

Vechele Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Five Times 'Yisrael'

"ואתנה את הלויים נתנים לאהרן ולבניו מתוך בני ישראל לעבד את אבדת בני ישראל באהל מועד ולכפר על בני ישראל ולא יהיה בבני ישראל נגף כגשת בני ישראל אל הקדש" (ח טז)

In this *passuk*, which commands the Leviim to preserve the Mikdash so that Bnei Yisrael should not be defeated when they approach the Kodesh, "Bnei Yisrael" are mentioned five times. This corresponds to the five *Chumshei Torah*. This fact comes to teach us that every Jew is as important to Hashem as the five *Chumshei Torah*, and his death is as significant to Hashem as if a *Sefer Torah* is being burned. (*Rashi*, based on *Gur Aryeh*)

The *Ra'aban* wrote that the closing of the *brachah* of *Geulah* in *Shacharis* was instituted to correspond to this *passuk*. That closing also mentions Yisrael five times: "Tzur Yisrael kumah b'ezras Yisrael ufedei chinumecha Yehudah v'Yisrael...Goaleinu Hashem Tzevakos Shemo Kedosh Yisrael, Baruch...Ga'al Yisrael."

Sefer Hamanhig, Hilchos Tefillah 20

Fluency in Tefillah Is a Sign of 'Distance' and Not 'Closeness'

"ויצעק משה אל ה' לאמר א-ל נא רפא נא לה" (י ביג)

Rashi explains the word "leimor" (according to *Sifri Piska* 105) that Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem: "Respond to me if You are healing her or not." These words are puzzling: Was Moshe's level less than Rabi Chanina ben Dosa, who

knew himself to recognize if his *tefillah* was accepted or not depending on how fluent the *tefillah* was in his mouth (*Brachos* 34b)?

Harav Yosef Yessel, the Rav of Vayan, near Brisk, explained:

Fluency in *tefillah* is a sign of its acceptance only in a long *tefillah*, but not in a short *tefillah*, where it is possible that because of its brevity it is fluent on a person's lips. Therefore, here, when Moshe Rabbeinu shortened his *tefillah* so that people should not say that only for his sister Miriam he davened at length (*Rashi*), he needed to ask Hashem to inform him if the *tefillah* was accepted or not.

This concept is well explained in the *passuk* brought by the *Gemara* (ibid) as a source for the words of Rabi Chanina (*Yeshayah* 57:19): "Borei niv sefasayim shalom shalom larachok velakarov amar Hashem urefa'asiv". When the "niv sefasayim, the utterance" is healthy and fluent on the lips of the person davening [as the word *borei* is explained to be derived from the term 'bari,' healthy (*Rashi* ibid)], that is a sign that "shalom," there is peace to the sick person. But this is only effective if the *tefillah* of a person who is "rachok" far, that the *mispallel* says at length. But for a "karov," a *tefillah* for someone who is close, he is brief and therefore this sign is not effective. Rather, the *mispallel* must wait until "Amar Hashem verefa'asiv, Hashem says I will heal him."

[Poras Yosef/Wandsbeck 5487]

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Chatzotzros of Amen'

In this *parashah*, *Beha'alosecha*, we learn about the mitzvah of *chatzotzros*, the trumpets that served in the *Mishkan* and the *Bais Hamikdash* to herald the *korbanos*, and during war. The *passuk* says (*Bamidbar* 10:9) "If war shall come into your land against the oppressor who oppresses you and you shall blow *teruahs* with the trumpets and you will be remembered before Hashem, and you will be delivered from your enemies."

In the situation we are in, it can be said that we are in a time of trouble, and in an almost constant danger of war, as we said not long ago in the *Haggadah*: "Shebechol dor vador, in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us," in the sense of "a lamb among seventy wolves" (*Esther Rabbah* 9, 100). And then, only "HaKadosh Baruch Hu spares us from their hands."

It's very important, and worthwhile, to remember that we, each and every one of us, has our own 'chatzotzros,' in whose merit we are protected from our enemies. The *Tanna Debei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* 11) reveals to us: "Through whom does HaKaodsh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael from the world? In people who go to shul in the morning and evening and answer amen..."

Yes! Even today when again and again our enemies try to harm us, we can be spared from them in the merit of answering amen. Without a doubt the millions of amens that are said by Am Yisrael each day serve as a protection for Klal Yisrael from their enemies. It is in our hands!

At the same time, let us notice an important point in the *Tanna Debei Eliyahu* regarding the great virtue of answering amen not only when it is random and we hear someone making a *brachah*; of course, this is something precious that we should not give up on. Rather, this is about "people who go in the morning and in the evening to the shul and *bais medrash* and answer amen, meaning that they make themselves regularly available by making the effort to rise early and to be in shul morning and night to say amen! Without a doubt this is even more important and reinforces the idea that this is how we gain protection from our enemies and persecutors.

Good Shabbos,

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

The Tefillah That Stopped the Bleeding

There was a longstanding and special bond between the renowned Chabad *Mashpia* Harav Mendel Futerfass, *zt"l*, and Harav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz, the Ribnitzer Rebbe, *zy"ta*. The bond began while they were still both in Russia, oppressed under the Communist boot, suffering behind the Iron Curtain.

Rav Mendel Futerfass and the Ribnitzer Rebbe were both '*mesirus nefesh Yidden*,' in the simplest sense of the word. They were both undeterred by the threats of the Communist regime to take a harsh stand against anyone who worked to disseminate Torah and Yiddishkeit in Russia. They continued with *mesirus nefesh* to work even under the regime, and did not desist even after they paid a heavy price.

Among his many efforts to teach Torah and do *chessed* in the Soviet Union, the Ribnitzer Rebbe also served



The Ribnitzer Rebbe, *zt"l*

with *mesirus nefesh* as a *shochet* and *mohel*. Those who knew him said that he never refused a request made to him to perform these two *mitzvos*. So, while under the Communist regime, which mercilessly persecuted those who kept religion, the Rebbe was *moser nefesh* to bring thousands of babies into the covenant of Avraham Avinu.

At many of those *brisos*, the only person present was the mother, because the father had to be absent from the house, either so as not to miss work – which in the Soviet Union was a crime, or because he objected to the *bris*. As such, the Ribnitzer Rebbe asked his friend Reb Mendel Futerfass to accompany him to protect him from the prohibition of *yichud*.

This story is about one of the more dangerous *brissen* that the Rebbe performed. A long time earlier, the

mother had contacted the Rebbe and told him about the son born to her after many years of waiting. The mother, who tried to adhere to tradition, was very worried about her child's Jewish future and wanted to make him a *bris* according to *halachah*. But the father had an important position in the Red Army and was an ardent Communist, and persecuted those who adhered to religion. So as long as he was near the house, there was no way to do the *bris*.

Until the right moment came, the mother had to raise her baby son uncircumcised. She prayed from the depths of her heart that an opportunity would arise, and indeed, it did in the end.

One day, the father told his wife that the next morning, he had to depart on a mission for the army outside the city; he would be absent for two weeks. The mother could hardly contain her elation. A two-week absence was an excellent opportunity for her to carry out her heart's desire. She told her husband she agreed to his trip and he departed.

As soon as he left, the mother sent a telegram to the Ribnitzer Rebbe that they had a short window of opportunity to perform the *bris*. She asked the Rebbe to hurry before it was too late, and the Rebbe immediately stopped at Rav Mendel's house and they set out.

The trip from the Rebbe's house to where the woman lived was long and dangerous, but nothing deterred him. Although the Rebbe hid his *milah* tools beneath his clothes, at one of the checkpoints, they were nearly taken from him. But they finally arrived safely. When they arrived, the Rebbe quickly arranged his tools. The baby was seated on his lap and the Rebbe quickly performed the *milah*. After the *bris*, the Rebbe began with the routine steps to stanch the bleeding and bandage the wound, but to his surprise, the blood did not stop.

The baby shrieked in pain; the Rebbe tried a few different things, but they were ineffective.

Tension was thick in the little room. Under normal circumstances, at this point, the *mohel* would summon a doctor to treat the baby and stop the

blood with medical measures that only doctors can perform. But in this case that was impossible, both because of the concern that the father would find out, and because of the risk that the doctor himself would inform on them to the authorities.

Reb Mendel paled and stood silently; the mother began to cry hysterically. The situation looked desperate; the baby's life was in danger. All those present knew what could ensue if something catastrophic happened to the baby. Aside for what could happen to the Rebbe and his companion, there was a risk for the Jewish future of hundreds of babies that needed the Rebbe to circumcise them in the future.

But amazingly, the Ribnitzer Rebbe looked very calm. He motioned to the others to wait a moment, and entered the next room. He closed himself in the room for several long moments; when he emerged from the room, the blood stopped flowing, and no medical intervention was necessary.

When he finished bandaging the baby, the Rebbe gave the mother instructions on how to care for him until he recovered completely. Then, as he always did, he blessed the mother and the baby, and hastily left the house, accompanied by Reb Mendel. A number of hours later, the two were back in their home city.

When they returned safely, Reb Mendel could not contain his curiosity and he asked the Ribnitzer Rebbe what he had done while closed in the room, and how the blood had stopped without any medical intervention. The Rebbe replied innocently: When I was in the room, I stood and davened, and cried to Hashem: "Father in heaven, I have done a great mitzvah for Your honor; I circumcised Your beloved child with *mesirus nefesh*. Please, I plead, do not cause me shame..." I cried from the depths of my heart, and Hashem heard my *tefillah* and stopped the blood.

In time, when Reb Mendel related this story to people close to him, he remarked: "I, with all the Torah that I had learned, and the *emunah* that I strengthened for so many years – when I saw the blood, I lost myself. But the Ribnitzer Rebbe, with his *emunah peshutah*, effected a miracle, beyond nature."

The Mitzvah of Meah Brachos (3)

Calculation of the Brachos

Chazal expound on how to calculate the one hundred *brachos* that a person makes on a regular day. The differences between the counts stem from different ways of calculating how many *brachos* one makes each day. But all agree that every person can reach the number of one hundred on a regular daily schedule, if he washes his hands for bread at least twice a day. (See *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 46 1; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 3)

This is different on Shabbos and Yom Tov, because while during the week there are nineteen *brachos* in each one of the *Shemoneh Esreh tefillos*, on Shabbos and Yom Tov there are only seven *brachos* in each. Therefore, on these days, the number of *brachos* should be completed by eating fruits and confections and smelling *besamim* (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 290 1). Someone who does not have a way to complete the number can, *bedieved*, fulfill the obligation by having *kavanah* when listening to the *brachos* of those who have *aliyos* and *maftir*, and answering amen after them. (Ibid 284 3; *Magen Avraham* 46 8; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 14)

It should be noted that the Rishonim wrote that *Birchos Hashachar* were instituted so that a person can complete his quota of reciting *Meah Brachos* within his regular daily schedule, and should not need to make the effort to add *brachos* each day (*Tur Orach Chaim* 46; *Shu"t Min Hashamayim* 12)

For this reason, some have called *Birchos Hashachar* “*Meah Brachos*” because through them it is possible to complete the quota on a regular day. (*Hamaspek L'Ovdei Hashem* [Machon M---- Edition] Chapter 30)

Counting the Brachos

The author of *Seder Hayom* (ibid) wrote that despite, as stated, a person can usually be sure that he meets the quota of one hundred *brachos*, and more, still “It is good for a person to concentrate on his *brachos*, and to count them and keep count so that he should know how many *brachos* he makes that they are not less than one hundred each day. And anyone who adds, then [from Above] it is added for him.” The Brisker Rav even learned this from the words of the Rambam in *Hilchos Tefillah* (7 26): “And he counts all the *brachos* until he completes one hundred each day” (*Teshuvos Vehanhangos* 2 129).

Harav Yaakov Emden added that whenever a person makes a *brachah*, he should mark it down in a special pad. He wrote: “Whenever a person makes a *brachah*, it is a mitzvah to write it down, to know the number... and on Shabbos, he should make himself a little box in which he puts a number of fruits or nuts, in the number of *brachos* that he needs to make until he completes one hundred... This count is beloved by Hashem very much, and He will send blessing to the person, and will fill his years and his days...” (*Amudei Shamayim, Cheshbon Meah Brachos* 2 4)

From When Do We Count Meah Brachos

The *poskim* differ as to the time period in which the one hundred *brachos* are counted: Some think that we begin each day from the first *brachah* we make in the morning – *Al Netilas Yadayim*, and count until the next morning (the first opinion in *Sefer Ha'itim* 195; *Toras Chaim* [Harav Y.S. Sofer] *Orach Chaim* 46 10, in the opinion of the *Levush* there 1). The *Rema MiPano* brings an allusion to this from the wording of the *brachah Al Netilas Yadayim*, that ע is numerically equivalent to מאה. (*Kanfei Yona* Vol. II, 112)

But most of the *poskim* agree that we begin to count *Meah Brachos* each day from the emergence of the stars at night until the emergence of stars (*tzeis hakochavim*) the next night. (The ruling of the *Sefer Ha'itim* ibid; *Seder Hayom Seder Meah Brachos*; *Amudei Shamayim, Cheshbon Meah Brachos* 1; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* ibid. And see *Shu"t Betzel Hachochmah* Vol. IV 155)

More or Less Than One Hundred

The *Rema MiPano* (*Shu"t* 39) wrote that the *poskim* only counted the one hundred *brachos* that a person makes each day “for the lightweights of the world, so that they should not recite fewer.” But the *chassidim* [referring to pious people, not necessarily Chassidim] make more than one hundred *brachos* each day. Indeed, on this subject, the *Avudraham* wrote (*Birchas Hamitzvos Umishpeteiheim*) that anyone who adds to the one hundred *brachos* is praised. As Dovid Hamelech said (*Tehillim* 71:15): “My mouth will recite Your righteousness, all the days Your salvation, for I do not know their number.”

The Brisker Rav ruled that a person who sees that he will not be able to recite one hundred *brachos*, and needs to hear *brachos* from others in order to complete the quota [as cited above that *bedieved* one can fulfill the obligation by hearing the *brachos* of those who have *aliyos* to the Torah], there is no need for him to make the effort to recite more *brachos*. Because regarding the *halachah* of *Meah Brachos*, there is no difference if he made 80 *brachos* or 90, as long as he did not reach one hundred. He also practiced this: While each Shabbos, he had the *aliyah* of *maftir*, because this helped him reach the quota of one hundred *brachos* he made himself, on Yom Kippur, when he knew he would anyway need to add to his reckoning the *brachos* of those having *aliyos*, he was not strict about having *maftir* (*Kuntress Mitzvas Meah Brachos* [Rav A. Tucker] p. 35).

But some differ and hold that as long as a person does not reach the one hundred *brachos*, he has a mitzvah to make as many *brachos* as he can himself, even if he is sure that at the end of the day he still will not have accumulated *Meah Brachos*. (Ibid, citing Harav A. Genichovsky; *Ayeles Hashachar Devarim* 10:12)

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

Otzros Emunim

Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

The Practice of Rabi Chaim Palagi

Each morning, Reb Chaim Palagi would invite his children and grandchildren to him so they could recite *Birchos Hashachar* and he could answer *Baruch Hu uBaruch Shemo* and amen. (*Tzava'ah Mei'chaim, Hanhagos Hamechaber* 4)

The Practice of the Amshinover Rebbe

This is a fascinating testimony about the practice of Harav Meir of Amshinov, brought in *sefer Kesser Meluchah* (p. 311): I was a young man when I learned in one of the *yeshivos* in Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim, the neighborhood where Rav Meir of Amshinov resided. In the Rebbe's shul, there were many *minyanim* for *Shacharis* throughout the morning. Once, I was late to the *minyan* in yeshivah and I went to daven in Amshinov. I put on my *tefillin* and opened my *siddur* in order to start davening. Suddenly, I noticed that the Rebbe was standing right near me and waiting to hear the *Birchos Hashachar* from me. I was very moved, and I said the *brachos* carefully, word for word. The Rebbe stood throughout that time and listened attentively to my *brachos* and answered amen with *kavanah* and in a pleasant tone. When I finished, he thanked me gratefully. After I finished the *brachos* I noticed that the Rebbe lingered for a long time in the various *minyanim* to answer amen and *Amen, yehei Shemei rabba*. I was in the shul a number of times after that, and I always saw him circulating among people to answer amen to their *brachos*.

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

To the Editors of *Vechol Ma'aminim*

The work you do is very, very good; it is a spiritual pleasure for all levels and all ages. It is a *chiddush* to see how much you can add and be *mechadesh* on the lofty subject of amen. You present all this in a clear and pleasant language, with words that penetrate the heart.

A special thank you for the beautiful segments on *Meah Brachos*. I saw that you brought in the name of the Mabit (*Beis Elokim Shaar Hatefillah* 16) that the reason that Dovid Hamelech instituted *Meah Brachos* is because each day, exactly one hundred people died. This was not like other plagues, when each day different numbers of people died. *Chazal* say (*Bava Kama* 60a): "Because when permission is given to the destroyer, he does not differentiate between *tzaddikim* and *resha'im*." And here, exactly one hundred died. For this reason, the Mabit calls it "*me'ein mageifah*," a sort of *mageifah*.

Based on this we see that each and every *brachah* of the one hundred *brachos* saved a soul. I had a thought, that this is alluded to in amen that we answer to the *brachah*, as it is an acronym for מציל נפש אחת. A person who makes a *brachah* is told, look, you have saved a soul. That is why amen is so great and so important – because it is what reveals the virtue of the *brachah*.

Shmuel Green

Modiin Illit

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

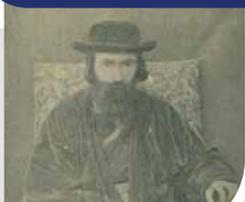


Photo of the first Rav of Jaffa Rav Naftali Hertz Halevi Windenbaum, zt"l

The Mekubal Rav Naftali Hertz Halevi Windenbaum, zt"l

14 Sivan 5662

Reb Naftali Hertz was born in Bialystok on 13 Cheshvan 5713, to his father, Reb Eliyahu Leib. In 5644,

he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Meah Shearim, where he taught in the yeshivah of Chevras Degel Torah. When they recognized his stature, they wanted to appoint him as a deputy to the elder Rav of the city, Harav Shmuel Salant, but ultimately, it became necessary to appoint him as the first Rav of Jaffa and the new colonies that had been established around it. He began serving in 5647 and he laid the foundation for Jewish life in the city.

While still in Bialystok, he became known for having tremendous knowledge of *Kabbalah*. He studied the *seforim* of *Kabbalah* written by the Gra, and edited some of them. He even printed the *Siddur HaGra* with his own explanations on the Gaon's words. He passed away in Yerushalayim on 12 Sivan 5662, at the age of fifty. He is buried on Har Hazeisim.

He wrote a beautiful letter addressing the *kavanah* of amen and its virtues. The entire letter is brought in *sefer Kesser Meluchah*, p. 273. Following are two excerpts:

A Request when Answering Amen

After he expounds on the deep *kavanos* of answering amen, he concludes: "And the advice for someone who cannot have all the *kavanos* mentioned...should have in mind when uttering the word that HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His *chesed*, will make all the *tikkunim* that need to be done with answering amen. The person should have in mind to ask for compassion from Hashem to perform all the mentioned *tikkunim* with His benevolence."

When Answering Amen, One Is Sanctified

He explains the words of *Chazal* (119b): "Anyone who answers amen with all his might has the Gates of Gan Eden open to him" as follows: "When he answers amen then the gates of Gan Eden are opened, because the gates are in this world – Torah and *mitzvos* are the gates to get into Gan Eden. When he answers amen with this *kavanah*, he causes the gates of wisdom to be opened, and Divine *Kedushah* and *Hashgachah* are bestowed upon him so that he can rise from one level to the next."