

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Begin the Tefillah with an 'Expression of Endearment'

"ויקרא אל משה וידבר ה' אליו מאהל מועד לאמר" (א א)

Rashi explains that "*kriah*" is a term of endearment, and the Torah is teaching us that whenever HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to speak to Moshe, He would first call to him in a loving way. If this is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu did before each time He spoke to Moshe, why is this explained specifically here, in the *parashah* of the *korbanos*?

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained that the Torah wants to teach us what Chazal have instructed (*Brachos* 32a): "A person should always first praise of Hashem and then daven for his own needs." Just like HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not begin speaking to Moshe with a commandment, and first called to him with love, likewise, we, *l'havdil*, should begin our *tefillah* with words of praise, before we begin to daven and plead. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Torah teaches this to us at the beginning of the *parshiyos* of the *korbanos* – as *tefillah* was instituted in the place of the *korbanos* (*Brachos* 26b).

Chochmas HaTorah p. 16

'Machol Timchol' – Forgive, So Your Tefillos Will Be Heard

"וכל קרבן מנחתך במלח תמלח ולא תשבית מלח ברית אלקיך מעל מנחתך על כל קרבנך תקריב מלח" (ב יג)

Harav Eliezer Papo, author of *Pele Yoetz*, explained:

The words "מלח תמלח" are equal in their value to "מחל תמחל". The Torah alluded with the words "*vechol*

korban minchascha bamelach timlach" that if a person wants his *tefillos* [which correspond to the *korbanos*] to be accepted fully, he must act forgivingly towards his friends, and overcome his *middos*, as Chazal said, 'Anyone who is *ma'avir al midosav* has his *tefillos* heard.' (*Orchos Tzaddikim, Shaar Haratzon* based on *Taanis* 25b)

Elef Hamagen

'Yihyu Leratzon Imrei Fi'

"ואם תקריב מנחת בכורים לה' אביב קלוי באש גרש כרמל תקריב את מנחת בכורידך" (ב יד)

Rashi explained that even though the Torah uses the term "*v'im takriv*," if you will sacrifice, this does not mean that sacrificing the *Minchah* is a *reshus*, something voluntary, because the *passuk* is referring to the *Minchas Ha'omer*, which is an absolute obligation for the *tzibbur* to bring on the second day of Pesach.

Why, then, did the Torah command this *Minchah* in a language that could be interpreted as voluntary?

Harav Moshe Feinstein explained:

The Torah wants to teach us that we should not bring even the obligatory sacrifices out of a sense of coercion, and rather as a choice and out of our will to do so. As Chazal instructed regarding *tefillah*, instituted in place of *korbanos* (*Avos* 2:13): "And when you daven, do not make your *tefillos* habit, but rather pleading and compassion before HaMakom Baruch Hu." Do not offer your prayer because you are obligated to daven regularly. Rather, think before each *tefillah*, and realize that you must plead and beg for mercy in every detail in your life before the Master of the World.

Darash Moshe

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

One Small Word – Tremendous Power

This Shabbos, we begin *Chumash Vayikra*. The word ויקרא is an acronym for ויענו ישראל קול רם אמן. Indeed, Chazal teach us (*Shabbos* 119) that "anyone who answers amen with all his might [in a loud voice] has the gates of Gan Eden opened to him" – no less! And who does not want the gates of Gan Eden opened for him? These are gates of success and *yeshuos* in all that he does.

Let us take heart that the letter aleph of *Vayikra*, the one that alludes to 'amen,' is written very small. This also has a beautiful *remez*: With a small investment, but with a strong will and *kavanah*, we can achieve a tremendous amount.

It is like, *l'havdil*, in the business world. Everyone seeks to invest a bit and to earn a big yield. We, in the real world, the eternal world, know that a *mitzvah* like answering amen, which arises at so many opportunities during the day, does not require any investment, yet its reward is so great. As much space as we would have would not be enough to describe even a bit of the many virtues that Chazal expounded upon regarding the greatness of amen.

Who knows, perhaps the fact that these things are known and simple and clear, and there is no real *chiddush*, is why the opportunity slips away from us, because we are not paying attention. Isn't that a shame? Is it not like someone that was given the keys to the king's treasury, and he can take whatever he wants, but he chooses to stand idly by with his hands folded?

Let us try to make the *brachos* out loud, so that we can give others the merit of answering amen. Of course, we should pay attention to every *brachah* around us, so that we can earn more amens.

Good Shabbos,

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

One Kaddish, Two Miracles

This story was related by the *maggid* Harav Meir Michoel Greenwald, *shlita*, who for years, has traveled all over the world to give *chizuk* to people and to enthuse them about the great virtues of *tefillah*, and answering amen and amen, *yehei Shemei rabbah*.

On one of his trips to America, he spoke at a large gathering of children. He dedicated his words to the subject of amen, its virtues and *segulos*. He wove the messages that he wanted to convey with wondrous stories, and his words left a deep impression on the listeners.

Rav Greenwald was accompanied by a young man named Rabbi Tauber, who volunteered to translate his words to English. After the *drashah*, Rabbi Tauber remembered that one of the *chashuve* Rabbanim of New York was hospitalized in Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan in serious condition after a heart attack. Rabbi

Meanwhile, the situation continued to deteriorate, and when the family arrived at the hospital, they had to gather ten people to be present at the *yetzias neshamah*. A quick count showed that together with Rav Greenwald and the person accompanying him, they were just nine people. Where would they get a tenth?

One of the doctors, who was feeling terrible about seeing the family convening for these excruciating moments, felt bad that they also had to scramble for a tenth for the *minyan*. Suddenly he remembered that in the next ward, there was a Jewish patient, a kidney patient in serious condition as he waited for a life-saving transplant. In absolutely contravention to hospital regulations and strict ethics rules, the doctor decided to tell the family about this person, and suggested that they enlist the patient as their tenth for the *minyan*.

Despite the difficulties involved in moving a patient from one room to another, the doctor made herculean efforts to bring this patient – with all the equipment that he was connected to – to the Rav's room. He went out of his way to fulfill the wishes of the Rav's family to gather a *minyan* to be at their father's bedside when his soul departed.

After all this effort, the patient was brought to the room. The *minyan* was complete, and the family was about to start reciting *Viduy* and the special *tefillos* for this time. But then, they suddenly heard the weak voice of the kidney patient in the next bed.

"Wait, one minute!" he pleaded. "I remembered just now that it is my mother's *yahrtzeit* today. Please, I have a chance, now that there is a *minyan* here to recite *Kaddish* after her!"

It's hard to describe the atmosphere in the room at that moment, and the naturally overwhelming emotions, which were now compounded by the wonder of all those present at this remarkable turn of *Hashgachah pratis*.

The patient recited *Kaddish* while

lying on his bed, and those present answered, with tears rolling down their cheeks as they recited amen and amen, *yehei Shemei rabbah*, with fervent *kavanah*...

The doctor who remained in the room to supervise both patients carefully watched their condition. At the moment *Kaddish* ended, while the doctor was starting intently at the monitor over the critically ill Rav's head, he suddenly exclaimed "Wow! I don't believe it! The monitor is stabilizing!"

A genuine miracle was unfolding in front of their eyes. After days of the numbers steadily sinking, a slow but steady shutdown of all the body's systems, and all signs indicating that the patient was living his final hours. Now his condition was taking another turn – for the better – and there was no other way to describe it besides "*techiyas hameisim*!"

The second patient was taken out of the room and returned to his ward, while the excited family wished him a heartfelt *refuah sheleimah*. Over the next few days, the Rav's condition continued to stabilize gradually, and he improved every day. Miraculously, two weeks later he returned home to his family and his community.

It was nothing less than *techiyas hameisim*!

But the chain of miracles was not yet over.

Apparently, that same day, another miracle happened at the same time that *Kaddish* was recited. A bad car accident occurred on one of the nation's major highways, and a young non-Jew lost his life and decided to donate his organs.

After a preliminary exam it turned out that the kidney of the accident victim was an exact match for the patient who had said *Kaddish*. Within a short time, he underwent a successful kidney transplant, and returned home some time later in much better health.

Everyone saw the unbelievable fulfillment of the words of Chazal: "Anyone who answers amen, *yehei Shemei Rabbah* with all his might has decrees of seventy years torn up."



Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan

Tauber suggested to Rabbi Greenwald that they go together to visit him and Rav Greenwald agreed.

When they entered the ICU, they both noticed a group of doctors emerging from the Rav's room with worried expressions. Rabbi Tauber asked the attending doctor how the Rav was doing, and was horrified to hear that his condition had taken a sudden turn for the worse, and was now classified as critical. The Rav's numbers were dropping, and it seemed that he had mere hours to live.

With heavy hearts, Rabbi Greenwald and Rabbi Tauber hastily called the Rav's family to tell them they should come immediately to the hospital, before it would be too late. The family was stunned at the news, and quickly headed to the hospital.

The Brachah of Shanim

Source of the Brachah

After the *brachah* of *Refa'einu*, we continue to ask for *parnassah* in a *brachah* that is referred to by *Chazal* as *Birchas Hashanim*, for its conclusion, *Mevarech Hashanim*. This *brachah* was placed as the ninth in the *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esreh* because the *mizmor* in which Dovid Hamelech asked to give an abundance of grain in the world, which would break the power of the evildoers who raised prices and extorted from the poor, is the ninth chapter in *Tehillim* (*Megillah* 17b). In our days, the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 10:15) “*shevor zeroa rashah*,” which refers to this *tefillah*, is mentioned in the tenth chapter, and *Tosafos* explained (*ibid*, ad loc. *VeDovid*) that *Chazal* called it the ninth *perek* because at that time the ninth and the tenth chapters were one *perek*.

Sefer Chassidim (453) explained that *Birchas Hashanim* is said after the *brachah* of *Refuah* because as long as we are not guaranteed life, then we do not ask for *parnassah*, as it says in *Sefer Tehillim* (33:19): “*Lehatzil mimaves nafsham – ulechayosam bera'av*, to rescue their soul from death and to sustain them in famine.” This is the order during the *Yemei Din* at the beginning of the year as well: Only after our decree for the year is sealed on *Hoshana Rabbah* are we then judged or rains on *Shemini Atzeres*. The *Seder Hayom* further explained (*Shulchan Aruch*, cited by the *Mishnah Berurah* 115 1) that *Birchas Hashanim* was instituted after *Birchas Refuah* because as long as a person needs a *refuah*, he is not available to ask about his *parnassah*.

Structure of the Brachah

The *Mishnah* (*Brachos* 33a) explains that we are supposed to daven for rain while saying *Birchas Hashanim*. The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 117, according to *Bais Yosef* *ibid* ad loc. *ube'Ashkenaz*) cited two opinions on this subject: The *Bnei Sepharad* say in the summer a *nusach* that begins with *Barcheinu*, and in the winter a longer *nusach* beginning with *Barech Aleinu*. But for *Bnei Ashkenaz*, there is no change in the wording at the beginning of the *brachah* between winter and summer. But in the summer we ask “*Vesein brachah al pnei ha'adamah*” and in the winter we say “*Vesen tal umatar livrachah al pnei ha'adamah*.”

Essence of the Brachah

In this *brachah*, we ask Hashem to bless for us “this year”, and to bestow an abundance of *brachah* on the crops of the Land. We find that *Yitzchak Avinu* was blessed, as it says (*Bereishis* 26:12): “*Vayizra Yitzchak*, and *Yitzchak* planted in that year and he found that year a hundredfold and Hashem blessed him.” (*Seder Hayom*, *ibid*)

Why should a person pray each day for his *parnassah*? Do *Chazal* not say (*Beitzah* 16a) that already at the beginning of the year, it is decreed for each person is decreed how much he will earn that year?

There are a few ways to explain this question: *Rabi Yitzchak* is of the opinion that even after the verdict, a “*tze'akah*” (a term of *tefillah*) is effective to annul the decree, and if so, even after it is decreed on *Rosh Hashanah* that a person will struggle with *parnassah*, his *tefillah* can help annul this decree (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a, and see *Ritva* *ibid* that the *halachah* is like *Rabi Yitzchak*, and that is what we rely on in our *tefillas*). *Tosafos* (*ibid* ad loc. *kema'en*) that even those who differ from *Rabi Yitzchak* concede that the decree that is cast on the *tzibbur* can be annulled with *tefillah*, even after the *gzar din*. Because *Shemoneh Esreh* is worded in the plural, we find that we are davening for the *tzibbur* at large. *Rabbeinu Tam* explained that according to the opinion of those who disagree with *Rabi Yitzchak*, we are davening in this *brachah* that if only scant rains were decreed on *Rosh Hashanah*, Hashem should bring them down at the right time and in the right way that they should be maximally effective. (*Tosafos* *ibid*)

Vesabeinu Mitvuah or Vesabeinu Mituvecha

The *Rishonim* (*Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos* by *Rabi Y. Ben Yakar*, *Shemoneh Esreh*; *Shu"t Harosh Klal* 4 20) wrote that we should say in the *brachah* “*Vesabeinu mituvecha*” and not “*mituvah*” because our intention is to ask *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* to satiate us from His goodness (according to *Nechemiah* 9:25)

But the *Mishnah Berurah* states (*ibid*) in the name of the *Siddur Ha'Ari*, that we should say “*vesabeinu mituvah*” and the *Gra* is of the same opinion (*Ma'aseh Rav*, 48). According to their view the word “*mituvah*” relates to *Eretz Yisrael*, about which we ask previously “*Vesein...al pnei ha'adamah*.” We can bring proof of this view from the words of the *Brachah Me'ein Shalosh* “*le'echol mipiryah velisboa mituvah*” (*Iyun Tefillah* in the *Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*. But see *Tur*, *Orach Chaim* 208 that the *Rosh* did not recite this *nusach*). *Harav Yechezkel Abramsky* added a proof to this view, that in the *nusach* of the *brachah* of *Havineinu*, which corresponds to *Shemoneh Esreh*, we ask corresponding to *Birchas Hashanim* “*ודשננו בנאות ארצך*,” and give us rich food from Your Land. (*Chazon Yechezkel*, *Tanach* p. 363).

The Kavanah of Amen

It is true that You bless the years, and may it be Your Will that You bless this year. (*Siddur Nehora Hashalem*)

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

Otzros Emunim

Pearls of Amen for Purim

A Special Shaliach to Answer Amen

Harav Chaim of Volozhin took upon himself not to make a single *brachah* if there wasn't someone to answer amen after him.

The Raavad of Yerushalayim, Harav Zelig Reuven Bengis, a *talmid* of Volozhin at the time of the Netziv, related a beautiful story on this subject. One night, when Rav Chaim was sitting and learning, he suddenly felt very thirsty. He sought out someone to answer amen after his *brachah*, but found no one. The whole family was sleeping, and at such an hour, no one was walking outside either. The minutes ticked by and his thirst became stronger. Suddenly, he heard a knock at the door. One of the yeshivah *bochurim* stood there; he wanted to understand the explanation of a certain *sugya*. Rav Chaim was so happy, he made a *Shehakol* with *kavanah*, the *bochur* answered amen and Rav Chaim slaked his thirst. Then he answered the *bochur's* question.

The next morning, when Rav Chaim entered the *beis medrash*, he first went over to the *bochur* to thank him again for enabling him to make the *brachah*. But the *bochur* looked at him in surprise and said, "Rebbi, I don't remember such a story. Last night I went to sleep early, as I usually do, and I didn't get out of bed until this morning."

That was when Rav Chaim understood that because of his insistence not to make a *brachah* without it being answered with amen, a special *shaliach* was sent to him from Above, in the form of the *bochur*, to make it possible for him to say amen and to slake his thirst. (*She'al Avicha Veyagedcha* [Rav Shalom Schwadron] Vol. I, p. 87)

The Angels Gather to Answer Amen

The *mekubal* Harav Tzvi Hirsh Kaidenover mentioned the concept of having angels answer amen in his *sefer Kav Hayashar* (Ch. 96). He wrote: "And it is simple that with each and every mitzvah that a person does, holy angels are created from it, and that is why they are called the '*machaneh*' (camp) of this mitzvah. And with each mitzvah that we recite a *brachah* for, those angels gather, and stand around the *mevarech* and hear the *brachah* and answer amen. An allusion to this is that the word מלאך is numerically equivalent to אמן."

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

To the staff of the remarkable pamphlet *Vechol Ma'aminim*, and Rabbi Marmurstein, *shlita*

Amen is one small word, but an inestimably powerful one. Amen is one word from the *tefillah*, but the entire *tefillah* revolves around it. Amen is one word that is the pillar of the life of a believing Jew.

For many years, you have invested so much in this word, by speaking, writing and acting about it, and your investment is paying off: answering amen has received its worthy place. There is no doubt that the words of Chazal in *Brachos* (6b) still apply: "Things that are at the apex of the world and people are lax about them," and *Rashi* explains "like *tefillah*." I heard from the Yeshuos Moshe, *zy"ta*, of Vizhnitz, that *Rashi's* intention here is answering amen, but there is no doubt that this laxity is waning constantly.

Even someone who is not strict about this mitzvah *l'Shem Shamayim* should do it '*lo lishmah*' because Chazal have promised many things to those who are careful about this mitzvah, and by doing it *lo lishmah*, he will come to doing it *lishmah*. I thought that in the word amen, there is an allusion that it protects a person, because אמן is the acronym for אינו ניזוק מכלום, he is not harmed by anything.

In appreciation,
A.C., Bnei Brak

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



Front of the shul in Regensburg, which was destroyed by the Nazis, *ym"s*.

Rabi Yehuda Hachassid

13 Adar, 4975

Rabi Yehuda Hachassid was one of the greatest sages in *Toras HaSod* throughout the generations. He was born in Ashkenaz during the period of the Baalei Hatosafos to his father, Rav Shmuel Hachassid, who was the leader of 'Chassidei Ashkenaz.' His life was devoted to Torah and *avodas Hashem*, and he was extremely ascetic with himself, and that is why his name became known to this day as Rabi Yehuda Hachassid.

He taught Torah to masses and served as the Rosh Yeshivah of Regensburg. He had many *talmidim* who became great sages, among them the Ohr Zarua, the Rokeach and the Sma"g. He was a beacon for his entire generation. In his well-known *Sefer Chassidim*, he paves a path for anyone who wants to dedicate himself to Torah learning and *avodas Hashem*. The *piyut Shir Hakavod* is attributed to him. He was *niftar* in Regensburg on Shabbos Zachor 13 Adar 4975, leaving behind his famous will named *Tzava'as Rabi Yehuda Hachassid*.

Meah Brachos - The Whole Person

Regarding the *passuk* (*Koheles* 12:13) "*sof davar hakol nishma es Ha'Elokim yera v'es mitzvosav shemor ki zeh kol ha'adam*," Rabi Yehuda Hachassid writes: "כל האדם" is numerically equivalent to 100, corresponding to the *Meah Brachos*. (*Sefer Hagematrios* 69)

Don't Steal Amens

One should recite each *brachah* aloud, because one who makes *brachos* quietly steals from the *tzibbur* the mitzvah of answering amen (*Sefer Hachassidim* 254).