

Vechele Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

Parashas SHEMOS | 5782 | Issue No. 413



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

A Person's Crying Indicates He Is a Jew

"ותפתח ותראהו את הילד והנה נער בכה ותחמל עליו ותאמר מילדי העברים זה" (ב ה)

How could the daughter of Pharaoh determine according to the child's cries that "he is from the Jewish children"?

Harav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim explained:

There is a significant difference between the cries of a Jew and the cries of a non-Jew. The cries of the non-Jew expresses despair and dejection, but the cries of a Jew express hope.

Harav Mordechai Chaim provided an example of this: When the Arabs were once organizing to launch a pogrom against the Jews of Eretz Yisrael, and there was fear in the air every minute, those close to the Rebbe gathered in his home in Teveriah to read *Megillas Eichah* and say *Kinnos*. He recited the difficult *pesukim* one after the other, and contained himself. It was only at the third *perek*, when he reached the *pesukim* of hope that begin with the *passuk* (*Eichah* 3:22): "*Chasdei Hashem ki lo samnu ki lo chalu rachamav*," that he suddenly burst into sobs – crying that expressed hope. (*Marbitzei Torah Mei'olam Hachasidus*, Vol. VII p. 204)

When the King of Egypt Died the Tefillos of Yisrael Were Accepted

"ויהיה בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבדה

ויעקו ותעל שועתם את האלקים מן העבדה" (ב כג)

Why did Bnei Yisrael cry out specifically after the death of Pharaoh?

The *Tzeror Hamor* explained that indeed, the cries of Bnei Yisrael were done before the death of Pharaoh, and that is the meaning of the words: "*Vayamas Melech Mitzrayim*" – the reason that the king of Egypt was punished and died was because "And Bnei Yisrael sighed...and their cries rose..."

The *Akeidas Yitzchak* (*Shaar* 34) explained: On the death of Pharaoh, when all the Egyptians gathered to eulogize him, as is customary, Bnei Yisrael were also compelled to eulogize him and mourn for him as was fitting for slaves to do upon the death of their master, Bnei Yisrael used the opportunity to gather with their wives and children and to channel their cries as a prayer to the King of Kings, and through that the Gates of Heaven were opened and their *tefillah* was accepted.

Based on this, the *Imrei Shammai* explained the words of *Ana BeKoach*: "*Sha'avaseinu kabel ushema tza'akaseinu yodea ta'alumos*." On the outside it appears that Bnei Yisrael were participating with the Egyptians in their cries. But the One who knows all secrets discerned the real reason for their cries and accepted their prayers.

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Ten Minutes That Make All the Difference

In continuation of what was written here about coming early to *Shacharis*, I would like to add that while the testimony of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 30b) about the "early *chassidim*" who "would linger an hour and then daven, so that they could have *kavanah* to their Father in Heaven" relates to all three *tefillos* of the day, it is undoubtedly most important and most relevant to *Shacharis*.

With regard to *Shacharis*, coming early is not only *hiddur* and a preferable practice, it is an absolute obligation! When a person comes to *Shacharis* "exactly on time" he loses out so much!

There are twenty-three *brachos* said before *Shacharis*, and when a person comes "just in time" to davening, how are they said, if at all?! If only we could focus on the *tefillah* of *Adon Olam*, as a *talmid* of the Maharshah wrote in *Mateh Moshe* (Vol. I 31): "Anyone who concentrates at the beginning of *Adon Olam*, Rabi Yehuda Hachasid, Rav Hai Gaon and Rav Sherira Gaon write – I am a guarantor that his *tefillah* is heard and the Satan does not prosecute over his *tefillah*." Think about how many times a person can miss out on this *tefillah* because he comes late or at the last minute!

In this short time, one must also don the *tallis* and make the *brachah*, put on *tefillin* and make the *brachah*, and say *Korbanos*...If we suffice with the window of time dedicated these days in shuls before davening, it is virtually impossible to do all this. It is so sad to see people who are *Yirei Shamayim*, yet who stuff all of this into just a few minutes.

This is especially relevant with regard to the ancient *minhag* of reciting *Birchos Hashachar* together, with one making the *brachah* and the other answering amen. It seems that we are losing time from all these additions, but perhaps we can recommend the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 47a) in this regard: "Anyone who prolongs the amen, his days and years are extended" – a person should not think that he is missing out to keep this mitzvah, because he is guaranteed that his days will be extended...

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

The Envelope Preserved for Shomrei Emunim

This story was sent to us by the person it happened to, a mother in Israel who merited to see remarkable *Hashgachah pratis* in the merit of her family strengthening their observance of the mitzvah of answering amen:

It was a Tuesday in Elul. Moishy, our twelve-year-old son, returned home, as was his habit every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, after learning *Gemara* with his *chavrusa*, a scholarly *avreich*. He had been learning with him three times a week for the past few months.

But this time, something was different. Moishy usually returned from his study sessions with a satisfied smile on his face; now, his eyes were dull and his expression downcast. I tried to probe, to see if I could figure out why his mood was so low, but he evaded me, went to his room and closed the door. I realized that something had happened; I connected a few details that came to mind, and more or less figured out what happened...

I went to his room and gently asked, trying to conceal my anxiety, "Moishy, sweetie, did you give the envelope to your *chavrusa*?"

Instead of an answer, Moishy began to cry.



My fears had been confirmed. The envelope containing about NIS 1000 to pay the *avreich* who learned with Moishy was lost. I could hardly listen to Moishy's detailed explanation as to how it had happened. As he was sitting on the bus, he put the envelope down on the seat next to him. Suddenly, he noticed a friend seated two rows behind him. In a moment of distraction, he decided to go sit next to his friend; when the bus reached his stop, he got off, leaving the envelope behind.

A thousand shekel is a significant sum for a *kollel* family like ours. We had saved every penny, knowing that we

were doing the right thing for our son, who needed some assistance to keep up with his learning. The *chavrusa* waited eagerly for his monthly payment. Now the envelope was lost, and I had no idea what to do.

My heart clenched. I had been so afraid this would happen. I had warned Moishy repeatedly to be very careful with the envelope, yet, what I had dreaded had happened. The money was gone.

I didn't have a lot of time to think; I had to take action. First I called the Dan bus company, and after waiting for a long time on hold, I was directed to the lost and found department. There, too, I waited quite a few minutes for a response, and when someone finally picked up, they informed me that they had no reports of a lost envelope.

Having no choice, I called the *chavrusa* and sincerely apologized that we would have to delay the payment a bit. I explained that the envelope had gotten lost on the way to him. With his characteristic refinement, he was very understanding and reassured me that he could wait. He also fervently wished me luck in finding the lost envelope.

"Money that comes from a *lomed Torah* and goes to someone who is learning Torah, in order to learn Torah, will surely be found and returned to you," the *avreich* said confidently. For me, that remark created an even greater obligation...

For his part, Moishy, who felt very bad about what had happened, realized that he had to do something. He immediately gathered his brothers and sisters together for a "*chizuk* meeting", and asked them what they thought they should work on in order to have the lost envelope returned to them.

It was around the time when Bney Emunim held their large *chizuk* campaign in *chadarim* and girls' schools, so it was no wonder when all the children unanimously chose 'amen' as a mitzvah whose tremendous merits would surely assist in finding the lost item.

From that moment on, we began to hear 'amen' out loud in our home, almost constantly, as they filled the air

with myriad meritorious angels that are created from this mitzvah.

A few hours passed, and there was no progress on the lost envelope front. We came to terms with the fact that it would probably never be found. The envelope had no identifying signs, and therefore, the chances of finding it were minimal. We consoled ourselves with the fact that at least something good had come of it, as our home had joined tens of thousands of others who were working on strengthening our observance of answering amen.

But the amen did not disappoint this time either...

Two days later, on Thursday, at five thirty in the afternoon – the hour that Moishy usually went to learn with his *chavrusa* – Moishy refused to go. Tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Moishy, dear," I soothed him, "Go, the money is a *kapparah*, and Hashem will pay us back. You learn Torah and Hashem will help..." On second thought, I added that perhaps Moishy should ask the bus driver if he had seen the envelope. Moishy would go out each day at the same time, so if he traveled on the same bus he had taken two days earlier, I thought, who knew, perhaps the driver had found the envelope and was looking for its owners.

Moishy left the house with a heavy step, but with a bit of hope in his heart. He went to the bus stop that he normally went to three times a week. The bus arrived, and Moishy mustered up the courage to ask the driver: "Did you maybe find an envelope, at around this time on Tuesday?"

"Yes!" the driver replied to a very surprised Moishy. "At the end of the route, I saw an envelope, maybe from a wedding...?! I put it in the garbage can near the seat." The driver continued on the route and Moishy went over to the trash can.

Unbelievable! The envelope was right there, fully intact and clean – it wasn't even dirty nor did it smell. For 48 hours the envelope had rested there and nothing had happened to it. Not a penny was missing.

The envelope was given to the dedicated *avreich*, and Moishy returned that evening with a spring in his step and a glow in his eyes. *Baruch Hashem*, the loss had been found, but the holy amen continues to resonate in our home to this day.

The Brachah of Emes V'emunah

The Source of the Brachah

Chazal instituted that one who recites *Krias Shema* of *Arvis* needs to recite two *brachos* after it (*Brachos* 11a). The first *brachah* after *Krias Shema* of *Arvis* is the *brachah* of *Emes V'emunah*.

Chazal based the concept of this *brachah*, and of the *brachah* of *Emes Veyatziv* recited after *Krias Shema* of *Shacharis*, on the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 92:3): “*Lehagid baboker chasdecha v'emunascha baleilos*.” For this reason, in the *brachah* of *Emes Veyatziv* said in the morning, we mention only the *chassadim* of Hashem with our ancestors at the time of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, while in the *brachah* of *Emes V'emunah*, said at night, we add mention of our *emunah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will fulfill His promise and save us from those who rise up in every generation and seek to harm us. (*Brachos* 12a; *Rashi* ad loc. *Shene'emar*)

The Essence of the Brachah

The *brachah* of *Emes V'emunah* does not begin with *Baruch* because it is adjacent to the *brachos* of *Krias Shema*, and *Krias Shema* is not considered a *hefsek*, a pause, between them. (*Tur Orach Chaim* 236)

This *brachah* is called a ‘*brachah aruchah*’ because the *Yerushalmi* states (*Brachos* 1 6) that one needs to extend it by mentioning many details: *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, *Makkas Bechoros*, *Krias Yam Suf* and the Kingship of Hashem. (*Rashi* and *Me'iri* ibid. see *Mishnah Berurah* 66 53)

Later in the *brachah* we say: “*Moshe uBnei Yisrael Lecha anu shira besimcha rabbah v'amru kulam* (*Shemos* 15:11): ‘*Mi kamocha b'eilim Hashem... Nora sehilos oseh pele...*’” Why do we mention specifically here this *passuk* from *Shiras Hayam*? The *siddur Tzelosa D'Avraham* explains that Chazal say (*Sotah* 27b) that for the whole *shirah*, only Moshe Rabbeinu said the *pesukim*, and Bnei Yisrael responded only to a small part of the *shirah*, and this *passuk* is an exception because Moshe Rabbeinu and Am Yisrael said it together. Therefore, only regarding this *passuk* can we say “*V'amru kulam*.”

The Meaning of Amen

It is true that we must praise HaKadosh Baruch Hu for redeeming us from Egypt, striking their firstborns and tearing the sea for us.

The Structure of the Brachah

The words of the *Mishnah* (ibid 12b) are recited each year in the *seider Haggadah Shel Pesach*: “We mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* at night. Rabi Elazar ben Azariah said: I am like a seventy year old man, and I did not merit to have *Yetzias Mitzrayim* said at night, until Ben Zoma explained, that it says (*Devarim* 16:3): ‘*Lema'an tizkor es yom tzeischa mei'Eretz Mitzrayim kol yemei chayecha*.’ *Yemei chayecha* refers to the days, “*kol yemei chayecha*” – refers to the nights. In other words, the words “*kol yemei*” are explained to mean that all the hours of the day, including the nighttime. (*Shenos Eliyahu*, *Brachos* 1 5)

The Rishonim differ on the explanation of the directive in this *Mishnah*: According to *Rashi* (ibid ad loc. *Mazkirin*), the *Mishnah* is instructing “we mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* at night” refers to the obligation to recite the *parashah* of *Vayomer* at night as well, even though it primarily addresses the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, which is not practiced at night. This is because *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is mentioned in it. But Rav Yeshaya Di Trani (*Piskei HaRy"d* ibid) disputes *Rashi* and holds that the instruction of the *Mishnah* does not refer to the *parashah* of *Vayomer*, but rather to the *brachah* of *Emes V'emunah*, in which *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is mentioned. Chazal instituted that we say it in the evening because of our obligation to mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* at night as well.

Reciting the Pesukim Aloud

The custom of *Ashkenaz* is to stop this *brachah* before saying the *pesukim* of “*Mi Kamocha*” and “*Hashem Yimloch L'Olam Va'ed*” and to say them together with the *chazzan*. The reason for this is that in earlier times, it was customary for the *shaliach tzibbur* to daven aloud, orally, and would then be *motzi* the entire *tzibbur*. Because *halachah* says that “Words that are written you may not say orally” (*Gittin* 60b), this refers to someone who comes to be *motzi* the *tzibbur*, and therefore, the *tzibbur* said these words together with the *shaliach tzibbur*. Even today, when the *sha"tz* is not *motzi* the *tzibbur*, this *takanah* remained in place. (*Tur Orach Chaim* 49 in the name of the *Rosh*; *Magen Avraham* ibid 1)

However, the *Gra* explained that the *tzibbur* says these *pesukim* together with the *chazzan* because these are *pesukim* of *Geulah*, and as the custom was in *Megillas Esther*, that the *pesukim* of the *Geulah* are said by the *tzibbur* in unison. (*Hanhagos HaGra Orach Chaim* 690 17)

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

Mei'Otzros Emunim

Pearls About the Reward
for Answering Amen

Lengthy Days With Much Good

The *Gemara* (*Brachos* 47a) explains that the life of a person depends on answering amen *k'halachah*, for better or for worse, as it says: "One who answers an orphaned amen [without knowing what the brachah is] – his children will be orphans, a *chatufah* [with an abbreviated enunciation] – his days will be abbreviated away, *ketufah* [when one of the letters is truncated] – then his days will be truncated." In contrast, one who answers amen according to *halachah* is guaranteed that he will live long, good days, "and one who extends his amen his days and years will be extended." The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 8 8) adds: "His days and years and are extended for good."

The meaning of "one who extends his amen" is that he answers amen slowly, as is fitting, in the amount of time it takes to say the words "*K-l Melech Ne'eman*." (See *Tosafos Shabbos* 119a ad loc. *Amar Rav*), as long as he does not extend it too much, in a way that distorts the pronunciation. (*Ohr Zarua*, *Hilchos Seudah* 193; *Tosafos Brachos* ibid ad loc. *Kol*)

The *Baalei Hatosafos* cite proof that one who extends his amen lives a long life from the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 24:1): "*V'Avraham zaken ba bayamim*." זָקֵן בָּא - the last letter of each word form the word 'amen.' (*Tosafos Hashalem*, ibid)

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

I'd like to begin by thanking you for the wonderful pamphlet filled with beautiful material each week, and especially the recent redesign that is so appealing to the eye. Above all, I am filled with *brachos* and gratitude to the Ribbono Shel Olam for the activities that have helped me and so many others strengthen ourselves on matters of *tefillah* and answering amen, as I will explain.

I am an *avreich* who lives in Bnei Brak. *Baruch Hashem* I have merited to marry off a number of my children. One of my children's *shidduch* took longer than expected for no apparent reason. It came to the point where he was holding up the next child. I looked for a *zechus* that could bring upon us Heavenly compassion. I consulted with a friend of mine who is a *talmid chacham*, and following a beautiful article that appeared in your pamphlet about the importance of coming early to davening, I decided to strengthen myself on this matter. That same friend told me that if I will work to help others come early to davening, then *middah kenegged middah*, from Above the destined time of the *shidduchim* of my children will also be brought up, *b'sha'ah tovah*.

In the shul where I daven it was customary that until *Yishtabach*, each one davened to himself, and the *shaliach tzibbur* only began at *Yishtabach*. Of course, there were Yidden who came early to recite *Birchas Hashachar* and *Korbanos* calmly, with *kavanah*, and also *bechavrusa*, but I regretfully note that in this reality that the *sha"tz* only went to the *amud* from *Yishtabach* generated an overall laxity in coming in time to davening. The appearance was as if the serious part of davening only began at *Yishtabach*.

As the result of my *kabbalah*, I worked to change this, and Hashem helped me succeed. The *chazzan* went over each morning already for *Birchos Hashachar*, and in the timetable of the *tefillos* a line was added: *Birchos Hashachar* – 6:50.

Baruch Hashem, within a few weeks, my children got engaged. A *shidduch* that had been suggested two years earlier and rejected was suggested once again, and brought to completion – "*ki ba mo'ed*" – its time had come. Not only that, but miraculously, that same week, the child after him also got engaged, *baruch Hashem*.

Y.Z.C. - Bnei Brak

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102
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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Semichas Chachamim

24 Teves, 5479

Harav Naftali Katz was born in 5420/1660 in the city of Ostro'ah, Ukraine, to his father, Rav Yitzchak Hakohen.

He served as Rav in the cities of Ostro'ah and Posen and in 5464, moved to Frankfurt-Am-Main in Germany to serve as Rav. In addition to his greatness in *Toras Hanigleh*, he was proficient in *Toras HaniSTAR* and *Kabbalah*. He authored numerous *seforim*, among them *Birchas Hashem*, *Semichas Chachamim* and *Kedushah Ubrachah*.

In 5478, after Shavuot, he decided to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael and to settle in Tzefas where he was accepted to serve as the 'Nasi of Eretz Yisrael.' On his way, he passed through the city of Istanbul, where he fell ill and passed away; he is buried there.

In his great humility, he instructed in his will to inscribe his *matzeivah* with the following: "Here lies Harav Moreinu Harav Naftali Hakohen ben Harav Hagadol Hamuflag Bedoro Moreinu Harav Yitzchak Hakohen, from the lineage of several *gaonim* of the land, the heads of the family on all sides, and the *kehunah* that can be traced back to Aharon Hakohen."

Greater in Stature and Greater in Reward

Chazal say (*Brachos* 53b) "*gadol ha'oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*, the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*." It would seem that it would be enough for them to say "*gadol ha'oneh amen min hamevarech*." Why is the word '*yoser*' included? There are two things that *Chazal* sought to teach us here: 1. "*gadol ha'oneh amen*" – the stature of someone who answers amen is greater and loftier than one who makes the *brachah*. 2. "*yoser min hamevarech*" – the reward of one who answers amen is also greater than the reward of the *mevarech*. (*Kedushah Ubrachah*, ibid)

The Virtue of One Who Answers Amen

"Anyone who is strict about answering amen is called a *kadosh*." (*Tzva'as Rabbeinu Naftali Katz*, 21)