

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

The Crown of the Neshamah Yeseirah

”ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתם; ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה ובוים השביעי יהיה לכם קודש” (לה א-ב)

The Chida explained:

Chazal say (*Shabbos* 88a) that after Bnei Yisrael sinned with the *eigel*, the two crowns they were given at Har Sinai, when they declared *na'aseh venishma*, were taken from them and transferred to Moshe Rabbeinu.

The Mekubalim tell us that in his humility, Moshe did not take the crowns for himself, and rather, he is keeping them for Am Yisrael, and each Shabbos, he returns the crowns to them. That is the '*neshamah yeseirah*' that Hashem places in a person each Erev Shabbos (*Beitzah* 16a).

Therefore, we say in *Shacharis* of Shabbos: "*Yismach Moshe bematnas chelko ki eved ne'eman karasa lo kelil tiferes beroshso nasata b'omdo Lefanchecha al Har Sinai.*" On Shabbos, the joy of Moshe is very great, because then, he is crowned only with "*matnas chelko*," his share, the *kelil tiferes* that Hashem put on his head when he stood on Har Sinai, without the added crowns that were given to him at *cheit ha'eigel*, because he returned them to Am Yisrael on Erev Shabbos.

The Chida derives an allusion to this in these *pesukim*: "And Moshe gathered all of Adas Bnei Yisrael" – עדת is from the word עדי which means an adornment. After the sin of the *eigel*, Moshe gathered all the crowns that were removed

from Am Yisrael due to their sins. But in his humility he consoled them and said: "For six days, work will be done, and on the seventh, it will be holy for you" – if you keep Shabbos properly, then "on the seventh day" the crowns will be "*lachem* – for you."

Pnei Dovid 1

39 Melachos During Creation

”ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה ובוים השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת” (לה א-ב)

From the fact that the Torah placed the *passuk* forbidding *melachah* on Shabbos right after the *pesukim* regarding the work in the Mishkan, Chazal learn (*Shabbos* 97b) that the *melachos* forbidden on Shabbos are the thirty-nine *melachos* that were involved in building the Mishkan.

The Gra explained that the reason that specifically these thirty-nine *melachos* were forbidden is because through them, HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world in the six days of Creation, and then rested on the seventh day. He then added that corresponding to these thirty-nine *melachos*, the poet in the *Yotzros* of *Parashas Shekalim* lists the thirty-nine forms of speech that express the process of creation: “אז ראית וספרת. והכנת. ואמדת וחקרת. וימדדת וכלת ושללת. ואמדת וצברת. ופקדת וחסבת וסכמת. ומניית וספרת. וקצבת וחרצת וגזרת. וטפחת ושמרת והבנת. והבנת והשכלת ושרת וסקרת. וכתבת וחרטת. וחקקת וציגת וחרת ולמדת והודעת והורית והורית. וגזרת וצוית וקראת וענית והורית. ודברת ואמרת...”

Pe'as Hashulchan, Introduction

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Answering Amen Is an Eis Ratzon

Dear Readers!

I have merited on this platform to share with you some important insights that Hashem blessed me with on a range of subjects of *tefillah*, especially about the lofty value of the holy word 'amen,' a small word that is making a great revolution.

This time, I would like to share with you something I heard from a *talmid chacham* who related: "Whenever I come across a subject that I struggle to understand, I employ the advice of Chazal (*Niddah* 70b): "He should ask for mercy from the One to Whom wisdom belongs." Recently, I decided to have this in mind when I answer amen after the *brachos* in which we praise and ask for matters of *da'as*, wisdom, which are *Birchos HaTorah* said in the morning and at *Krias HaTorah*, *Hanosein Lasechvi Binah* in *Birchos Hashachar* and *Atah Chonen* in *Chazaras Hashatz*.

"I based this idea," this person said, "on the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 53b): '*Gadol ha'one yoser min hamevarech.*' It is clear to me that the greatness of amen is expressed in the fact that it is an *eis ratzon* for *tefillah* to be accepted." Indeed, he says, from the minute he began to adopt this practice, he saw great *brachah* in his learning, to the extent that even his *chavrusa* sensed it and wondered what had changed...

I thought to add that these words are alluded to in the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 8a) where they explain the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 69:14): "*V'ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b'emes yishecha.*" Thus, "What is an *eis ratzon*? When the *tzibbur* is davening." Yes, the *tefillah betzibbur* has, of course, a special virtue in its own right, but undoubtedly, its greatest virtue is answering amen. The most prominent characteristic of *tefillah betzibbur* is the numerous amens that are answered, after *brachos*, *Kaddish* and *Chazaras Hashatz*.

These words are alluded to in the *passuk* itself that *tefillah betzibbur* is an '*eis ratzon.*' It says "*aneini b'emes yishecha*" – because we answer amen many times, and its meaning is *emes!*

And if we merit to reach that point, then it is likely that answering amen after the *brachah* of *Hagomel Chassadim Tovim L'Amo Yisrael* is a special *eis ratzon* for any request or wish. May Hashem merit that we all should receive His benevolent *chassadim*, amen.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

'Yedid Nefesh' Until the Soul Departed

This story was related by the *mashpia*, Harav Elimelech Biderman, *shlita*, as heard from Harav Mendel Futterfas, *zt"l*:

One of Rav Mendel's friends, Reb Yaakov, was exiled to frozen Siberia for the 'sin' of teaching Torah to young children. Due to the 'severity of his crime,' Reb Yaakov was sent to a remote village in one of the highest and most frozen regions in Siberia. It was a place where the sun did not rise for months on end, and the temperatures could plunge to minus forty degrees and more.

When he arrived at that remote village, Reb Yaakov was directed to a rickety shack, where he would be living for the years of his exile. His heart shattered inside him. The horrific cold and the constant hunger would imperil his survival, but that did not bother him as much as the fact that he did not have



A prison camp in Siberia

any *seforim* or *tashmishei kedushah* that he needed for his spiritual survival. He had only one item that he had been able to smuggle in under the noses of the Soviets – his *tefillin shel yad*, which he guarded zealously.

The first Shabbos of his incarceration in Siberia arrived. On Shabbos afternoon, Reb Yaakov left his hut for a short walk around the area. As he moved further away from his shack, in the frozen steppe, he suddenly heard the sound of singing. The sound was distant, but because of the terrain, he was able to hear it.

The closer Reb Yaakov drew to the source of the sound, the more he was able to identify that it was a Jewish *niggun*, filled with emotion and yearning. He followed the voice as it grew stronger, until he reached another miserable shack on the edge of the village.

The door to the shack was partly open,

and when Reb Yaakov looked inside, he was stunned to see an elderly Yid, with a bent back and overgrown hair, sitting at an empty table, his head buried in his hands. He seemed to be in another world, as he sang with tremendous emotion the poignant chorus of *Yedid Nefesh Av Harachaman*.

Reb Yaakov opened the door and slipped into the hut. The other Jew continued singing, and did not even seem to notice that someone had entered. Even after Reb Yaakov sat down at a chair that stood near the table, the other man was still so engrossed in his thoughts that he didn't acknowledge his guest.

This continued even after Reb Yaakov closed his eyes and joined the song: "*Nafshi cholas ahavasecha...nichsof nichsafti liros betiferes Uzecha.*" For more than an hour, they continued singing together, the words of the holy

piyut composed by Rabi Elazar Azkari hovering in the air of Siberia, expressing the holy emotions of yearning to be close to Hashem that united two Jews who had met through their fate in this frozen wilderness. Only when the song finally ended did the other man open his eyes, and raised his head,

and his luminous countenance became visible to Reb Yaakov.

For a few moments, the man was stunned at the sight of the guest, but then he recovered. He welcomed Reb Yaakov warmly and said:

"It is twenty years since the day I was exiled here, and since then I have not seen a Jewish face. I came here with nothing, and since the day I have arrived, I have not put on *tefillin* nor wrapped myself in a *tallis*. I haven't sat in a *sukkah* or heard a *shofar*. Blessed is Hashem, Who has sent to my home a Jew who looks like you, and I am so happy. Perhaps now I will finally merit to put on *tefillin*, or maybe even to wear *tzitzis* after so many years?" the man concluded longingly.

The man spoke with emotion, and his guest had to disappoint him when he told him that he had no *seforim* or holy articles, except the *tefillin shel yad* that he was able to save. His *tefillin*

shel rosh had been confiscated by the Soviets when he had reached Siberia.

Reb Yaakov parted from the man with a promise that he'd be back the next day with the *tefillin shel yad* for him to put on.

The next day, Reb Yaakov returned to the hut, the *tefillin* wrapped on his arm so that no one would see them. When he entered he found the other Yid sitting at his table, enveloped in deep thoughts. "I wasn't able to fall asleep all night, I was so excited to do the *mitzvah*," he said excitedly when he saw Reb Yaakov. "I have waited for this moment for twenty years," he added, and put out his hand, thanking Hashem that finally he had the merit to put on *tefillin*.

Reb Mendel's friend took the *tefillin* off his own hand and put them on the hand of the other Jew. The man began immediately to recite the *brachah*, in a loud voice, slowly, with tears rolling down his face: "*Baruch Atah Hashem... Asher Kidshanu Bemitzvosav Vetzivanu lehaniach tefillin.*" Reb Yaakov fervently answered amen, and began to wrap the straps around the mans' skinny forearm.

When the *tefillin* were firmly tied on the man's hand, he closed his eyes and began reciting *Krias Shema*. The words of the *passuk Shema Yisrael* emerged from his mouth slowly, clearly, but then his voice began to fade. He could barely finish the first *passuk*, when his head slumped down onto his chest.

His purified soul had departed with the word "*Echad.*"

Years later, when Reb Mendel would relate this story to people, he would conclude:

"My friends, each one of you should ask yourselves, how he would look if he would have been sitting alone for twenty years without the ability to fulfill even one *mitzvah*. Would his soul still be yearning and pleading and longing when he says *Yedid Nefesh Av HaRachaman* like that Yid?"

"Now that we are sitting calmly and peacefully, when *bechasdei Hashem*, we have everything, with comfort and peace of mind, does it not behoove us to raise our voice and cry from the depths of our heart: "*Yedid nefesh Av HaRachaman meshoch avdecha el Retzonecha!*"

The Halachah of ‘Amen Yesomah’

Answering Amen ‘Toch Kedei Dibbur’

1. One must answer amen right after the mevarech finishes uttering the brachah. If he pauses after the brachah for longer than ‘kedei dibbur,’ which is three or four words, he should not answer amen, and if he does it is an ‘amen yesomah.’

Sources and Explanations

The *Avudraham* (*Shemoneh Esreh*) brings that there are *meforshim* who define an ‘amen yesomah’ as answering amen “a long time after the brachah is ended,” that just like an orphan does not have a father, this amen does not have a brachah. They say that the drawback that an amen yesomah has is not in that the person does not hear the brachah or does not know which brachah was said (as explained in *Yerushalmi Brachos* 8 8. And see *Sdeh Yehoshua Megillah* Chapter 1 end of *Halachah* 11, that asks about their conclusion from this *Yerushalmi*), but rather, the issue is the pause between the brachah and the amen. The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Biur Halachah* *ibid ad loc. miyad*) derives from these words that the prohibition of answering amen is only when waiting “a long time after the end of the brachah,” but if he does not wait a long time, it is not an amen yesomah, even if it is longer than the time of *kedei dibbur*.” However, the *Mishnah Berurah* rules (*ibid* 34) that *l’halachah*, when waiting longer than *kedei dibbur* from the end of the brachah, one should not answer amen at all, for if he does answer, then it is an amen yesomah, as ruled by the *Pri Migadim* (*ibid Eshel Avraham* 14), and as is evident from the words of the *Rema* (124 8) who wrote “And one should not wait to answer amen, and as soon as the brachah

ends, he should answer amen.” But if he lingers after the brachah for as long as the time of *kedei dibbur*, [including the time of *kedei dibbur*] then he should still answer amen, because a *hefsek* of this length is not considered a *hefsek* [“toch kedei dibbur kedibbur dami” (see *Bava Kamma* 73a)], and it is considered like someone who answered amen right when the mevarech finished the brachah. It should be noted that even though the opinion saying that amen yesomah means when amen is recited not adjacent to the brachah is brought in *Rema* and not in *Shulchan Aruch*, nevertheless, the *Shulchan Aruch* also rules (*ibid* 11) that one should answer amen right after the end of the brachah (and see *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid* 42).

Maseches Bava Kamma (73b) says that “toch kedei dibbur” is the amount of time needed for a student to ask about his rebbi by saying the four words “Shalom alechah Rebbi uMori.” But some Rishonim do not include the word “uMori” and they say that “toch kedei dibbur” is the amount of time needed to say the words “Shalom alecha Rebbi” (see *Rosh* *ibid* 7 7, and *Pilpula Charifta* *ibid* 7). As noted, the *poskim* wrote that one should be strict to answer amen *toch kedei dibbur* from the end of the brachah. The *Mishnah Berurah* (124 34) did not rule what is the time considered *toch kedei dibbur*, but wrote: “and the amount of time of *toch kedei dibbur* is a dispute in the *poskim*: some say it is three words and some say it is four.” But *sefer Sha’ar Ha’ayin* (p. 441) brings a ruling of Harav Chaim Kanievsky that the measure of “kedei dibbur” is three words, because that is what the *Mishnah Berurah* rules in other places (206 12, and in *Sha’ar Hatziyun* *ibid* 10; 487 4; 582 7), and this is what the *Rambam* ruled (*Shavuos* 2 17) as do most of the Acharonim (see *Shaar Hatziyun* 487 3).

Razei Emunim

Pearls of Amen in the Parashah

Moshe Rabbeinu Was Called ‘Ish Emunos’

“אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדת אשר פקד על פי משה עבדת הלויים ביד איתמר בן אהרן הכהן” (לח כא)

This *parashah* details the amount of gold, silver and copper that the nation deposited with Moshe Rabbeinu for building the Mishkan. In this context, the *Midrash* (*Shemos Rabbah* 51 1) says of Moshe Rabbeinu the *passuk* (*Mishlei* 28:20): ‘Ish emunos rav brachos’ that because the donations that Bnei Yisrael brought for the Mishkan were deposited with Moshe, who was a trustworthy person, Bnei Yisrael brought so many donations, and that is how the brachah was multiplied on the work of the Mishkan (according to *Eitz Yosef* *ibid*).

Another reason that Moshe was called Ish Emunos is explained in *Sefer*

Nechmad Mizahav:

The Rebbe, Harav Yechezkel of Kuzmir, explained the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 53b): “*Gadol ha’oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*,” that because the one answering amen is asking for his friend’s brachah to be fulfilled, and does not aspire that he should be the mevarech, therefore, he is greater than the mevarech. Based on this we can explain that Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the humblest of all men, was called “ish emunos” because he did not aspire to be the one to bless, rather, he was strict to answer amen to the brachos of Am Yisrael so that those brachos should be fulfilled.

The *Chessed L’Avraham* of Radomsk added that even the name of Moshe

alludes to the word amen, because the last letters of the letters that comprise Moshe מֹשֶׁה, שִׁי”ן ה”א is amen.

Nechmad Mizahav Pekudei; Chessed L’Avraham Tetzaveh

On this subject, the *Megaleh Amukos* explains that the *passuk* “Ish emunos rav brachos” comes to teach us about the virtue of one who answers amen being greater than the mevarech, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b) “*Gadol ha’oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*.” רב means big, as it says (*Bereishis* 25:23) “*verav ya’avod tza’ir*” – the bigger one will serve the younger one. “Ish emunos” – one who answers amen, “rav brachos” – is greater than the mevarech.

Megaleh Amukos Vayeishev

Otzros Emunim

The Virtue of Answering Amen

One Who Answers Amen Is Strengthened

In *Maseches Brachos* (53b), *Chazal* compare one who makes a *brachah* to the simple soldiers who launch a war, while the one who answers amen is compared to the stronger soldiers who come after them and win the battle. Rabbeinu Bechayei explained that *Chazal* compared the advantage of the one who answers amen over the *mevarech* to the advantage of the strong one over the weak one, because one who answers amen “draws strength from the Source of all strengths, from where he draws the strength and power, and that is where the strength of every one who overcomes and prevails comes from.” (*Kad Hakemach, Emunah*)

On the Brachos of Tzaddikim As Well

The rule “*gadol ha'onehyoser min hamevarech*” is said not only regarding answering amen after someone who makes the *brachos* of Hashem, but also after one who answers amen to a *brachah* that is given by a great person. This is because the *brachos* of *tzaddikim* depend on the *emunah* of the one accepting the *brachah*. The more the *emunah* in *chachmei Yisrael* and their *brachos* is rooted in the heart of those receiving the *brachos*, the greater the power of that *brachah* to be fulfilled is. Therefore, the share of the one answering amen is greater in the fulfillment of the *brachah* of the *tzaddik* than the one who gave the *brachah* (*Birchas Eliyahu* [Harav Eliyahu Fisher] p. 126).

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

As your pamphlet is a wonderful platform for encouraging and strengthening the answering of amen, I thought it appropriate to ask you to bring the beautiful things I saw in *sefer Yalkut Me'am Loez* on *Parashas Mishpatim* (p. 731) regarding the virtue of answering amen. He writes:

“That which we said, that the reward of a *brachah* is ten gold coins, is specifically when he says it in a loud voice, because he then is *mezakeh* the *rabbim*, who answer amen. And this is the *Kavod* of Hashem *Yisbarach*, to bless Him in front of other, as it says (*Mishlei* 14:28) ‘*Berov am hadras Melech.*’

And from here, a person should learn to say *brachos* in front of people in a loud voice, both *Birchos Hanehenin* and *Birchos Hashachar*, so that the *kahal* should answer amen. This is especially the case regarding the *brachos* that are said when going up to the Torah, because according to *halachah*, they must be said out loud so that people should hear. Because if they are said in a whisper between one's teeth, then they are *brachos levatalah.*”

From his words it appears that only a *brachah* out loud is worth ten gold coins, because of the two virtues that exist when saying it specifically aloud: 1. *Bein adam lachaveiro*, that it brings about a *zikkui harabbim* when amen is answered, and 2. *Bein adam laMakom*, because it is a *Kavod* for Hashem to bless Him in front of a crowd. We can add that according to *Rashi* (*Brachos* 47a, ad loc. *ad*) that answering amen is part of the *brachah*, how much more so that we can say that we do not receive a reward of ten gold coins for a *brachah* without an amen, because it is a *brachah* that is incomplete.

I thought that regarding this we can advise the words of *Chazal* (*Megillah* 18a): “*Milah besela mishtika basrei.*” That only through silence when the *brachah* is said so that we can answer amen after it, do we merit a double and multifold reward.

In appreciation for your work,
Ezra Toledano, Yerushalayim

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102
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Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The ruins of the Jewish cemetery in Lvov. Photographed in 5702.

The Sho'el Umeishiv

7 Adar I 5635

Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson was born in Berezhany in 5570 as the oldest son to Rav Aryeh Leibish Halevi, author of *sefer Beis K-l*. He learned under his father's tutelage, and cites him often in his *seforim*. After his marriage to the daughter of his uncle, Rav Yitzchak Aharon Itinga, he moved to Lvov, where he learned *bechavrusa* with his brother-in-law Harav Mordechai Zev Itinga. They learned together for twenty-five years, and wrote together a few compilations, including *Meforshei Hayam – chiddushim* and commentaries on the *sefer Yam HaTalmud*; *Magen Gibborim* on *Shulchan Aruch* and *Me'iras Einayim* on the examinations of the animal's lungs.

In 5717, the Rav of the city of Lvov, Harav Yaakov Orenstein, author of *Yeshuos Yaakov*, passed away. Harav Yosef Shaul was asked to succeed him, and he served in this position for 18 years. His many responsa were compiled into a series entitled *Shu"t Sho'el Umeishiv*, which became a basic *halachah sefer*. In addition, he authored other *seforim*, including the *Divrei Shaul* series on Torah, Moadim and *Aggados* of *Shas*.

On 27 Adar I, 5635, he departed this world, and was buried in the cemetery in Lvov. His *matzeivah* is inscribed with, among other things, the following: “*Ish kadosh merachem... Yomam valaylah lo mash m'ohel shel Torah, laYehudim hayah amud eish, shemesh magen v'orah; kol shochnai seivel Torah bikshu mipiv veyichalu l'imrosav hatehoros, yelidei sichlo rabu heimah hayu l'Yisrael lem'oros...*” (a holy and compassionate man... did not move from the tent of Torah day and night, he was a pillar of fire for the Jews, a sun and protection and light; all the denizens of this world sought Torah from him and awaited his pure statements, his many teachings were a guiding light for Am Yisrael...)

A Brachah Answered by Amen

By a person answering amen to the *brachah* of a friend, he testifies of him that the *brachah* was said with the right mind and with complete *emunah*, with the goal of opening the gates of goodness and blessing. Therefore, specifically a *brachah* that is answered by amen has the power to bring an abundance of goodness for Am Yisrael. (*Divrei Shaul, Nazir* 66b)