

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Tefillas Arvis Is a Collateral

“ויפגע במקום וילן שם כי בא השמש”
(כח יא)

In one of his *Chumash-Rashi shiurim*, the **Shefa Chaim** of Sanz-Klausenberg explained:

It is brought down in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that when a person travels from place to place, he should not daven en route. Rather, he should wait to daven until he reaches the place where he plans to sleep. This practice is a *segulah* and a *shemirah* for him that he should arrive at his destination safely. We can cite a proof of this practice from this *passuk*: “*Vayifga bamakom*” – Yaakov davened *Tefillas Arvis* (*Brachos* 26b), “*vayalen sham*” – in the place where he slept.

When the Shefa Chaim once visited the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz in Bnei Brak, his host honored him with davening *Maariv* in his *beis medrash*. At first the guest declined, saying, “I learned from my uncle, the Divrei Yechezkel of Shineva, that *Maariv* is held as a collateral, and we do not daven this *tefillah* until we arrive at the place where are sleeping. I plan to sleep tonight in Yerushalayim...” But ultimately, the Shefa Chaim acceded and davened *Maariv* at the *beis medrash* of the Imrei Chaim.

Halichos Chaim, Seder Hayom p. 294; Meir Hachaim, Vol. II p. 476

First ‘Yirah,’ Then ‘Mora’

“ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המקום הזה אין זה כי אם בית אלקים וזה שער השמים”
(כח יז)

Harav Binyamin, the Maggid of Zaloshitz, explained:

Upon reaching the shul, some say the *passuk* “*Mah nora hamakom hazeh...*” But unlike Yaakov Avinu, of whom it is said “*Vayira vayomar mah nora hamakom hazeh*” they do not feel the fear of the holiness of the shul before they utter these words, and even after saying it, because they do not think at all about the significance of the words they have just uttered.

Turei Zahav

Bread that is Worthy to Eat, Clothing that is Worthy to Wear

“אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ומשרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבוש”
(כח כ)

Why did Yaakov need to detail “bread to eat and clothing to wear?” Is there any other purpose for bread or for clothing?

Harav Chaim Mordechai Gottlieb, the Av Bais Din of Mishkoltz, explained:

Yaakov Avninu was very careful about *mitzvos* and did not eat any food or wear any garment that had even the slightest possibility of an *issur*. As it says in the *Zohar* (*Vayishlach* 169 1) that a person needs to detail his request, therefore, he asked that he should have food and clothes that are kosher and fine, so that he should be able to enjoy them without any doubts.

Yag”el Yaakov

With Tefillah, On Time Is Ahead of Time

There are some people who can be praised for coming to davening ‘on time.’ They come to shul, huffing and puffing, just around the time when davening is set to begin. They are convinced there is no one more punctual than them. But they forget that *Chazal* emphasize (*Pesachim* 4a): “*Zerizin makdimin lemitzvos*” – a *zariz* is someone who comes early, not someone who comes on time.

Coming early to davening is just that – arriving in shul a few minutes before the *tefillah* starts. A few minutes in the context of *tefillah* is a tremendous amount of time, which determines the quality of the davening, and consequently also impacts the way it is accepted.

In fact, anyone who has the privilege of being accustomed to arriving in shul some ten minutes before davening, will find himself marveling in surprise at those who come ‘exactly on time.’ It can even be classified using the words of the *brachah* “*lehavchin bein yom ubein laylah*” – it is like the difference between day and night. The difference between the davening of someone who comes early, before davening, to someone who comes ‘on time’ is as different as ‘day and night.’

Every person knows that when he has a meeting with an important person, he does not arrive exactly on time. And if that’s the case with a human being, how much more so must it be with HaKadosh Baruch Hu...Coming early to *tefillah* is obligatory for one who believes that he is about to stand during davening in front of the King of all kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

We have to understand, and internalize that in essence, the beginning of davening is at the very least ten minutes before the official start time. When a person comes at the time when davening is supposed to start, he is late.

Good Shabbos,

Yaakov Dov Marmorstein

Five Jews Who 'Landed' From Above

This remarkable story, which is a valuable lesson in the extraordinary *Hashgachah pratis* experienced by those who are *moser nefesh* to fulfill a mitzvah at all costs, was submitted by the person it happened to, a distinguished Rav who is a veteran member of Bney Emunim in Eretz Yisrael. This is his letter:

My father, a''h, passed away more than a year ago. As a faithful son to his Father in Heaven, and as a son honoring his father who recently departed this world, for eleven months after his passing, I made every effort not to miss even one *tefillah* before the *amud*. Even during Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed, when it is customary that an *avel* does not daven before the *amud*, I made sure to daven *betzibbur*, from beginning to end, so that I could say *Kaddish Yasom*. This should not be taken lightly, because it was during corona, when all regular shul *sedarim* were upended. But with Hashem's benevolence, at the end of eleven months, I was able to conclude



with satisfaction that I had not missed even one *tefillah* with *minyan* *l'iluy nishmas* my father, *zt''l*.

Often, doing so was a herculean effort. Over the year I found myself going from one shul to another seeking a *minyan* – at times even in the small hours of the night. And here, I feel a need to note with amazement that while I visited shuls at the most unusual hours, I encountered many Jews whose external appearance conveys detachment, but their inner souls are burning with love for their Creator. Even at the end of a tiring day of work, when they can barely keep their heads up, they go to shul to daven *Maariv* with a *minyan*.

At the end of the eleven months, I did not want to step back from this spiritual level I had attained, so I took upon myself that from now on, I would make every effort to continue to daven every *tefillah*, in every situation and at any time, with a *minyan*. Usually, this is not particularly difficult for me, because I rise early each morning to daven *Shacharis* with a regular *minyan* that I attend. Of course, I begin with saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*. I daven *Minchah* and *Maariv* in a fixed place as well. Even at times when I need to alter my schedule, especially on days that I have to travel away from my city, I can make sure that I am able to daven in one of the thousands of shuls all over Eretz Yisrael.

The first challenge I had was when, over *bein hazmanim*, I needed to travel for health reasons to vacation in Austria. Aside for making sure to make a reservation in a kosher hotel, which had *minyanim*, I even asked my travel agent to make sure my flight time made it possible for me to daven *Shacharis* before takeoff, and *Minchah* after landing, all with a *minyan*. Likewise, I made the request for the return flight. While I was away, I made sure to return to the hotel each day at least half an hour before 7:30 p.m. – when *Minchah* was scheduled at the hotel's shul – so that I should not miss the *minyan*.

But it happened that one day, I drove in my rented car to a lake in the area. On the way back, I lost my way, and drove into a long tunnel – about 20 kilometers long – that had no way out before the end. When I finally emerged on the other side, I found myself in a totally different area from where the hotel was.

Correcting my mistake cost me a long and tiring detour that I had to make on the winding Tyrolean roads. When I finally got the hotel, they were already in the middle of *Minchah*.

The thought that I had to accept what had happened, and to daven without a *minyan* this once, distressed me deeply. Instead, I realized that the *shekiah* in this area was very late,

and because there was still an hour remaining to sunset, I would wait a bit longer. Who knows, perhaps a *minyan* would still gather.

I stood at the entrance to the hotel, asking each person who passed if they had already davened *Minchah*. Most of them replied that they had, but slowly, after about 45 minutes, I managed to gather four additional people who had not yet davened. I glanced at my watch. There were about twenty minutes left to *shekiah* and we had only half a *minyan*. The rest of the hotel's guests were enjoying dinner, which was being served at the time. It didn't seem likely that any other guests would be arriving, but I refused to give up. I believed with all my heart in the words that Hashem says, 'Open for Me an opening like the eye of a needle and I will open for you an opening the size of a banquet hall.' I continued to wait, praying in my heart that Hashem should bless my efforts with success and fulfill my will.

And then, seemingly out of nowhere, a small van sped around the bend in the road, and screeched to a halt in front of the hotel. The driver was one of the Jewish kitchen workers in the hotel. Did you daven *Minchah*? I asked. No, he replied.

I asked how many people were in the car, waiting with bated breath for his response: "Five," he replied. And we all broke out in jubilant cheers. We literally saw a "stroke on the cheek" from Above, so to speak.

The five *Yidden*, who appeared out of nowhere, completed our *minyan*, and that's how I had the merit not to miss out on my *kabbalah* to be careful about *tefillah* with *minyan*.

I was especially moved by the comment of one of the people who had waited with us, and he said before we started to daven: "Although it's true we are missing dinner, please, let that not make us hurry the davening. Let's daven word for word, as we should." And in my heart I thought, how can we hurry through a *tefillah* that we waited for nearly an hour to recite, with such *emunah*?

The Brachah of Yishtabach

The Source of the Brachah

Although the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, which concludes *Pesukei Dezimrah*, is not mentioned in the sources, the *Siddur Chassidei Ashkenaz* (p. 75) cites that the Savora'im instituted to recite it each day. The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 51) wrote that this *brachah* is mentioned in the *Yerushalmi* [but the *Yerushalmi* version that we have does not have it, see *Hagahos Maharatz Chayes, Megillah* 12b]. The holy *Zohar* (*Terumah* 132 1) also mentions this *brachah*, discusses its contents and explains its deep significance according to *Toras HaniStar*.

The Essence of the Brachah

This *brachah* was instituted as the closure of the praises of *Pesukei Dezimrah*, similar to the *brachah* that concludes *Hallel* (*Orchos Chaim*, *ibid* 21).

The *brachah* begins with the words “*Yishtabach Shimcha*”, because *Pesukei Dezimrah* concludes with the *passuk* (*Zechariah* 14:9): “*Bayom hahu yihiyeh Hashem Echad uShemo Echad.*” Therefore, we declare that Hashem’s Name will be *meshubach*, praised for eternity. Then we mention fifteen terms of praise, from “*shir ushevachah*” until “*brachos vehoda’os*”, corresponding to the fifteen words of *Birchas Kohanim*, and the fifteen chapters of *Shir Hamaalos*. (*Peirush Siddur Hatefillah LaRokeach*, Vol. I, p. 233)

But the *Zohar* (*Terumah* 132 1) wrote that *Yishtabach* has thirteen praises, corresponding to the 13 *Middos Harachamim*, because he groups the words “*brachos vehoda’os*” to the rest of the *brachah*, and does not include them in the praises.

The *Rokeach* further wrote (*ibid*) that this *brachah* has 53 words corresponding to the 53 *parshiyos* in the Torah, and therefore, one who says it with *kavanah* “it is as if he fulfilled the *Chamishah Chumshei Torah*.”

The Kavanah of Amen

Amen – it is true that only Hashem Alone is to be praised and glorified, and I believe that.

The Structure of the Brachah

Tosafos (*Brachos* 46a, ad loc. *Kol habrachos*) say that this *brachah* does not begin with ‘*Baruch*’ like all the longer *brachos*, because it is considered a ‘*brachah hasemuchah lachavertah*’, a *brachah* that is adjacent to another – with the other one being *Baruch She’amar*, which is said before *Pesukei Dezimrah*, and the *Pesukei Dezimrah* that are in between are not considered a *hefsek*. But Rav Asher of Lunil is of the opinion that this *brachah* also begins with *Baruch*, as its first part, from *Yishtabach* until *Baruch*, is only an introduction to the *brachah*, “which concludes the praise of Hashem that began with chapters of song and praise, and therefore, he does not stop to say *Baruch* until the end.” (*Sefer Haminhagos* p. 4, 1)

Who Composed the Brachah?

On the day that Shlomo Hamelech ascended on his magnificent throne “which was not thus done to all the kingdoms” (*Melachim* I, 10:20) all of Am Yisrael came to witness it. When they saw the grandeur and sophistication of the throne, they began to praise and extoll the wisdom of the king. Shlomo Hamelech heard this and said: Does it enter your mind that I am to be praised for the workmanship of this throne? HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself gives the person the wisdom, and He is the only One who should be praised. And he stood up and composed the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*. He even alluded to his name at the beginning of the *brachah*, because the acronym of “שמך לעד מלכינו הקל” is Shlomo. (*Peirush Siddur Hatefillah LaRokeach*, *ibid*)

Another view on the subject is brought by Rabi Yichyeh Salach, one of the sages of Yemen, that Moshe Rabbeinu composed this *brachah*. When Pharaohs desecrated Kavod Shamayim and said (*Shemos* 5:2): “*Mi Hashem asher eshma bekolo*, who is Hashem that I should listen to His Voice,” Moshe stood up and said “*Yishtabach Shimcha la’ad...*” Because this *brachah* was instituted against the blasphemy of Pharaoh, which began with “*mi*”, this is alluded to in the wording of the *brachah*: If we combine the first letter [ישתבח] and the last letter of the last word [עולמים] we get מי. (*Eitz Chaim, Birchas Yishtabach*)

”וכאשר תקום מן הספר, תחפש באשר למדת אם יש בו דבר אשר תוכל לקיימו.”

Every *Tefillah* Is a Meeting With the King

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would say that a person must come to shul ten minutes before davening, and stressed: No one would arrive at the last minute to a meeting with the king, and he certainly would not dare come late. How much more so is this the case with the King of Kings. Indeed, a person who comes early to davening hones the feeling in his heart that his entire *tefillah* is like a meeting with the King of Kings. (*Shalmei Simcha*, Vol. I, p. 221)

Those Who Come Early to Davening Are Closer

It is known that one's participation in a *simcha* depends on how close he is to the *baal simcha*. The closest family members come early and leave late. Those who don't feel as close come late and leave early. Similarly, a person's closeness to his Creator can be measured through his conduct regarding coming on time to *tefillah*; the earlier a person comes and the later he leaves, that's how he shows how close and connected he is to Hashem. (*Yisgaber K'ari*, Chapter 9, 5)

Coming Early Out of Closeness to *Tefillah*

Harav Binyamin Rabinowitz, a *dayan* in Yerushalayim, would often say:

When one comes to davening 'exactly on time' it is impossible to have the proper *kavanah*. Only someone who comes a few minutes before davening begins, thus preparing himself properly for it, can feel the connection to the *tefillah*, and then say it with the requisite *kavanah*. (*Tiv HaTorah, Kedoshim*)

Dear Vechol Ma'aminim,

I am the resident of a city where, regretfully, your pamphlet is not distributed. But since I read it the first time a few years ago, I make an effort to obtain it and read it each week. I even keep all the pamphlets you have published in recent years, and from time to time, I leaf through them. One of my neighbors, a respected *mechanech*, has asked me on occasion if he can peruse them so that he can use some of the material for his students.

I am especially impressed at how you are able to provide fresh, new content. It is remarkable how each section is filled week after week with rich and fascinating content, like a wellspring of *emunah* that is constantly growing stronger and watering the readers, who are thirsting for its sweet waters.

I will single out praise for the section entitled *Taaneh Emunim*, which I study and review all the time. It is in its merit that I say *Birchos Hashachar* with Bney Emunim – with a *chavrusa*, and daven with *Taaneh Emunim* – with the right *kavanah*. I believe that anyone who is strict to learn this section is sure to have the words "*taaneh emunim*" fulfilled and have his prayers answered.

Because it is in your merit that I began to connect more to the words of *tefillah*, I'd like to share with you a thought that crossed my mind while saying the *Yehi Ratson* after *Birchos Hashachar*. We ask: "*Vesitneinu lechen ulechessed ulerachamim b'einecha ube'einei kol ro'einu*" – what is the purpose of davening to find favor in the eyes of all who see us?

I thought this can be explained according to what I once read in your pamphlets that the acronym of the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 18:3): "אִם נָא מְצֹאֵתִי הֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ" is "amen" and that is why we ask in *Birchos Hashachar* that wherever we daven we should find favor in the eyes of all who see us that they should participate with us in reciting *brachos*, by answering amen after our *brachos* and we, in turn, will answer amen to theirs.

Respectfully,

Y.C.

Ofakim

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the Vechol Ma'aminim email address.

Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Sifsei Tzaddik

10 Kislev 5681

The Rebbe, Harav Pinchas Menachem Elazar ben Reb Binyamin Eliezer Yustman was a grandson of the Chiddushei Harim, from whom he studied most of his Torah. After the passing of the Sfas Emes, he established his court in the Polish town of Piltz. After World War I, he moved to Chencstochow, where he passed away and is buried. He was renowned for his *sefer Sifsei Tzaddik al HaTorah*. A large compilation that he authored on *Shas* was lost in the Holocaust.

"ובשפתי צדיקים תתברך"

"The Rebbe the Sifsei Tzaddik recited *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, standing up, in front of another person who listened and answered amen to each *brachah*. After that, all those who davened in his *minyan* had to stand in front of him and make the *brachos* aloud, and the Rebbe would answer amen, with great concentration." (From a soon-to-be released biography)