

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Seder Hadoros in the Brachos of Nisu'in

"וילך איש מבית לוי ויקח את בת לוי"

(ב א)

Chazal say (Sotah 12a, cited in Rashi) that Amram separated from his wife Yocheved because of Pharaoh's decree to kill the male children. Because he was the gadol hador, all of Am Yisrael followed suit. His daughter Miriam said to him, "Father, your decree is harsher than that of Pharaoh, because Pharaoh only decreed on the males, and you decreed on the males and the females." Amram heard his daughter's words and brought his wife back. The Gemara describes: "He sat her in an aperion [a chuppah] and Aharon and Miriam danced in front of her, and the Ministering Angels said (Tehillim 113:9) 'Eim habanim semeichah.'"

Based on this, **Harav Chaim Soloveichik** of Brisk, resolved a question in the wording of the brachos of the Eirusin: "... Vehitir lanu es hanesuos lanu al yedei chuppah vekiddushin, Baruch... Mekadesh amo Yisrael al yedei chuppah vekiddushin." Based on the halachos of Torah, we first are mekadesh the woman [eirusin], and only afterwards, are they married [nisu'in] through a chuppah; why in the brachah do we first say chuppah and then kiddushin?

It needs to be explained that these words were thus instituted according to the traditional order of nisu'in practiced in Am Yisrael. Until Mattan Torah, it was customary to marry only with a chuppah, as the Gemara describes that Amram married Yocheved a second time by seating her under a chuppah. Only at Mattan Torah was it learned that first there needs

to be kiddushin, and then a chuppah (see Rambam Ishus 1 1). That is why the brachah states chuppah and then kiddushin.

Teshuvos Vehanhagos Vol. IV, Hanhagos Hagra"ch 142

The Cry Is Heard Even Without a Reason

"ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבדה; וישמע אלקים את נאקתם" (ב כג כד)

After it says "vaye'anchu Bnei Yisrael min ha'avodah..." why did the Torah then again repeat "vata'al shavasam el haElokim min ha'avodah?"

The Ohr Hachaim explained that the Torah used a double language to emphasize that the cries of Yisrael rose On High and were heard with compassion even though they were not cries of tefillah, but rather cries of pain that stemmed from the difficult work.

Based on this, **Harav Eliezer Yitzchak Fried**, a Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin, explained the reason why in Shemoneh Esreh we ask a general request of "Shema Koleinu" without specifying that we mean the cry of tefillah and request. Just like a when father hears his son's cry - even if it is not directed to him - he certainly will not turn a deaf ear. He will hurry over to find out why the child has cried, and to offer help. Thus, we ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu, that even when our cry comes from the depths of our troubles, and we do not necessarily direct it to Hashem, He should still hear them with compassion and send us salvation.

Ohr Hachaim; Nitei Eisan Vol. VII [Rav A. Zakheim] p. 19

Pischu Shearim Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Amen – A Test of Emunah

Answering amen is a declaration of emunah in the Creator. The Shulchan Aruch, when explaining the simple meaning of the word amen, emphasizes the concept of emunah, and wrote (Orach Chaim 124:6): "And they should answer amen after each brachah... and should have kavanah in his heart: the brachah that the mevarech made is true and I believe it."

In fact, amen is not only a declaration of emunah, it is also a 'test of emunah.' Our approach to answering amen is a test of our emunah in the words of Chazal. They expounded so much on the virtues of answering amen, to the point that they say (Devarim Rabbah 7 1) that there is nothing greater to Hashem than amen. Likewise, Chazal promised much good in this world and the World to Come for one who is careful to answer amen properly. The stronger our belief in these words, the more willing we will be to dedicate many hours each day to fulfill this mitzvah! Because why should we be busy with other things when there are eternal gifts that we cannot fathom waiting for us.

Because we are accustomed to estimate the value of things based on our human view of them, we have a hard time grasping the inestimable value and importance of this small three-letter word. But we need to know that Above, there are completely different ways of calculating things. When Chazal say there is nothing greater to Hashem than the amen that Am Yisrael answer, that is the truth; there is nothing greater! Plain and simple!!

A businessman knows how important it is to grab at "metzios – bargains." Sometimes, investments in things that appear to have no value, and are small and marginal, are the ones that ending up yielding the greatest profits. This is all a parable, of course, even a distant one, to the world of true profits, the eternal world that pays the absolutely best yields. Our entire purpose in this world is to acquire these lucrative 'investments' for the World to Come. It is therefore evident that according to the words of Chazal, the greatest reward is guaranteed specifically to those who invest in the mitzvah of answering amen.

When I reflected on this, I thought of a wonderful idea: It seems that each morning, even before answering amen to Birchos Hashachar, we are sent a Divine reminder about the value and reward of amen, with the well-known Mishnah (Peah 1 1) said after Birchos HaTorah: "Eilu devarim she'adam ochel peiroseihem b'olam hazeh, vehakeren kayemes lo l'Olam Haba" – the first mitzvah that we list is "הפאה" – which is numerically equivalent to אמן.

Chazal urge us to believe in amen. Answer it with all your strength and kavanah, so that you merit to be Mekadesh Shem Shamayim, and you will see much goodness and brachah all your days.

**Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**

The Storm Stilled for Shabbos

That Friday was supposed to be a festive one at the Haifa Port. After a tremendous investment of billions of shekels, and planning and renovations that took a number of years, the managers could finally say the job was done.

On this day, the huge ship, the Maeva, owned by the second largest shipping company in the world MSC, was supposed to dock at the port. The entry of such a tremendous ship, which could carry some ten thousand containers at once, was only possible after extensive and expensive upgrades were made to the port. It was supposed to symbolize the admission of the cargo port in Haifa to the prestigious list of modern ports in the world, where huge ships like the Maeva could anchor.

In honor of the special event, a spacious tent was erected at the port where a



The Maeva being tugged into the port.

party was to be held once the ship was unloaded. Public figures and business people from Israel and abroad were invited; they made the effort to come and celebrate this remarkable achievement with the CEO of the port, Mr. Mendy Salzman.

A few days before the auspicious date, when excitement was at a fever pitch, a worrying piece of information suddenly came through from the meteorology service that a powerful storm was heading for the coast of Israel. The information sowed worry in the hearts of the port managers, especially the CEO, Mr. Salzman.

Not many knew that Mr. Salzman had been in constant contact for some time already with Harav Amram Koch, zt"l, who was known to many as the Tzaddik of Haifa. Due to his acquaintance with the tzaddik, Mr. Salzman had become stronger in his mitzvah observance, and he tried to do everything that he could to keep the huge port that he

directed closed on as many Shabbosos as possible.

Every beginning sailor knows that the wide structure of a ship is like sail in the wind. The larger the ship, the more resistance there is to the strong winds, and thus, navigation becomes more difficult. That is aside from the fact that the huge cranes used to unload the ship struggle to carry out their work when the winds are strong.

As the days passed, and the information coming from the meteorology service became clearer and more well founded, the clearer it became that the arrival and unloading of the ship might have to be postponed. Aside for the fact that this might lead to a cancellation of the planned ceremony, the CEO was very concerned that the unloading might have to take place on Shabbos, R"l.

On Thursday night, the storm went from being a 'prediction' to a fact. The satellite images indicated the exact time when the storm would hit the port area. But the CEO, who was afraid that the ship might enter the port very late and cause chillul Shabbos, decided not to give up.

At a very late hour, he headed for the Rav with whom he consulted on every step, Harav Amram Koch, zt"l, and asked for his advice and a brachah.

Rav Amram, who felt a great responsibility for the spiritual status of Haifa, saw it very important that the port, which was in essence the gateway to Eretz Yisrael, should keep Shabbos. For years, he had poured out many tefillos to ensure that the port would not operate on Shabbos, and now he was perturbed at the news that the CEO was bringing. Rav Amram reached out to the gedolei hador and asked them to daven so that the holiness of Shabbos would be preserved; at the same time, he also began to pour out his heart in tefillah.

Meanwhile, the CEO called the captain of the Maeva and asked if the ship could pick up speed so that it might reach the port as early as possible; at the very least they would be able to unload its cargo before the storm arrived.

Shortly after that, they began to hear the sounds of the storm. Strong gusts of wind blew, lightning flashed and thunder rumbled; the storm was already right there, apparently. MSC

representatives who had arrived from abroad for the event, sized up the situation with concern. As the hours passed, the thunder and lightning grew stronger; it also began to rain. No one could predict whether the planned ceremony would take place or not.

At 1:30 at night, the port officers received a transmission that the ship was nearing the port. The storm was already strong enough to instruct the captain to keep a safe distance from the port, but the CEO, with strong emunah in his heart, decided to begin the process of taking in the ship. He sent tugboats, which are supposed to draw the ship closer to the port, out to the sip.

At two in the morning, just as the tugboats began to do their job, a tremendous miracle happened. The huge storm quieted; there was absolute silence at the port. Within the hour, the ship was tied to the dock, and the dedicated port workers began vigorously working to unload it. The work was done extremely fast, because no one knew when the storm would start up again. By nine in the morning, the ship had been unloaded. One hour later, the ceremony was supposed to begin, and it began to rain hard. Again, there was a question mark hanging over the whole ceremony. Would it happen or not?

And again, there was a miracle. At ten o'clock, the rains topped; the clouds parted and a pleasant sun peeked through. This was in complete contravention to the weather forecast the night before. The guests at the event – even the non-Jews – could not help but marvel at the miracle unfolding in front of their eyes.

At a quarter to three, about two hours before Shabbos, the Maeva left the dock, and Mr. Mendy Salzman could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Remarkably, a few minutes after the ship left the port, the storm picked up again with full force, and the port was closed to new ships until Sunday morning.

Only a few people knew about the hidden tzaddik behind this miracle. Only a few people knew how many tefillos had been poured so that this Shabbos as well, the holiness of Shabbos should be preserved at the Haifa Port, and there should be a Kiddush Hashem.

Answering Amen to the Brachos of a Thief

One who eats something that he acquired through stealing should not make a brachah rishonah or acharonah on that food. If he does make a brachah, amen is not answered. But some are of the opinion that if he ate stolen bread, he should recite Birchas Hamazon after it. Therefore, if one recites Birchas Hamazon after eating stolen bread, the listeners should answer amen.

❧ Sources and Explanations ❧

Eating something stolen before the thief alters the item that he stole is considered eating something forbidden. This is because as long as the theft has not been altered, it belongs to the one who it was stolen from, and the thief is obligated to return the theft itself. If he eats it, then he is transgressing an issur, and he should not make a brachah before or after eating it as his brachah is considered ni'utz (Shulchan Aruch Harav 196 2). And it is simple that if the thief transgresses and made a brachah, one should not answer amen to it, similar to the din of one who eats something forbidden (see Mishnah Berurah 196 2). And the Shuclahn Aruch Harav (ibid) wrote that if one steals bread and eats it, despite it being forbidden for him to make a brachah rishonah, he should recite Birchas Hamazon. That is because after the bread has been eaten, the thief is no longer obligated to return it; he is only obligated to return its value. Although the thief ate it b'issur, still, once it has been eaten, it is his, and "ein birchaso ni'utz." The source for this is in Magen Avraham (beginning of 196), but the Magen Avraham wrote this halachah as a possibility, while the Shulchan Aruch Harav wrote it as a clear ruling. But the Mishnah Berurah (Shaar Hatzion ibid 9) differs, and is of the opinion that one who steals bread and eats it does not recite Birchas Hamazon, because one should take into account those who think that even after the thief acquires it, there is still a concern about ni'utz in his brachah. This is especially that the Magen Avraham wrote his words only as a possibility. But regarding answering amen, the Notrei Amen wrote (Vol. II, p. 123) that one should answer amen after one who acts according to those who permit reciting Birchas Hamazon on stolen bread.

The poskim differ regarding the ikker din of Birchos Hanehenin on the stolen food that the thief has acquired by altering it before he ate it: According to the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 649 1. And see Magen Avraham beginning of 196, that the Rema Orach Chaim 454 4 holds this way as well) that he both steals the food and then alters it, such as one who steals flour and then turns it into a dough and bakes it, should not make a brachah rishonah or acharonah on it. That is because mentioning Shem Shamayim over something that came to his hands through theft is considered ni'utz (Mishnah Berurah 196 4). But the Bach (ibid) differs and holds that if something stolen that was acquired by altering it before eating, then there is a brachah rishonah and acharonah (see Magen Avraham ibid that even according to the Maggid Mishnah, Chametz uMatzah 6 7 it is evident that he thinks this way).

L'halachah, the poskim wrote that one who steals a food

and alters it, should not make a brachah rishonah, but if he ate stolen bread, he should recite Birchas Hamazon, because it is d'Oraisa, and therefore, one should be machmir and recite it (Magen Avraham ibid; Mishnah Berurah ibid). But the Shulchan Aruch Harav (ibid) ruled that one should also make a brachah rishonah.

Answering Amen After Someone Who Was Forced to Eat

Someone who is forced to eat should not make a brachah before or after eating, even if ultimately he enjoyed the food. Some hold that he makes a brachah before and after. In any case, if he makes a brachah, amen is answered afterwards.

❧ Sources and Explanations ❧

The Rema (Orach Chaim 204 8) ruled that someone who was forced to eat should not make a brachah before or afterwards, even if he enjoys the food, because he does not want it (Shulchan Aruch Harav ibid 15. And see later what is cited in the name of the Chasam Sofer). But the Mishnah Berurah (ibid 45) wrote that some differ and hold that one should recite a brachah on forced eating both before and after eating, because ultimately, he had 'pleasure of the palate' from this food. See there, where he cites the ruling of the Chayei Adam (49 8) that if one is forced to eat bread to satiation, he should recite Birchas Hamazon, because it is a mitzvah from the Torah. In light of this, the sefer Leket Hakemach Hachadash (124 22) wrote that one who hears a brachah from someone who was forced to eat should answer amen, in the halachah of one who makes a brachah that is disputed among the poskim (see Biur Halachah 215 4).

Even according to those who are of the opinion that someone who is forced to eat is exempt from making a brachah, someone who is forced to eat a forbidden food because of a danger hovering over him must make a brachah before and after eating (Shulchan Aruch 196 2; 204 9). The difference between someone who is forced to eat regarding who the Rema ruled that he does not make a brachah, and someone who is forced to eat because of danger, is explained by the Chasam Sofer (Shu"t, Orach Chaim 202) as follows: "One who eats of his own will for pikuach nefesh, blesses Hashem Who created this fruit, or this bread, because even just to satiate his hunger he makes a brachah, and certainly he should make the brachah and thank Hashem for providing him this food to save him from death. Even when Hashem in His compassion made a concession regarding Torah and mitzvos so that this person can live, then how can one not make a brachah?! That is not the case when someone is forced to eat against his will. Will he thank Hashem that this fruit was created when he wished it had not been created, because he is eating it against his will." See more in Mishnah Berurah (ibid) and Shaar Hatzion (ibid 38).

Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen –
The Foundation of Emunah

Amen – Kodesh Kodashim

Chazal say (Tikkunei Zohar 40 1) that the greatness of amen stems from the fact that its numerical value is equal to that of the two Holy Names – Havay-h and Adnus. Thus, the Baal Haturim explained (Devarim 24:2) the reason that Chazal say (Brachos 53b): “The one who answers amen is greater than the mevarech.” While the mevarech mentions in the brachah only the Name of Adnus, the one who answers amen, utters both Havay-h and Adnus.

Moreover, the Mekubal Harav Aharon Hazaken of Kardina, author of sefer Karnayim, wrote in his sefer Iggeres Hata’amim (Mantua 5342, p. 12): “Because all the Holy Names are included ...in hidden segolos...the deepest secrets in the word amen...and of it the passuk says (Yeshayahu 26:2): ‘Veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim,’ he wanted to say like the guard of a treasure that he is deep in the chambers, so, too, this pure and holy word is sourced in the most precious of pearls...If so, you, should also see yourself a number of remazim, secrets and sodos that are based on adnei paz...and what is the place of amen – the kodesh kodashim.”

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear Vechol Ma’aminim,

As a resident of Netivot, in southern Israel, I thank Hashem for giving me the merit of living in a place of Torah. But unfortunately, your wonderful pamphlets do not come to my area.

However, I personally make sure that we should get the pamphlets regularly through family and friends who live in the center of the country. There have also been times that I rummaged through genizah to find back issues that I was not able to get. But perhaps you should take into account when distributing your pamphlets also those who live in the periphery, to spread Torah and to glorify it.

Your constant chiddushim are remarkable. It is amazing to see who all the sections are filled each week with rich and new content that is like a constant fount. The fount of emunah flows and refreshes all the readers who are thirsty for your wonderful material. Special thank you for the segment on halachos that gives us knowledge and guides us in how to keep this important mitzvah.

As a person who is strict to recite Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa each day, even when I come to a place where no one knows me, and it is sometimes a bit unpleasant, I had a nice idea about this:

In the Yehi Ratzon after the brachah of Hamaavir Sheinah, we ask: “Vesitneinu hayom ubechol yom lechen ulechessed ulerachamim b’Einecha ub’einei kol ro’einu.” The question is why we ask “ubechol yom” if we make this request each day.

But each day, even before reciting Birchos Hashachar, we need nesi’as chen, we need to find favor in the eyes of others, in order to find a good chavrusa for Birchos Hashachar wherever we are. Therefore, we first ask for tomorrow, that we should merit chen and chessed and rachamim, and that we should be able to recite Birchos Hashachar in front of someone who will answer amen to them. Then, in the merit of amen, we are guaranteed that “sigmeleinu chassadim tovim.”

It is possible that this is what the passuk is alluding to: “Im na matzasi chen b’einecha” – we find this phrase a number of times in the Torah (Bereishis 18:3; 30:27; 33:10; 47:29; 50:4; and others). “אם נא מצאתי” is an acronym for amen, to teach us that there is a promise for nesi’as chen when we ask to fulfill the mitzvah of answering amen. On the other hand, one who is strict to answer amen will merit chen vechessed and rachamim in the Eyes of Hashem and of others.

Respectfully,
S.M.R., Netivot

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Tzaddik B’Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



Caption: The headstone on the kever of the Mahara”m A”sh, zt”l.

Mahara”m A”sh

24 Teves 5612

Harav Meir Eisenstadter, known as the Mahara”m A”sh, was born in 5440 in Eisenstadt, to his father Harav Yehuda Leib, a talmid of Mahara”m Banet.

As a child he learned Torah under his father. When the Chasam Sofer opened his yeshivah in the city of Mattersdorf, the Mahara”m was one of his first students. Later, when he moved the yeshivah to Pressburg, Mahara”m moved as well and became one of the Chasam Sofer’s prime talmidim.

In 5595, after serving as Rav in various cities, he was appointed Rav and Av Bais Din in Ungvar. There, he established a yeshivah gedolah for hundreds of students, and some of Hungary’s prominent rabbanim were among its alumni.

After the passing of the Chasam Sofer in Tishrei 5600, the Rav was considered one of the eminent leaders of Hungarian Jewry. Masses directed their questions to him, and some of those questions appear in his sefer Shu”t Imrei Eish.

On 24 Teves 5612, he passed away and was buried in the cemetery in Ungvar.

In sefer Zichron Yehudah, authored by Rav Menachem Einestadter, son of the Mahara”m Ash, he wrote down some “hanhagos yesharos” that his father practiced each day. He thus describes his father’s strictness to hear Birchos Hashachar from mispallelim, in order to answer amen after them (Ungvar Edition 5628, p. 18):

“He went to a shul or beis medrash, wearing his tallis and tefillin, and five or six people said Birchos Hashachar for him, and he would answer amen after them to complete the tzaddi”k (90) amens.”