

Vechele Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Had Korach Gone to Sleep, He Would Have Been Saved

“וידבר אל קרח ואל כל עדתו לאמר בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו ואת הקדוש והקריב אליו” (טז ה)

Rashi explains (based on *Midrash Rabbah* 18 7) that Moshe pushed off Korach and his people until morning “perhaps they will repent.” Harav Pinchas of Koritz explained that because Korach was a *talmid chacham*, and Chazal say (*Brachos* 19a) “if a *talmid chacham* transgresses a sin at night, do not think about him during the day...for surely he has repented,” therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu thought that if he would push him off till the morning, surely he would do *teshuvah*. But in actuality, this move did not work, because the time when a *talmid chacham* repents is before he goes to sleep (see *Zohar Hakadosh* in this *parashah*, 178 1), and Korach did not go to sleep that night. Rather, he circulated among Bnei Yisral and tried to convince them to join his uprising against Moshe and Aharon. (*Rashi*, 16:19).

Imrei Pinchas

Minchah Is Effective for the Wicked as Well

“ויהר למשה מאד ויאמר אל ה' אל תפן אל מנחתם לא חמור אחד מהם נשאתי ולא הרעתי את אחד מהם” (טז טו)

Why did Moshe mention specifically “their *Minchah*” and not “their *korban*”?

Harav Yehonasan Eibshitz explained:

In contrast to a *korban behemiah* that is not willingly accepted if the one bringing it is not worthy, the *Minchah*, which

is the sacrifice of a poor person who could not afford an animal, is accepted even if the pauper is not worthy of it. This is because the poor person sacrifices the *Minchah* with a broken heart, as we say in the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 51:19): “*Zivchei Elokim ruach nishbarah lev nishbar venidkeh Elokim lo sivzeh*, the sacrifices of Hashem are a broken spirit; You will not despise a broken and crushed heart.” Therefore, when Korach was wicked enough to rise up against Moshe, Moshe only needed to daven that the *Minchah* – also accepted from *reshaim* – should not be accepted, because their *korban* would surely not have been accepted.

Rav Yehonasan added that this virtue is not only in a *Korban Minchah*, but also in *Tefillas Minchah*. Of all the *tefillas*, it alone can be accepted even from one who is wicked. As Chazal say (*Shabbos* 89b), l'Asid Lavo, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu will tell the Avos that their children have sinned, Avraham and Yaakov will say, “They should be eradicated for the sake of Your Holy Name.” Only Yitzchak, who instituted *Tefillas Minchah* (*Brachos* 26b) will plead for them, because Yitzchak had compassion also for the wicked, as we see that he even loved his son. For this reason, Chazal say (*Brachos* 6b): “A person should always be careful about *Tefillas Minchah*, because Eliyahu was only answered in *Tefillas Minchah*.” Even when Eliyahu sought to daven for his generation that strayed after the prophets of the *ba'al*, he was only answered at *Minchah*, which is effective and beneficial for the evil as well.

Tiferes Yehonasan

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

They Are All Miracles - Nothing Is Nature!

Throughout life, we often encounter events that, when we experience them, we remark something to the effect of “what a miracle!” Subconsciously, this description is reserved only for things that we are surprised at, things that we did not expect. But the truth is, that if would pause the race of our routines for a moment, and think about it, we would need to be emitting this cry every single moment.

We are familiar with the words of the Ramban (*Shemos* 13): “From the great and famous miracles, a person admits to the hidden miracles, which are the fundamental of the entire Torah. As a person does not have a share in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu until we believe, with all our words and our happenings, that they are all miracles, and there is no nature, or way of the world.”

A prominent example of those ‘hidden miracles,’ is the wondrous and coordinated function of the systems in our body. Just delving into this briefly should cause us to marvel every single second. In order to merit to thank Hashem properly for this, Chazal instituted a special *brachah* – *Asher Yatzar*. In a few short words, this *brachah* encapsulates the magnitude of this miracle.

This *brachah* is one of gratitude, but it also contains within it a tremendous request, directed at the Kisei Hakavod: “*Galuy veyadua lifnie Kisei Kevodecha*, it is known before Your Throne, Hashem, that if one of them opens or one of them is closed, it would be impossible to exist and to stand in front of you.” When we look Heavenwards and declare, ‘Ribbono shel Olam! We cannot manage on our own, even for one second – “for Your salvation I await!” – then there is no greater plea for mercy than this!

We have been taught that being strict about reciting the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* with *kavanah* is a *segulah* for healing. For that reason, I prefer to call it the *brachah* of ‘*Rofei Kol Basar*.’

Let us take heart that if the *segulah* of this *brachah* is so great, how much more so is answering amen after it so special, as we know, “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.”

If we take upon ourselves to be strict about reciting this *brachah* with the requisite seriousness, and we will be careful to answer amen after it, we will certainly merit an abundance of blessing and good from now and forever. Amen.

Good Shabbos,
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Tefillah Under a Hail of Bullets

It was the fourth day of Chanukah, the eve of 28 Kislev 5776/2016. Reb Shaul Nir and his wife, residents of Yerushalayim's Old City, were on the way home from a visit to their daughter and grandchildren who live on a *yishuv* in the Shomron. They planned to stop at the hospital to visit another daughter who had given birth to a son earlier that day. A few minutes after they got on the way, they heard a strange noise. It took just a second to realize that they had fallen into a terrorist ambush. Reb Shaul, who was injured from the gunfire, coolly pulled off the road into a canal and killed the motor. A strange silence enveloped them. Mrs. Nir looked at her husband, whose face was bloodied and whose hand hung limply on the wheel. "I think I've been hit," Reb Shaul moaned. "Me too," she replied.

Even after the vehicle was already riddled with bullets, the gunfire did



The Nir family's car after the attack

not cease. Reb Shaul began to lose consciousness, and his wife began to imagine that they were ascending to the world where all is good. She felt bad for her children, who would sit *shivah*, and suddenly remembered. The day they would get up from *shivah* would be the day of the *bris* of their newest grandchild...

This thought broke her heart, and helped her snap out of the shocked state she was in, and do what a Jew does at such moments – to cry out to Hashem. "Ribbono shel Olam, please, do not turn my daughter's *simchah* into a time of pain. Please, do everything possible so that we should be able to participate in the *bris*..." She then began to murmur *Tehillim*, and did not forget to thank Hashem for the abundant good He has blessed her with.

Suddenly, there was silence. The

shooting had stopped. At that moment, a car stopped next to them and a man who appeared to be an Arab emerged, wearing light colored clothes. He approached their car, and they trembled in fear. Was he the shooter?! He looked at the casualties, and asked Mrs. Nir for her husband's name. "Shaul," she replied. Surprisingly, the man turned to Shaul and soothed him gently, "Shaul, Shaul, don't worry, everything will be fine. You're going to be fine, *b'ezrat Hashem!*"

The Arab stood next to them for a few moments, which felt like eternity, giving encouragement to Shaul and trying to keep him conscious, until rescue services finally arrived from the closest settlement. At that moment, he disappeared without another word.

Only twenty precious minutes later did an ambulance come to take Reb Shaul to the nearest hospital – Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba.

When the paramedics saw the extent of his wounds, and his deteriorating condition, they decided to stop midway, and transfer him to a mobile intensive care unit that they had summoned. After a short assessment, the doctors in the MICU decided to change the destination to Beilinson Hospital. Miraculously, Reb Shaul was able to give over his personal information – after which his body went into organ failure. He arrived at

the hospital in very serious condition, and was taken to the operating room for surgery on his head.

During the surgery, the doctors fought for Reb Shaul's life. At the end, the doctor emerged, marveling to Shaul's family waiting outside: "Your father merited a miracle! A bullet like this should have shattered his skull and entered his brain, but it was stopped by the bone. It's a miracle, and his life was saved!"

Later, it emerged that his more significant injuries were on his leg. But there, too, there was clear *Hashgachah pratis*, as the bullets struck half a centimeter above and half a centimeter below the joints. This spared him from irreparable damage.

While on the way to the hospital, Mrs. Nir quickly called some of the staff members in the *yeshivos* that

her husband was connected with, and asked them to organize *tefillos* for her husband. "He's very badly injured, only *tefillos* can help him," she pleaded.

Only when she arrived at the hospital did she realize that the bag she had been holding on her lap was full of water. She looked inside and saw that the bottle of water inside was full of bullets – which had been aimed at her. In her wallet, she found a ten-shekel coin that had been pierced by a bullet. HaKadosh Baruch Hu had given her Chanukah *gelt*, she mused...

The doctors checked her, and could not contain their surprise. Of the dozens of bullets that had whistled around her, only two had hit her. One had entered her leg, but did not damage the bone or important muscles. The other one was stopped by a bracelet she was wearing, and barely scraped her thumb tissue.

Mrs. Nir was quickly released and hurried to her husband's side. He was unconscious, and the doctors did not know if his brain had been affected. Through the week, dozens of *yeshivos* and *kollelim* davened and took on *kabbalos* for his recovery. And miraculously, after a week of tension, on the day of the *bris*, he woke up.

Mrs. Nir merited to participate at the *bris*, as she had prayed.

The Nir family heard the magnitude of the miracle they had experienced from GSS agents who investigated the incident. "You were saved by a miracle," they said. "You were shot at by two terrorists armed with automatic weapons and a pistol. Even when you went into that canal, they ran after you and literally emptied their weapons onto your car. But then some Arab – whose identity we cannot figure out – stopped them as he protected your car with his body."

"Maybe it was Eliyahu Malach Habris who was sent to save us," Mrs. Nir thought to herself. Who knows...

The miracles did not end there. Reb Shaul had been badly wounded in his leg. The doctors were pessimistic about his chances of being able to walk again. In any case, they expected it to take a few years to recover from the wounds, but in reality, just a few months later, on Simchas Torah, he was already dancing with his community like a young man. Amazing!

Heard from a family member

The Brachah of 'Vele'Yerushalayim'

Source of the Brachah

In the *brachah* of *Al Hatziddikim*, we asked Hashem to elevate the value of the *tzaddikim*, and after that, it is a fitting time to ask for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. That is because only after Yerushalayim is built, and peace will reign within it, will the *tzaddikim* who love Yerushalayim be able to dwell in tranquility, as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 122:6): “*Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim yishlayu* [they will live in peace] *ohavayich* [those who love You]” (*Megillah* 17b; *Maharsha* Vol. I, *ibid*).

Likewise, as long as the *tzaddikim* are degraded, the Shechinah commiserates with their plight, and only after we daven for the elevation of the *tzaddikim*, can we ask for the Geulah. Because of the connection between these two *brachos*, this *brachah* begins with the letter “*vav*”, which connects the two, as if it is a continuation of the previous *brachah*. (*Iyun Tefillah* in *Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*)

Structure of the Brachah

In the *Rishonim* we find two *nuschaos* to the opening of this *brachah*. Some say it should begin with the words: “*Tishkon besoch Yerushalayim ircha*” (*Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos*, Rav Y. Ben Yakar Vol. I, p. 57; *Avudraham*). There are others who stipulate that we should begin by saying “*Vele'Yerushalayim ircha berachamim tashuv*” (*Peirushei Seder Hatefillah L'Rokeach* 55; *Tur Orach Chaim* 118). The *siddur Daas Kedoshim* brings an explanation: When the Bais Hamikdash stood and served the Shechinah in Yerushalayim, it was not possible to ask for the return of the Shechinah. At that time, they opened the *brachah* with “*Tishkon besoch Yerushalayim*.” Only after the Shechinah departed during the Churban was the opening changed to “*Vele'Yerushalayim ircha berachamim tashuv*.”

Further in the *brachah* we ask: “*Uvnei osah bekarov beyameinu binyan olam*.” Shouldn't we first ask “*uvnei osah*” and then “*vesishkon besochah*, dwell in it”?

At the beginning of the *brachah*, our intention is to also ask about the return of Hashem to Yerushalayim shel Ma'alah, as alluded to by the words “*Vele'Yerushalayim ircha*” [likewise the addition of the letter *vav* to “*Vele'Yerushalayim*” indicates that we are asking about another ‘Yerushalayim’ – and that is Yerushalayim shel Ma'alah], and when Hashem will return to it, then Yerushalayim shel Matah will also be sustained. “*Uvnei osah bekarov beyameinu binyan olam*,” as HaKadosh Baruch Hu said (*Taanis* 5a): “I will not come to Yerushalayim Shel Ma'alah until I come to Yerushalayim shel Matah.” (*Eitz Yosef, Siddur Otzar Hatefillos; Binyan Shlomo* Vol. II, *Orach Chaim* 45. And see *Peirushei Siddur Hatefillah L'Rokeach* 55).

Essence of the Brachah

In this *brachah* we ask for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. The Shevet Halevi explained that the request here is not for the actual Geulah, because we are promised that and await it every day. Rather, we have two requests for how it should take place. One, “*Vele'Yerushalayim ircha berachamim tashuv*” – that we should be redeemed with the *middah* of *rachamim*, compassion; and two, “*uvnei osah bekarov beyameinu*” – that it should happen speedily, without delay (*Avodas Halevi, Tefillah*, p. 375).

Further along in the *brachah* we ask: “*Vekisei Dovid [avdecha] meheirah lesochah tachin*.” It would seem more fitting to place this request in the next *brachah* of *Es Tzemach Dovid*. Indeed, there are those who do not say this request (see *Likutei Mahari"ch Seder Shemoneh Esreh*, and this is the view of the *Rambam* and the *Avudraham*). However, *sefer Pri Eitz Chaim (Sha'ar Ha'amidah* 19) brings that the Ari Hakadosh once looked at the forehead of a person who skipped this phrase and said to him, “You haven't davened a complete *Shemoneh Esreh* even once in your life!”

The *Bach (Orach Chaim* 118) explained that this request is part of the request for building Yerushalayim. First we ask “*uvnei osah...*” regarding the building of Yerushalayim and the Bais Hamikdash, and then we ask that the throne of Dovid be built within it, as it should be ready for his arrival in the city so that he can rule. Because included in the building of the city is the building of the *beis tefillah* and the house of the king.

The Mikdash Was Built in Our Time

Harav Naftali Tzvi of Ropschitz explained that in the request of “*Uvnei osah bekarov beyameinu*,” we mean to ask that Hashem should build Yerushalayim ‘in our day’, meaning through these days. Because when a person serves his Creator, he is in essence building Yerushalayim and the Bais Hamikdash. “There is one who builds an entire row in one day, and one who puts one brick, each one based on his service, until it is built in its entirety” (*Zera Kodesh, Ki Seitzei*). For that reason, we conclude this *brachah* with the words “*Boneh Yerushalayim*” – in the present tense, because it is built slowly each day through our deeds. (*Divrei Shmuel Bechukosai*)

The *Sfas Emes (Devarim* 5634) explained that this is what *Chazal* meant when they said (*Yerushalmi Yoma* 1 1) “Every generation in which the [Bais Hamikdash] is not rebuilt, it is considered as if they destroyed it.” Yet, we have seen generations that had tremendous *tzaddikim* and *kedoshim* and the Bais Hamikdash was not rebuilt. How can we say that it is considered that the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed in their times? But *Chazal* mean that when there is a lowly generation that does not have people who wish to accept the Yoke of Heaven properly, the Bais Hamikdash Shel Ma'alah does not continue to be built in those days “and it is considered as if that generation destroyed it.”

Kavanah of Amen

It is true that You will rebuild Yerushalayim, and may it be Your will that You build it very soon and return to dwell in it.

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

Otzros Emunim

Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

Distributing Billions Each Morning

As is known, the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Aharon Yehuda Leib Steinman, instituted that in the *neitz minyan* that took place in his home, the *mispallelim* should first recite *Birchos Hashachar* to one another. The Rosh Yeshivah suddenly began implementing this practice one morning, when at the end of the *shiur* that he delivered at dawn, before davening, he urged the *mispallelim* to each recite *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, and everyone would answer amen after them. He would do the same thing. His *talmid*, Rav Avraham Kessler, author of *Notrei Amen* (Vol. II, p. 26) described it:

“An hour before *vasikin*, when dawn breaks, in the home of Moreinu, *shlita*, [zt”l] there is a *shiur* on *Zevachim*. One day, there was a distribution of lots of loot... ‘billions...billions!’ he declared...Let us strengthen ourselves, he began to those who were at the *shiur*. About fifteen minutes before davening, each one will say *Birchos Hashachar* out loud, and the listeners will answer amen. And here, he continued warmly and with enthusiasm to speak about the virtue of answering amen, and this is what he said...”:

When we are in this world, we do not understand the importance of amen, that it is worth billions of billions, and we do not appreciate it. But in the World to Come, every amen will help, and if one amen is lacking, this lack will be strongly felt, because even one amen can save a person.

Once, Yidden were very strict about answering amen, and they would look for another amen and another, to the point that they would go from person to person to hear the *brachos* and answer amen. And they also used to recite *Birchos Hashachar* aloud so that they could answer amen after them. This is a very good thing, as they would give others the merits of *mitzvos*.

Regret for Losing an Amen

Harav Simcha Rubin of Sassov-London, had a great love for the mitzvah of answering amen. He would always walk among the *mispallelim* of the *beis medrash* to be able to answer amen after their *brachos*. Once, he was a few minutes late, and when he entered, the *shaliach tzibbur* was already in the middle of *Birchos Hashachar*. He felt a deep sense of regret at that time that he had lost out on one opportunity to answer a few amens.” (*Kovetz Kol HaTorah*, 57, p. 108)

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

Dear Vechol Ma'aminim,

I thoroughly enjoyed the segment by the founder and Nasi of your organization, which produces so much *chizuk* for answering amen around the world. He wrote there, that in light of the words of the *Zohar* that a *brachah* not answered by amen is not a complete *brachah*, and that not only the one answering needs to pursue the amen, but so does the *mevarech*. In fact, this is already found in the ruling of the Rema in the *halachos* of *betzias hapas* (*Orach Chaim* 167 2): “And the *mevarech* should have *kavanah* on the amen that they say.” The *Mishneh Berurah* explains (ibid 20): “By answering amen the *brachah* is made more important.”

I thought that this is perhaps what was said by the wisest of all men (*Koheles* 4:9): “*Tovim hashnayim min ha'echad asher yesh sachar tov b'amalam.*” In other words, when saying a *brachah* it is good that there should be two people, and not only one [the *mevarech*], because this way the *brachah* is perfect “and they have good reward for their toil” – referring to both the *mevarech* and the one who answers.

With admiration and appreciation,
M. Weiss, Haifa

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



Harav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, zt”l

Harav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz 26 Sivan 5771

Harav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was born in 5674 to his father, Rav Moshe Dovid. As a *bochur*, he travelled to Vilna to learn in the Rameilles Yeshivah, under the Rosh Yeshivah

Harav Shlomo Heiman, who he considered his *Rebbi muvhak*. In time, he even published Rav Heiman's *shiurim* in the *sefer Chiddushei Rabi Shlomo*.

In 5695, after the passing of his father, he came with his family to Eretz Yisrael and began learning in Yeshivas Chevron in Yerushalayim. After his marriage, he moved to Bnei Brak, where he became very close to the Chazon Ish.

When the Ponevezher Rav established Yeshivas Ponevezh LeTzeiirm, he appointed Rav Michel Yehuda to lead it, alongside Harav Aharon Leib Steinman, zt”l. For the next sixty years, he delivered *shiurim* in the yeshivah, and taught thousands of *talmidim*, among them those who became renowned *rabbanim*, *roshei yeshivah* and *talmidei chachamim*. He compiled his *chiddushim* in his series of *seforim* entitled *Minchas Yehuda* on *Shas*. He passed away on 26 Sivan 5771 and is buried in the Ponevezh Cemetery in Bnei Brak.

A Segulah to Straighten the Mind

Listening to *Chazaras Hashatz* from the *siddur* and answering amen to every *brachah* is a great *segulah* to help straighten one's mind. (*Darchoi Hachaim*, Vol. I, p. 334)

One Hundred Brachos Lead to Yirah

The obligation to recite one hundred *brachos* a day is derived by *Chazal* from the *passuk* (*Devarim* 10:12): “*V'atah Yisrael mah [meah] Hashem Elokecha sho'el mei'imach ki im leyirah.*” This can be understood to mean that reciting *Meah Brachos* needs to bring a person to *Yiras Hashem*, and what value does a *brachah* have if it is said out of habit without any attention? A person must pause before he starts to make the *brachah*, so he knows what he is about to say. And during the *brachah* he should concentrate on the meaning of the words. (*Darchoi Hachaim* Vol. I, p. 344)