

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Where Do We Find Yehudah Approaching in Tefillah?

"ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי אדני ידבר נא עבדך דבר באזני אדני ואל יחר אפך בעבדך כי כמוך כפרעה" (מד יח)

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah* 93 6) says that when he approached Yosef, Yehudah prepared for three things: appeasement, war and tefillah. It would seem that his approach to appeasement and war are explained in the *passuk*, as *Rashi* explains there. So where do we find that he davened?

Rabi Elazar Azkari explained:

At the beginning of his words, Yehudah repeated the word "Adoni" – "Bi Adoni... b'aznei Adoni." We can explain that the first "Adoni" was referring to Hashem, and thus he davened: "Bi Adoni" – please Master of the World (**Adon HaOlamim**), "Your servant will speak a word" that should be accepted "in the ears of my master" – Yosef, the master of Egypt, because as we know "the heart of a king is the Hand of Hashem, wherever He wishes, He turns it." (*Mishlei* 21:1)

Even though it appears that Yehuda is addressing Yosef, in his heart, he intended to daven to Hashem. Similarly we find that the *Maharsha* explains (Vol. I, *Rosh Hashanah* 3 2) the *passuk* (*Nechemiah* 2:4-5): "And I davened to the Elokei Hashamayim; and I said to the king." *Nechemiah* spoke to the ears of the king but in his heart, he was davening to Hashem.

Chareidim Al HaTorah

Teshuvah With Joy

"יעתה אל תעצבו" (מה ה)

The Rebbe **Harav Shmuel of Slonim** said:

One who repents need to do so out of joy. Even though regret for the past is one of the conditions of teshuvah, a person should not mire himself in sadness as a result, because sadness is a

Answering Amen in the Years of Plenty

"ולחם אין בכל הארץ כי כבד הרעב מאד ותלה ארץ מצרים וארץ כנען מפני הרעה" (מז יג)

The Mashgiach, **Harav Eliyahu Lopian**, said:

Our years in this world are like the "years of plenty." Each day we have countless opportunities to collect mitzvos that will accompany us during the "years of famine" – in Olam Haba, when we will not be able to add more merits. One who is wise and can foresee what is ahead, will take advantage of each and every minute to grab another page of *Gemara*, another mitzvah, another brachah and another amen. Because in the "years of famine" – in Olam Haba, even if one pays millions to be able to answer just one more amen, he will not be able to. Then he will yearn for the days of his life, and will say to himself: Why did I not grab more merits...

The **Chofetz Chaim** would cite the *passuk* (*Shir Hashirim* 3:1) to illustrate: "Al mishkavi baleilos bikashti es sh'ahavah nafshi, bikashtiv velo metza'asiv." *Al mishkavi* – after 120 years, when a person will begin to ask for the mitzvos that his soul loved so much, but even if he searches and searches, he will not find anything. Therefore, a wise person who looks ahead surely will not miss out on even one amen in this world...

Sefer Hazikaron Chasdei Avraham, p. 132

The Dayan of Chust **Harav Yaakov Katina** would say that in the Heavenly Court there will be a special judgment for a person who was lax about answering amen. He wrote in his famous *sefer Rachamei Ha'av*, which was printed in dozens of editions:

"To be very careful to answer amen...because what will he answer when the time comes when he is asked: 'Why did you not answer amen?' And this is alluded to in *Tehillim* (83:17): "מלא פניהם קלוין" – their faces will be filled with shame - as the last letter of each word forms "amen."

Rachamei Av, 56

A few moments before the soul of **Harav Reuven Gershonovitz**, the *tzaddik* of Netivot, departed this world, he asked to hear *Birchos Hashachar*. He mustered up all his energy to answer amen to each of the brachos, and with each brachah, he weakened, until he had no strength left...

Nitzotzei Eish, p. 185

great obstacle in *avodas Hashem*. This is what Yosef was alluding to his brothers: "v'atah, and now" – as you come to repent for selling me to Egypt [*"ein v'atah ela teshuvah* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 21 6)], "don't be sad" – do not do this from sadness, but rather with joy.

Divrei Shmuel

Yosef's News to His Father

"מהרו ועלו אל אבי ואמרתם אליו כה אמר בנך יוסף שמני אלקים לאדון לכל מצרים" (מה ט)

Why was it such good news for Yaakov that his son was the ruler of Egypt?

1. Harav Yisrael of Ruzhin explained:

The word "samani" could be read as two separate words "sham ani", there I am. We can say that Yosef came to inform his father that even in Egypt he had not weakened in his faith, and on the contrary, "sham" – amidst the impurity of Egypt "ani" I work to publicize and teach the Egyptians about the belief that "Elokim l'Adon lechol Mitzrayim," Hashem is the master of all of Egypt.

2. Harav Yosef Chaim of Baghdad offered another explanation:

Yosef informed his father that in the merit of the "כ"ה" letters of the *passuk* of "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad," that "your son Yosef said" each and every day, he was able to prevail over the hostile forces in Egypt and over Pharaoh, until "samani Elokim, Hashem put me as a ruler over Egypt."

3. Yet another explanation is offered by **Harav Yaakov Neiman**, *Rosh Yeshivas Ohr Yisrael*:

With these words, Yosef described to his father the strength of his emunah, his faith in the Creator. Even though he could have been prideful and attributed his greatness to his brilliance and wisdom that impressed Pharaoh, he still declared: "Samani Elokim" – Hashem is the One Who appointed me as the king of Egypt.

Yismach Yisrael; Ben Yehoyada Sotah 42a; Darchei Mussar



Dear Yid!

You have merited to recognize the lofty virtues of the mitzvah of answering amen, and you are careful to present completed brachos to Hashem each day – and thus you know best the value of a brachah that is answered with amen!

You have the ability to save many brachos each day, which without you would be recited in an incomplete way, and at the same time, accumulate many amens each day.

Join the mezakei harabbim, the gabba'ei amen in the shuls, and thousands of completed brachos will be credited to you each day.

Birchos Hashachar Aloud With kavanah Bechavrusa

"ומצדיקי הרבים פנוכים לעולם ועד" (דניאל י"ג)



Give Merits to the Public by Answering Amen

Dear Readers!

You have surely heard and have seen the remarkable expansion of the Bney Emunim revolution in recent years. From an "easy" mitzvah, which most people were lax about, this mitzvah has regained its glory among so many people. In the merit of Bney Emunim's efforts, tens of thousands have learned more about its tremendous importance and its many *segulos*, and have taken upon themselves to strengthen their observance of this mitzvah.

The jewel in the crown of Bney Emunim activities is reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, where one makes the *brachah* and the other answers amen. This practice is mentioned in early sources, and cited in *sifrei poskim*. *Gedolei Yisrael* practiced it throughout the generations, to this day, as has often been detailed in this pamphlet over the years.

Yet, despite the tremendous virtues and the simplicity of fulfilling this mitzvah, many refrain from this holy practice for various reasons: either out of habit, or because they are embarrassed to approach another person and "bother" him to answer amen. Perhaps they come to *daven* when it is no longer possible to say the *brachos* in a relaxed fashion. And there are – amazingly enough – those who have not yet grasped the tremendous virtue of this mitzvah.

That is why a few years ago, Bney Emunim established a network of "*gabba'ei amen*" in shuls, which has been very successful in Israel and around the world. Special "*gabba'im*" in each shul – people of virtue who dedicate their time for this effort – do this on a volunteer basis. "*V'yemalei kevodo es kol ha'aretz amen v'amen*" – they regularly stand in the shuls and listen to the *brachos* of *mispallelim* and then complete those *brachos* by answering amen.

With the same *siyata diShmaya* that has accompanied Bney Emunim since its inception, this initiative as well, has also been remarkably successful. So many have "tasted and seen the good" and have joined the legions of the King – the people who rise early and say *Birchas Hashachar bechavrusa*, presenting a *minchas hoda'ah*, an offering of gratitude to the King of the World, with love and willingness.

These *gabba'im* report the special satisfaction that they feel as a result, and many have also experienced *yeshuos* since they began to serve in this holy capacity to bring merits to the public.

In the way of *divrei Torah* that

need *chizuk*, reinforcement, we seek in this important space to once again raise the importance of this matter, and to encourage the public of "*bney emunim*" who understand the lofty virtue of this mitzvah, to join the ranks of the *matzdikei harabbim*, those who bring merits to the public – the *gabba'ei amen* in the shuls. There are many shuls who do not yet have such a *gabba'i* on a regular basis.

Dear Yid!

It is needless to detail the greatness of being *mezakeh* the *rabbim*, especially with this mitzvah, which is the greatest before Hashem (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1). Furthermore, it is not "a mitzvah that can be done through others" because who know how many hundreds of "amens" are lost each day in the shul where you *daven*, and how many *brachos* are being recited without being completed, only because no one has yet volunteered to encourage those making the *brachos* to say them in front of him so he can answer amen?!

True. We know that this is not a simple task. It requires a lot of *mesirus nefesh* and dedications, as indicated by the acronym of amen, which is "*Ani Moser Nefesh*". But the tremendous gain that you will reap surely justifies the investment and the dedication.

As noted, hundreds of amens, which each create an angel, will be answered each week only because of you. Hundreds of *brachos* will be said in a complete fashion because of you, hundreds of Jews will merit – because of you – to say their *brachos* with more *kavanah*, because anyone who has tried it knows that there is no way to compare a *brachah* said in front of others to a *brachah* said by a person himself.

Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 99a): "When one galvanizes his friend to do a mitzvah, the *passuk* considers it as though he did it." Especially with this mitzvah, where the one activating his friend actually fulfills the mitzvah of answering amen, we see that his reward is doubled from Above – as he receives both his reward and his friend's.

In the coming segments, we will detail some of the *segulos* and virtues of this holy mission, and share some of the stories and testimonies of those who serve as *gabba'ei amen* and saw many *yeshuos* as a result.

We sincerely hope that these words will have the desired effect, and we will merit that each shul in Am Yisrael will have someone who will dedicate himself to the *tzibbur* and arouse them to the importance of answering amen...

"Ushemor Tzeiseinu Uvo'einu L'Chaim Uleshalom"

It was towards the end of the British Mandate rule in Eretz Yisrael. Yosef, a young and energetic lad, was compelled to join one of the underground groups that operated at the time to protect the Jews of Eretz Yisrael from Arab riots that took place under the eyes of the British soldiers. With the latter condoning the violence, the Arabs mercilessly murdered people in Jewish settlements throughout the land.

Time after time, the murderers waited in ambush for Jewish convoys heading to outlying settlements, carrying food, medicine and other necessities. The Arabs would murder the members of the convoy and loot the trucks. As a result, groups were established to accompany the convoys and protect them. They also installed round the clock guards at Jewish towns that were abandoned by the British soldiers.

Aside for the routine guarding, the members of these groups sometimes had to go on the offense to thwart attacks, and penetrated deep into Arab towns whose residents were plotting to carry out evil attacks. These operations were very risky and they needed a lot of advance planning that included reconnaissance and concealing weapons caches and bombs deep in enemy territory and suchlike. That was beside the extra caution that was needed because of the probing eyes of the British soldiers, who worked constantly on the side of the Arabs and did everything possible to dog the steps of these watch groups.

Yosef, who was young and talented, took an active role in these activities. His father, Reb Yehuda, an eminent *chassid* of Harav Mordechai Shalom Yosef of Sadigura, was very worried about him. Therefore, before each such action, he would go to his Rebbe, sometimes with his son and sometimes alone, asking the Rebbe to bless his son to return safely. One day, Reb Yehuda learned that his son would be participating the next day in a very dangerous but necessary operation that the group had planned for a long time. As he was wont, Reb Yehuda went to the Rebbe to ask for a *brachah* that his son return safely. In contrast to the other times, when the Rebbe sufficed with giving a *brachah*, this time, when Reb Yehuda came with his son, the Rebbe instructed Yosef that before setting out, he and his friends should *daven Maariv betzibbur*, and only then to depart.

Yosef began to apologize that regretfully, most of his friends were not mitzvah observant, and they probably would not agree. But the Rebbe did not reply, and instead just repeated his instructions: "Tell them to *daven* together with the *tzibbur* and only then to set out." Yosef tried again to express his justified hesitation that his friends would not accept his words, but the Rebbe calmed him and said, "You'll see that they will agree."

Before he left, the Rebbe blessed him warmly that they should be successful and that he and his friends should return safely. Yosef, who was infused with strong *emunas chachamim*, answered amen, and then set out for the place where he was supposed to meet his comrades.

They met and the commanders presented the plan of action in detail. While his friends were all tense and excited, Yosef asked to speak:

"My friends, you all realize how dangerous this operation is. It is true, we are doing it for the welfare of the Jews of the land, but we need many merits to succeed. What do you think, therefore, about *davening Maariv* together as a *minyan* before we go? In the *tefillah*," he explained, "we will ask '*Hashkiveinu – leshalom v'ha'ariveinu Malkeinu lchaim...vesakneinu b'eitzah tova milfanecha...* and protect us and remove from us the enemy...and remove the Satan

from before us and behind us...and protect our departure and our arrival, to life and to peace." I am sure that this merit will advocate for us that our mission should succeed and that we merit to return safe and sound."

As the Rebbe had said, Yosef's heartfelt words, said with deep rooted *emunah*, made an impression on his friends and they agreed enthusiastically. Yosef saw that as the first sign that the Rebbe's words were being fulfilled, and was sure that likewise, the rest of the *brachah* would be realized.

So when night fell, just before they departed, Yosef served as the *shaliach tzibbur* and began *davening Maariv* for his friends. For some, it was their first time *davening* with a *minyan*. The moving *tefillah* concluded and they set out.

In the thick darkness, the group cautiously advanced towards a small hilltop that overlooked their destination. They quickly realized that the information they had received that at this hour everyone should have been sleeping, was erroneous. Some of the houses were lit up.

Moreover, one of the Arabs must have sensed the unusual movement and alerted some friends. This surprised the members of the Jewish group and made their planned operation even more dangerous than they had thought. But despite that, after a quick huddle and consultation, they decided that there was no going back, and they would forge ahead no matter what. They knew that their lives hung in the balance, and it was possible that lives would be lost. But they realized that after being discovered they could not retreat, so they launched the operation as planned.

As per the plans, they split into smaller groups and began a courageous raid on the target. The Arabs quickly recovered from the surprise and began to return heavy fire. But miraculously, of the hundreds of bullets that whistled around them, not a single one struck a target. The more the Arabs tried to harm them, they could not, and thus, when the operation was over, all the members of the group returned home safely.

It was a miracle that had no other explanation aside for the *tefillah* that had protected them, as the Rebbe had promised. Some of the members even grew stronger in their observance as a result of seeing the power of *tefillah* and that there is a G-d in the land, and that He is close to all Who call to Him, especially the *tzaddikim*, who speak and their words are fulfilled.

More than fifty years later, in 5760, one of the Sadigura *chassidim* was at the *kever* of the Rebbe, the Abir Yaakov, and noticed an elderly Jew who did not appear to be a *chassid*, walking among the *kevarim* and looking for something. The *chassid* asked what the older man wanted, and the latter related that he was looking for the *tziyun* of Rav Mordechai shalom Yosef of Sadigura.

The *chassid* offered to show the old man how to get there. As they walked, the *chassid* asked how the man knew the Rebbe. In response, the man related this story, noting that he was one of the participants in the operation and became closer to Yiddishkeit after seeing the Rebbe's *brachah* come true and seeing how the power of *tefillah* protected them and saved them from a near certain death.

"Every time I need a *yeshuah*," the man related, "I *daven* beforehand, as the Rebbe instructed. This time, I need a special *yeshuah* so I decided to visit the Rebbe's gravesite in the hope that he will be able to advocate for me for a *yeshuah*..." the man related, and then began to *daven* fervently.

Kiryas Melech, 8, p. 98