

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Secret of the Power of the Tefillah of the Tzaddik

"ויאמר משה לחתנו כי יבא אלי העם לדרש אלקים; כי יהיה להם דבר בא אלי ושפטתי בין איש ובין רעהו והודעתי את חקי האלקים ואת תורתיו" (יה טו-טז)
Why does the *passuk* begin in the plural: "*Ki yihiyeh lachem davar*," and conclude in the singular, "*ba eilai*"?

Harav Shmuel Ehrenfeld, the Rav of Mattersdorf, explained:

The Rambam explained the words of Moshe to his father-in-law, "*Ki yavo eilai ha'am lidrosh Elokim*" to mean "To pray for their sick." Based on this we can explain that Moshe told his father-in-law: The reason that the masses came to seek specifically my *tefillah* is because "*ki yihiyeh lahem davar*" – when they are struck with a *tzarah*, their pain "comes to me" and touches my heart as if it is my personal pain. Because the power of the *tefillah* of the *tzaddik* is contained in the fact that he shares the pain of the one who comes to share his woes, as if it was his personal trouble.

Chasan Sofer

The Ten Dibros in Krias Shema

"ויאמר ה' אל משה הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך" (יד ט)

The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 1 5) brings the view of 'Levi', that the reason that we were commanded to recite the three *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema* each day is because the ten *dibros* are included in them. The *Yerushalmi* there adds how the *Aseres Hadibros* are alluded to in the *parshiyos* of *Krias Shema*. These words were brought by the *Mishnah Berurah* (61 2) who added: "Therefore, a person needs to think about the ten *dibros* when he says *Krias*

Shema, so that he should not come to transgress a single one of them."

Harav Meir of Dzhikov brought a *remez* for this from this *passuk*: The ten *dibros* are included in the first *dibbur* that begins with "*Anochi*." "*Ba eilecha*" – are alluded "*b'av he'anan*" – with [ע"ב 72] words of the *parashah* of *Vayomer*, and [יב"ע 170] words of the *parshiyos* of *Shema* and *Vehayah Im Shamoa*.

Imrei Noam

Don't Desecrate the Mizbe'ach of Tefillah

"ואם מזבחה אכנים תעשה לי לא תבנה אתהו גזית כי הרבך הנפת עליה ותחללה" (כ כב)

The Ben Ish Chai explained:

During the *galus*, when, due to our sins, we do not have a Bais Hamikdash, and we don't have the ability to bring *korbanos* on the *mizbe'ach*, the mouth of a person is considered a *mizbe'ach* and the *tefillos* that it utters are like *korbanos* (see *Brachos* 26b). The letters that a person utters with his mouth are called *avanim*, stones, because through them, the word is built (*Sefer Yetzirah* Ch. 4, 12), and that is why the mouth that daven's is called the "*mizbe'ach avanim*."

Therefore, the Torah warns: "*Ve'im mizbe'ach avanim ta'aseh li*," when you take the words and letters of *tefillah* out of your mouth, "*lo sivneh es'hen gazis*" – don't say them quickly and thus you will cut letters and words [from the root of *ligzoz* – to shear]. "Lest you lift your sword over it and profane it" – because you are liable to desecrate all that is holy and to turn your *tefillah* to *kefirah*, *chalilah*, for example by dropping the letter *ayin* from *Ba'al Gevuros*, and suchlike.

Ben Ish Chai, Year 1 Introduction to *Yisro*

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Answering Amen Was Given at Sinai

The *brachah* of *Tikanta Shabbos*, which we say in *Mussaf* of *Shabbos*, states regarding the *mitzvos* of *Shabbos*: "*Az miSinai nitztavu*." Rabi Yehuda Bar Rav Yakar, the Rebbi of the Ramban, added that the acronym of *Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos* Vol. I, p. 112). Based on his words, we can explain that the ones who arranged the *tefillah* sought to allude that we were commanded to answer amen already at Sinai.

Indeed, the obligation to answer amen has a very early source. *Chazal* learned it from the words of Moshe to Am Yisrael at the beginning of *Shiras Ha'azinu* (*Devarim* 32:3): "*Ki Shem Hashem ekra – havu godel l'Elokeinu*." And they explained: "At the time when I mention the Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the *brachah* – you should *havu godel l'Elokeinu*, give greatness to Hashem, by answering amen" (*Rashi Brachos* 21a, based on *Yoma* 37a).

"*Az miSinai nitztavu*" – those who arranged the *tefillah* show us that answering amen, aside for being a *mitzvah* that is a great merit for us to fulfill, is also an absolute commandment, and as the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 215 2) rules: "Anyone who hears someone in Am Yisrael making one of all the *brachos* is obligated to answer amen after it."

I thought to further add that the words earlier in that *brachah*: "*Vegam ha'ohavim devareha gedulah bacharu*" allude to answering amen; those who love the words of amen chose '*gedulah*' and as *Chazal* taught us (*Brachos* 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*."

While I was recently in Miami for a family *simchah*, a *Yid* shared with me another *remez* on this subject: The *passuk* says (*Koheles* 12:11): "דברי חכמים כדרבנות; וכמשמורת נטועים בעלי אספות נתנו מרועה אחד. The words of the wise are like goads, and like well-fastened nails with large heads, given from one shepherd." נתנו מרועה – is an acronym for amen, to teach us that answering amen was also given to us from the faithful shepherd, at Sinai.

On these *Shabbosos*, we read about the declaration of our forebears at Har Sinai: "*Na'aseh venishma*." How worthy is it that we should also declare "*na'aseh venishma*..." We will be strict to listen to the *brachos* and to answer amen properly, and thus we will connect to the craft of our forebears, as we stood there at the foot of Har Sinai with them.

Good Shabbos

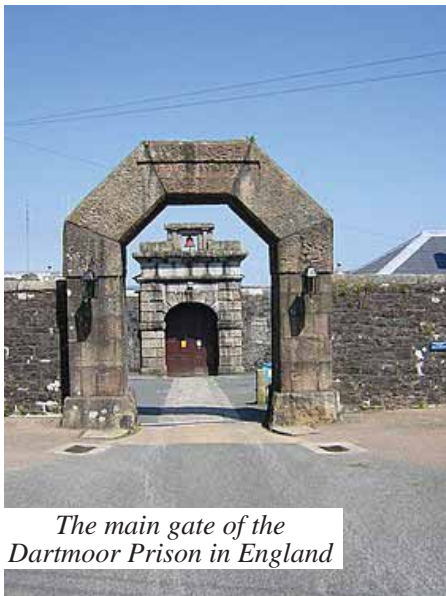
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

The Tefillah that Led to Liberation

Miracles. Who does not await them?! How many times in life have we found ourselves at a dead end, and yearning for a miracle to extract us from our troubles?!

Is it appropriate to expect a miracle or not? That is not a question to address in this platform. We can only say that the following story proves with certainty that there are miracles in our day as well! And that indeed, it is true that there is none other like Hashem when we call to Him. So we can say that this is not a 'miracle' per se, but rather the power of the gift of *tefillah* that the Creator has granted us with His compassion, to benefit us always.

And yet, when miracles happen, we all marvel, and our hearts overflow in gratitude. The miracle is a way to tangibly



The main gate of the Dartmoor Prison in England

illustrate for us the actions of Hashem in the world, and to sharpen for us the recognition that everything depends on Him.

This remarkable miracle story was related by the person it happened to, to Harav Shimon Spitzer, *shlita*, who shared it in one of his *shiurim*. The story also contains a special element of Kiddush Hashem, fulfilling the words "And all the nations of the world will see that the Name of Hashem is called upon you."

The story is about Reb Yehuda, a *baal chessed* from London, who for whatever reason got in trouble with law enforcement in England. After a prolonged legal battle that lasted a few years, he was convicted by a jury, and sentenced to a long prison sentence.

Dedicated *askanim* who became involved tried at first to fight against the sentence, but they quickly realized that their efforts were doomed to fail. The English legal system protects jury decisions and prevents them from being nullified in every way possible. Reb Yehuda

internalized that he would be spending the next few years behind bars, and instead of falling into depression, he decided to strengthen his *emunah* and *bitachon*. He used the time remaining until he went to prison to draft a firm schedule for the days he would be there, so that his long sentence could be used to advance in his learning and *avodas Hashem*.

On Monday of *Parashas Vayeitzei*, 4 Kislev, Reb Yehuda began to serve his sentence. He was placed in a cell with a Muslim prisoner named Basel, who told him with a big grin that he was scheduled to be released a few days later after serving a four-month sentence. Over the next few days, the non-Jew was elated about his release, but on Wednesday morning, Reb Yehuda noticed that Basel looked sad and dejected.

Reb Yehuda delicately inquired why this was, and Basel told him that although he had been sentenced for two separate crimes, and the sentence for each was four months in prison, he had understood that he could serve those sentences concurrently. But the day before, he had approached the prison manager's office to arrange his release, and was surprised to hear that he had been mistaken, and his punishment was to be served consecutively – meaning he'd have to remain in prison for four additional months.

"Last night, I was so sad and dejected," Basel told Reb Yehuda. "I was so angry that I decided not to recite the evening Muslim prayer, as I usually do. But don't worry... This morning, I felt stronger again and I prayed our morning prayer... I even dared add a special prayer to G-d to change my sentence for the good..."

A few hours later, Basel went out to the prison offices to arrange his re-admittance into the prison, and to find out when his new discharge date would be.

Two hours later, he virtually danced back to the cell, beaming with excitement. "Listen to this!" he exclaimed to Reb Yehuda. "My prayer was accepted! I was told that after a recalculation about my situation, they discovered that I was right, and that indeed, I have been serving a concurrent sentence. And therefore, I'm being released this week."

"You see?" the Muslim cried, "only this morning I prayed for it, and already G-d heard my prayers and made sure that I will be released tomorrow."

Basel began to get his belongings together, and Reb Yehuda was stunned, thinking to himself: If a Muslim's prayer can be answered, how much more so can mine?!

His conclusion was self-understood. A few hours later, when evening fell, Reb Yehuda stood to daven *Maariv*. Tears flowed from his eyes, as he pleaded to Hashem: "If a gentile testifies that his prayers to You were answered," he wept in anguish, "how much more so do the *tefillos* of a Jew need to be answered! "

Please accept my *tefillah* and send me a positive sign, for the sake of Your Name, for the sake of those who love You – Your nation and Your flock."

Reb Yehuda concluded his emotional *tefillah* and prepared to go to sleep.

That night, the judge who had handled Reb Yehuda's case could not sleep. He was not at peace with the decision of the jury, because he did not think that the crimes that Reb Yehuda had committed warranted such a severe punishment. That night, he deliberated the matter, and in the morning, he called the lawyer that had represented Reb Yehuda, and told him that he wanted to review the ruling.

This is a special right that the English legal system grants judges, to review rulings made by a jury; as a matter of course, they use this privilege very rarely, if at all. This time, was one of those rare occasions...

The lawyer hurried to convey a message to the *askanim*, and they traveled to the prison to tell Reb Yehuda about the unusual turn of events in his case in recent hours. "Early tomorrow morning, Friday, the hearing will be held. And although it is impossible to know with certainty that things will change, we have positive signs that they will. We can estimate with cautious optimism that before Shabbos, you will be released."

On Friday morning, Erev Shabbos *Parashas Vayeitzei*, Reb Yehuda walked towards the van that would take him and several other prisoners to the courthouse. On the way, he met Basel, who was making his final preparations for release. When Basel saw him he asked: "Where are you going?" And Reb Yehuda replied simply, "I prayed to G-d and He heard my prayers. I'm leaving the prison before Shabbos!"

Upon hearing this, Basel gasped in wonderment. He began to scream and cry to anyone who would listen: "You see? There is a G-d, there is one Creator to the world and He listens to the prayers of those who pray to Him!"

A few hours later, Reb Yehuda stood before the judge. "I have reviewed your case," the judge said, "and I have reached the conclusion that due to the overcrowding in the prisons, and taking into consideration the crime that you committed, you should be released immediately."

A few hours before Shabbos, Reb Yehuda was set free, and he spent that Shabbos at home, with his family, after a very short prison term - without any natural explanation other than the power of *tefillah* and *emunah*.

— In Olam Haba We Learn to Appreciate Every Amen —

The Apta Rav, the Ohev Yisrael, used to explain the *passuk* (Tehillim 126:6): “*Haloch yelech uvacho nosei meshech hazara bo yavo berinah nosei alumosav*,” about the mitzvah of answering amen. He said:

In this world, a person does not know to appreciate the great virtue of answering amen. He hears many *brachos* and sometimes, does not pay attention and answer amen. When he comes to the Higher World, and will see how important every amen is to Hashem, he will surely regret his laxity, but by then it will be too late.

This is what this *passuk* is referring to: One who is lax about answering amen in this world, when “*haloch yelech*” – he goes on to the next world, then “*uvacho*” – he will cry and regret that he did not collect more amens. But “*nosei meshech hazara*” – one who was careful about answering amen, which is compared in this world like the small seed of grain that is planted in the ground, then “*bo yavo berina*” – he will enter the Upper World with joy, as “*nosei alumosav*” – when the gates of Gan Eden open to him in the merit of answering amen. And then he will understand that the amen that in this world appears to be a small seed, is really a great mitzvah that can be compared to a big sheaf of wheat [*alumah*].

The Ohev Yisrael then offered a parable to illustrate this:

There was a rich man who lost his money and became a pauper. Because he was embarrassed about his situation, and could not ask for help from the people in his city, he decided to leave his place of residence, and to wander to a place where no one knew him. There, he would try to rehabilitate his life and dabble in business. For a few years, he wandered from place to place, until he finally settled in a distant land, where the hills and mountains were filled with mines of gold and precious stones.

In that land, there were precious stones rolling around on the ground, and the people there did not even realize how valuable they were. When the new arrival got used to the place, he also thought these stones had no value, and they became like regular pebbles and rocks to him.

Years passed, and this man still did not strike it rich in business. He ultimately gave up and decided to return to his family, who he missed. Because he did not want to return empty-handed, he thought long and hard what he could bring home to them. In the end, he had the idea to take a handful of the stones that lay on the ground in this place, even though they were not worth much... They just looked different to the stones in the place where he lived... He took a handful of stones, tied them into his bundle, put on his garment – which, in keeping with the local custom had buttons set with these stones as well – and set out.

The trip home was difficult and full of obstacles and dangers; the merchant lost his way and could not find how to go. His food ran out and he wandered in the desolation, fretting at the thought that he might die soon... But then he noticed a person carrying a sack filled with bread on his shoulder.

This man was quite the swindler; the sack he was carrying was filled with moldy bread. Only on top did he put two or three fresh

loaves, to serve as a deception. But our weary traveler did not know that, and he was so hungry that he pleaded with the peddler to give him some bread. He apologized that he had no way to pay for it, except for a handful of ‘simple stones’ that he had with him...

The swindler glanced at the stones, and he nearly gasped, but he contained his excitement, and with artificial compassion, he ‘agreed’ to the deal. The goods changed hands: the merchant received a sack of moldy bread, while the swindler turned wealthy in a flash.

Eating infused the merchant with some strength. Finally, his wanderings came to an end, and he was at the gateway to his city. His family and friends hurried to come out to greet him with great joy. They hadn’t seen him in years. When he arrived home, his children began to rummage in his packages, hoping that he had come home with many good things from the land where he had spent all this time. But they were very disappointed to find the bundles filled with moldy bread. When they saw this, they began to cry bitterly: ‘Father, is this why you left us for so many years, to bring us back bread that is not fit to be eaten even by animals?’

After they calmed down a bit, they looked in his bundles again, until finally they found one stone that had falling from his hand when he had given the rest to the bread peddler. They also noticed that his buttons were set with these stones; They immediately took them and ran to the pearl dealer on the next street to have them appraised. To their joy, he appraised them to be worth a fortune, that turned them at once into wealthy people.

But their father was not a partner to their joy. On the contrary, news of their newfound wealth caused him to tear at his hair and wail loudly: “Woe is me; I could have taken tons of gold and precious stones and to become the richest man in the world, but I lost it all when I exchanged the bit that I had for a sack full of moldy bread!” tears rolled down his cheeks as he said this, and no one could console him.

The *nimshal* is clear: If a person will make sure to answer amen on all the many *brachos* that he hears each day in shul, at home, and anywhere else, then at the time he will merit “*bo yavo berina*,” he will come with joy to Gan Eden. But if *chalilah*, he is lax about it, then when he comes before the Beis Din

Shel Ma’alah, and see the value of its reward and the real worth of each amen that he could have answered easily and without effort, then “*haloch yelech uvacho*” – he will weep for not having paid attention and throwing out these precious stones and diamonds. Instead of amassing them in his treasure houses, he exchanged them for some moldy bread... (*Sefer Hapanim* [Harav Z.W. Leichter] 31).



The matzeivah of the Ohev Yisrael in Mezibuzh.



The beis medrash of the Ohev Yisrael of Apta.

Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen – The Foundation of Emunah

Amen Hastens Healing

The Rebbe, Harav Aharon Roth, the Shomer Emunim, explained:

When Am Yisrael answer amen, immediately the Holy Shechinah dwells in that place where they answer. And from the power of the dwelling of the Shechinah, the person who answers is granted a *refuah sheleimah* – healing of the body and soul. This is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Shemos* 15:26): “All the diseases that I put in Egypt I will not put on you, Ki Ani Hashem Rofecha, because I am Hashem, your Healer.” By אֲנִי - which is numerically equivalent to amen, then ה' רפאך - the Shechinah of Hashem will dwell upon you and you will merit a *refuah* and *yeshuah*. (*Imrei Aharon, Beshalach*)

Amen Banishes Disease

The *mashpia*, Harav Eliyahu Roth, told his *talmidim*:

“Know that by answering amen properly, we bring upon ourselves good *hashpa'os* in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*, and we banish illnesses from the house. Every person needs to make the calculation in this world, what he prefers – to go seek out doctors, or to answer amen aloud.” (*Ish Chessed Hayah*, p. 231)

People once came to tell him that one of his students, a young *bochur*, was mortally ill. Immediately, Rav Eliyahu gathered those in his house, and placed a variety of foods on the table, which required different *brachos*. He asked each person to make the *brachah* aloud, both a *brachah rishonah* and a *brachah acharonah* for each of the types of food, so that everyone could answer amen with *kavanah* in the merit of this sick *bochur*. Rav Eliyahu said that this practice is a “great *tikkun* that rectifies *dinim* in a wondrous way for a sick person” (*ibid* p. 267).

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

During the winter, when we all daven for *gishmei brachah*, blessed rains, I wanted to point out in this context that the *sefer Shemeinah Lachmo* (*Parashas Noach*) states that the rains come in the merit of answering amen. That is what *Chazal* had in mind with the words (*Taanis* 8a): “Rains only fall for the *baalei amanah*.” In this *sefer* there is also an allusion cited from the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 8:2): “ויסכרו מעינת תהום וארבת” – השמים ויכלא הגשם מן השמים, The wellsprings of the deep were closed, and so were the windows of the Heavens, and the downpour from the Heavens was withheld.” – ויכלא הגשם מן – the last letter of each word comprises amen, to allude that the rains fall in the merit of answering amen, and if amen is not answered properly, *chalilah*, the rains can be withheld.

I thought to bring another allusion to this from the *passuk* we say twice a day in *Krias Shema* (*Devarim* 11:14): “*Venasati metar artzechem b'ito*” – the words מטר ארצכם is an acronym for amen.

We can add that this is why the rains are called “*gishmei brachah*,” because they descend in the merit of saying *brachos* and answering amen.

With appreciation,
S.Y., Yerushalayim

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 Yahtzeit



Harav Shaul Brach,
Rav of Kaschau

Harav Shaul Brach, Av Beis Din of Kaschau

26 Shevat 5700

Harav Shaul Brach was born to his father, Reb Elazar, in 5626. After he became bar mitzvah, he traveled to the yeshivah of the Maharam Schick in Chust, and was able to learn under him for nine months, until the Maharam passed away. Later, he studied in the yeshivah of Harav Shmuel Ehrenfeld, the Mattersdorfer Raf, author of *Chasan Sofer*.

Over the years, he also traveled to the Rebbes of Belz and Sighet.

From the year 5652, he served as Rav in Magendorf, and later in Krali, until he was appointed Rav of Kaschau, where he served until the end of his life. He was one of the prominent rabbanim and *poskim* of his generation, and fought the battle of Hashem against those who sought to violate all that is holy. He also established a *yeshivah gedolah* in Kaschau, which he led, and had many *talmidim*.

Harav Shaul authored many *seforim*, some of which were never published; his works include *Bihiyos Haboker* on Shavuuous; *Givat Shaul* on the month of Elul; *Avos al Banim* and *Chelek L'Olam Haba* on *Pirkei Avos*; *Tov Devarecha* on *Shir Hashirim*; *Liba Ba'i* on *sugyos* in Shas; and *Shaul Sha'al* on *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*. He passed away on 26 Shevat in Kaschau, where he is buried.

Be Careful to Answer Amen at the Precise Time

Harav Shaul Brach would often caution his students and members of his community to answer amen properly. He would explain that the amen needs to be answered precisely on time, because one who answers it too early or too late not only did not fulfill the mitzvah, but also sins. When one answers amen before the *mevarech* finishes the *brachah*, this is an *amen chatufah* (*Me'iri Brachos* 47a; *Shulchan Aruch* 124 8). And when one answers after a time, and not right after the *brachah* is finished, that is an *amen yesomah* (*Me'iri* *ibid*. See *Rema* *ibid*).

Rav Shaul brought a beautiful allusion to the obligation to answer on time from the *passuk* (*Shir Hashirim* 1:4): “משכני אחריו נרוצה,” that the acronym of these words is amen. משכני – one should wait with the amen until the *mevarech* finishes his *brachah*, but אחריו נרוצה – as soon as he does finish, one should hurry to answer amen. (*Tov Devarecha Shir Hashirim* 1:4; *Shaul Bechir Hashem* p. 189).