

Vechele Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

An Oved Hashem Has Time for Everything

"ופניתי אליכם והפריתי אתכם והרביתי אתכם והקימותי את בריתי אתכם" (כו ט)

The **Chiddushei HaRim** explained the words "*upanisi Aleichem*" as a promise to every *oved Hashem* that he will have time to be busy with everything he needs. Support of his words is cited by **Harav Shammai Ginsburg**, who quotes the *Breisa* (*Brachos* 32b): "The early *chassidim* would linger for one hour [before each *tefillah*], davened one hour and then returned to linger for another hour [after davening.] *Chazal* wondered about this: After those *chassidim* spent three hours for each of the three *tefillas*, how did they have time to learn and to engage in *parnassah*? And they replied, 'Because their Torah was preserved [remembered] and their work was blessed.'" So we see that even the *chassidim* who dedicated nine hours a day to *tefillah* were helped from Above that Hashem gave them time to remember their learning and to earn a *parnassah*.

Siach Sarfei Kodesh Vol. IV 51; *Imrei Shammai*

Techiyas Hameisim with a Standing Straight

"אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים מהית להם עבדים ואשר מטת עלכם ואולך אתכם קוממויות" (כו יג)

Rashi explains that *komemiyus* means "with upright stature." Based on this, the *Chasam Sofer* explained our request each day in *Shacharis* "*Vesolicheinu meheirah*

komemiyus l'artzeinu":

Chazal say (*Kesubos* 111a) that *techiyas hameisim* will take place only in Eretz Yisrael, and therefore, before *techiyas hameisim*, those who are worthy of being resurrected will come to Eretz Yisrael from their *kevarim* in other places through tunnels. The *tzaddikim* will go through these tunnels standing upright, while those who are not *tzaddikim* will have their bones roll to Eretz Yisrael and there they will rise up to life. Therefore, we ask "*Vesolicheinu komemiyus l'artzeinu*" – standing upright and not by having our bones roll.

Ben Yehoyada Kesubos 111a

Loss of Ability to Daven – the Worst of the Curses

"ואכלתם בשר בניכם ובשר בנותיכם תאכלו; והשמדתי את במותיכם..." (כו כט-ל)

The *Ibn Ezra* explained the curse of "and I will destroy your *bamos*" as follows: "And you will not have a place to cry out and daven to be saved from the hunger, because I will destroy your *bamos* – the place where the *zevachim* are brought."

The *Mashgiach*, **Harav Gedaliah Eiseman** explained: If we delve into this, we will see that this curse is the most difficult of all the curses, because if Am Yisrael would not have refrained from davening, they could have nullified the decrees with the power of *tefillah*. He then added: Today as well, a person sometimes finds himself punished with this curse, by having his '*ta'am*,' and emotions in *tefillah* taken from him.

Gedolei Mussar, Elul, p. 183

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Bivrachah Sheleimah Venomar Amen'

In honor of the *hilula* of *Rashbi* that falls this week, I thought it would be appropriate to share with you what he wrote in *Sefer Hazohar Hakadosh*, that in my opinion is a fundamental concept in the definition of answering amen to a *brachah*.

In *Parashas Eikev* (271 1), in a long segment about the virtues and importance of a *brachah* that has amen answered after it, *Rabi Shimon bar Yochai* wrote: "Any *brachah* that had amen answered to it, is a *brachah* that is fulfilled in its fitting completion."

In these words, *Rabi Shimon* defines for us that answering amen is not only the praise that the listener adds to the *brachah*, similar to '*Baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo*,' and the like. Rather, it is an integral part of the *brachah*, and in fact, completes it. One who makes a *brachah* himself cannot make a complete *brachah* because he cannot answer amen to a *brachah* that he made. Therefore, he needs his friend to help him complete the *brachah* by answering amen.

We learn from the *Zohar* that a *brachah* without amen is in essence incomplete, as the *dorshei reshumos*, those who have recorded history, derive from what we say in *Birchos Hamazon*: "*Bivrachah sheleimah venomar amen*" – in order for the *brachah* to be *sheleimah*, complete, we need to make sure that amen gets answered to it.

Another point that is brought into clearer focus by the words of the *Zohar* is that answering amen is not only an obligation for the one who hears the *brachah*, it is also an obligation of the *mevarech*, if he wants his *brachah* to be complete [and who does not want that...?!]

I once met *Harav Eliezer Ben David*, *zt"l*, the head of *Mosdos Ohr Ha'emes* in *Elad*. He told me in casual conversation that he had never uttered a *brachah* without someone answering amen after it. Even when he needed to make a *brachah* in the middle of the night, he would call one of his many *talmidim* abroad, in places where it was not yet night, and said the *brachah* for them to listen.

I was very impressed by the fact that he did not think that he had done anything special. On the contrary, he said to me in surprise, and with great humility: "But how could I have acted differently?!" In other words, how could I not thank Hashem completely when He grants me so much good, in a complete way?!

When we say *Birchos Hashachar* each morning, it is fitting that we should remember the words of the *Zohar* that only a *brachah* that is answered with amen is a complete *brachah*. Let us start our day with complete *brachos* and thus we will merit that our days should also be good and complete.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

An Innocent Tefillah that Opened the Gate

The C. family had been planning the trip for a long time. The C. family belongs to a Chassidic community that has a large population in a city in southern Israel. They had won this trip after participating in a contest for an entire month. All the children in the family participated, and the grand prize that had been promised was a trip up north, both to have a change of scenery, but mainly, to daven at the *kevarim* of the sages who are buried in the Galil on the auspicious day of 7 Adar, the *yahrtzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Rosh Chodesh Adar arrived, and the children were getting more excited as the big day drew near. A day before the long awaited day, the father rented a spacious car that could comfortably accommodate all the children. Early the next morning, before dawn, the family packed up the car and set out on their long awaited trip. The plan



The entrance to Meron during the corona lockdown.

was to begin the day by davening *Shacharis* at the *tziyun* of Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai in Meron.

The long drive was pleasant. The children were riveted by the passing scenery, which was constantly changing as the day dawned. The desert landscape with its monotonous brown shades was replaced by green as the car advanced northward.

When the car finally began to climb the winding road to Meron, their expectations reached a fevered pitch. The older children began to hum Lag BaOmer songs that they had heard on previous trips to Meron. The previous two years, they were not able to go, due to the pandemic, and now, they were very excited to be back.

The car drove further up, and they reached the famous intersection at

the entrance to Meron. The car made a left, and suddenly, it screeched to a halt...

“What happened??” they all cried at once. The answer was clear right away: The famous yellow gate at the entrance to the *yishuv* was closed. A policeman with a stern expression stood there and motioned for them to turn around.

Rabbi C. did not move into reverse, as if not understanding what the policeman was telling him. He inched closer to the gate, and braked impatiently.

“What’s the matter, you don’t understand?!” the policeman snapped. “Kever Rashbi is closed today to vehicles. Move on, what’s not clear about that?!”

Indeed, the *tziyun* was closed to vehicular traffic. It took Rabbi C. a few minutes to digest this. He tried to ask about the reason for the sudden closure, but was met with a non-response and lots of impatience. He switched tactics and tried to play on the policeman’s emotions. He pointed to his children, who were stunned, and tried to explain where they lived and when this morning had started for them and how excited they had been about this trip.

But apparently he was not the first one who had tried to speak to the policeman this morning, and his reaction was as impatient, and unaccommodating, as before...

Having no choice, the father had to disappoint his children and tell them that they would have to forgo a visit to the *tziyun* in Meron.

Although they had not known about it, over the past two years, this had happened numerous times. Since the tragedy this past Lag BaOmer, the police closed the gates to the *yishuv* a number of times whenever they feared masses that could lead to overcrowding, or alternatively when they worried that crowds could spread corona infections.

The pressure of the authorities mounted, especially after last Lag BaOmer, when forty five holy Yidden

lost their lives in the crush.

After the tragedy, the authorities clamped down on the regulations, and whenever a special date approached, when lots of people were expected at the *tziyun*, they closed Meron, fearing too much crowding.

This time as well, ahead of 7 Adar, when masses of people come to Meron, the authorities announced that it would be closed to *mispallelim*. The C. family was not apprised of this, and naturally, their disappointment was commensurate with their anticipation. They could not get over this bitter letdown.

Having no choice, Rabbi C. turned around. He parked on the side of the road, and considered the options: Should they continue to Tzefas to daven, or should he park in a nearby lot, and then walk with the children up the steep hill to the *tziyun* in Meron...

But if he thought of resigning himself to the situation, the children were not ready for him to do so. “Abba,” six-year-old Shmuel called from the back, “you always tell us that *tefillah* helps in every situation, and now we’re giving up before we even daven?!”

“Of course, how didn’t we think of that?!” they all cried in surprise. At that moment, the children began to daven, each one in their own way. In their innocent and simple, childish language, they made one request: Let the gate to Meron open for them so they could go and daven at the *kever* of Rashbi. They were davening for just a few moments, and then, when they finished, all of them infused with *emunah*, their father began to drive towards the gate. It was still closed, but the father ignored it and slowly inched towards it. The policeman was the same one as before, but surprisingly enough, he glanced at the children in the car, and pressed the button to open the gate, without another word.

And that is how that morning, they were among the select few who were able to get in to daven at the holy *tziyun*, all because of an innocent *tefillah*.

Birchas Hatzaddikim

Source of the Brachah

Chazal (*Megillah* 17b) explain that the reason that *Birchas Hatzaddikim* was instituted after *Birchas Haminim* is because after all the heretics will be eradicated from the world, then the *keren*, the value of the *tzaddikim* will rise, as it says (*Tehillim* 75:11): “*Vechol karnei resha'im agadea – teromannah kranos tzaddik*, and all the horns of the wicked I shall cut off; the horns of the righteous will be upraised.”

Chazal also say (*ibid*) that this *brachah* should also include a request for *geirei tzeddek*, righteous converts, as we find that the Torah placed the *geirei tzeddek* alongside the sages of Torah, as the *passuk* says (*Vayikra* 19, 32-33): “*Mipnei seivah takum vehadarta pnei zaken...; vechi yagur itcha ger*, rise before a venerable person, and respect the elderly...And when a stranger sojourns with you in your land.”

Some write that mentioning the converts in this *brachah* was not instituted by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah. Rather, Rabban Gamliel Hazaken is the one who instituted their mention, because in his times, there were many converts in Am Yisrael. (*Tikkun Tefillah in Siddur Otzar Hatefillas, He'arah L'Tefillas Shemoneh Esreh*)

Structure of the Brachah

The *brachah* begins with the request of “*al hatzaddikim*” – referring to those who never sinned (*Avudraham*). Then we ask for the “*chassidim*,” those who have stumbled and sinned, but repented for their sins. And because *baalei teshuvah* need to make boundaries and *seyagim* for the *mitzvos* of the Torah, and to act *lifnim mishuras hadin* in order that they do not return to sin, they are called *chassidim* (*Avudraham*. See also *Pri Megadim Orach Chaim* 118 in *Eshel Avraham* 1). Then we ask for the “*ziknei she'eris amcha Bais Yisrael*” – those who carry the burden of the *tzibbur* and for “*pleitas bais sofriehem*” – “they are the wise ones who teach the children” (*Peirushei Siddur Hatefillah L'Rokeach* 57), and some explain that this means the authors of *seforim* (*Eitz Yosef*).

We also ask for the “*geirei tzeddek*” who we were instructed specifically to love, as it says (*Devarim* 10:19): “And you should love the convert” (*Avudraham*), and in the end we ask for ourselves, as we say “*v'aleinu*,” that although we are not *tzaddikim* or *chassidim*, and we do not have any of the mentioned virtues, still we ask, “*yehemu na rachamecha*” (*Seder Hayom*).

We conclude this *brachah* with praise: “*Mishan umivtach latzaddikim*,” which refers to those *tzaddikim* who are filled with merits like a pomegranate; because they are on such a high level, they need to lean on Hashem. How much more so the rest of the people, who have only their Father in Heaven to rely on (*Bais Tefillah Rav A. Papo, Brachah* 13).

Essence of the Brachah

Chazal say (*Taanis* 24b): “Each and every day a Bas Kol declares: The entire world is sustained for Chanina My son.” The Baal Shem Tov explained that the *tzaddik* opens a ‘path’ and a conduit through which he brings down good and blessing for Am Yisrael (*Avodas Yisrael Likutim Maseches Taanis*). Indeed, in this *brachah*, we ask for mercy for the *tzaddikim* of the generation, because it is in their merit and in their goodness that we live, and as long as there are *tzaddikim* in the world, the world is bestowed with goodness and blessing (*Yearos Devash*, Vol. I, *Drush* 1). In this context, the Chozeh of Lublin said that in order to merit the influence of a *tzaddik*, one must daven and ask for mercy for him (*Ohr Lashamayim Mishpatim*).

In addition, we ask in this *brachah* for mercy on the *geirei tzeddek*. The converts are worthy of a special *brachah* in this time that Am Yisrael is in a state of poverty and lowliness, while the wicked people of the world are at a pinnacle of goodness. One who converts at this time is certainly worthy of the title ‘*ger tzeddek*’ as he did not convert out of a desire to merit goodness with Am Yisrael, but rather because he truly recognized, like Avraham Avinu, who cleaved to the truth against the whole world. Therefore “It behooves us to love him and to kiss the soles of his feet, and one who increases his love for the *ger*, loves Hashem and His Torah, because his love for the *ger* is contingent on the love of Hashem and His Torah, because they are the reason for his love (*Yearos Devash*, *ibid*).

Explanation of ‘Vesim Chelkeinu Imahem’

In this *brachah* we ask: “*Vesein sachar tov lechol habotchim beShimcha b'emes vesim chelkeinu imahem*.” We might ask: Why is it fitting to ask that we should receive good rewards like the *tzaddikim*? Doesn't a person receive what he deserves, commensurate with his actions? Is there a bias here?

The Ari Hakadosh explained this request as follows: When a person sins, he is prevented from enjoying the influences of the *mitzvos* that he has done. Therefore, until the sinner repents, the *hashpa'os*, the influences of his merits are given to a worthy *tzaddik*, as it says (*Iyov* 17): “*Yachin [rasha] vetzaddik yilbash*,” that the *rasha* will prepare it and the *tzaddik* will wear it. But there are very lofty *tzaddikim* who do not want to benefit from something they have not toiled for, and therefore, they keep the influence of the *mitzvos* that were given to them for safekeeping until the person repents. Then, they return it to the person, in completion. Therefore, we ask “*vesim chelkeinu imahem*,” that if *chalilah* we have sinned, and lost our share in the *mitzvos* we have done, Hashem should put them for safekeeping with the share of the lofty *tzaddikim* who do not want to benefit from others. When we repent, He will return to us our share in completion (*Shaar Hakavanos, Drushei Ha'amidah Drush* 6).

The Chasam Sofer further explained: “*Habotchim beShimcha b'emes*” – they are the ones who hope to see that “all of mankind will call Your Name...” as we ask in the *tefillah* of *Al Kein Nekaveh*. We ask that Hashem should give them their good reward, by putting “our share with theirs,” and by us joining them to call the Name of Hashem, as they aspire (*Drashos Chasam Sofer*, Vol. I, p. 31b).

Kavanah of Amen

It is true that You are a support and a security for the *tzaddikim*, and may it be that You should be a support for us at all times. (*Siddur Nehora Hashalem*)

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

Otzros Emunim

Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

Birchos Hashachar in Front of Two People

In Eshel Avraham (Orach Chaim 487 4) by he Daas Kedoshim ---- of Butchatch, he wrote that he heard that Harav Yosef Hollis, the Gaavad of Tisemnitz---, “would stand at chatzos of the night and recite Birchos Hashchar, and he would awaken two people to answer amen after him.”

Birchos Hashchar From Talmud Torah Students

The Rebbe, Harav Yitzchak of Kaliv, would go each morning to the Talmud Torah that he established in Kaliv, in order to hear Birchos Hashachar from the students and to answer amen after them. (Yemei Zikaron Adar p. 72)

Being Makpid and Shomer Emunim

Harav Menachem Sofer, author of Shu”t Menachem Meishiv, testifies of his grandfather Rav Eliezer Zussman Sofer, the Rav of Paksh, that “he was very makpid, strict, and shomer emunim, until each morning the chidlme would gather in the beis medrash to recite all the Birchos Hashachar, in order, in front of him. He stood with them and answer amen until they all finished.” (Shu”t Menachem Meishiv 29)

His Neshamah departed Upon Answerign Amen

Regarding the tzaddik of Netivot, Rav Reuven Yosef Gershonowitz, it is related that he passed away fro this world while reciting amen to Birchos Hashachar. His passing is described in sefer Nitzotzei Eish, which was published in his memory (p. 69):

“All his days, his soul cleaved to its Creator, through tefillah, and that is also how his soul rose when it returned to its Source, to gaze at the light of the Melech, and to bask in the glow of the Shechinah amidst tefillah. After others said Birchos Hashachar in front of him, and with his final vestiges of strength and superhuman fortitude of making his spirt dominate his physical being, he overcame like a lion and answer amen to the mevarech, and amidst this amen of emunah in the Tzur Olamim, his holy and pure soul rose On High. ‘Vayehi Yadav emunah ad bo hashemesh’ (Shemos 17:12).”

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

To the Editors of Vechol Ma'aminim

The words of Rabbeinu Bechayei that you brought (Kad Hakemach, Emunah) that anyone who is strict to answer amen is called a tzaddik, as it says (Yeshayah 26:2): “Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim” are a beautiful chiddush. I thought about an allusion from the words of the passuk (Tehillim 146:8): “ה' אהב צדיקים” – which is the acronym of א”צ – or amen. And thus, we can answer the well-known question as to why this passuk is said among those with blemishes – “matir asurim,” “pokeach ivrim” and “zokef kefufim”? Based on this it is possible that this comes to teach us that a person can be spared from all the blemishes and tzaros if he is strict about answering amen, which is alluded to in the words “ohev tzaddikim.”

May you have much strength to do your work for Klal Yisrael to strengthen the recital of amen with kavanah all over the world. May it be Hashem's Will that in your merit, we see the fulfillment of the words “V'amech kulam tzaddikim.”

With brachah,

**Rabbi Eliyahu Friedman,
Yerushalayim**

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



Harav Menachem Mendel of Riminov

19 Iyar

Rav Menachem Mendel Tarim--- of Riminov was born to his father, Harav Yosef Charif, the

Av Beis Din of Pintchov, in 5505 in the city of Hamburg Germany. He was the talmid of Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg and Rav Elimelech of Litznes.

After his marriage, he moved next to his father-in-law in the town of Pristik--- Poland, where he learned Torah and served his Creator, in dire straits. After the passing of Harav Elimelech of Litzhensk, he began to serve as a Rebbe in Pristik. Many of Rav Elimelech's chassidim streamed to him and accepted his leadership. Later, he moved to Riminov, in whose name he is called.

For twenty two years, he spoke each Shabbos of Parashas Hamann, in order to bring down an abundance of parnassah to Klal Yisrael. Each day, he learned eighteen dapim of Gemara with Tosafos.

On Lag BaOmer 5575, he purified himself and said that he was departing the world, and that he would repay kindness to anyone who lights a candle for his soul. The next day, on 19 Iyar 5575, he passed away and was buried in the cemetery in Riminov.

Recognizing the Creator By Answering Amen

He explained the passuk (Vayikra 29:23-24) “Shalosh shanim yihyeh lachem arelim... ubashanah hareve'is yihyeh kol piryo kodesh hilulim l'Hashem” as follows: For the first three years, a child does not recognize his Creator. But during the fourth year “his father is mechanech him to holy words – to answer amen to brachos” and thus he learns to recognize his Creator and to praise him. (Menachem Tzion, Parashas Hamann)

Amen in Humility

He explained the words of Chazal 9Brachos 53b) “Gadol ha'onah amen yoser min hamevarech” as follows: One who merits to say a brachah might come to feeling pride. But the one who answers amen is humble because he did not merit to say the brachah, and therefore he is greater than the oneh. As the Zohar wrote (Chayei Sarah 122 2) “The small one is the big one.” (Yalkut Menachem p. 242)