

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

To 'La'asok' in the *Toras Chatas*

"זאת תורה החטאת במקום אשר תשחט העלה תשחט החטאת לפני ה' קדש קדשים הוא" (ו) (י)

In *Maseches Menachos* (110a), Rabi Yitzchak learns from the fact that the Torah calls the action of the *chatas* "**Toras chatas**" that "anyone who engages in *Toras Chatas* is considered as though he sacrificed a *chatas*." The **Shelah** Hakadosh learned this from the fact that Rabi Yitzchak used the term "*kol ha'osek*" and not "*kol hahogeh* [who studies]", because in order for the *Toras chatas* to be considered in place of a *korban*, it is not enough to just recite it, one must engage in it, and learn it with *kavanah* of the heart and deep understanding.

Indeed, the disciples of the **Shefa Chaim** of Sanz described the way their Rebbe would engage in the Torah of *korbanos*: "He would say the *Seder Hakorbanos* very slowly, not just as a recital, but as a real study of it, and his recital appeared to be like a *shiur* in the *halachos* of the Mikdash and its *kodshim*. He translated each and every word, and explained it well for a long time. For a time, he would even come to davening with a volume of *Mishnayos* in hand, and he would say the *perek* of *Eizehu Mekoman* from the *Mishnah*."

Shelah Maseches Taanis 33; Halichos Chaim, Seder Hayom p. 168-169

One Who Engages in Torah Is Exempt from the *Olah*

"זאת התורה לעלה למנחה ולחטאת ולאשם ולמלואים ולזבח השלמים" (ז לז)

Chazal (*Menachos* 110a) explain from this *passuk* that: "Anyone who engages in Torah does not need an *olah* or a *chatas* or a *minchah* or an *asham*." That is because the Torah atones for the sins of one who learns the same way a *korban* does (*Rashi* ibid ad loc. *Ein tzarich*). The

Midrash (Tanchuma 96 14) explains that **Chazal** explain the letter "ל" [*loh* or *lah*] written in the *passuk* before the names of the *korbanos*, to mean "ל", or no. Therefore, they explain the *passuk* as follows: "*La'olah laminchah velachatas...*" As if to say: "*Zos haTorah – lo olah, lo minchah velo chatas* – one who engages in Torah is exempted from bringing *korbanos*."

Similarly, the *Tur* explains (*Orach Chaim* 582) that the **Maharam of Ruttenberg** was strict to say during *Aseres Yemei Tehsuvah*: "*Zachreinu lechaim*" – with a *shva*, and not "*lachaim*" – with a *pasach*, because the word "*lachaim*" might sound like "*lo-chaim* – not life." During the *Yemei Hadin* we should be very strict and scrupulous about *tefillah*. (*Mishnah Berurah* ibid 15)

Based on this, **Harav Shmarya Zalman of Leipnik** explained the words of the *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b): "Three *seforim* are opened on Rosh Hashanah... *Tzaddikim gemurim* are written and sealed for a long life; total *resha'im* are written and sealed for an imminent death, and the *beinonim*, the mediocre people, are in a pending state from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur." In all the *seforim*, the word "להיים" is written, but for the *tzaddikim* it is written with a *shva* – "*lechaim*", and for the evil with a *pasach* "*lachaim*" [meaning לא חיים, not for life.] For the mediocre people, it is written without any vowels, and on Yom Kippur it will be filled in with the vowels based on their decree. Thus, the **Sar Shalom of Belz** explained the words of the poet at the beginning of the *piyut* said before *Kedushah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah: "*Hayom yipaschu sheloshah seforim menukadim*," because the difference between the *seforim* that are opened on Rosh Hashanah is only in the vowels and not with the letters themselves.

Nachalas Yaakov – Avnei Shoham V'eschanan; Mahara"sh of Belz, Rosh Hashanah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Hayom Nechbad LiBney Emunim'

"*Hayom nechbad libnei emunim, zehirim leshamro avos ubanim...*" These words are familiar from the *piyut* of *Yom Shabason*, and in the past they served as a source of inspiration for the name of the revolution that has occurred in the last decade around the world, the Bney Emunim revolution.

"Bney Emunim" are the members of Am Yisrael who believe in Hashem and His Torah. "Bney Emunim" are those who are strict to answer amen, as we learned in the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 119b): "*Pischu shearim vayavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim – she'onim amen!*"

This is also the connection to the subsequent phrase in the *piyut*, "*zehirim leshamro avos ubanim*." There is a special focus on being *mechanech* children to answer amen, as the *Rema* wrote (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): "And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as a baby answers amen he has a share in *Olam Haba*."

We find something remarkable – that **Mordechai Hatzaddik** was also strict about this *halachah*. As the *Shevet Mussar* wrote on the *passuk* (*Esther* 2:7): "*Vayehi omen es Hadassah – hie Esther*" – he was *mechanech* Esther to say amen "because she had no father and mother." Regarding this very lofty matter, her uncle, **Mordechai**, took care to fill the place of the father and mother. (*Minchas Eliyahu* Chapter 32)

Apparently, Esther continued to be strict about it even after she left **Mordechai's** house, as the *passuk* says (ibid 8): "*V'es ma'amar Mordechai Esther osah ka'asher haysah b'omnah ito*."

It is only natural that the great miracle that we celebrate and commemorate during these days is alluded to in the word amen – which is an acronym for **אשר מרדכי אסתר**.

Let us try to increase our answering of amen and we will merit to see miracles and wonders, like in those days, yet in our times!

Good Shabbos and a Freilichen Purim
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

From Matanos L'Evyonim to Vanahafoch Hu

Each year, before Purim, Bentzy, a regular *bochur* learning in a well-known yeshivah in Bnei Brak, becomes one of the most prominent personalities in the yeshivah. Bentzy serves as the manager of the Tomchei Torah fund, which supports *chassanim* and needy *bochurim* from the yeshivah. He is very successful in this role.

Ahead of Purim, Bentzy sits in the Tomchei Torah office, with his lists in hands, and organizes the routes that the groups of *bochurim* would make on Purim among generous donors. The *bochurim* use their talents to extract as much money as they can from their 'clients' for the fund.

The most select group was, of course, the one that Bentzy led. The *bochurim* were chosen carefully by him. Only the 'heaviest' donors received a visit from this group. Bentzy was able to put his special talents into use as he managed the negotiations efficiently; no one, it seemed, could refuse his solicitations.



Yeshivah bochurim at a Purim appeal (Illustrative photo)

Even Yitzchak, the *gvir*, could not stand up to Bentzy. Yitzchak was a rare breed of a miser, and even on the day when 'whoever opens his hand is given' he kept his fist closed tightly and turned away all those who came to his house.

But that did not deter Bentzy. He decided to take Yitzchak on as a personal project. About a month before Purim, he began to think of how to carry out his plan to extract from Yitzchak at least five thousand shekels.

At the end of the day, he succeeded. Bentzy exerted tremendous pressure on Yitzchak, after some wily tactics, and only Bentzy knows how to do them in a way that Yitzchak capitulated. With a heavy sigh, he pulled out his checkbook, wrote the requisite sum and handed it to Bentzy, to the cheers and whoops of

the large group of *bochurim* who had gathered.

This continued for five years and Bentzy felt that all his prestige was contingent on his success in this special job that he had undertaken. Yitzchak cooperated fully; he objected with all his might, and ultimately, capitulated ... And Bentzy would emerge from the house, drunk with happiness, accompanied by the admiring gazes of his friends.

In truth – but not for the record – Bentzy sometimes felt a bit guilty. After each successful Purim visit to Yitzchak's house, he would emerge with difficult questions, whose answers he could not provide. Yitzchak lived in an elegant, beautifully furnished home – which he had inherited from his father – and he could even be seen driving through the streets of the city in a gleaming luxury car. However, unlike what could be expected from a wealthy man of his stature, his Purim *seudah* at home, whose remnants Bentzy and his group of friends were able to see, was rather paltry. His easy personality and refinement were also a total contradiction to his stringiness, and to Bentzy this was all a mystery.

He had other questions along these lines, yet, perhaps for the success of Tomchei Torah, or perhaps for his own success, Bentzy ignored the signals and continued to visit Yitzchak's home annually.

The year this story took place, Bentzy and his friends sang and danced their way into Yitzchak's house, as they always had. Bentzy began with his performance, but suddenly, he fell silent. His eyes fell on a twelve-year-old boy, Yitzchak's son, who stood next to the table. His face was very familiar to Bentzy, and he immediately remembered from where...

Bentzy's father was the director of a tzedakah organization that distributed food parcels to needy families. The week before, Bentzy had dropped in during the distribution, and noticed this child pushing a cart filled with products. Bentzy was overcome with compassion at the sight of him, but when he saw the boy unloading the cart into the trunk of a

luxury vehicle parked on the next block, his compassion was replaced by anger.

When he asked his father about this, the father related with a wry smile that it was a family that had lost its money some time ago. On the outside, they lived a rich life, but in reality they were terribly poor and were supported by the *chessed* organization that he headed.

Now, when Bentzy noticed the child, he understood everything. Five years of questions were resolved at once. Stunned and embarrassed, he stopped his friends and instructed them to leave. The boy must have also realized – as had his father. Yitzchak, pale as plaster, went out to the yard, and waved his checkbook to Bentzy, almost pleading with him to come back. But Bentzy firmly refused.

"Excuse me..." he murmured, and turned to follow his friends out to the street. But then something terrible happened. Yitzchak collapsed to the ground in a faint. The *bochurim* quickly returned, poured water over him, and were able to revive him. Bentzy immediately understood what was going on, and made them swear in front of Yitzchak's rolling eyes that they would not tell anyone about the dreadful discovery they had made.

Yitzchak calmed down a bit, and Bentzy, filled with good spirits, announced loudly: "Friends, it is Purim today! On Purim, *kol haposhet yad nosnim lo*. Let us daven to Hashem, and bless Yitzchak, that this coming year, Hashem should restore his former status, and bless him with great wealth – real wealth, not imagined wealth." The friends – and Yitzchak – all emotionally answered amen. After again promising not to reveal the secret, the boys turned to leave.

The sincere *tefillah*, and the enthusiastic amen that followed, was effective. The next year, there were suddenly interested buyers for an old, neglected property that Yitzchak had inherited from his father. Until now, no one had wanted it, but now, he received a large sum of money for it. As a seasoned businessman, he immediately invested the money in an unusual opportunity that was presented to him. By the next Purim, Yitzchak could, for the first time, tranquilly express his naturally generous nature. And the first Tomchei Torah that benefitted from his largesse was, of course, Bentzy's.

The Tefillah of Mordechai – In Those Days, In Our Times

In those days, like in our times, the *avodah* of *tefillah* was an integral part of Purim. In *Megillas Esther*, and in many *Midrashim* written about it, *tefillah* is an element that binds them together, and ties together the many miracles performed for Am Yisrael at that time. Mordechai Hatzaddik is also called in the *Gemara* (*Megillah* 12b) “Ben Ya’ir” – a son that illuminated the eyes of Am Yisrael with his *tefillah*, ‘Ben Shimi’ – a son whose *tefillos* Hashem heard, ‘Ben Kish’ – that he knocked [*heikish*] at the gates of mercy and they were opened for him.”

The *Midrash* (*Esther Rabbah* 7:13) describes: “At that time [when the decree of Haman was cast] Eliyahu *zachur latov* ran in haste...and Moshe said to him...What will you answer for this *tzarah*...Moshe said to him: ‘Is there no kosher person in that generation?’ He said to him: ‘There is, and his name is Mordechai,’ he said to him: ‘Go and inform him so that he should stand there in *tefillah* and I will stand from here and we will ask for mercy for them before HaKadosh Baruch Hu.”

Indeed, the Maharal of Prague expounds in his introduction to the *Ohr Chadash* commentary on the *Megillah*, that the miracle of the days of Purim were because Hashem heard the *tefillos* of Am Yisrael, as it says (*Esther* 9:31): “*Divrei hatzomos veza’akam*”, and the Maharal adds that “there is no *geulah* that is achieved by *tefillah* more than the miracle in the days of Mordechai and Esther.”

From that point on, to this day, the great *segulah* of *tefillah* during the days of Purim is well known. Many who recognized its virtue have also effected *yeshuos* in its merit. In this segment, we compiled some pearls and insights from *Chazal* about the virtues of *tefillos* at this time. May it be that this will serve as a *his’orerus*, and may Hashem fulfill all the requests of our hearts *letovah*, for good.

The Tefillos That Were Accepted

There was a group of young men from Lakewood, New Jersey, who took to heart the words of the *tzaddikim* about the great virtue of *tefillah* on Purim. They united to strengthen themselves in *tefillah* on this day. Days before Purim, they prepared a detailed schedule for Purim. They decided when they would go to bed and when they would rise, set aside time for *tefillos*, saying *Tehillim*, and the other *mitzvos* of the day. All this helped them take advantage of this great day properly.

Those same *yungeleit* then publicized that within a short time, they merited to see *yeshuos* beyond what could be expected; each person had his troubles resolved, both physical and material. (*Be’er Hachaim* [Rav Elimelech Biderman] Purim p. 80)

Purim – Kippurim

The *Zohar* says (*Tikkunei Zohar* 57 2) that Purim is thus called for Yom Hakippurim. The Vilna Gaon (*Yahel Ohr*; *Likutim al Hazohar*, end of *Sefer Shemos*) explained that all the Moadim that were given to Am Yisrael are ‘half for Hashem and half for you’ except for Yom Kippur which is completely for Hashem, as we are not allowed to eat or drink. Therefore, *Chazal* instituted Purim as a complement to Yom Kippur, and both these Moadim together are ‘half for Hashem and half for you.’

The *Kedushas Levi* (*Kedushos l’Purim Kedushah Rishonah*) explained that Yom Hakippurim is thus called because it is “like Purim.” Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin learned from this that the days of Purim are *yemei ratzon* more than Yom Kippur, because the word “*kepurim*” makes it sound like Yom Kippur is contingent on Purim, and usually, the smaller thing is hung on, or dependent on, the bigger thing. (*Resisei Laylah*, 25)

Rising in the Morning

The ancient *sefer Nohag Katzon Yosef* (Purim 8) notes that in Frankfurt, they would rise early on Purim for *Shacharis* in order to recite the *Pirkei Tehillim* of that day before the *neitz hachamah*. He cited (also in *Aliyah Rabbah Orach Chaim* 5664 3) that Purim day is one of the five days when one rises early to daven. [These days are alluded to in the *passuk*: “וישכם אברהם בבוקר” (*Bereishis* 19:27) – the acronym of the letters of אברהם are the final letters of the days: ראש, יום כיפור, ט, באב, יום כיפור, ראש, הושענא, פורים, הושענא.]

The *Sefer Segulos Yisroel* (*Maareches* 80 4) writes that “I have learned from a *gadol*, z”l, that it is a *segulah* on Purim to rise early and to daven copiously and pleadingly to Hashem for anything. It can be for children, health, *parnassah*, and for other things, for all his relatives, because that day is an *eis ratzon*, a very auspicious time, and all the worlds are in a state of joy and willingness...This has also been accepted by *gedolim* and *tzaddikim*, zy”a...”

The Power of Tefillah for Generations

Harav Yitzchak Zev of Brisk noted the words of the *Rambam* (end of *Minyan Hamitzvos*) that the objective of reading the *Megillah* is to publicize and to inform of the power of *tefillah* and crying out to Hashem, and to fulfill the obligation of thanking for the great miracle. The *Rambam* wrote: “And they commanded to read the *Megillah* at its time, in order to remind the praises of HaKadosh Baruch Hu and the salvation that He sent us and listened to our cries, in order to bless and praise Him, and to inform the coming generations that the promise in the Torah is true (*Devarim* 4:7): ‘*Ki mi goy gadol asher lo Elokim krovim eilav k’Hashem Elokeinu bechol kera’einu eilav*, For what great nation is there that has G-d so near to it, as Hashem is at all times that we call upon Him?’”

The Brisker Rav explained that because they wanted to inform of the tremendous virtue and power of *tefillah* to coming generations, they instituted that we recite in *Shoshanas Yaakov*, said after the recital of the *Megillah*: “*Teshuasam hayisa lanetzach vesikvasam bechol dor vador, lehodia shekol kovecha lo yivoshu...lanetzach kol hachosim Bach.*” (*Peninei Rabbeinu Hagri”z*, p. 83)

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

Otzros Emunim

Pearls of Amen for Purim

Mordechai Raised Esther to Answer Amen

The Rema ruled (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): “And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as a baby answers amen, he has a share in the World to Come.” His words are based on the words of the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (110b): “When does a child merit Olam Haba...Rabi Meir says: from when he says amen.” Based on this, **Harav Eliyahu Hakohen of Izmir**, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained the *passuk* (*Esther* 2:7): “*Vayehi omen es Hadassah hie Esther bas dodo ki ein lah av v'eim.*” Because Esther, who is Hadassah, “did not have a father and mother” to teach her to answer amen, therefore, “*vayehi omen es Hadassah*” – Mordechai made sure to give her a *chinuch* from a young age to answer amen. (*Minchas Eliyahu* Chapter 32)

A Purim Miracle in the Merit of Answering Amen

Mordechai and Esther’s scrupulousness about answering amen, alluded to in the *passuk* “*Vayehi omen es Hadassah,*” is the merit in which Am Yisrael was redeemed in their times. *Chazal* alluded to this (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1): “Anyone who answers amen with all his might has the decree of **seventy years** torn up” – referring to the seventy years of exile of the First Bais Hamikdash – which included the days of Mordechai and Esther. They were redeemed from this exile in the merit of answering amen. (Rav A.A. Knopfler, *Kovetz Hamaor*, Year 69, Kovetz 6)

Moreover, amen is an acronym for **נֶאֱמַר מִרְדְּכַי אֶסְתֵּר**, alluding to the fact that the miracle of the days of Purim were in the merit of Mordechai and Esther’s scrupulousness about answering amen. (*Gam Ani Odecha*, Purim, Introduction)

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

Dear Bney Emunim,

As someone who has served for many years as a *melamed* in a well-known *cheder* in Yerushalayim, I would like to put special emphasis with this letter on the tremendous benefit there is in habituating children to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* from an early age, as I have seen from personal experience.

Firstly, the children get used to reciting the *brachah* word for word, aloud. This arouses their hearts and imbues them with the loftiness of *tefillah*. In addition, the emphasis on answering amen properly as part of the classroom setting infuses children with awareness of the importance of answering amen, something that is so vital in our generation.

This is the place to point out something I find distressing. I do not want to be *mekatreg*, but unfortunately, the children relate that they see people talking during *Chazaras Hashatz* or *Kaddish*, and there is no doubt that this cools down the *chinuch* they have received for seriousness in *tefillah*.

It is so important to continue to strengthen this practice that infuses them with the recognition that the value of amen is inestimable and unparalleled.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give Klal Yisrael merits so he sent them Bney Emunim, who are *mezakeh Yisrael!* May you see much success!

Y. Y. - Yerushalayim.

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the Vechol Ma'aminim email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



Harav Yechezkel Levenstein, zy" a

Harav Yechezkel Levenstein

18 Adar 5734

The Mashgiach, Harav Yechezkel ben Reb Yehuda Levenstein was born in Warsaw in 5645. He learned as a *bochur* in the *yeshivos* of Radin and Kelm. After the passing of his Rebbe, the Mashgiach Harav Yeruchem Levovitz, he was asked to fill his place as Mashgiach in Mir. During World War II, he was exiled with the *yeshivah* to Shanghai. From Shanghai, they reached America, and from there, Eretz Yisrael. He lived in Yerushalayim for about five years, and delivered *shmuessen* in his house and in the Mir. After the passing of the Mashgiach, Harav Eliyahu Dessler, Harav Kahaneman invited him to succeed as Mashgiach in Ponevezh, a position in which he served until his passing. His *talmid*, Harav Elchanan Yosef Hertzman, wrote that one of the Mashgiach’s outstanding virtues was his ‘*emunah chushis*,’ his tangible *emunah*, a concept that he spoke a lot about and instilled in the hearts of his *talmidim*. The Chazon Ish said of him: “The *emunah* of the Mashgiach was as clear as someone who puts his hand into fire. He meant to say that just like in order to know that your hand is being burned in fire you don’t need explanations and words of *his’orerus*, likewise, his *emunah* was so clear and tangible to him.” (*Mofess Hador*, Introduction)

The Reward of One Amen

Harav Levenstein related a thought in the name of the Alter of Kelm that sheds light on the tremendous value and the reward of those who are strict to answer amen: “It is worth it for a person to be born and to live a long life, and even to suffer Gehinnom, for the reward that awaits him for answering amen one time.” (*Ohr Yechezkel*, Vol. III, p. 275)

Amen to Birchos Hashachar

The Mashgiach would rise each day early and come to the *yeshivah* a long time before *Shacharis* began, in order to prepare for davening. In the *yeshivah* there was a *bochur* who recited *Birchos Hashachar* each morning, so that the Mashgiach could answer amen after the *brachos*. (*Amud Hayirah Veha'avodah* p. 67)