a gathering held during the initial years of the Bney Emunim revolution:

"There was an early *minhag Yisrael* that they would recite all of *Birchos Hashachar betzibbur*, both the *brachos* before the *brachah* of *Hanosen Lasechvi Binah* and further. The whole group would make the *brachos* together, one would make the *brachos* and his friend answered amen, and then they would switch, with another making a *brachah* and the first answering amen. This practice was forgotten in recent times and now Bney Emunim has merited to revive and reestablish it, in the essence of (*Shabbos* 104a and more) 'they were forgotten and then reestablished...'

The Bais Yosef and the Ari Hakadosh

When seeking out the sources of this custom, we find that it is already cited in the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 6 4)*: "There are some who have a practice that after one makes *Birchos Hashachar* and was answered with amen, one of the ones who answered amen then makes the *brachos* and others answer amen to him. In this order all the ones who first answered amen do this, and they should not be undetermined..." In *Birkei Yosef (Orach Chaim 677)* the Chida adds: "And as it is known this custom spread in villages and large towns, as Maran said."

Among the most prominent sages who adhered to this practice was the Ari Hakadosh, and as his disciple, Harav Chaim Vital wrote: "When a person says the order of the *brachos* in shul he would answer amen after them, and even if he was in the middle of *zemiros [Pesukei Dezimrah]* he would stop to answer amen after them, even if there were many making the *brachos*." (*Shaar Hakavanos Birchos Hashachar*, and see *Shaarei Teshuvah Orach Chaim 6 6*, who writes: "And even if there were one hundred...")

The Bais Aharon of Karlin, who also practiced this and instructed his *chassidim* to do so, added: "Even though the Arizal could in a moment be *meyached* all the worlds—he was not strict with his time and was not lazy to hear even one hundred times '*Hanosen lasechvi binah*' and all the *brachos*." (*Bais Aharon 4*)

Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg and His Disciples

The Rebbe Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg was known for his special

love for the mitzvah of answering amen. It is told about him:

"The Chozeh of Lublin learned in his younger years in Shineveh in the yeshivah of Rav Shmelke of Nikolsburg...The Rebbe Reb Shmelke loved his young student with the sharp, incisive mind, and drew him very close. Each morning, the Chozeh would say *Birchos Hashachar* out loud, and Reb Shmelke would answer amen on each and every *brachah*. His friends in the yeshivah would envy him, and Reb Shmelke would tell them 'You should know that the whole Heavenly Entourage answers amen to his *brachos*.'" (*Migdolei HaTorah Vehachassidus*, 19, p. 16)

Indeed, until the end of his days the Chozeh maintained this holy practice, and it was related that each day, he would summon a child in the morning to be able to say *brachos* before him and the child would answer amen. (*Avnei Zikaron* p. 227)

Rav Shmelke's disciple who succeeded him as Rav of Nikolsburg, Harav Mordechai Banet, *zt"l* was also strict about arriving early to the *bais medrash* to hear each one of the *mispallelim* say *Birchos Hashachar*, so he could answer amen after them. Then he himself would recite the *brachos*, in order, in a pleasant voice and with *kavanah*, before the *shaliach tzibbur* stood up to *daven*. (*Toldos Mahara"m Banet*, p. 16)

Many Gedolei Yisrael Kept This Practice

The *Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah (Shaar Ha'ashmores* Chapter 10) writes: "*Birchos Hashachar*...they should be recited in shul with the rest of the *tefillah* so that others should answer amen after the *brachah*. Because what is greater than the virtue of a *brachah* that is answered with amen."

It was told that Rav Chaim Palagi "Never got tired of hearing the voices of the children. On the contrary, he would call them in the morning each day so that they could say *Birchos Hashachar*, in order to answer *Baruch Hu Ubaruch Shemo* and amen." (*Tzava'ah Meichaim, Hanhagos 4*)

Harav Elyahu Dovid Rabinowitz Teumim, the Aderes, said of himself:

"I was very very careful about answering amen from when I was a child, and I love and run with great love to this mitzvah, until it is almost a nature for me, that I was accustomed each day to hearing *Birchos Hashachar* from several people. Anyone who sees me can learn from me to do so, to love the mitzvah of answering amen... at first they would be scornful of them, and did not hold this mitzvah to have much importance, and who remembers what Chazal said in praise of it?! And in this easy way each one can acquire the World to Come, to fulfill the mitzvah hundreds of times each day, easily, without being tired." (*Nefesh Dovid 23*)

Reb Yossel Bar Mazel

Market day in the city of Dinov was an event that none of the merchants in the surrounding area wanted to miss. As Dinov was a commercial city for the district, once every so often, all the farmers and merchants of the area would come for market day, which was a primary source of their livelihoods.

On this day, the city of Dinov and the surrounding areas hummed with the traffic of buyers and sellers with their carriages loaded down with merchandise. The sellers were happy to empty their storage houses, and the buyers were thrilled to be able to purchase quality merchandise at wholesale prices, with the hope of selling it further in their cities for a decent profit.

Among the multitudes of Jewish merchants who made their way to the market was the noble figure of Reb Yossel the flax merchant. He was better known as Rav Yosef of Neustadt, *zy"a*, the son of the Maor Vashemesh, and who known by the *chassidim* of his generation as "Der Gutte Yid" – the Good Jew. When he was young, Reb Yossel was a flax merchant, and even later, when *chassidim* flocked to him, he continued to conceal his ways and acted like a simple person.

During his time in business, Reb Yossel stood out among his fellow merchants for his modesty and his humble ways. His business was conducted with utmost honesty and with an adherence to the *halachos* of money. His business practices became so well known that the *tzaddikim* of his generation would go out to the market just to observe the holy way in which he conducted his dealings.

Now Reb Yossel, along with his fellow merchants, was heading for Dinov, his cart loaded with merchandise that he had amassed in recent months. He hoped to sell it all quickly, earn enough money to support his family and then return as fast as he could to his erstwhile desire – learning Torah and serving Hashem. But make no mistake – even while doing business, Reb Yossel did not compromise even one iota of his spiritual conduct. Thus, upon his arrival in Dinov early in the morning, while his fellow merchants managed to quickly daven as they traveled and then ran to the market to get a good place for their stall, put it up and arrange the merchandise, Reb Yossel was the only one who turned in a different direction entirely.

He didn't consider for a moment on doing any business before davening, and didn't hurry with his davening either. Instead, he headed for his lodgings, where he began his preparations for *tefillah*, as he did each day, with great awe. He said the *Tehillim* and *Ma'amados* of that day, and then enveloped himself in a *tallis* and donned his *tefillin*. He began to *daven* slowly and with fervor, reciting each word carefully.

When he finished *davening*, he took out his *pas shacharis*, breakfast that he had prepared before he set out. He ate it slowly and *bentsched* with *kavanah*. He did everything deliberately, without haste, and throughout that time he felt absolute trust in Hashem that no one in the world could touch his *parnassah* that was allocated to him from Above. Late in the morning, Reb Yossel was finally ready; he took his sacks of flax and headed out to the market.

When he arrived, he was just about able to find a little corner in which to set up his stall. And only late in the afternoon was his stall finally ready for business.

It was already rather late and most of the customers had already left the market with their carriages loaded down with merchandise. Reb Yossel's fellow merchants, who saw him setting out his merchandise, remarked to him with fake pity, and smiles on their lips:

"Yossel, Yossel, why are you bothering to set out your merchandise? The fair is already over; just go home, and maybe, if you daven well, next time you'll have better luck and you'll profit from your business..."

But Reb Yossel was not at all cowed by his mockers. Instead, he silently continued arranging his merchandise on his stall. Then he took a *Sefer Tehillim* in hand, and waited with confidence for what was in store. All the merchants who had finished selling their merchandise began walking through the stalls, some to purchase other merchandise to sell in their cities, and some to just enjoy browsing before returning home. All except for Reb Yossel – who was still standing behind his fully stocked stall and waiting for buyers that might come.

And they came...

Suddenly, an elegant carriage pulled by sturdy stallions rode up. The driver stopped with a screech, and the door opened. An elegantly dressed Polish nobleman emerged and began walking among the empty stalls with a haughty air.

"What is his honor looking for?" one of the merchants asked.

"Flax," the man answered shortly. "I need a large amount of flax, immediately. I have been all over the area to obtain it, and I just heard that it is available here."

There was no flax in the market besides Reb Yossel's stall, and many followed the nobleman's carriage as it headed exactly there. He didn't even try to negotiate; he quickly paid top dollar for Reb Yossel's merchandise and left.

The other merchants stood and watched in astonishment as the transaction unfolded. "Yossel is a *bar mazel*, he has *mazel*," they told one another. Meanwhile, Reb Yossel just folded up his stall.

He still had one thing left to do: he had to purchase new merchandise to be able to sell in his city to make a profit. But the market was already empty of all merchandise. The merchants looked at one another and waited; would another miracle transpire?!

Indeed- it did. Once again it was proven that "one who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by chessed." Suddenly, a gentile merchant entered the market; a short time before he had sold his merchandise, bought new stock and had departed for home. But with tears in his eyes, he shared his tale of woe with his fellow merchants: On his way home, the wheels of his carriage had broken. Now he had no way to transport his merchandise, and thus, he wanted to sell it at a cheap price.

The merchants were all thrilled at this opportunity but had to turn him down because they had used up all their money already. Only Reb Yossel was able to buy the merchandise – at half price. He hastily loaded it onto his carriage and returned to his city, overjoyed at the events of the day.

From that day on, he was nicknamed by the merchants "Yossel Bar Mazel." Praiseworthy is the man who puts his faith in Hashem.

Yad Maor Vashemesh p. 343