

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

### Birchas Hamazon in the Midbar Was D'Rabbanan

"ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך על  
הארץ הטבה אשר נתן לך" (ח"ה)

In his introduction to *Sefer Devarim*, the **Ramban** explained that although Bnei Yisrael were already commanded all the *mitzvos* at Sinai, Moshe refrained from detailing some of them until *Sefer Devarim* "Because perhaps these *mitzvos* were only practiced in Eretz Yisrael...or perhaps because they are not commonly practiced, so they were only mentioned to the sons that settled the land."

But with regard to the mitzvah of *Birchas Hamazon*, the **Radbaz** asked why Moshe Rabbeinu waited until *Chumash Devarim* to explain it. It is not one of the *mitzvos hatehuyos ba'Aretz*, and certain it is not a mitzvah only seldom practice, so why is it this way?

**Harav Meir Don Plotzky**, author of *Kli Chemdah* explained:

The reason that Am Yisrael was not commanded to observe the mitzvah of *Birchas Hamazon* until *Chumash Devarim* is not because it is not common. Rather it is because they were not obligated from the Torah to say it until they entered the Land, because the Torah emphasized: "*Ubeirachta es Hashem Elokecha al ha'aretz hatovah asher nasan lach*" (see *Panim Yafos*, 11 13). Even though Chazal said (*Brachos* 48b): "Moshe instituted for Yisrael the *brachah* of *Zan* at the time when the *mann* descended for them" – even before they entered the land, still, the term "Moshe instituted for Yisrael" indicates that as long as they were in the desert, they only said the *brachah* because of Moshe's *takanah*, and only once they entered Eretz Yisrael were

they obligated to do so from the Torah.

Shu"t HaRadbaz, Vol. VI, 2143;  
*Kli Chemdah Parashas Devarim*

### 'Avodah' That the Heart Yearns to Fulfill

"והיה אם שמע תשמעו אל מצותי אשר אנכי  
מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את ה' אלקיכם  
ולעבדו בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם" (יא"ג)

**Rashi** cites the words of Chazal (*Taanis* 2a) that the commandment "*ule'ovdo bechol levavchem*" refers to *avodas Hashem* through *tefillah*, which is 'avodah' done through the *kavanah* of the heart.

**Harav Binyamin Diskin**, the Rav of Horodna, added that the *tefillah* is called "*avodah shebalev*" also because it is a service that the heart yearns and desires to do. In contrast to the other *mitzvos*, *tefillah* is something we need, and which we use to pray for our lives. And still, we receive a reward for it. So just like a servant whose master gives him a reward for the fact that he comes to ask for his sustenance from him, certainly he will desire to do this 'service' above other types of work that he is subject to do for his master. Likewise, everyone with some understanding should yearn and desire with all his heart to fulfill the mitzvah of *tefillah*.

Based on this concept, his son the **Maharil Diskin** explained the praise that we say in the *piyut* of *Vechol Ma'aminim* during the Yamim Noraim: "*Hazocheh lemazkirav tovos zichronos*." This is a special praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for remembering and granting special good to those who remember the good things that He does for them, and thank Him for those things in their *tefillah*, even though they were obligated to do so by *halachah*.

*Maharil Diskin Al HaTorah*

## Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder  
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Don't Treat the Mitzvah of Amen Lightly

This *parashah* – *vehayah eikev tishme'un* – begins, and is called in the name of those precious *mitzvos* that are called "*mitzvos she'adam dash be'akeivav*," *mitzvos* that a person treads on with his heel, so to speak. The Torah guarantees great reward to those who keep these *mitzvos*, as **Rashi** explains: "if, even the lesser commandments which a person [sometimes] treads on with his heels, you will heed," then you are guaranteed to receive the tremendous reward detailed in the coming *pesukim*.

With the name of this *parashah*, *Eikev*, the Torah emphasizes, and promises, a special reward for those who are able to appreciate specifically the 'easy' *mitzvos*. When you read about it in this segment, surely you understand what I am referring to. Every person has those *mitzvos* that are not so important in his eyes, but there are certain *mitzvos* who many considered to be 'light' or 'easy' and the mitzvah of answering amen is one of them.

It is possible that this stems from a negative personal example. This may be caused specifically because of the great ease with which it is possible to fulfill this mitzvah. But regardless, we can say that the Torah warns us especially about this mitzvah "*Vehayah eikev tishme'un*," – listen very well to the *brachos* that are said around you and answer amen to them. Answering amen should not be light in your eyes, *chalilah*; on the contrary, appreciate and value this mitzvah.

There is a common phrase that says "*da'as baalei batim – hefech da'as Torah*," and that is particularly applicable with this mitzvah. While answering amen is considered 'easy' by the masses, Chazal have given it great weight, even more than they gave other *mitzvos*, to the extent that they said (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1): "There is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen answered by Am Yisrael." It is possible that this expansive language was even said as a counterweight to the fact that in the eyes of other people, this mitzvah is considered easy. It is as if Chazal are revealing to us that what might be mild in our eyes is infinitely great in the Eyes of Hashem.

This Shabbos, the *kriah* is talking to each and every one of us: "*Vehayah eikev tishme'un!*" – if answering amen was - in your eyes - an easy mitzvah until today, one that a person treads with his heel, turn it into a mitzvah that a person 'runs with his heel' to fulfill. Be *shomrei emunim*, and rise each morning and go to shul to hear *Birchos Hashachar* from *mispallelim* and answer amen after them. By doing this you will merit to have the wondrous *brachos* said in this *parashah* fulfilled: "He will love you and bless you and multiply you; and He will bless your progeny and the fruit of your soil – your grain, your wine and your olive oil, and the offspring of your cattle, and the herds of your sheep, upon the soil that He swore to your forefathers to give you... Hashem will remove from you all illness..." *Amen v'amen*.

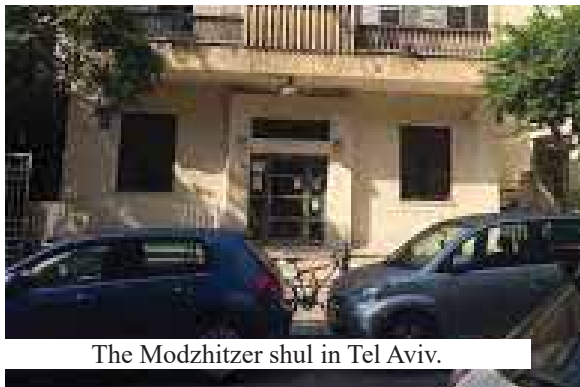
Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

## The Poet's Last Message

It was Shabbos morning in the Modzhitzer *shtiebel* on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv. The pleasant singing by the *chazzan* kept all the *mispallelim* riveted; only a few of them noticed an unusual figure that could be seen through the window that faced the streets. It was peering inside, seemingly transfixed, but none of the *mispallelim* recognized the tall, elderly man with the long hair standing on the outside and peering at the distinguished appearance of the Rebbe, the Imrei Eish, who was immersed in his *tefillah* at the front of the shul. If they would have recognized him, they surely would have raised their eyebrows in surprise – as he was one of the leading poets and songwriters who lived in Tel Aviv at that time.

His name was Yechiel Perlmutter, and he had been born in the city of Neschiz, to a family that was related to the Rebbes of Neschiz. His family had



The Modzhitzer shul in Tel Aviv.

been wiped out during the Holocaust, and he, who managed to make Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, became one of Israel's most famous poets.

After a few moments of peering through the window, one of the *mispallelim* noticed him. He went outside and invited the visitor to enter, but he was met with a chilly response: "No need. I'm fine here!" Towards the end of davening, the older man turned and left.

The next Shabbos, the scene repeated itself. During the *tefillah*, the elderly man's face could be seen through the window, and this time, his long hair was covered with a small cloth kerchief that served in lieu of a yarmulke. This time, as well, he was invited inside, yet firmly refused.

This went on for a few weeks. Each Shabbos the older man would come

in the middle of davening, watch from the window, was invited to enter and refused. Until finally, he was able to overcome his shame, and entered and took a seat near the door.

The *mispallelim* tried to offer him a *tallis* and *Siddur*, but he refused. The following Shabbosos, he also came into the shul and sat down near the door. From the beginning of the *tefillah* until the end, he fixed his eyes on the Rebbe, who was immersed in his *tefillah*. From time to time, the visitor joined the signing.

After a few weeks of this, the man took yet another step, and agreed to don a *tallis*. Now that he had breached the barrier of shame, he also moved a bit closer to the front of the shul, but he still refused to accept a *Siddur* or *Chumash*.

His progress was slow but steady. From Shabbos to Shabbos, he became more tied to the Rebbe and the *chassidim*; he wished them a good Shabbos, took an interest in their lives, and in the end, he became one of the regular members of the shul.

Now, the Rebbe and the *mispallelim* knew who the man was and what he did, and when they saw his genuine intentions, they tried to reach out to him as best they could. The Imrei Eish would rise early and come to shul before davening to recite

*Birchos Hashachar* before a number of *mispallelim*, who then answered amen. A. Yeshurun, as Yechiel was known, also rose early, and he was one of those *mispallelim*.

His closeness to the Rebbe reached a peak on Simchas Torah, during the *hakafah* that the Rebbe danced alone. As he danced, the Rebbe noticed the older songwriter gazing at him, and without a word, the Rebbe approached him, hugged him warmly, and then began to dance with him enthusiastically. Tears of emotion flowed from the eyes of all the *mispallelim* at the scene.

On 4 Iyar, 5744/1984, the Imrei Eish passed away. Yechiel felt that his world had caved in. He channeled his grief into a special song that he wrote in the Rebbe's memory entitled "The Tzaddik of Modzhitz." He described the Rebbe's sublime visage in the song, and between the lines, he also shared

his impressions of the Rebbe's *tefillah*: "When I heard the Rebbe say *Eizehu Mekoman shel Zevachim*, I would see the sacrifices at Auschwitz being slaughtered."

As the songster grew older, his fame faded. In 5752, Rabbi Nosson Krimolovsky, a distinguished Modzhitzer *chassid*, happened to be in the geriatric department of the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. He noticed a familiar figure in one of the beds; it was none other than Yechiel, the famous songwriter, who had clearly aged.

Reb Nosson, who knew him from the Shabbosos they had davened together in the shul, went over to the man and asked how he was doing. The older man was very happy to see him, and asked how the Modzhitzer *chassidim* were doing and about the shul. The two spoke for a long time, and before they parted, the hold man gripped Reb Nosson's hand and asked him for a favor:

"I ask you to please go to the Modzitzer Rebbe [the Nachalas Don], the son of the Imrei Aish, and tell him I did complete *teshuvah*." Reb Nosson was very moved, and nodded in agreement. He turned to leave, and heard the old man stress once again, "*complete teshuvah*."

A few days after Reb Nosson carried out his mission, the phone rang in his house. He heard someone introduce herself as the singer's daughter. "Are you the one who visited my father a few days ago?" she asked, and Reb Nosson confirmed that it had been him. "You should know," the daughter said after Reb Nosson had described his conversation with her father, "that when you got to him, he had been lying in his bed for a long time, in near total silence, without uttering a word. After you left, he was once again silent, and last night he passed away."

Reb Nosson thought about this, and marveled, that of all the messages that had emerged from the singer's pen throughout his life – and he had influenced so many with his sentiments – the last message that he had chosen to leave in this world was that "I have done complete *teshuvah*."

The Rebbe's warm heart and fiery *tefillah* had managed to melt even the hardest of souls, and it had returned, purified and cleansed, to its Source.

### The Obligation to Answer Amen to *Brachos*

**1. Anyone who hears another Jew making a brachah, of any type, even if he does not intend to be yotzei with this brachah – must answer amen after it.**

#### • Sources and Explanations •

This is according to the *Rambam* (*Brachos* 1:13) that is cited as *halachah* in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 215:2). The source of the words of the *Rambam* is the *Mishnah* (*Brachos* 51b): “And one answers amen after a Yisrael who makes a *brachah*” (*Kesef Mishneh* *ibid*). The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 198:1) rules: “All the *brachos* that a person hears, he must answer amen,” and the *Mishnah Berurah* there explained “Whether they are *Birchos Hamitzvos* or *Birchos Hanehenin*.” In other words, the obligation to answer *brachos* applies also to the *brachos* that a person is not obligated to recite, such as *Birchos Hanehenin*, as a person can refrain from eating and thus to exempt himself from being obligated to say them (see *Shut Ha’alef Lecha Shlomo*, *Orach Chaim* 95).

### Source of the Obligation to Answer Amen

**2. Chazal teach us that the obligation to answer amen from the words of Moshe to Klal Yisrael at the beginning of Shiras Ha’azinu (Devarim 32:3): “Ki Shem Hashem ekra – havu godel l’Elokeinu.” They explain that this is what Moshe said: “At a time when I mention HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s Name in a brachah – you should ‘havu godel’ by answering amen.**

#### • Sources and Explanations •

The words of the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 37a): “Tanya, Rabbi says: ‘Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu godel l’Elokeinu’ – Moshe said to Yisrael: at the time that I mention HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s Name, you should *havu godel*.’ However, the words of the *Gemara* there apply to the answering of ‘*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso l’olam va’ed*,’ in the *Bais HaMikdash*. But *Rashi* in *Brachos* (21a, ad loc. *ki*) explains the words of the *Gemara* to refer to answering amen, because there is one *halachah* for both (*Tzeidah Laderech Devarim* 32:3). The *Yalkut Shimoni* (*Ha’azinu* Remez 942) brings this *drashah* as a special explanation for answering amen: “And how do we learn that we answer amen after the *mevarech*? The *passuk* says ‘*Havu godel l’Elokeinu*.’”

### The Obligation of Amen Is Like the Obligation of the *Brachah*

**3. Some hold that the geder, the classification, of amen is like the geder of a brachah that it is answering. When the obligation to recite the brachah is from the Torah, like *Birchas Hamazon*, then answering amen after it is also a mitzvah from the Torah. When the obligation for the brachah is d’Rabbanan—then answering amen after it is also a mitzvah**

**d’Rabbanan.**

#### • Sources and Explanations •

In *Maseches Brachos* (21a) *Chazal* say: “From where do we learn that *Birchas HaTorah* is from the Torah, as it says: ‘*Ki Shem Hashem Ekra havu godel l’Elokeinu*.’” *Rashi* explains (*ibid* ad loc. *ki*): Before Moshe began *Shiras Ha’azinu*, he instructed Am Yisrael: “*Ki Shem Hashem ekra*” – when *Birchas HaTorah* is recited, you should “*havu godel l’Elokeinu*” – by answering amen after it. The *Ramban* (*Shichechas Ha’essin* *Mitzvah* 15) learns from this that *Birchas HaTorah* is a mitzvah from the Torah and he includes it in his count of *mitzvos*. (Other *Rishonim* and *poskim* rule likewise, see *Mishnah Berurah* beginning of 47. And see *Megillas Esther* (*ibid*) that according to the *Rambam*, the *passuk* is brought as an *asmachta*, a proof, and the obligation to recite *Birchas HaTorah* is only d’Rabbanan). The *Tzeidah Laderech* (*Devarim* 32:3) derived from this that according to the *Ramban*, just like *Birchas HaTorah* is learned from the *passuk* “*Ki Shem Hashem ekra*” that it is a mitzvah *aseh d’Oraisa*, likewise, answering amen to *Birchas HaTorah* is learned from the rest of the *passuk* “*Havu godel l’Elokeinu*,” it is a mitzvah *aseh d’Oraisa*. The *Pri Migadim* (*Teivas Gomeh*, *Ha’azinu*. And see *Mishbetzos Zahav* 215:2; *Eshel Avraham* *ibid* 6) learned from this that the *geder* of amen is always equal to the guideline of the *brachah*. When there is a *brachah d’Oraisa*, then we have a mitzvah from the Torah to answer amen to it. When the *brachah* is d’Rabbanan, our obligation to answer amen is d’Rabbanan. This is relevant when there are two people standing in front of a person: one wants to make a *brachah* that is an obligation d’Oraisa, and the other wants to make a *brachah* that is only obligatory d’Rabbanan. He should prefer to listen to the *mevarech* a *brachah d’Oraisa*, because when answering amen after it, he will fulfill a mitzvah *aseh d’Oraisa*.

### Exceptional Caution in Answering Amen

**4. A person must be very careful about answering amen, and anyone who is lax in answering amen is punished severely. A person must do extensive teshuvah even if he did not answer amen one time.**

#### • Sources and Explanations •

*Ohr Hayashar* (Rav Meir Papiras, *Amud Ha’avodah* 7:18); *Chayei Adam* (*Klal* 6:1). *Rabbeinu Bechaye* (*Shemos* 14:31) wrote that one who is lax about amen is referred to by the *passuk* (*Shmuel* I 2:30): “*Ubozai yekalu*.” See there, where he expands on the extent of the punishment of one who is lax about answering amen. The source of his words is the holy *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285:2). In *Sefer Derech Moshe* (Day 11), it is written that when Rav Mordechai Yaffeh, the Baal Halevushim, learned under his *rebbe*, Harav Yitzchak Abuhav, Rav Yitzchak’s young son said a *brachah*, and due to a lack of attention, Rav Mordechai did not answer amen after it. In response, Rav Abuhav excommunicated him and rebuked him for the severe sin of refraining from answering amen to the *brachah*. He even added that there had already been a story in a previous generation about a *chassid* who was sentenced to death because he did not answer amen to his son’s *brachah*.

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

## Otzros Emunim

Answering Ninety Amens a Day

### The Way to Be a *Tzaddik*

Harav Aharon of Zhitomir wrote:

In our times, the main way through which a person can reach the level of 'tzaddik' is by being strict about the quota of holy matters alluded to in the word צדיק which are 90 (צ) amens, four (ד) *Kedushos*, 10 (י) *Kaddish* and 100 (ק) *brachos*. One who is careful about these opens the Gates of Heaven, and his *tefillah* rises On High, and the angels make from his *tefillah* a crown for HaKadosh Baruch Hu. "There are great *tzaddikim* who have preparations before davening, by *yichudim* and *tzeirufei Sheimos*, but simple people like us do not know this – the main thing is to be careful each day about performing קצדיק." (*Toldos Aharon Parashas Shemini*)

### Filling in What Is Missing

When Harav Chaim Binyamin Brod, the father-in-law of the Maggid Rav Yaakov Galinsky, came from Russia to Eretz Yisrael, he brought with him a notebook, in which he had written all the days when he had not met the quota of holy matters determined by *Chazal*. Due to the terrible religious persecution that raged under the Communist regime at the time he was not always able to daven and perform *mitzvos* as he wanted to.

As soon as they came to Eretz Yisrael, Rav Chaim Binyamin filled in all that he had missed. Each day, he made sure to remain in shul for many hours, going from *minyan* to *minyan*, and that's how he made up all the amens, *Kaddish* and *Kedushos* that he had missed out over those long years in the Soviet Union. (*Ma'amarei Chaim* 70)

### Shomrei Emunim

In the *Sefer Hatzava'ah* (Yerushalayim 5726, p. 48) the Rebbe, Harav Aharon Roth of Shomeri Emunim, revealed the reason why he chose to call his community 'Shomeri Emunim.' He wrote: "It is known that I have called our *chaburah* 'Shomeri Emunim,' and the reason is according to the *passuk* (Yeshayah 26:2) '*Pischu she'arim vayavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.*' *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b): 'Do not read it *shomer emunim*, but rather *she'omrim amen*. Because every person in Am Yisrael is obligated to answer 90 amens a day, and then he is included in the essence of 'tzaddik' and is called a 'goi tzaddik.'"

## Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

### Iggeres Emunim

#### A Letter from a Loyal Reader

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

As my wedding day approaches, I feel obligated to express my appreciation and deep admiration for your work, as in your merit, throughout my time as a *bochur*, I rose on time to daven. This way, I found *ta'am* in my *tefillah* and my *avodas Hashem* was vibrant and infused with life.

I saw in the pamphlet of Shavuot that you brought in the name of the Rishonim that the acronym of אמן מסיני נצטוו is amen, and I thought to add to that that before these words we say "*vegam ha'ohavim devareha gedulah bacharu.*" I thought that in light of your words that the words "*ha'ohavim devareha*" also allude to the '*dibur*' of amen, that one who loves amen "*gedulah becharu*" – has chosen for himself something great. As *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*."

In any case, the words are worthy to be said of you, as there is no greater "*ohavim devareha*" than you, and you also endear the Torah's words to us all, through your pamphlets and your wonderful activities. May you see much success.

With the blessing of Kohanim,

The chassan Y.M. Hakohein R.

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



The kloiz in Brody

### The Mateh Ephraim

24 Av 5588

Rav Ephraim Zalman Margulies was born in 19 Kislev 5522 to his father, Rav Menachem Manish, the Av Bais Din of Dinovitz, one of the most prestigious families in Klal Yisrael. He learned under his great uncle, Harav Alexander

Sender Margulies, Av Bais Din of Santov.

For a short time, he served as the Rav in the town of Ohanov, but after he became wealthy in the diamond industry, he left the Rabbanus, and began to learn in the famous *kloiz* in Brody, where he immersed himself in Torah day and night. He embodied the concept of *Torah ugedulah bemakom echad*, a combination of wealth and Torah greatness.

He was one of the eminent *morei hora'ah* in his generation, and the *gedolim* of that generation accorded him great respect. He authored *seforim* on all parts of Torah, but became especially renowned for the *sefer Shaarei Ephraim*, on the laws of *Krias HaTorah*, and *Mateh Ephraim*, on the *halachos* of Yamim Noraim, both of which became basic *seforim* that were printed in many editions.

He passed away on 24 Av 5588 and he was laid to rest in Brody

### Stealing Mitzvos

"One who says *Kaddish*, and likewise other *brachos*, in a whisper, is a stealer, because he is stealing the *mitzvos* of other people who cannot answer amen after him." (*Mateh Ephraim*, *Dinei Kaddish*, 3)

### Amen after Birchas Hagomel

Some have a custom not to answer amen after *Birchas Hagomel*, because they think that saying "*Mi shegemalcha kol tov Hu yigemalcha kol tov selah*" contains the affirmation of the *brachah* like answering amen. But the *halachah* is that one must answer amen after it, like the rest of the *brachos*, and then he should say the *nusach* of "*Mi shegemalcha...*" This is because when answering amen, the one answering joins the gratitude of the *mevarech* to Hashem, while saying "*Mi shegemalcha...*" is a *brachah* to the *mevarech* himself. (*Shaarei Ephraim*, 4:30; *Pischi She'arim* *ibid*)