

# Vechele Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

## Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

### Come to Pharaoh – After Tefillah

"וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל פַּרְעֹה כִּי אֲנִי  
הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת לְבֹו וְאֶת לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן  
שְׁתִּי אֶתֵּנִי אֵלָה בְּקִרְבּוֹ" (י א)

From the words of the *passuk* it appears that the words "*Ki Ani hichbadeti es lev Pharaoh*," is the reason for the commandment of "Come to Pharaoh." In other words, that you should come to Pharaoh because I have hardened his heart. Is it not the other way around – that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a reason to refrain from coming to him? In such a situation, wasn't the chance of him listening to Moshe's words minimal?

**Harav Shlomo Kluger** explained:

Before the *makkos* began, HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded Moshe (ibid 8:16): "*Hashkem baboker*, rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh" – even before you pray, because if he would have first davened, then he would have been enveloped in holiness, and he would not have been able to stand in an impure place like the home of Pharaoh. But now, at the height of the *makkos*, Hashem commanded Moshe "Come to Pharaoh," without rising especially early, because after the *makkos* Pharaoh has suffered, his heart has become submitted and the impurity has lessened. However, the reason he is not sending out Bnei Yisrael is only because "I have hardened his heart."

Chochmas HaTorah

### Eating Korban Pesach as Avodas Hatefillah

"וְכַכָּה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְּנִינֶיכם חֲגִרִים נְעִלִיכֶם  
בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמִקְלַכֶם בִּידְכֶם" (יב יא)

From the words of the *passuk* it appears that they ate the *Korban Pesach* at midnight, and only left Mitzrayim after dawn broke (*Brachos* 9a). Why, if so, were they commanded: "And this is how you should eat it, with your waist belted, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand" – as people who are about to leave immediately?

*Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 10a) that during the time of *tefillah*, a person should conduct himself in the same way that Am Yisrael were instructed to act when eating the *Korban Pesach* in Mitzrayim: He should have his waist belted, wear shoes and clasp his hands as though he is holding a staff [see *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chaim* 95 2), that the *mispallel* should hold his thumb in his palm – a position similar to holding a staff].

This is what the Torah means with its commandment; eating the *Korban Pesach* is like *tefillah*, as it is called "*avodah*" (ibid *passuk* 25), and "*ein avodah ela tefillah*," (*Bava Kamma* 92b) and moreover, it should be said in praise and gratitude. Therefore, Am Yisrael were instructed to conduct themselves the same way they do with *tefillah* "Your waists belted, your shoes on your feet and your staffs in your hands."

*Sheloshah Seforim Niftachim* [Rav  
Y. Mandelkorn] p. 100

A word from the founder  
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Shabbos ב"א - A Shabbos of Emunah

The *parashah* this week, *Parashas Bo*, describes the redemption of Bnei Yisrael from the bondage of Egypt, which they merited because of their firm *emunah* in Hashem (*Mechilta Masechta Devihi, Beshalach Parashah* 6). There is no better Shabbos than this to note the remarkable 'Amen revolution' of Bney Emunim, which is also alluded to in the acronym of the *parashah* בני אמונים ב"א.

The early Maggid, Harav Moshe Kahana of Gibitch, in his *sefer Derech Moshe* (for Day 11), wrote about a *chassid* who fasted so that the reason for the delay in the *Geulah* should be revealed to him from Above. It was revealed to him in a dream that the *Geulah* is being delayed because people are not strict enough to answer amen on the *brachos* in which we ask for the *Geulah*.

I do not know about esoteric matters, but I am sure that the Bney Emunim revolution, which is completely dedicated to glorifying the mitzvah of answering amen in our generation – the generation of *Ikvesa D'Meshicha* - is one of the clear signs of the impending *Geulah*. As *Chazal* say (*Tanchuma Beshalach* 10): "The *galuyos* are only destined to be redeemed in the merit of אמונה, faith." And as the Shevet Halevi, zy"u, who accompanied the Bney Emunim revolution from its inception, stated in a speech at the first Bney Emunim gathering in Elul 5770:

"This great *tikkun*, to strengthen the answering of amen, has a tremendous merit, and it is a step towards greeting Mashiach, because it give a new opportunity to be *mekabel* the G-dliness and *emunah* in Klal Yisrael."

On this special Shabbos, we issue a heartfelt call to tens of thousands of readers: Let us all strengthen our observance of answering amen with *kavanah* for every *brachah* said in our vicinity. This way, we will declare over and over our firm faith that HaKaodsh Baruch Hu is the 'K-l Melech Ne'eman', and we will merit to see the fulfillment of the *brachah* of "*Boneh berachamav Yerushalayim amen*" very soon.

**Good Shabbos to all my fellow Bney Emunim!**  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

## 'Vechol Ma'aminim She'Ani Chai Vekayam'

This moving story was sent to us by the person it happened to, just a short time later, while the writer's emotions were still at their full intensity. He writes:

I am a Yid who has lived in Yerushalayim for many years; in recent years, I have been a regular *mispallel* at the Kosel. I would like to share a personal story, although some of the details are surely familiar to you. However, I am sharing the part that relates to me for the first time – with you, and you will realize why I decided specifically to share it with you...

Let me precede by saying that until a few days ago, I was regretfully not familiar with your extensive activities. But now, they have come an integral part of my life, and it is possible that I even owe my life to your efforts.

It all began about five years ago, after I was hired for a job in an office located in the Jewish Quarter. Because the new job required me to be at the office at a relatively early hour, I decided to come each day an hour earlier than I needed to, so that I could begin my day by davening *Shacharis* at the Kosel.



The place where hakadosh Eliyahu Kay, Hy"d, was murdered.

Since then, I have been davening each weekday at a regular *minyan* at the Kosel. Even on days that I do not have to be at work, I come specially to the Kosel to daven at this special *minyan*. The uniqueness of the *minyan* is that the 'hard core' nucleus of members are fixed, and they have become close friends who take part in each other's *simchos*.

It was the morning of Sunday, 17 Kislev. Because my supervisor at work had asked me to come especially early to open the office that day, as soon as davening was over, I hurried to leave the Kosel Plaza so that I could climb

the stairs to the Old City and open the office at the designated time.

I strode quickly on my regular route that I take each morning, but just before I left the Plaza, a Yid suddenly approached me and asked me to wait a few moments to answer amen after his *Birchos Hashachar*. I was in a big hurry, but something about the look in his eyes, a blend of determination with pleading, did not allow me to refuse his request.

Although I am by nature a very organized person, and the clock showing that I would be late opening the office made me very tense, still, I found myself standing patiently and listening to the man's *brachos*. He recited each word with *kavanah*, and deliberately. The minute I finished answering amen after *Hagomel Chassadim Tovim*, I broke into a jog towards the exit. I managed to hear the man offering a few words of thanks as I went...

I dashed up the stairs to the Old City and when I turned towards the Jewish Quarter, I was horrified to suddenly hear gunshots, and then cries for help. For a moment, which felt like an eternity, the sounds of shooting and shrieks pierced the narrow alley; the panic was dreadful.

The few people who were in the area, myself among them, turned back towards the Kosel, fleeing in panic and screaming. It was an atmosphere that's hard to describe with words; there was a deathly fear in the air, literally.

At the same time, security and rescue forces began swarming on the area, and a few minutes later, Am Yisrael learned that once again, a murderous terrorist had spilled pure Jewish blood in the Holy City.

The confused fog of news and information slowly cleared into an accurate picture of the tragedy: One of the dedicated employees of the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, Eliyahu Kay, Hy"d, was shot at close range by an evil terrorist and succumbed to his wounds. Two more Yidden were injured as well.

Making a quick calculation, I figured

out that if things had been on schedule, it is very possible that I would have been one of the victims of the attack. If not for having been delayed for two minutes to answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* of that 'angel of rescue,' I would have been passing the site of the attack at the very moment that it occurred.

I was in such a state of terror, that I obviously did not make it to work that morning. For days after that, I was still in a state of heightened anxiety. It is possible that clinically, I would have been considered 'suffering from shock,' but the next morning, 18 Kislev, I awoke with the resolve that I would not allow the murderer to harm another soul. I knew that if I would not overcome the fear now, it would only be harder for me going forward. So I quelled the fear and once again attended my *Shacharis minyan* at the Kosel. I walked to the Kosel using an indirect route, but still, throughout the walk, my heart pounded in fear.

While I was walking to the Kosel I thought of ways to express the feelings of gratitude I had for the Ribbono shel Olam. But then, when I entered the Kosel Plaza, I was stunned to see that angel of rescue who was the emissary from Above to save me.

I saw this as a sign from Above that the best thing for me to do would be to strengthen that very thing that had facilitated the miracle that had saved me.

This time, I did not wait for him to approach me, and I went over to him and asked, "Perhaps you would like me to answer amen to your *brachos*?" But the man smiled broadly and said, "Today I already made the *brachos* with someone else, but I'll be happy to hear your *brachos* and answer amen after them..."

After I finished my *brachos*, I asked him about the source for this practice. Instead of answering me, he pulled out a folded colored sheet of paper from his *tallis* bag:

"The source for this practice is in *sifrei halachah* and the words of Chazal, but the source that helped me take it on myself is this beautiful pamphlet called *Vechol Ma'aminim!!!*"



## Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

### Source of the Practice

The sages (*Tikkunei Zohar Chadash* Vol. II, p. 84a) have told us that each person needs to answer at least 90 amens on *brachos* a day [aside for the amens that one answers for *Kaddish* (*Shu"t HaRema MiPano*, 109)], and *poskim* likewise rule this way (*Magen Avraham* 6 9; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* ibid 9; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 13).

In order to complete answering 90 amens for *brachos* each day, many have the practice of reciting *Birchos Hashachar* in shul '*bechavrusa*,' in a way that one makes the *brachos* aloud and his friends answer amen, and then one of those answering makes his *brachos* and the others answer amen. This continues until the whole group has said *Birchos Hashachar* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 6 4, and see *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 13). The *Chida* (*Birchei Yosef, Orach Chaim* 5676 2) testifies of this practice: "And as is known, this custom spread through large towns" and cities.

The Shevet Halevi made clear statements on this subject at one of the Bney Emunim events: "The early *minhag Yisrael* was that they recited *Birchos Hashachar betzibbur*, including the *brachos* before '*Hanosen Lasechvi Binah*' and onwards. And everyone would recite the *brachos* together, and one made the *brachos* and the friends answered amen. Then they would switch, with another person making the *brachah* and the others answering amen. This custom has been forgotten in recent times, and our friend, Reb Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, merited to resurrect this tree of life of *zikuy harabbim*, in his work to strengthen the answering of amen. He wants to revive and re-establish this ancient practice, in the sense of (*Shabbos* 104a): "They have been forgotten and then they were re-established." (*Sefer Bney Emunim*, p. 227).

### The Reward for Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

Aside for the tremendous reward promised in this world and the next for one who is strict about answering amen according to *halachah*, we find in the sources that there is a special reward for those who are strict to answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar*, and thus complete the answering :90 amens a day

1. The Mekubal **Harav Eliezer Nachman Po'eh**, a *talmid* of the Rema MiPano, testified that a woman heard from a *mazik*, a harmful force, that was sent to harm her son, that he was unable to fulfill his mission and harm the boy because she was strict to answer 90 amens that day. (*Midbar Kedmos* [Chida] *Ma'areches* 1:33)

2. *Chazal* say (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah* 10): "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 **rise early** and go to shul in the morning and in the evening **and answer amen...**" From the words "*Mashkimim...v'onim amen*" the Be'er Moshe learned (*Shoftim* p. 165) that the reward of revenge from the nations is given to Am Yisrael for answering amen that they make an effort and seek out "and that means that he rises early to the Bais Medrash and brings himself to a place where he is obligated to answer amen by those making *brachos*."

### The Virtues of One Who Makes the Brachos Bechavrusa

1. He accrues 90 amens for *brachos* each day, the quota that *Chazal* set (see Source of the Practice).
2. His *brachos* are *mehudar* and complete, as the *poskim* have written that answering amen is an integral part of the *brachah* and it completes the *brachah* and raises its importance (*Rema* 167 2; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 5). The *Zohar* says (*Eikev* 271 1) that when a *brachah* is answered by amen, all the Heavenly Gates are opened for it, and it is announced, 'This is the gift that so-and-so sent to the King.' (*Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah, Sha'ar Ha'ashmoress* Chapter 10)
3. His *tefillah* is accepted. The *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) states that in the merit of answering amen, *tefillah* is accepted, and certainly that the most suitable time to say a lot of amens is before davening, when reciting *Birchos Hashachar*.
4. Being strict about this practice makes a person come early to shul, before davening, which has a positive effect on his entire *tefillah*.
5. His *brachos* are said slowly. Tens of thousands of people who are strict about this practice testify that from experience, the *brachos* recited in front of others are very different from those recited alone, because they are said slowly, with *kavanah*, and with careful enunciation.

### The Quota of Holy Matters

The *mekubal* Rabi Moshe Zakut (*Biur HaRema"z LaZohar, Vayeilech* 285 1): *Chazal* established a daily quota of holy things that must be said that they are: 90 - ק"ץ amens, four *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. In order to meet the quota of *Kedushah, Kaddish* and *brachos*, it is not necessary to expend particular effort, as anyone who davens three *tefillos* a day with *minyan* usually accrues the necessary amount. But in order to accrue 90 amens for *brachos*, a person needs to wait and look out for every *brachah*, and even to hear *Birchos Hashachar* from a number of people (as stated in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 6 2).

Therefore, it states (*Yeshayah* 26:2): "*Tzaddik shomer emunim*" - that of all the quotas alluded to in the word "*tzaddik*" it is only for answering amen that the term "*shemirah*" can be applied.

Regarding this, Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus added: If a person is missing one of the quotas that *Chazal* instituted to recite holy things, he is no longer a *tzaddik*! It is not a matter of one amen more or less; there is a building here called "*tzaddik*" and if one amen is missing, the whole building is lacking! Just like a person who is missing a finger is not an "*adam*" minus a finger, he is a *ba'al mum*, a person with a flaw in the completeness of the "*adam*," likewise someone who had not completed this quota is lacking in the completeness of "*tzaddik*." (*Nefesh Shimshon* on the *Siddur Hatefillah*, p. 138)

## Mei'Otzros Emunim

Pearls About the Reward for Answering Amen

### The Reward for Amen Is at Least the Same as for a *Brachah*

*Chazal* say (*Chulin* 87a) that the reward for each *brachah* is ten gold coins, and therefore, one who snatches a *brachah* away from a friend has to pay him damages of ten gold coins (as ruled in *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* 382 1).

Rabbeinu Tam is *mechadesh* (*Tosafos Bava Kamma* 91b ad loc. *Vechiyvu*) that because *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b) "The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*," therefore the reward for one who answers amen to a *brachah* is at least as great as that of the *mevarech*. So we find that the reward for each amen is also at least ten gold coins. Therefore, the ruling is that if one who is called up to the Torah and someone else comes in his place, the latter does not need to pay the one who was originally honored with the *aliyah* for taking his *brachah*, because the one originally called up for the *aliyah* can answer amen to the *brachos* of the *oleh*, and thus he does not lose out on the reward of ten gold coins that were taken from him.

It should be noted that the value of each gold coin is twenty five *zuzim*, so we find that twenty gold coins are worth two hundred and fifty *zuzim*. We can learn about the tremendous value of this from the fact that in the time of the *Gemara*, each person could subsist for an entire year on just 200 *zuzim* (see *Peah* 8 8 and *Rav Ovadia MiBartenura* *ibid*).

## Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

In the yeshivah world, there is a widespread practice that every *chassan*, before getting married, takes leave of his *rabbanim*, friends and acquaintances, and offers words of gratitude to each one that he merited to receive from and to be helped by, directly or indirectly, in spiritual matters or material, during his years in yeshivah.

I am just a short time before my wedding day— the day of my personal Yom Kippur, and I am taking stock and doing a personal reckoning. While doing so, I am reflecting back over the years, and see with satisfaction about how much I've progressed, where I've done better, and who I need to thank.

In this letter, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to you, Bney Emunim, for the eternal acquisitions that you have instilled with me from an early age. I acquired them slowly, not in one year or even two, but rather drop by drop, you infused me with the amazing fact that every small amen is really a huge diamond; that one small word is so much greater and infinitely more valuable than the stone.

*Baruch Hashem*, I am now meriting to go to the *chuppah* with tens of thousands of amens that I have accrued in your merit accompanying me. I have no doubt that they will serve as a merit for me to establish a home that is faithful to Hashem and His Torah.

I will conclude with a *birchas hedyot*; may the countless merits of amen that you have generated in Am Yisrael advocate for all of those involved, especially your founder and leader, Reb Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*, that you should continue to be *mezakeh harabbim* for many years to come, with an abundance of *birchos Shamayim*.

In appreciation and admiration,  
**A.R., Rechasim**

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 beis medrash of the Sfas Emes in the town of Gur.

### The Sfas Emes 5 Shevat 5665

The Sfas Emes, the Rebbe Harav Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter, *zy"ta*, was born on 29 Nissan 5607 in Warsaw, to his

father, Harav Avraham Mordechai, the son of the Chiddushei HaRim. When he was two years old, he was orphaned of his mother, and when he was eight, his father passed away. He was raised by his grandfather, the Chiddushei HaRim. With the passing of his grandfather in 5626, he was appointed to succeed him as the Av bais Din of Gur; he was just 19 years old. Some four years later, with the passing of Harav Henich of Aleksander, he began to serve as Rebbe as well. Tens of thousands flocked to him and followed his guidance. His *seforim* on Torah and *Shas* have been printed in many editions, and have been studied by multitudes through the generations.

In 5664, war broke out between Russia and Japan. The Russian Army conscripted tens of thousands of Jews from Poland, including many of the Rebbe's *chassidim*. Throughout the war, he slept on the floor, covered only by his coat, and when he rose, his coat was wet with tears. The Rebbe passed away on 5 Shevat 5665 and was buried near his grandfather in the cemetery in Gur.

### Meah Brachos – Meah She'arim

The early sages wrote that in Heavens, there are one hundred gates of *brachah*, which are opened by the power of *Meah Brachos*. One who is careful to recite *Meah Brachos* each day, in accordance with the *takanah* of *Chazal*, merits that these gates open before him, and he is blessed with one hundred *brachos* to correspond. The **Sfas Emes** brought a beautiful allusion to this:

The obligation to recite *Meah Brachos* each day was cited by *Chazal* (*Tanchuma Korach* 12) with the *passuk* (*Devarim* 10:12): "V'atah Yisrael mah Hashem Elokecha sho'el me'imach ki im leyirah..." They explained: "Al tikrei מה rather מאה." Similarly, we should explain the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 31:20): "מה" rather "meah" as if to say: one who fears Hashem and is strict about reciting 100 *brachos* as per *halachah* merits to have the *meah sha'arei brachah*, the hundred gates of blessing, opened before him. (*Sfas Emes*, *Toldos* 5657)