

Veche Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Segulah of 'Haggadah' - When It Is Said with Joy

"מגיד - אומרים ההגדה מ'הא לחמא עניא' עד 'גאל ישראל'"

The *mekubal*, **Harav Yosef of Dubno**, the Rebbe of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kaidenover, author of *Kav Hayashar*, shared inspiring words about the virtue of saying the *Haggadah* with *kavanah* and genuine *simchah*:

"In each and every generation, on the night of Pesach, anyone who says praise and *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and the story of the *Haggadah* with joy and happiness, without any anger in his heart and without laziness and feeling that it is a burden, *chalilah*, but with *kavanah* and joy, the Wings of the Shechinah are always spread upon him to protect him in all places, in all ways, and he merits to have miracles performed for him. But someone who views the *Haggadah* as a burden, and who says it lazily and without joy in his heart, does not merit to have a miracle performed when he is in a place of danger."

(*Yesod Yosef* (Chapter 85

Reciting the Haggadah Is a Segulah for Children

"ושאינו יודע לשאול - את פתח לו שנאמר (שמות יג ה): והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים."

The *Ohr Hachaim* (*Shemos* 13:8) revealed that the words "*vehigadeta lebincha*" allude that fulfilling the mitzvah of *sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* on Seder night is a *segulah* to be blessed with a son. He wrote: "And it is possible also that he alludes when he says '*vehigadeta lebincha*' that if you say the *Haggadah*... Hashem will give him the merit of saying it to his son."

The *mashpia*, **Harav Elimelech Biderman**, says that some have a practice of learning the words of the *Ohr Hachaim* after the Seder, and testifies that a few who did so indeed merited to be blessed with children.

Haggadah shel Pesach, Be'er Hachaim, p. 177

The 'She'eino Yodea' Is Better Than the 'Yodea'

"ושאינו יודע לשאול - את פתח לו"

The Rebbe, **Harav Tzvi Hirsch of Riminov**, used to say that the virtue of the son "who does not know how to ask" is greater than the other sons. **Harav Yehoshua of Belz** explained it as follows:

There is a practice that when people need a *yeshuah* on a certain matter, they ask for it in the *brachah* in *Shemoneh Esreh* relating to this matter. For example, a sick person makes his request in *Refa'einu*, and one who needs *parnassah*, in *Bareich Aleinu*. However, we have learned from the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov not to do that, because by doing so, the *mispallel* might say the wrong thing and then miss his goal. It is better that a person should have equal concentration on all the *brachos*, and at the same time, he should ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who knows everything that we need, to send salvation wherever the person needs it.

This is what the Riminov Rebbe meant: Someone who understands that he is an '*eino yodea lishol*,' he doesn't know how to ask about the personal things he needs, asks in general that Hashem should help him in everything he needs. When one does this, his virtue exceeds that of the other *mispallelim*.

Mahar"i MiBelz, Second Edition, p. 173

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'She'eino Yodea Lishol' - At Psach Lo'

In the *Haggadah*, we read about the four sons, and what needs to be said to each one of them. Each of the first three sons is given an answer in accordance to his question, but the last of them is a '*she'eino yodea lishol*.' Therefore, "*At psach lo*" – don't wait for his question, but initiate, and tell him the story of the faith of the Jewish people through the generations, the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Just like the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is comprised of two – the teller and the listener – so too, is the praise of Hashem completed by reciting the *brachah* and answering amen, as it says (*Tehillim* 34:4): "*Uneromemah Shemo yachdav*, we will elevate His Name together." Here, too, the *mevarech* seeks to find someone to complete his *brachah* with amen, but there is the "*she'eino yodea lishol*" – the one who does not know how to ask – whether because he does not understand the importance of it, or because he is uncomfortable.

You, who understand the importance of amen, have an obligation: "*At psach lo*!" Stand up and suggest: "Fellow Yid! I'd be happy to answer amen after your *brachos*!"

Think about the fact that even someone who does not come over to ask that you answer amen after his *brachos* needs completed *brachos* and to have the gates of blessing opened for him. This concept is also alluded to at the beginning of the Seder, when we declare: "*Kol dichfin yesei veyeichol*!" Thus we follow the path of Avraham Avinu, who saw it as a mission to disseminate *emunah* in this world through the mitzvah of *hachnassas orchim*. As *Rashi* writes (*Bereishis* 21:33), that Avraham Avinu would turn to his guests and teach them: "Bless the One whose food you ate; you think you ate from my food, but it is from the One who said that the world should be and it was that you ate."

May this festival of *emunah* be a time when we merit to be inspired with *emunah* for us and our offspring, that the amen should always be in our lips and on those of our offspring for eternity.

Wishing you a happy and kosher Pesach,
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

'Kaddish Yasom' At the Height of Seder Night

This happened more than one hundred years ago, during a period when many young people throughout Russia began to rise up against the Tsar's rule. On the other side, the Russian authorities launched harsh crackdowns to suppress the uprisings. After a few incidents where local policemen cooperated with the rebels, the government decided to replace the top police command in many cities around Russia with commanders from other cities. This also happened in the town where this story takes place. Rumor had it that the *natchalnik*, or the commander that was appointed to replace the one in office, was an especially harsh person. The leaders of the local Jewish community, who naturally were quite concerned, decided to choose Reb Zev, one of the wealthier members of the community with ties to the Russian government, to represent them before the new commander. He would also make sure to 'grease' his pockets with cash, an age-old method of attempting to soften harsh officials...



The shul in Tomsk, in central Siberia, established by communists who were exiled to Siberia.

As the days passed, it became clearer that the selection of Reb Zev was truly *siyata diShmaya*. He and the new commander developed warm ties, they met often, and even though the commander firmly refused to take bribery, he did inform Reb Zev of a number of incidents in which Jewish youngsters who were involved with the rebels were being targeted by the Russian secret police. He told this to Reb Zev so that he could warn the youths to desist from their action before it was too late for them.

It was two days before Pesach, and Reb Zev was in the market, his mind busy with the final preparations. Suddenly, the commander appeared in front of him. Reb Zev stood silently, and the commander chided him laughingly: "What happened that you're ignoring me?!" Reb Zev apologized that his mind was preoccupied with the preparations for the upcoming Pesach holiday.

When he heard this, the commander

stopped walking and said to Reb Zev: "What did you say? 'Pesach?' Is this the holiday when you have 'Seder night?' Please invite me to your house for Seder night!"

Reb Zev did not know what to respond. What did he need a non-Jew at his table on this holiest of nights?! But something about the commander's gaze prodded him to answer in the affirmative. "No problem," he said. "Tomorrow evening, I will send my son to call the commander to join us at our Seder table."

Seder night in Reb Zev's home was celebrated with beauty and grandeur. He seated the commander next to him, and the rest of the large family, children and grandchildren, sat around the table. Throughout the recital of the *Haggadah*, Reb Zev sensed that his guest was disturbed by something, but he attributed it to the obvious difficulty of getting through such a long and unfamiliar *Haggadah* service. Surely he was waiting for *Shulchan Aruch*, when he would eat his fill.

But even during *Shulchan Aruch*, the commander was somber and thoughtful, and barely touched his plate. "What happened?" the host asked gently. "Is our fish not to the liking of the commander?"

He was very surprised – as were all those present – when the commander promptly burst into tears.

Reb Zev and his family sat quietly, feeling the tension in the air. They waited for the commander to compose himself, but then they were in for another surprise. The commander stood up, and after thinking for a moment, trying to remember, he suddenly cried out in a heavy Russian accent: "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*"

Before the family could respond, the commander stood up and shared his life story:

"I am an Cantoninist. When I was eleven, I was abducted from my widowed mother and sent to the home of a coarse farmer so he could 'educate' me to be a 'good Russian.' In the farmer's house, I became very ill, and when I recovered, I forgot my past completely. When I grew up, I was drafted to the army, where I rose through the ranks until I became a senior commander.

Although to the best of my knowledge, I was the son of the farmer, for some reason, I always liked Jews. This caused me to protect them from those who tried to harm them. For this reason, I was

expelled from the army and appointed police commander. Until now, I did not remember my roots, but now, as you read the *Haggadah*, my memory grew clearer. I remembered my father, who passed away when I was ten, and how he made a Seder just like you. I didn't understand a word of what you read, but each and every word intensified my yearnings for the past. The long suppressed memories rose in my mind, and suddenly, I recalled the moments of parting from my mother, and how she called to me from afar "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.*"

I now remember those last words she told me before I was torn away from her: "When you manage to get away from these terrible people, I will probably no longer be on this world. I ask you that at first opportunity, go into a Jewish shul and say *Kaddish* for me."

Please, teach me how to say *Kaddish*. I will say it for you, and then I'll go still tonight to the Jewish cemetery. I'll tell my mother that I fulfilled her request, and then I will put an end to my wretched life."

Around the table, a heavy silence ensued, a silence of both emotion and sadness. Reb Zev was the first to break the silence when he said courageously, in a confident voice:

"My dear sir, you do not need to bother to put your life to an end. However, it is true that tonight the wretched life of the commander Grigory Ivanov has come to an end. He no longer exists. In his place, a Jew has been born, and as our forefathers in Egypt began a new life tonight, so are you going to start a new life from tonight."

"Let us drink a cup of wine to the life of our friend who has been reborn!" Reb Zev called to his family. And thus, he restored the joy to their faces and hearts.

Reb Zev's confident words infused the guest with a new desire to live. Reb Zev opened the siddur and read *Kaddish* with him. The *minyan* of people present answered amen and *Yehei Shemei Rabbah* with great emotion.

After the Seder, the two closeted themselves in a side room, where they spent the entire night talking about very crucial matters.

On Chol Hamoed, the members of the town were informed that the new commander had disappeared. Rumors spread rapidly, but Reb Zev and his family were not worried. They were the only ones who knew the secret that indeed, the gentle Russian commander had disappeared from their town, but someplace, he was reborn as a kosher Jew.

The Brachah of Asher Ga'alanu

Birchas Asher Ga'alanu Is an Eis Ratzon

“אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים, והגיענו ללילה הזה”

Gedolim through the generations have said that the time when one recites the *brachah* of *Asher Ga'alanu* is a special *eis ratzon*, an auspicious time. The *Ohev Yisrael* explained once on Shabbos Hagadol that anyone who is in a distressful situation should daven and cry from the depths of his heart before saying the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*, and he is guaranteed that his *tefillah* will be accepted and he will see *yeshuos* in all areas. (*Emunas Moshe*, Vol. III, *Pesach* p. 90)

Harav Yissachar Dov of Belz would often say that the time of saying the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael* on Seder night is a special *eis ratzon*. A wise person will use this time to have *kavanah* for his *yeshuos* that he needs “and surely Hashem Yisbarach will help him.” It is told over that his grandfather, the **Sar Shalom of Belz** once went out to walk with his *meshamesh* after the Seder. On their way, they passed the home of a simple, ignorant Jew, who, in his innocence, after finishing the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*, stood up to daven *Shemoneh Esreh*, as if it was after *Ga'al Yisrael* in *Shacharis*. The *meshamesh* laughed at the sight, but the Rebbe hushed him and said: “You should not laugh at him; know that this Jew has no children, and in the merit of his pure *tefillah*, he will merit to have children.” (*Leket Sifsei Kodesh Pesach*, Vol. II p. 187)

The Pesachim and the Zevachim Are Meant to Eat

“שמחים בבנין עירך ושישים בעבודתך ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים”

Usually, in *tefillos* in which we ask for the Bais Hamikdash to be built, we only mention the sacrifice of the *korbanos* and the not obligation to eat them. For example, in *Mussaf* we ask: “*La'asos lefanecha es korbanos chovoseinu*.” Why, in this *tefillah*, do we mention the eating of the *korbanos* and not their sacrifice?

Harav Moshe Yoel Walkin of Queens, New York, explained:

There is a big difference between the *korbanos* that we are asking about here and the other *korbanos*. With the rest of the *korbanos*, even those eaten by their owners, the main part of the *korban* is their sacrifice. The *Korban Pesach* and *Chagigas Yud Dalet* that comes with it [alluded to in ‘*zevachim*’] are primarily about the mitzvah of eating them. We learn of the *Pesach* (*Pesachim* 76b): “*Shelo ba mitechilaso ela l'achilah*,” that its purpose is to be eaten, and the *Korban Chaggigas Yud Dalet*'s purpose is to make sure that the meat of the *Pesach* is eaten when one is satiated (see *Pesachim* 69b). Therefore, in the *tefillah* relating to those *korbanos*, it was instituted to mention only their eating. (*Shiurei Haggadah Bais Aharon* p. 75)

Joy Only When the Objective Is Complete

“כן...גיענו למועדים ולרגלים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום שמחים בבנין עירך ושישים בעבודתך”

Usually, the term ‘*sasson*’ is mentioned before the term ‘*simchah*’ such as in the *passuk* (*Yirmiyah* 7:34): “*Kol sasson vekol simchah*.” Why in this *brachah* do we first say “*semeichim*” and then “*sassim*”?

There is a well-known explanation from the **Gra** (*Devar Eliyahu*, *Iyov* 3:22) regarding the difference between *simchah* and *sasson*. *Simchah* is an expression of the way a person feels when he begins to do a good deed, while *sasson* expresses his feelings after he has succeeded in completing his objective. Therefore, in the *piyut* of *K-l Adon*, we praise the creation of the *Me'oros*, by saying “*Semeichim betzeisam vesassim bevoam*.” When they emerge to do the will of their Creator, they are ‘*semeichim*.’ After they have completed their task properly, they are ‘*sassim*.’

Therefore, in this *brachah*, we first ask “*semeichim bevinyan irecha*” – with regard to the beginning of the process of the Geulah, and only afterwards “*vesassim be'avodasecha*” – with regard to completing the Geulah with the rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash and the restoration of the service of the *korbanos*. (*Baruch She'amar*, *Shacharis* for Shabbos)

Opposite Order on Motzaei Shabbos

“ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים אשר יגיע דמם על קיר מזבחך לרצון”

The **Tosafos** (*Pesachim* 116b) explained that the reason that we precede “*zevachim*” [*Chagigas Yud Dalet*] to “*Pesachim*” is because during the *seudah* of Pesach night, they would eat the meat of the *Chagigah* before the *Korban Pesach*, so that they should eat the latter on full stomachs. As such, the **Mahar”i Weill** (*Shu”t*, 193) wrote that when Seder night falls on Motzaei Shabbos, when we do not bring the *Chagigah* with the *Korban Pesach*, because the sacrifice of the *Korban Chagigah* is not *docheh* Shabbos (*Pesachim* 69b), we have to switch the order and say “*Min hapesachim umin hazevachim*.”

In contrast, the **Knesses Yechezkel** (*Orach Chaim* 23) held that even when Seder night is on Motzaei Shabbos, the *nusach* of the *brachah* should not be changed. We ask in this *brachah* for next year, and yearn that the Geulah should be here by then. And then, even if according to our current calculation, Pesach next year is scheduled to be on Motzaei Shabbos, because they will return to be *mekadesh* on the *re'iyah* [for Rosh chodesh], like it used to be, it is possible that ultimately it will not fall on Motzaei Shabbos.

Harav Yaakov Emden agreed with the **Knesses Yechezkel** that the order should not be changed, but for another reason – that the *nusach* of the *Haggadah* was determined by the widespread practice over the years, and it should not be changed. (*Bais Yaakov*, *Seder Hahaggadah*)

Kavanah of Amen

It is true that HaKadosh Baruch Hu redeemed us from Egypt and may it be that we merit to have the Geulah arrive, and the service of the Bais Hamikdash should be renewed in our day.

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

Otzros Emunim

Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

‘Es Habrachah Asher Tishme’u’

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz once saw one of his *chassidim* reciting *Birchos Hashachar* to himself in a whisper, without having amen answered. He turned to him in rebuke: At the beginning of *Parashas Re'eh* it states (*Devarim* 11:27): “*Es habrachah asher tishme’u el mitzvos Hashem Elokeichem*,” and he explained it to mean that “the *brachah*” should be made “so that it will be heard” by those around you and they can answer amen. One should not be lax on this subject because it is included in the “*mitzvos Hashem Elokeichem*.” (*Ateres Chaim* p. 103)

‘Zehirim Leshomro Avos Ubanim’

The Divrei Chaim had great enthusiasm and alacrity for saying amen after *Birchos Hashachar*. Once, his legs ailed him and he could not walk without support. Nevertheless, when he came to shul for *Shacharis*, as soon as he heard a person – even a small child – beginning to recite *Birchos Hashachar*, he seemed to forget all his pain. With great alacrity, he would stand next to the person, his head bowed, as he listened to the *brachos* and answered amen, loudly and slowly. Each time, children would gather around him and asked to say the *brachos* for him, he would bow his head to each one and answer amen (witnessed by one of his *chassidim*, cited in *Alei Zikaron*, Vol. VII, p. 38). His son, the Divrei Yechezkel of Shineva was strict each day to listen to *Birchas Hashachar* from a few people, so that he could answer amen after them. (*Divrei Yechezkel* [5759] p. 319)

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

To the editors of *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

I would like to express my tremendous gratitude for the wellspring that you send each week to all corners of the world. It is filled with precious insights about the virtues of answering amen, and the greatness of *brachos* and *tefillos*.

I found a beautiful thought written by the *talmid* of Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, Harav Aharon of Zhitomir in his *sefer Toldos Aharon* in *Parashas Shoftim*. He wrote that each person who answers ninety amens before davening has the gates of *tefillah* opened for him and his *tefillah* is accepted.

This is a very powerful promise from one of the holy figures of an early generation of the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov. I will tell you the truth, that since I saw this, I am careful to answer amen to the *Birchos Hashachar* of six people – at least – in order to complete the quota of 90 amens before davening. I clearly feel that my *tefillah* is said with lofty *kavanah*, that my heart is close to my Creator, and my requests are accepted.

In a generation that keeps trying all kinds of *segulos*, I suggest, and recommend, for one who wants to see a *yeshuah*, to answer 90 amens and then to daven, and there is no doubt he will see wonders.

Y.S.G.
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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Shevet Halevi at a Bney Emunim event

The Shevet Halevi

15 Nissan 5775

Harav Shmuel Halevi Vosner was born on 2 Elul 5673 in Vienna, Austria, to his father, Rav Yosef Tzvi. From an early age, he made great strides in his Torah learning, and when he was eighteen years old, he traveled to study in Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.

He immersed himself in his learning, and also became close to the *roshei yeshivah*, Harav Meir Shapiro and Harav Shimon of Zelichov. When World War II broke out, he departed for Eretz Yisrael, and after a tumultuous journey, settled in Yerushalayim. He was soon asked to serve as Rav and *moreh tzeddek*.

In 5707, he moved to Bnei Brak to serve as the Rav of the Zichron Meir neighborhood. There, he reestablished his *rebbe's* yeshivah, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, and headed it for some seventy years. He had a *derech* in *psak* and taught many *talmidim*. His many *piskei halachah* were published by him in *Shu"t Shevet Halevi*. He accompanied, guided and encouraged the work of Bney Emunim from its inception, and even attended events that were organized to strengthen the recital of *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*. He passed away on Seder night 5775 when he was 102 years old. Hundreds of thousands of people escorted him on his final earthly journey to the Zichron Meir Cemetery in Bnei Brak.

Following is a letter that he wrote when Bney Emunim was established; a number of *gedolei hador* *zt"l* and *lbl"c shlita*, signed after him:

BH, Chodesh Harachamim Vehaslichos 5769,

I have heard and rejoiced that my *talmid*, the *baal chessed* Reb Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, has come up, in the spirit of mitzvah, with the idea to arouse and instill among the youngsters and the masses an ancient *minhag* to recite *Birchos Hashachar*, and other *brachos*, aloud, thus giving another person the merit of answering amen. My *talmid* has invested a lot of his own fortune and energy to habituate people to this good practice, and fulfills the words “*Hai man debai lemehavei chasida – lekayem mili dibrachos*.”

Chazal speak of the greatness of answering amen; these are ancient words and are well known. Moreover, it causes the youngsters to be raised to say *brachos* slowly, with *kavanah* and out loud. See the powerful story in *Ohr Zarua* Vol. II, in *Hilchos Shabbos* 42 on this subject.

Therefore, I will work with him, to strengthen him and encourage him to continue this, *v'ein mezarzin ela l'zerizin*, and in the merit of this mitzvah and his great work for Torah and *chesed*, may he and his family be blessed with *yeshuah* and *rachamim*, and they should succeed in all good things that they do.

His Rebbe who asks after his welfare, with fondness

