

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Tearing Up the Decree in Merit of Answering Amen

“נאם שמע אמרי א-ל אשר מזהה ש-די יהזה” (כד ה)

Harav Moshe of Komarna explained:

נאם has the same letters as אמן – the *passuk* is alluding that a person must answer amen whenever he “שמע אמרי א-ל” hears the words of Hashem, which refers to the praise of Hashem said in the *brachah*. [The word אמרי א-ל can also be explained as saying words of praise, see *Rashi Tehillim* 94:4.] And the *passuk* details his reward: “*Machazeh Shakai yechezeh*,” meaning he will merit to see his decree torn up (see *Shabbos* 119b; *Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1), as the Name ש-די alludes to it, as *Chazal* say (*Tanchuma Mikeitz* 10) that Yaakov “would daven with ש-די” and say: the One [at Creation] who told the Heaven and Earth די should tell my suffering די, enough.”

Shalshelas Komarna p. 374

The ‘Beis Knesses’ of Yaakov Avinu

“מה טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתיך ישראל” (כד ה)

The *Targum Yerushalmi* explains this *passuk* to mean, how good are the tents in which Yaakov their father prayed. From here we learn that Bilam mentioned specifically the shul in which Yaakov Avinu davened. Harav Yissachar Dov Babad, the Rav of Buska derived a source for this *minhag* of trying to daven in the place where a great person davened in the past.

However, Harav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, Rosh Yeshivah of Be'er Yaakov, asked: Didn't Bilam come to praise the “tents” and the “*mishkanim*” of the members of the Dor Hamidbar? Why is he calling them in the name of Yaakov, who lived centuries earlier?

He explained: Yaakov Avinu is the one that established for generations the special significance of a *makom tefillah*, a specific place to daven. As we find (*Chulin* 91b), after he came

to Charan and he remembered: “Is it possible that I passed the place where my ancestors prayed and I didn't pray?!” and he hurried to retrace his steps in order to pray where his forebears did – in Bais Kel. So we find that the great *segulah* of the shuls throughout the generations as a ‘*makom tefillah*’ is only from the power of Yaakov Avinu's conduct that instituted this *segulah*, and that is why the shuls are forever called in his name.

Otzar Yad Hachaim, Klalim, Bais Haknesses; Zahav Mishva

Four Brachos When Welcoming Melech HaMashiach

“אראנו ולא עתה אשורנו ולא קרוב דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מישראל ומחזיך פאתי מואב וקרקר כל בני שת” (כד י)

The *Ramban* explained that with this *passuk*, Bilam prophesied about the Geulah of Am Yisrael with the arrival of Melech HaMashiach, may it be speedily in our day. Harav Shmuel Hominer wrote that those that will merit to see the arrival of Mashiach will have to recite four *brachos*:

1. *Chacham Harazim* – for the tens of thousands of people that will come to welcome Mashiach, and as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 58a, based on *Rashi*) that this *brachah* is said when seeing six hundred thousand Jews.

2. *Shechalak Michochmaso Liyerei'av* – as *Chazal* instituted (ibid) to recite on seeing the sages of Torah.

3. *Shechalak Mikvodo Liyerei'av* – as *Chazal* instituted (ibid) to recite when seeing the Kings of Yisrael.

4. *Shehecheyanu Vekiyemanu Vehigianu Lazman Haze* – as is the *halachah* for one to recite after seeing a beloved friend after more than thirty days (ibid 58b, based on the *Tosafos*, ad loc. *Haro'eh*). If that is the case, how much more so one must make this *brachah* when seeing Melech haMashiach for whom we are waiting for so many generations.

Shu"t Minchas Shlomo Vol. 1, 91 27

Rising to Answer Amen

For as long as I can remember, whenever I read the words in the *parashah* praising Am Yisrael (*Bamidbar* 23:24): “*Hen am kelavi yakum uk'ari yisnasa*, behold a people that rises like a young lion, and lifts itself up like a lion” I think about the words of *Rashi* there. He writes: “When they rise from their slumber in the morning, they are as vigorous as the young lion and the lion, to snatch the *mitzvos*...” What does “snatching” have to do with *mitzvos*? Isn't it better to prepare properly, calmly, and to do the *mitzvos* at a slower pace?

With *siyata diShamya*, I saw in *sefer Toldos Yaakov*, by one of the early sages (Rabi Yaakov Di Elba of Italy who lived about 400 years ago), who revealed to us that the acronym of the final letter of the words כלביא הן עם כלביא allude to the holy word אמן, and its merit prevented Bilam from cursing Am Yisrael!

If so, we can clearly understand the reason for alacrity. Anyone who knows the value of amen cannot bring himself to miss even one amen. Therefore, he strengthens himself like a lion to rise in the morning, in order to be able to come to shul early, before davening, at a time when many *brachos* are ‘bouncing around’ the shul from the mouths of the *mispalleim*, so that he can ‘snatch’ more and more amens...

Indeed, it is worthy to hurry each morning to shul, and to go from one *mispallel* to another, to listen to his *brachos* and to answer amen after him. Fortunate is the one who merits to snatch as many of these diamonds of amen as he can, and to enrich his trove of *mitzvos* with them.

The *dorshei reshumos*, the record keepers, added another *passuk* as proof of the custom of Am Yisrael to rush to the shul in the morning to merit answering amen to *Birchos Hashachar*: The acronym of the *passuk* (*Shir Hashirim* 1:4): “משכני אהריך נרוצה” is amen, and the acronym of the second letter of each word is שחר. From here we learn to run to snatch the amens of *Birchos Hashachar*.

Let us learn and remember that with relative ease, by coming a few minutes early to the *beis medrash*, we can merit so many amens, which will protect us from those seeking to harm us, and will bring about for us days of happiness and goodness always. Amen.

Good Shabbos,
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Amen Serves as the Defending Forces

This story was shared nine years ago by Harav Simcha Hakohein Kook, *zt"l*, the Rav of Rechovot, who was taken from us just recently. He related the story during a Bney Emunim *chizuk* event, and may his words and the *chizuk* they engender be in his memory.

This story was heard by Harav Kook from Professor Avraham Sofer, one of the senior physicians in Shaare Zedek Hospital, who witnessed it. He related:

One day, an elderly Jew of about seventy-five years old was brought into the internal medicine ward after contracting severe pneumonia and running a very high fever. Such a state, at his age, could rapidly deteriorate into a life-threatening situation, and therefore, the doctors on my team hurried to connect him to an infusion. We were thus able to administer strong antibiotics.



Harav Simcha Hakohein Kook, *zt"l*, speaking at a Bney Emunim event.

Baruch Hashem, his body reacted quickly to the treatment and within a few days, his condition improved and we told the family that, *b'ezras Hashem*, before Shabbos he would be released.

But Above it was ordained otherwise. Two days later, his condition again began to deteriorate. His fever rose even higher than it had been, which made it necessary to increase the antibiotics. Before Shabbos, he again stabilized; his fever went down, and he seemed to be recovering. During Shabbos, this recovery continued, but surprisingly, when Shabbos ended, again he deteriorated – until his condition was even worse than before.

At this point, we began to worry. I convened the doctors for an emergency meeting, at the end of

which we decided that because the antibiotics did not seem to be working, we had no choice but to give him a different medication. It was not usually prescribed for pneumonia, but in some cases, it had been proven effective.

Despite its effectiveness, we knew that using this medication involved serious side-effects, and there was a risk of further deterioration, especially for someone in his condition. Therefore, as is customary in such situations, before we began giving the medication, we summoned the patient's children. We explained the severity of his condition, and told them that in our view, the only way we could save him was with this drug. We also emphasized that although there was a certain risk to his life by taking it, we hoped that with the *tefillos* that we and they would offer, we would merit that the medicine would have the desired effect.

After they consulted their Rav, the family gave their consent. But in the interim, the patient's condition had deteriorated drastically; he lost consciousness, and his life seemed to be hanging in the balance. Still, we began to administer the drug, and the children stood and watched us, davening fervently, and very afraid of what was going to happen.

With *siyata diShmaya*, and with open miracles, within a short time, the medication began to take effect. The infection cleared up and slowly, the patient began to stabilize. A few days later, he opened his eyes and looked around in confusion. Only when he saw the expressions on his family's faces did he realize how serious his condition had been. When he grew a bit stronger and was able to talk, he began to relate this amazing story:

"After I lost consciousness, and was at death's door, I found myself in a big, magnificent hall. In front of me where the members of the Bais Din Shel Ma'alah, Heavenly Angels, discussing if my time had come to enter the Upper Worlds yet, or if I

should be returned to life. On one side stood the prosecuting forces, airing their claims, and on the other side stood the defenders, trying to offer merits on my behalf.

At one point, it seemed that the prosecuting forces would prevail, and the Bais Din was going to grant me entry to the Upper Worlds. But then, from the corner of the hall, I heard a very familiar voice. It was the voice of the Rav of the shul where I have davened for the last thirty years, and he wanted to offer a favorable judgement of me. He said: 'Listen please, Rabbosai, honored Dayanim. For the past thirty years, I have served as the Rav of the shul where this person davened, and I can testify that in all those years, he was strict to rise early to go to shul, and to participate in a regular *shiur* that takes place before *Shacharis*. Because of this, he was never late to *Shacharis*, even once. Aside for that, he was strict to guard his tongue from forbidden words, especially from speaking about mundane matters in shul. If that is not enough, he was particular each morning to listen to *Birchos Hashachar* from many *mispallelim*, and to answer amen aloud and with *kavanah*.

'He also managed to influence many other *mispallelim* to adopt this practice, until our shul was called, in his merit, the Beis Knesses shel Onei Amen, the shul of those who answer amen.'

Apparently the Rav's words tipped the scale, because immediately, a voice announced that I was decreed to live, and that I could return to this world to continue to learn and to serve Hashem. At that moment, I opened my eyes. And here I am, with you, *bechasdei Shamayim*, safe and on the road to recovery."

When he finished the story, Rav Kook wiped an emotional tear from his eye and told the audience: "This Yid illustrated for all of us how great is the power of a person who gets up to go to the *beis medrash*, who treats it with respect, and dedicates his time spent there to learning, davening and answering amen properly."

The Brachah of 'Shema Koleinu'

Source of the Brachah

After the *brachos* of Geulah, Chazal instituted that we ask that our prayers be accepted, as we find that they placed Geulah next to *tefillah*, as it says (*Yeshaya* 56:7): “*Vehaviosim el har kodshi vesimachtim bevais tefillasi*, I will bring them to My holy mount, and I will cause them to rejoice in My house of prayer.” (*Megillah* 18a, based on *Sfas Emes* ibid)

However, don't we pray three times a day even while we are in *galus*? So what special connection is there between Geulah and *tefillah*? The answer is that only after the complete Redemption, when the Shechinah will dwell in the Bais Hamikdash, will the *tefillos* be accepted in their entirety (*Sifsei Chaim – Rinas Chaim – Biurei Tefillos* 18, p. 208)

Moreover, the *tefillah* that is desired by Hashem is the one said with joy, as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 100:2): “*Ivdu es Hashem besimchah bo'u Lefanav birnanah*, serve Hashem with happiness, come before Him with joy.” And reaching the state of *tefillah* with inner joy, which is a perfect *tefillah*, will only be possible after Mashiach ben Dovid comes to redeem us. We can derive this from the words of the *passuk* cited by Chazal as a source for placing this *brachah* after the *brachah* of Geulah – “*Vesimachtim bevais tefillasi*.” (*Ohr Hachamah, Megillah*, ibid)

Structure of the Brachah

In this *brachah*, we ask that even if a person's *tefillah* is not worthy of being accepted, Hashem should have mercy on us and accept it with compassion:

“*Shema Koleinu*” – even if our *tefillah* is just a ‘*kol*’ just a random voice, and we do not have the proper *kavanah* when saying it, please accept it with compassion. This point is emphasized in the conclusion of the *brachah* as well: “*Ki Atah shomea tefillas kol peh*” – even if it is a *tefillah* said only “*bepeh*,” by mouth, and without *kavanah* (*Bais Elokim* [Mabit] *Shaar Hatefillah* Chapter 3)

Furthermore, it is explained: “*Shema Koleinu*” – without taking into account our spiritual situation. Even though the *passuk* says (*Shir Hashirim* 2:14), “Let me hear your voice, for your voice is pleasant and your appearance is comely,” in other words: First show me that the *Tzelem Elokim* is etched on your face and only then “let me hear your voice.” This is because your “voice is pleasant” only when “your appearance is comely.” Nevertheless, we ask “*Shema koleinu*” – even if our appearance has been blackened, and the *Tzelem Elokim* is no longer on our face. (*Maggid Tzedek* in *Siddur Sha'ar Harachamim*)

When we say “*Umilfanecha Malkeinu reikam al teshiveinu*,” we ask that even if we are not worthy of having all our *tefillos* accepted, please, do not turn our requests away “*reikam*” – completely empty. Rather, at least accept some of our *tefillos*, as Chazal said (*Vayikra Rabbah* 10 5): “*Tefillah* accomplishes half.” (*Bais Elokim* ibid; *Eitz Yosef*)

Essence of the Brachah

This *brachah* completes the series of the “*Middle Brachos*” in which a person asks for his personal needs. Therefore, it behooves a person to have a lot of *kavanah*, that Hashem should hear his *tefillos* and requests that he asked in these *brachos* and should accept them with compassion. (*Emek Brachah* [by the father of the Shelah] *Shemoneh Esreh* end of 32)

Chazal say (*Brachos* 31b) that in this *brachah* a person can add the personal requests that he needs. The *Ye'aros Devash* (Vol. I, *Drush* 1) expounds and teaches us that a person needs to daven for all his needs here, small and big. He should ask about everything that he needs to do that day, and that Hashem should guide him on the right path and help him succeed.

The *Ye'aros Devash* added that one who adds a personal request while reciting this *brachah* is still *yotzei* with “*tefillah gemurah*” because a personal request is certainly said with *kavanah* and not by rote. There is an explanation that notes that the *Ye'aros Devash* wanted to teach us that one who davens the *nusach* of *tefillah* that was instituted by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, without having *kavanah* in his *tefillah*, does not fulfill the obligation of *tefillah* from the Torah. Even though the Torah did not establish a *nusach* and fixed time for *tefillah*, and from the Torah a person fulfills his obligation by making a request with any *nusach* at least once a day (*Rambam Tefillah* 1, 1-2), it is not for naught that the Torah calls *tefillah* “*avodas halev*” (*Devarim* 11:13, based on *Taanis* 2a). The *din* is that the *tefillah* must be said with *kavanah* of the heart. So we find that sometimes, only when a person includes a personal request in his *tefillah*, because that is normally said with *kavanah*, does he fulfill his obligation for *tefillah min haTorah* by doing this. (*Kuntress Hatzava'ah* [Rav S. Tfiliniski] 10:3)

The Sound of Our Tefillos Should Be Favored

The *Gemara* (*Taanis* 25b) says that Shmuel Hakatan once decreed a fast because of a drought. Even before the people managed to fast and pray, the rains began to fall. The nation thought that this was complimentary for the *tzibbur* that Hashem provided their needs even before they had time to daven for it. But Shmuel said that this was not praiseworthy, because they are compared to a servant who wants to ask for a gift from the king, and the king does not want to see him. Therefore, he says to his ministers: “Give it to him so I don't have to hear his voice.”

Based on this, the Maggid Harav Pinchas of Plotzk explained that this is what we ask at the beginning of this *brachah*: “*Shema Koleinu*” and only afterwards “*chuss verachem aleinu*,” because by You listening to our voice we will understand that the sounds of our *tefillos* are favored by HaKadosh Baruch Hu. (*Maggid Tzedek* in *Siddur Sha'ar Harachamim*)

Kavanah of Amen

It is true that You listen to our *tefillah*, and may it be Your Will that You listen to our *tefillos*.

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

Otzros Emunim

Reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

A Parting Gift from the Rebbe of Yaroslav

The Rebbe, Harav Shmuel Abba of Zichlin, once came to Lodz to serve as a *sandak* in the home of one of his *chassidim*. The *chassidim*, who wanted the Rebbe to remain in their city for Shabbos, set their clocks for a later hour, and because they knew that the Rebbe didn't have a watch, they were sure that when he would see the late hour, he would remain in Lodz instead of returning to Zichlin. They were thus very surprised that when the Rebbe saw the fast clocks, he smiled and said, 'You can't fool me,' and as he spoke, he gathered his *tzitzis* in his hand and noted the exact time.

"The Rebbe Harav Shimon of Yaroslav taught me this skill when I was a child," the Rebbe told his astonished *chassidim*. "It was a *hakaras hatov* for the fact that whenever he could come to my native city, Lowicz, I would make sure to answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* that he recited. Each morning, when the Rebbe of Yaroslav said *Birchos Hashachar*, the children of the community would gather around him and answer amen. I was about six when the Rebbe came to Lowicz. Before davening, I approached him, heard his *brachos* and answered amen. After he finished making the *brachos*, the Rebbe asked that every time he came to the city, I should come and answer amen to his *brachos*, which I did.

"On his final visit to Lowicz, the Rebbe called me after davening and expressed his satisfaction for me having come to answer amen after his *brachos*. He told me this helped him daven. In gratitude, he taught me how I could know the exact hour by looking at my *tzitzis*." (*Ohel Shimon* [Jerusalem Edition 5770] p. 19)

The Will of the Rebbe of Partseva

In the will of the Rebbe, Harav Nosson Dovid of Partzova, he addressed the importance of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and instructed his *chassidim*: "Each one should say *Birchos Hashachar* and his friends should answer amen." (*V'Elu Hadevarim Shene'emru L'Dovid, Hatzava'ah* 28)

The Practice of Harav Moshe Aryeh Freund

Each day, the Gaavad, Harav Moshe Aryeh Freund would come into the *bais medrash* wearing *tallis* and *tefillin*. He went over to his place and began to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in a loud voice so that others should answer amen after him. When he finished, he waited for the *shaliach tzibbur* to come and recite the *brachos* aloud so that he could answer amen. (*Moshe Raya Mehemna*, Vol. I, p. 58)

Igros Emunim

Readers' Letters

Dear Vechol Ma'aminim, and Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*,

In the pamphlet of *Parashas Beha'alo'secha*, you pointed out that answering amen protects us from our enemies who rise up against us, as the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* writes (*Rabbah* 11): In the merit of who does HaKadosh Baruch Who exact punishment on the nations of the world on behalf of Klal Yisrael? In the merit of people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* in the morning and evening and answer amen, and bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu with amen."

I had a thought, that there is a double allusion to this: In the *brachah* of Geulah of *Maariv*, in which we thank Hashem for saving us from our enemies, we say: "*Ha'Oseh gedolos ad ein cheker nissim veniflaos ad ein mispar...haOseh lanu nissim unekamah bePharaoh osos umofsim b'admas bnei Cham.*" The words *אין מספר אין ניסים* are an acronym for *אמן* and the acronym of the words *העושה העולה לנו ניסים ונקמה* is equal to amen.

The merit of answering amen should advocate for all of us to merit to see the revenge of Hashem on those who hate Am Yisrael with the arrival of the Go'el to Tzion may it be speedily in our day, amen.

Ephraim Weiss,
Kiryat Gat

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The ohel on the kever of the Ateres Tzvi, זי"א, in Zidichoiv, Ukraine.

The Ateres Tzvi 11 Tammuz 5591

The Rebbe Harav Tzvi Hirsh Eichenstein of Zidichoiv was born his father, Harav Yitzchak Eizik, in the village of Safrin in Hungary. He was a giant in *Toras HaniStar*, and one of the great sages of *Toras HaSod*. The *gedolim* of his generation called him the Sar Bais Hazohar. He

engaged extensively in *tzedakah* and *chessed*, and merited to marry off forty orphaned *chassanim* and *kallos*. He was a *talmid* of the Chozeh of Lublin, and also was a *chassid* of Harav Baruch of Mezhibuzh.

He began to lead his community in the lifetime of his Rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin, and after the passing of Harav Naftali Tzvi of Ropschitz, he was considered the leading Rebbe in Galicia. The Divrei Chaim of Sanz would say that when one said just 'Rebbe' in Galicia, they meant the Ateres Tzvi. The Divrei Yechezkel compared traveling to his *tziyun* on the *yahrtzeit* to traveling to Kezer Rashbi on Lag BaOmer.

He authored *sefer Ateres Tzvi* on the *Zohar Hakadosh*; *Pri Kodesh Hilulim* on *sefer Pri Eitz Chaim* and other *seforim*. He passed away on 11 Tammuz 5591 and was laid to rest in the cemetery in Zidichoiv.

Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa

He wrote that he heard from his Rebbe, the Chozeh, that one should say *Birchos Hashachar* in shul, *betzibbur*, so that others should answer amen to the *brachos*. He concluded by stating: "And a *brachah* without amen is literally half a body, as is well known." (*Pri Kodesh Hilulim, Shaar Habrachos*, Ch. 4)

Ninety Amens Before Davening

The early sages wrote that one needs to answer ninety amens a day to *brachos*. The *Ateres Tzvi* wrote that one needs to answer these ninety amens even before *Shemoneh Esreh* of *Shacharis*. The only way to reach this quota before *Shacharis* is by hearing *Birchos Hashachar* from a number of people before davening. (*Hagahos Bnei Abba* on *Sefer Pesora D'Abba, Birchos Hashachar* 6)