

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

HaKadosh Baruch Showed Am Yisrael That Their Tefillah Is Beloved

"וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם ואזכר את בריתי" (וה)

It would have been enough to write "V'Ani shamati." Why does it say "**vegam Ani shamati**"?

Harav Chaim Abulafia, a leader of the Jewish *yishuv* in Teveria, explained:

It is stated in *Maseches Taanis* (25b) that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu provide s a person with his needs before he prays and asks for them, this does not indicate the person's stature, because it is possible that Hashem hastened to provide the person's needs because He does not want to hear his voice. On the other hand, when a person who does not see salvation even after praying copiously, this does not prove that Hashem wants him to daven a lot, because it is possible that he was not worthy of seeing salvation before he submitted his heart with a lot of *tefillah*. In contrast, if a person davens and his *tefillah* is answered right away, that is a sign that Hashem wants his *tefillah*.

In order to emphasize that aside for the actual Geulah, Hashem wants to show Am Yisrael that their *tefillah* is beloved to Him, He said: "**Vegam Ani shamati...**" that I did not redeem them until they davened for it. (*Eitz Hachaim*)

The Non-Jew Hastens to Repent

"הן בני ישראל לא שמעו אלי ואיך ישמעני פרעה ואני ערל שפתים" (ויב)

Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Sanhedrin* 11 5) that the non-Jews have an easier time repenting than Am Yisrael, and for this reason, Yona HaNavi refused to carry out his mission to go to Ninveh. He was afraid that when the people there would repent, there would be a *kitrug* on Klal Yisrael, as they do not repent even after the Nevi'im rebuke them repeatedly.

Based on this, **Harav Yaakov Shimshon of Shpitovka**, a *talmid* of the Maggid of Mezeritsch, ponders the *kal vachomer* that Moshe Rabbeinu claimed in this *passuk*: "*Hein Bnei Yisrael lo sham'u eilai v'eich yishme'eni Pharaoh*, Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me, how will Pharaoh hear me?" Because the non-Jews are closer to doing *teshuvah* following the rebuke of the Nevi'im, is it possible that although Bnei Yisrael did not heed the words of Moshe, and Pharaoh would heed them?

He answered that this in itself was Moshe's claim: Because Bnei Yisrael did not listen to me, "And how [will it be if] Pharaoh will hear me" Will I not remain an "*aral sefasayim*" – that I will not be able to advocate good for Am Yisrael? (**Zera Ephraim on the Psikta [Rav Ephraim Zalman Margulies] 70b**)

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Give Honor to *Birchos HaTorah*

I once asked an acquaintance: Which *mitzvah d'Oraisa* do we perform each morning, when we awaken, aside for *tzitzis* and *tefillin*? In response, he looked at me in surprise. So I began to recite for him the words of the *Gemara* in *Maseches Brachos* (21a): "*Minayin l'Birchos HaTorah lefaneha min haTorah*? Where is the *mitzvah* in Torah to recite *Birchos HaTorah*? As it says (*Devarim* 32:3): '*Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu godel l'Elokeinu*.'"

Yes, not everyone knows this but when we recite *Birchos HaTorah* each morning we are fulfilling a *mitzvas aseh min haTorah*, as the Mishnah rules at the beginning of *Siman* 47.

After my friend absorbed this surprise, I then asked him, "Which *mitzvah d'Oraisa* do we perform right after saying *Birchos HaTorah*?" This time he was completely stumped, and I quoted him the *passuk* that this pamphlet has cited many times, in the name of the *Pri Megadim* (*Eshel Avraham* 215:6), that just like *Birchas HaTorah* is a *mitzvah* from the Torah, so is answering amen after the *brachah* a *mitzvah* from the Torah.

Imagine: A moment ago, we rose from a night's sleep and already we are surrounded by *mitzvos d'Oraisa*, with *brachos* and amen whose obligation is from the Torah. Can we imagine not jumping at this opportunity and coming to shul early to be able to recite *Birchos HaTorah* properly?!

We can also learn from the words of *Chazal* (*Bava Metzia* 85b) that the reason that Bnei Yisrael were exiled from their land was because they did not recite *Birchas HaTorah* before learning. We are all anticipating the Geulah, and if we were exiled from our land due to a laxity in this *brachah*, then surely it behooves us to check ourselves to radically improve our recital of this *brachah* – and to recite it with *kavanah* each morning.

The *brachah* has a special 'added value' because aside for the gratitude that we offer for the gift of Torah as an obligation, we also integrate a special *tefillah* for our offspring in this *brachah*.

We all want to see blessed generations, and we invest so much energy, effort and money in doing so. But let us not forget the main thing: to ask with *kavanah* "that we and our children and our children's children, and the children of all of Amcha Bais Yisrael should all know Your Name and learn Your Torah *lishmah*."

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmorstein

Meah Brachos That Brought Hearts Closer

This story was related by the person it happened to, a dedicated father who put the good of his children as his top priority, and when he saw they needed his help but could not ask it from him, hastened to provide it. He used a remarkable tool whose effectiveness has been proven countless times in the past few millennia.

This is his story:

Hashem has blessed us with a beautiful family, and children who engage in Torah and *mitzvos*. When the time came, I merited to marry them off one by one, with tremendous *siyata diShmaya*. I looked forward learning and engaging in my *avodas Hashem*, while reaping *nachas* from my family. But then, the issue with Binyamin arose.

Binyamin, one of the younger children, was a model child, and then a model yeshivah *bochur*. "A good boy from a good home," who, throughout his childhood and teen years, gave his parents and teachers much *nachas*. *Bechasdei Hashem*, he married a wonderful girl, from a good home; another Jewish home was being built before our eyes, and our hearts overflowed with joy.

But the joy did not last too long. The first sign that something was amiss



The field of a person observing the mitzvah of shemittah.

was when a few months after the wedding, the couple surprised us by telling us that they had chosen to leave their apartment, which was not far from us, and move to a distance city – distant physically and spiritually. The announcement surprised us to put it mildly; we tried to persuade them to backtrack on their strange plan, but we were met with unexplained obstinacy.

The couple had chosen to move far away from us, physically, but at first, we chose to look away from this. We respected their desire for independence, which we attributed to a passing fancy of youth. But our hearts sank when we saw their spiritual decline, which began on the inside but slowly started

showing signs on the outside as well. And by the time it was obvious to all, it was too late...

For a long time, I found no peace, but one day, I received Divine inspiration to think. Didn't *Chazal* say that Dovid Hamelech instituted that Am Yisrael should recite one hundred *brachos* each day to stop the terrible plague that was raging in his times? This trouble plaguing my home could not be called anything less than a *mageifah* – a terrible spiritual plague that had affected and felled so many among us, had now struck in our home.

I quickly accepted on myself to start being strict about *meah brachos* each day, no matter what.

On a regular day, the *meah brachos* come to a person easily, and there is no need to make a great effort to accrue them. So during the week, my *kabbalah* mostly manifested itself in my being careful to recite the *brachos* with greater *kavanah*. On Shabbos, when there are fewer *brachos* during the course of the day, my *kabbalah* manifested itself in the extra effort I made to complete the quota of *brachos*.

I made sure to purchase sweets and nuts on Erev Shabbos, on which I could make various *brachos*. I made sure to count each *brachah*, and I did not rest until I reached one hundred.

My strict adherence faced a test when, one Shabbos, I was invited to a relative's *simchah* in a different city. I was so busy getting ready that I forgot to take my 'brachos kit' with me. By nature, I am shy, but this time, I overcome the awkwardness, and I knocked on the door of one of the residents of

the building that I had been placed in for the *simchah*. I asked for the foods that I needed to complete the *meah brachos*. It's interesting to note that it was Shabbos *Parashas Eikev*, in which we read the *passuk* upon which *Chazal* base the *takanah* of *meah brachos*: "V'atah, Yisrael, mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach."

A short time later, we suddenly began to sense a change. We closely and cautiously followed the young couple, who had slowly begun to become stronger. When, after a year of not visiting our home, they suddenly called and asked if they could come for Shabbos, we could finally breathe a small sigh of relief.

Over the pleasant Shabbos we experienced, we contained ourselves from asking the couple anything about the changes we were seeing – for the better. But when Shabbos ended, and we returned from *Maariv*, my son suddenly opened up and told us:

"Some time ago, I began to work in a management position in an agricultural warehouse near where I live. Working alongside me was a farmer who did not seem observant, but I was shocked to see that each time he got ready to eat something, he took a yarmulke out of his pocket, put it on his head and made a *brachah* before and after eating.

"When I asked him about this, he answered simply: 'I am not religious, but I am a believing Jew. I always wanted to keep *shemittah*, but until now I struggled to do it because of the big losses involved. This year, I went to the rabbi of the moshav, and asked him to give me advice that would give me strength to observe *shemittah*. He advised me to start making a *brachah* on any food I put into my mouth, and explained that the *brachos* would strengthen my *emunah* and give me the strength I need to leave my land fallow.

"I did as he said, and it was effective. I decided to leave my land for the year, and at the same time, to continue strengthening myself in *brachos*, to strengthen my *bitachon* in the King of the world, Who will stand at my side and support me during this year as well.' As we spoke, the farmer suggested that I answer amen to his *brachos*, and I fell silent; the man had no idea why his words left me with such stormy feelings.

"The truth is, I was so very ashamed; this person did not grow up religious, and he is being *moser nefesh* for his faith, and I, who grew up in such a Torah environment, was trying to throw it all off?!

"This made me rethink my ways, and I decided to return to the lifestyle I was raised with. So here I am, a son returning to his father, literally and figuratively."

My son concluded his words, and I could not hold back my tears. Those *brachos* and amens that I was working so hard on are what brought my son's soul back to us and made him see the folly of his ways. Later, I was stunned to hear from my son that the day that he began to work next to that farmer was Sunday of *Parashas Re'eh*, the day after that Shabbos when my *kabbalah* had been tested, and *baruch Hashem* I passed the test.

The Brachah of Hashkiveinu

The Source of the Brachah

After *Krias Shema* of *Arvis*, *Chazal* established that we recite two *brachos* (*Brachos* 11a), the second of which is *Hashkiveinu*.

The reason *Chazal* instituted to recite a second *brachah* after *Krias Shema* at night – *Hashkiveinu* – in contrast to the day, when we make only one *brachah*, is because in this *brachah* we ask Hashem to save us from harmful forces. This request is very necessary at night, when there are more harmful forces than during the day. (*Avudraham Tefillah Arvis*) But there is one opinion that although *Hashkiveinu* is said at night, it is not specific to the night, and also applies to the day, because we mention the subject of *hashkamah*, of rising: "*Veha'amideinu Malkeinu lechaim tovim uleshalom.*" (*Brachah Meshuleshes* [Rav Aviezer Yehuda of Tiktin] *Brachos* 1 4)

The Essence of the Brachah

This *brachah* begins with a request from Hashem to put us to sleep in peace, and to restore our souls to us when we awaken, and to stand us up for life and peace.

Later in the *brachah* we make a special request: "*Vesakneinu b'eitzah tovah milfanecha,*" and we ask: How is this request connected to rest of the *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu*? The *Avudraham* (*ibid*) explains: It is the nature of a person that when he finishes the toil of his day and gets into his bed, all kinds of thoughts enter his mind that lead him to different decisions, and therefore, we ask Hashem to instill within us good ideas and decisions.

The *brachah* concludes with the words "*Shomer Amo Yisrael La'ad,*" based on the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 121:4): "*Hinei lo yanum velo yishan shomer Yisrael.*" (*Avudraham* *ibid*)

The Meaning of Amen

During the week: It is true that HaKadosh Baruch Hu protects His Nation Yisrael always, and may it be His will that He watch over us always.

On Shabbos: It is true that HaKadosh Baruch Hu spreads (on Shabbos) a special *sukkah* of protection on Yisrael and on Yerushalayim, and may He protect us with compassion, life and peace.

The Structure of the Brachah

According to *halachah*, it is necessary to mention the *Geulah* in the previous *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* adjacent to *Shemoneh Esreh*, in the opinion of Rabi Yochanan (*Brachos* 4b) that even in *Ma'ariv*, *Geulah* must be adjacent to *tefillah* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 236 2). The reason that *Hashkiveinu* is not considered a *hefsek* between *Geulah* and *tefillah* is because *Chazal* (*ibid*) defined it as a "*Geulah Arichta*", a long *Geulah*.

Rabbeinu Yona explained why this *brachah* is thus considered (*Brachos* 2b *Midapei HaRif*): On 15 Nissan, when the Destroyer struck at the firstborns of Mitzrayim, Bnei Yisrael were afraid that perhaps their sins would lead them to be struck as well. Therefore, they stood in prayer and pleaded to Hashem to fulfill His promise and spare them from all bad. The *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu* was composed to correspond to this *tefillah* that Bnei Yisrael offered at the time of their *Geulah*. Its essence is also a plea to be protected from all bad. And because this *brachah* was instituted to correspond to the *tefillah* that Bnei Yisrael said at the time of their Redemption, it is thus considered a continuation of the *brachah* of *Geulah*.

The author of *Sefer Ha'Eshkol* cites his *rebbe*, Rabi Yitzchak ben Maron Halevi, that the *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu* was not only instituted in memory of Am Yisrael's *tefillah* in Egypt, but it was also said by them when they left that land. He writes: "When they left Mitzrayim and ate the *Korban Pesach* He said to them (*ibid* *passuk* 22): 'And each man should not leave from the door of his home' and promised them that He would not allow the Destroyer to come to their homes. They prayed '*Hashkiveinu Hashem Elokeinu leshalom... vehaser Satan milfaneinu umei'achareinu ushemor tzeiseinu...*' as it was on the subject that they needed at that time."

Changing the Closing Line on Shabbos

We find something unique in this *brachah*: On Shabbos, the closing line is changed to "*Ufros aleinu... Baruch Atah Hashem Hapores Sukkas Shalom Aleinu V'al Kol Amo Yisrael V'al Yerushalayim.*" The source of this change is in the *Midrash* (see *Zohar HaKadosh* 48 1) that on Shabbos, Am Yisrael does not need protection, because Shabbos itself protects them. Therefore, the signature should not be "*Shomer Amo Yisrael L'ad.*" (*Tur Orach Chaim* 267)

However, the *Re'eh* (*Brachos* 4b) writes that his *rebbe*, the Ramban, questioned this, as we do not find that in any other *brachah* we sign off differently than during the week, except in the places where it is instituted to mention Shabbos in the closing words. For this reason, the Ramban is of the opinion that during the week as well, we should conclude the *brachah* with "*Hapores Sukkas Shalom,*" and not only on Shabbos.

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

Long Days and Long Years

Why did Chazal double the language and state "Anyone who lengthens their amen has his **days** and years lengthened"? Would it not have been enough to say "has his years lengthened"?

The **Ben Ish Chai** explained: "Length of days" does not mean that a person will have additional years added to his life, but that his days will be tranquil and filled with good, until it will appear to him that his days were multiplied (see *Yevamos* 63b). Therefore, *Chazal* say that one who lengthens his amen will merit "*arichus shanim*", literally, and "*arichus yamim*", in quality, that his days will be long in his eyes because they will be filled with good and blessings. (*Ben Yehoyada, Brachos* 47a)

Travel Diminishes Answering Amen

Chazal (*Brachos* 54b) promise someone who lengthens his *tefillah* that his days and years will be lengthened. Based on this **Harav Asher Anshel of Furth** explained the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 102:24): "*Inah baderech kochi kitzar yamai*, He has afflicted my strength on the way, He has shortened my days." As *Chazal* say (*ibid* 3b) "One who davens on the way - davens a short *tefillah*," so we find that because of "*inah baderech kochi*" - this prevented me from prolonging my *tefillah* - "my days were shortened." (*Chidas Shimshon* [Furth 5545] p. 8b)

Harav Eliezer Zev of Kretchnif added that shortened days that are caused to travelers because of their lack of davening is also caused because while they are traveling on the ways, they inevitably lose out on answering many amens. And amen is also a great *segulah* for a long life, as *Chazal* say "Anyone who prolongs his amen - his days and years are prolonged." (*Olamo Shel Abba* p. 437)

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

As someone who reads your pamphlet every week, and enjoys its content, I am impressed each week anew at the wonderful way that you bring out the importance of all parts of *tefillah*, and especially of answering amen. Your new design takes it to another level, and you continue to bring rich materials about *brachos* and rising early to go to shul. May you see only success!

My grandfather, Reb Shmuel Yitzchak ben Reb Ephraim Cohen, *zt"l*, whose *yahrtzeit* falls around now, was scrupulous about answering amen. He would often say: *Chazal* say that someone who answers amen improperly is punished by having his days shortened. On the other hand, one who answers amen with *hiddur* has his days and years extended (see *Brachos* 47a). We find that someone who is not so strict about it is indicating that he does not care about his life, so why should he expect that others should care about his life?!

He would also often mention the *passuk* in *Yehoshua* (2:13) which we say in the haftarah of *Parashas Shelach*: "*Vehitzaltem es nafshoseinu mimaves*." Some say that the words "את נפשתינו" is an acronym of amen, to teach you about the *segulah* of amen said properly to save lives.

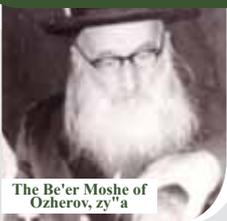
Thank you for your constant work to be *mezakeh harabbim*, and especially for your efforts to constantly add and expand. May we all merit together to see the fulfillment of the *passuk* "וימלא ויברוד את כל הארץ אמן ואמן."

A.R. - Kiryat Gat

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Be'er Moshe of Ozherov, *zt"l*

The Be'er Moshe of Ozherov

1 Shevat 5731

The Rebbe Harav Moshe Yechiel Halevi was born in 5650 to his father the Rebbe Harav Avraham Shlomo of

Ozherov, *zt"l*, and his mother, the Rebbetzin, who was the daughter of Harav Chaim Shmuel of Chantzin. Already as a child, he displayed brilliance in Torah, and before he reached bar mitzvah, had studied and remembered all of *Shas*. Aside for that, he was proficient in *Toras HaSod* and *sifrei Chassidus*.

After his father's passing, he was appointed Ozherover Rebbe. In 5686, he settled in New York, where he began to write and publish his renowned series of *seforim* entitled *Eish Dos* and *Be'er Moshe*. In 5713, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Tel Aviv. He was one of the leaders of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. He passed away on Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5731, and is buried in the Zichron Meir cemetery in Bnei Brak.

'Hashkamas Beis Hamedrash' to Answer Amen

The *passuk* (*Shoftim* 5:2) states "*Bifroa pera'os b'Yisrael behisnadev am barchu Hashem*." *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* 10) explains: In [the merit] of who does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael from the nations of the world? In [the merit of] people who **go to the *beis knesses* and *beis hamedresh* early in the morning and in the evening and answer amen...**"

From these words, the Be'er Moshe learned (*Shoftim* p. 165) that the primary virtue of answering amen is when one makes an effort to seek it out, by coming early to shul before the requisite time to answer amen after people who make *brachos*. As *Chazal* say "those who rise early...and answer amen." And the words of the *passuk* are "*behisnadev roshei am*," that they volunteer to bring themselves to the obligation of answering amen. Answering amen that a person seeks out is a higher level than an amen that is answered during a person's routine of his day without any special effort.