

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah from the Power of "Hachodesh Hazeh"

ההדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים... (יב ב)
Harav Moshe Leib Litch Rosenbaum of Pressburg explained:

HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe and Aharon: "Hachodesh Hazeh," this month, when you departed from Egypt, will be "l'chem" – for you, "rosh chodoshim" – a 'rosh' a beginning of all the things that will be renowned for you. Even if, *chalilah*, Bnei Yisrael sin before Me, you will always be able to *daven* for them and to advocate for them so that they should be acquitted in judgement, as in Egypt. Even though there, Am Yisrael were mired in the 49th level of impurity, and they had no merits, still, they merited to witness countless miracles. Indeed, we find that Moshe *davened* after the *Cheit Ha'egel* (Shemos 32:11): "Lamah Hashem yechereh Apcha b'Amcha asher hotzeisa me'Eretz Mitzrayim, why Hashem should Your wrath blaze against Your people whom You brought out from the land of Egypt."

Imros Hashem, Vayikra

The Segulos of Blessing the Moon

ההדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה" (יב ב)

"He showed him [Hashem to Moshe] a moon at its renewal, and said: When the moon renews itself, let that be for you the beginning of a new month." (Rashi according to *Mechilta Pesichta* 1)

Chazal established that one who sees the *levanah* in this stage recites the *Birchas Halevanah* (*Sanhedrin* 42a). The *Bnei Yissaschar* writes that the *takanah* of Chazal is included in the mitzvah of *Kiddush Hachodesh*.

Amen Lifts One Out of Darkness

"ויהי חשך אפלה בכל ארץ מצרים" (י כב)

The holy Zohar (*Vayeilech* 286 1) has frightening words about the punishment of one who makes light about answering amen. After describing the lowest depths of Gehinnom, of which Shlomo Hamelech said (*Mishlei* 11 11): "She'ol v'avadon negged Hashem", the Zohar writes: That place [the lowest level of Gehinnom that is called *she'ol v'avadon*] is where those who are disdainful about answering amen are taken to, and they are judged in Gehinnom for the many amens that were lost because they did not hold it in sufficient importance. (See *Rabbeinu Bechayei Shemos* 14:1)

Harav Chaim Vital added: The first letter in the word "amen" is aleph, א, which, when scrambled, makes "אפל", meaning a darkness of gloom that was in Egypt (see *Rashi* here). Because one who is neglectful about answering amen will ultimately be sentenced to the seventh level of Gehinnom, from where the darkness in Egypt was taken.

Based on this, the Rebbe **Harav Meir of Dzikov** explained: This is why after *Makkas Choshech* (11:8) it says "Tzei atah vechol ha'am" – "צא" is numerically equivalent to amen, which is an allusion that one who is careful about answering amen is spared the darkness to which one who is negligent about amen is sentenced to.

Furthermore, aside from the fact that one who values amen prevents himself from falling into the darkness that one who is not is destined for, answering amen also has the power to lift one out of the Gehinnom even after he has been sent there. **Eliyahu Hanavi** revealed this (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Zuta* 20): "Dovid says [Kaddish of] *Aggadah* before HaKadosh Baruch Hu...and the sinners of Yisrael say amen from the Gehinnom. HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to the angels: Who are those who are answering amen from Gehinnom? They say to Him: Ribbono Shel Olam, they are the sinners of Yisrael, and even though they are suffering the pain of Gehinnom they strengthen themselves to say amen before You. HaKaodsh Baruch Hu says to the angels: Open Gan Eden for them and they should come and sing before Me, as it says 'Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim' (*Yeshayah* 26:2) – don't read it 'emunim' but rather 'she'omrim amen.'"

Let us finish with the words of the *mekubal* **Rav Meir Schwartz** of Podheitz, who, after copying these words of the Zohar in his will, continued to warn his offspring: "My dear children, believe, that when I saw this in the holy Zohar, and in the Zohar-Chadash, my hair stood up on end. Woe to me and woe to my soul, how many times I lost out on saying amen. Therefore, *l'maan Hashem!* For the sake of Heaven! Be very very careful to listen to each *brachah* from the one making a *brachah* in order to know to answer amen..."

Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Kavanas Amen 3; Imrei Noam; Hanhagos Tzaddikim Vol. V p. 445

Many even call it "Kiddush Levanah" (See *Rema Orach Chaim* 426 2)

There are many *segulos* brought down for those who observe this *takanah*. Among them are:

Harav Elya Shapiro of Prague, brings in his renowned compilation *Elya Rabbah*: A person was once accosted by marauders at night, and they sought to kill him. He asked them to let him fulfill one mitzvah before they carried out their plans, and they agreed. Because it was the beginning of the month, when the moon was in its renewal stage, the man stood and recited the *Birchas Halevanah* with tremendous *kavanah*, in front of the marauders. A miracle happened, and when he jumped three times, as is the custom, when he said, "Keshem she'ani roked kenegdech...kach lo yuchlu kol oyvai lingoa bi lera'ah" he was carried by the wind and saved from those who wanted to kill him. As such, the *Elya Rabbah* says that one who makes *Birchas Helevanah* should not worry that he will die in that month.

The *Siddur Bais Yaakov* brings a *segulah* to heal toothache: After reciting "kach lo yuchlu kol oyvai lingoa bi lera'ah" – one should add "velo yehiyeh li k'ev shinayim – and I should not have a toothache."

Harav Eliezer Papo adds that reciting *Birchas Halevanah* with *kavanah* is a *segulah* for finding a suitable match. A hint to this is the word "levanah", which is an acronym of the first *Mishnah* in *Maseches Kesubos* (2a): "בתולה נשאת ליום הרביעי" – a maiden is married on the fourth day.

Elya Rabbah, Orach Chaim 602 7; *Siddur Bais Yaakov Birchas Helevanah; Damesek Eliezer [Rav Eliezer Papo]* 30 4; *Derech Pikudecha Mitzvas Aseh 4, Chelek Hama'aseh* 13

Double the Wisdom

Dear Yid!
When you say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, you reap double the rewards:
Your *brachos* are completed by amen, and you also merit to answer many amens before *davening*.



Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa - filling the scales with merits.



Birchos Hashachar Aloud With *kavanah* *Bechavrusa*

Birchos Hashachar and Daf Yomi...

To conclude this series about being *mezakeh harabbim* with answering amen, we would like to present a letter we recently received following the Siyum HaShas Bavli as part of *Daf Yomi*. The letter was sent by a prominent *maggid shiur*, who delivers a *Daf Yomi shiur* before *davening* each day:

To the staff of Bney Emunim, headed by the *mezakeh harabbim* Rav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, *shlita*,

For the last ten years, I have merited to serve as a *maggid shiur* of *Daf Yomi* in one of the large shuls near where I live. Each morning at exactly six o'clock, the participants are already in place, and the *shiur* begins. It lasts around forty five minutes, during which there is a genuine *ritcha d'Oraisa*.

Towards the Siyum HaShas and the new beginning, as per the suggestion of a friend, I distributed a questionnaire to the participants, in which they were asked to offer suggestions on how they felt the *shiur* could be improved for them. When I read the feedback, I was surprised to discover that a few of them had the same idea that all revolved around one issue. They each claimed that while they made the effort to come to the *shiur* each day with *mesirus nefesh*, and tried to listen attentively, they were disappointed when they remembered the material for just a few hours or days. 'We would be happy to see more results for our effort,' they wrote. I, as the *maggid shiur*, understood them very well.

During the course of the *shiur* the next day, I paid attention to their words and tried to suggest that they should review what we learned each day, or at least on Shabbos. But this suggestion did not placate them. Some claimed that they were doing so, but it was ineffective, while others claimed that they did not find the time.

We began the *shiur* with *Maseches Niddah* 70a, and when we reached *amud beis*, we suddenly got an answer to our question. The *Gemara* there states: "The disciples of Rabi Eliezer asked him...what should a person do to gain wisdom? He said to them: He should sit [i.e. to learn] a lot and minimize business dealings. They said: Many have done this and it did not help them! Rather: He should ask for mercy from the One to Whom all wisdom belongs, as it says 'Ki Hashem yiten chochmah miPiv da'asevunah.'"

I read the words of the *Gemara* with extra emphasis, and it seemed as though the listeners understood. In order to succeed in Torah learning, it's not enough to just 'sit a lot', but rather, one has to ask for compassion from Hashem, to Whom all wisdom belongs.

I continued thinking about this throughout the day. I tried to take advantage of the fact that they had brought this to my attention, and to look for an idea that could help remind us each morning to *daven* that our learning be successful. With great *Hashgachah pratis*, as I was thinking about it, I came across your pamphlet.

And suddenly, I had an idea: the *shiur* ended about fifteen minutes before *davening*. Perhaps we should convene each day after the *shiur* for five minutes, and say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

I thought to myself: We learn together; why shouldn't we *daven* together for our learning to be fruitful?! In *Birchos Hashachar* there are several 'requests for mercy' for wisdom: in *Birchos HaTorah*, *Hanosen Lasechvi Binah*; *Shetargilienu Besorasecha* and so forth. If we say them together, and as you say 'in the perfect manner...' then surely the *tefillah* will be more accepted.

The next morning, I made my suggestion to the members of the *shiur*, and they all accepted it happily. Some of them (myself among them) already were doing this for some time, but now we were happy to make a joint partnership all together. When I saw that the idea was widely accepted, I decided to speak about it at the speech that I planned to give at the Siyum HaShas that was to take place for all the participants of the *shiurim* in our shul. I tried to include allusions to the subject, and with *siyata diShmaya* I was successful. I'm pleased to share with you the part that is relevant to this subject, from my speech:

Maseches Niddah concludes with a phrase that we say each day in *tefillah*: "Tana Devei Eliyahu: Anyone who learns *halachos* each day is guaranteed to have Olam Haba..." The promise of being a 'ben Olam Haba' is especially connected to "amen" because *Chazal* said (*Sanhedrin* 110b): "When does a child earn Olam Haba...? From when he answers amen. And the last *perek* in Shas is called "Tinokes"...and because they said (*Shabbos* 119b): "Anyone who answers amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him." In addition, the acronym of the final letters of *הבא בן עולם הבא* are amen, and *הבא* is an acronym for *Birchos Hashachar* and Bney Emunim.

The first *Masechta* in *Shas* is *Brachos*. It is thus called even though the *halachos* of *brachos* only begin from the sixth *perek* and on. This is because *Chazal* alluded to us: If you want to begin *Shas* and succeed in remembering what you learn, then the recipe for that is reciting the "brachos" properly, followed by amen.

As noted, the *Shas*, like every good thing, begins with a *brachah* and ends with amen. But it turns out that even at the beginning of *Brachos* there is the 'amen' – the four first letter of *Shas* – *אמני* (אמני) are numerically equivalent to amen. Moreover, the acronym of the *passuk* that arouses us to pray for wisdom, "כי יהי יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה" is numerically equivalent to amen.

I know this letter has been long, but aside for hoping that it will serve as a *zikui harabbim*, to bring merit to the public, it was important for me to write it for myself as well, so that I always remember what the source of blessing is...*tefillah* and amen.

Ashreichem, may you be praised, and be blessed with an abundance of blessing for your work.

Signing off with the wish that by the time the next Siyum HaShas arrives, "yemalei Kevodo es kol ha'aretz amen v'amen."

Y.B.

Maggid Shiur from Central Israel

"Merit to See Sons...Engaging in Torah"

This story is an ancient one, and its message is congruent with that of all the stories that we present in this space: *tefillah* has a special power, and even situations that did not seem to have any natural way to resolution were resolved miraculously through the power of *tefillah*.

This story is about Harav Dovid of Lelov, whose *yahrtzeit* is on 7 Shevat, 206 years ago. This story was discovered and related by his holy brothers, Harav Elimelech of Lizhensk and Harav Zusha of Anipoli, ז"א.

As is well known, the holy brothers Rav Zusha and Rav Elimelech undertook to exile themselves, as was customary in those times among the *tzaddikim* of the generations. They wanted to purify their souls and afflict their bodies so that they could elevate themselves to the loftiest spiritual planes.

So these brothers donned faded, simple clothes, took up their walking sticks and began a long, tiring trek that lasted for an extended period.

As they were strict about not remaining in one place for too long, the brothers walked from city to city, and wherever they were, they looked for a home with a *mezuzah* where they could sleep. In the interim, as they concealed their identities and wandered from place to place, they used their wisdom to draw errant souls closer to Torah and *chassidus*. They strengthened broken hearts and effected miracles for sick and downtrodden people.

Aside from the hunger and the suffering that accompanied the brothers throughout their wanderings, they sometimes were compelled to sleep in gentile homes, and sometimes, even when staying at Jewish homes, they were subject to humiliation and even beatings because they concealed their true identity. Yet, they accepted it all with love, as suffering that atones for sins and purifies the soul.

One day, they came to the town of Biala, located near Lelov, and when they entered the tavern that they had heard was owned by a Jew, they found it empty – except for a little boy with pure eyes. He was sitting at the old table and sweetly reviewing the *pesukim* of *Chumash Bereishis* that was open in front of him.

In their great holiness, the brothers realized that this was a lofty and special soul, and they were truly surprised: was it possible that such simple parents, the owners of a tavern in which drunk gentiles wiled away the nights, could raise such a holy soul?

The brothers decided that the parents of the boy were also pious people who were so modest and concealed their true level, and that is why they had merited such a son.

"Where are your parents?" the holy brothers asked the child.

"My mother went to the market and she said she'd be back soon. My father is preparing the beer and will be back late in the evening."

Wanting to see the hidden *tzaddikim* for themselves, and to understand how they had merited such a special son, the brothers decided to wait for the parents to return home.

The father only returned late in the evening; by his appearance, his clothing and his language, it was evident that he was a simpleton. Rav Elimelech and Rav Zusha tried to understand from him if there was perhaps a special practice that had earned him the merit to have such a son. But the man could not indicate what he had done to merit his child. On the contrary, it appeared that indeed, they were very simple people, conducting a simple life.

The brothers tried to delve a bit deeper, and asked the parents to describe their daily schedule. Perhaps they would hear of a good deed or special practice that had given them this merit. But even after the parents detailed their actions for the day, the brothers were not yet calm. They did not see any sign of greatness that could have been deemed so great. On High that they had merited this lofty soul as a result.

Finally, the mother remembered: "I forgot to note one thing, and that is that each and every Shabbos, at the time of *Shalosh Seudos*, when my husband sings 'Baruch Hashem Yom Yom,' when he reaches the *tefillah* when the *zemer* concludes: 'HaRachaman Hu yevarech es amo...veyizku liros banim ubnei banim oskim baTorah ubemitzvos...' he stops and repeats this *tefillah* with great *kavanah*, his voice growing louder, and with sobs and tears, until he falls to the ground in a faint.

"He does this each week and that is the only thing that I can point out perhaps. I have nothing else to add."

When the brothers heard this, their minds were put at peace. Now they understood why this child had such a lofty soul: after all, there is no gate in Heaven that can remain closed in the face of tears and crying.

When the brothers returned after a number of years, the boy's reputation as a holy person, with wisdom and noble *middos*, had begun to spread – and in time, he became their disciple and was famed as Harav Dovid of Lelov, ז"א – the father of the Lelov dynasty.

Befikudecha Asichah, Vol. II, p. 47