

# VeChol Maaminim

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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

## Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

### Daven for Parnassah

“מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות”

In the times of the *Gemara*, it was customary before reciting *Mah Nishtanah* to move the table with all the foods on it a little bit, in order to make the children wonder and to get them to ask about this (*Pesachim* 115b).

Harav Chaim HaKohein Rappaport, the Rav of Lvov, added that this custom has another goal: Moving the table with all its food reminds a person that in one minute, everything can be taken from him, and therefore, even if he is blessed with many assets, he should not sit with confidence. Rather, he should beseech in the *tefillos* of Pesach, when we are judged for the success of the grain (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a), that Hashem should continue to bestow *brachah* upon him.

On this subject, the Imrei Baruch of Vizhnitz added that for this reason, people do not feel a sense of satiation from eating *matzos* on Pesach – so that they should remember to daven for the grain in these days, when we are judged on the success of the growth of the crops.

Zechar Hachaim 19; Imrei Baruch Pesach

### Tefillah to Be Spared from a ‘Mashehu’ of Chometz

“שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה הלילה הזה כלו מצה”

Harav Yaakov Shimshon of Shpитеvka was worried because of the opinion of those who hold that *chometz* is forbidden even if it is a *mashehu*, a tiny bit, and even if it is in cold water (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 467 12 and the *Nosei Keilim* there). As a result, he was afraid to drink from the water drawn from the river, lest a small piece of *chometz* had fallen in and rendered the water forbidden. One year, he took a clean barrel and shoveled pure snow into it; then he sealed the barrel and stood it in his room, with the thought that he could drink this water without worrying.

On Erev Pesach, the Rebbe opened the barrel. Of course, the snow had melted, and it was filled with pure water, but floating on the top was a cracker, which apparently had fallen from a passerby into the snow...

The Rebbe then said, “I learned from this that a person should not adopt a *chumrah* that is not practiced. He should do what his forebears did, and ask the Creator to help him be spared from a *mashehu* of *chometz*.”

Haggadah Shel Pesach ‘Mekarvan LaTorah’ p. 59

### Amen and Emunah on Seder Night

The mitzvah of recounting the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is at the heart of Seder night, and in order to merit to fulfill it according to *halachah*, Chazal instituted the *nusach* of the *Haggadah*, which includes all the elements of *sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Right at the beginning of the *Haggadah*, it is mentioned that we are actually commanded to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* every single day, as the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 16:3): “*Lema’an tizkor es yom tzeischa me’Eretz Mitzrayim kol yemei chayecha*, so that you should remember the day you left Mitzrayim all the days of your life.” But the mitzvah of telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on Pesach night is unique in the fact that we have a special mitzvah: “*Vehigadeta levincha*,” you should recount to your son.

The Ramban (*Shemos* 13:16) explains that when the father tells his son the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, he conveys the torch of *emunah* to the coming generations. We find that the basis of Seder night is the responsibility of every Jew to imbue his offspring with the concepts of *emunah* that were revealed at *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

We’ve often mentioned that Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote (*Shemos* 14:31) that the mitzvah of answering amen was instituted in order to imbue *emunah* in the hearts of Am Yisrael. From his words, we can derive that on this night of conveying *emunah* – Seder night – we must fulfill the mitzvah of “*Vehigadeta levincha*” also with imbuing the mitzvah of amen.

We can peruse the many *brachos* that we recite on this night with this in mind: Aside for the *brachos* said at all the *seudos* of Yom Tov, on this night, we have many unique *brachos*, such as *Borei Pri Hagafen* on each one of the four cups; the *brachah* of

*Asher Ga’alanu*; *Al Achilas Matzah*, *Al Achilas Maror*, and others. The *tzaddik* Harav Shmuel Hummer (Mitzvos Beileil HaSeder 73) lists no less than 32 *brachos* that we merit to make on this night, from *Ma’ariv Aravim* until *Hamapil*, and each *brachah* has its own amen, of course.

On Seder night, we invest effort and thought in strengthening our children’s *emunah*. And if we want these concepts to be embedded in their hearts, it is fitting that we should imbue them on this night also with the importance of answering amen – which is the foundation of *emunah*.

I will add that just like the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on Seder night is unique in the mitzvah of *vehigadeta levincha*, likewise, is the mitzvah of answering amen. In *Maseches Sanhedrin* (119b) it states the opinion of the Tanna Rabi Meir that the baby merits life in *Olam Haba* from “the time that he answers amen.” The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 124 7) rules this practical *halachah* as follows: “And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as the child answers amen he merits *Olam Haba*.”

We can allude also that the custom of *אפיקומן* that is meant to convey the fundamentals in *emunah* that were revealed at *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, alludes to the obligation of teaching children to answer amen, as it begins and ends with the letters of *אמן*.

On this night, we are given an opportunity! Let us use it, and at the same time as inculcating our children with *emunah*, let us strengthen them and be strengthened at the same time, with the mitzvah of answering amen. This way, we will merit to continue the light of *emunah* that is revealed on this great night for the entire year.

Pesach Kasher V’sameach!  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

### The Matzos Eaten on Purim Night

*Kyiv. Early years of the Bolshevik revolution.*

Frightened residents watched fearfully from their windows as the brigade of secret police handcuffed the young Jewish man and dragged him brutally to their black car. The car sped away to an unknown destination.

Inside the car, handcuffed and beaten, was Shaul Perlstein, an energetic Karliner *bochur*, who had dared defy the Communist revolution. Under the noses of the secret police, he organized *minyanim* for *tefillah* and Torah *shiurim*, and helped Jews carry out *brisos* and kosher marriages, among other things. All these acts, in the eyes of the Communist authorities, were considered traitorous to the revolution. Shaul knew that the KGB's long arm had picked up on his activities, and that they were waiting for the right moment to catch him. But that did not preclude him from continuing his holy activities, with the understanding that it was the only thing that would help preserve the Jewish embers among Russian Jews.

The operation to capture him was planned very well, and was carried out that night. The KGB agents burst into his home with a file full of incriminating evidence, and dragged him cruelly to the secret police headquarters.

To the surprise of the investigators, Shaul did not try to deny anything. He decided to spare himself the tortures of the interrogation, and to admit to everything he was being accused of. Thus, he brought upon himself exile to frozen Siberia, where he would be "reeducated"

beginning of the winter in a frozen village in the forests of Russia, among hundreds of boorish farmers.

Despite the harsh conditions, he chose not to break. He knew very well that he was not alone, that "*Melo kol ha'aretz Kevodo*", and decided to strengthen his *emunah* and to observe his Yiddishkeit proudly.

One of the most difficult decisions that he took upon himself was to keep track of the Jewish calendar. He crafted various signs through which he would recall when Shabbos was, when Chanukah and Purim fell, and most importantly – when it would be Pesach. When he thought about Pesach, he resolved, with characteristic determination, that this year, as well, in this remote place, he would have kosher *matzos* to fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Yom Tov. Each day, he would mark the date down, and at the same time, he murmured a *tefillah*. He pleaded with Hashem to help him realize his dream and to merit to fulfill Pesach according to *halachah*.

Among the prisoners in the village was a lone, quiet young man named Vladimir. Shaul, with his big heart, befriended the lonely soul, and slowly, the ice between them thawed. Vladimir found Shaul to be a source of encouragement and strength.

In one of their conversations, after Shaul learned that Vladimir worked as a laborer in the wheat fields, he made a suggestion that Vladimir could not refuse: "For the next three weeks, I will give you my entire breakfast every day. In exchange, you should pay me with pocketsful of wheat kernels."

Vladimir could not care less what Shaul was going to do with the wheat; he was just happy for any extra food he could get. As far as he was concerned, the Jew could plant the kernels into the ground again...

By a week before Pesach, Shaul already had a nice amount of wheat kernels that would be enough to bake six *mehudar matzos* for the Seder. Secretly, he ground, kneaded and baked, and when Seder night came, he sat down at his table, said the *Haggadah*, and recited *Al Achilas Matzah*, as he ate his

matzah proudly. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He tasted the special flavor of the *matzos*, the flavor of freedom, of "*hashata avdi, leshanah haba'ah ben chorin*, this year I am a slave, but next year, I will be a free man."

In the middle of the summer that followed, Shaul was released, and began the long journey back to Kyiv. After an exhausting trip, he arrived in Kyiv on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul. And as if he had not just returned from "reeducation", he walked purposefully towards the familiar cellar where, according to his memory, there were underground *minyanim*. He wanted to daven the *tefillah* of Yom Kippur Kattan.

When he entered, he was happy to find a few stubborn Jews like him. At first, he was suspected of being a spy, and when he was finally able to convince them of his pure intentions, he asked, "When does the *tefillah* of Yom Kippur Kattan begin?" they answered

him with very surprised looks. "The *tefillah* of Yom Kippur Kattan? That is only customary to say on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul!"

"Nu, so according to my calculations, today is Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul," Shaul replied. In response, the *mispallelim* shook their heads with compassion: "You must have not remembered that it was a leap year... Today is Erev Rosh Chodesh Av."

When he heard this, Shaul fainted on the spot. When they were finally able to revive him, Shaul burst into wracking sobs. His determined soul, which had withstood even the most difficult days, could not contain the chilling news that all of his efforts to eat matzah on Pesach had been for naught. He had celebrated Pesach on Purim night, and on Pesach itself, *Rachman litzlan*, he had eaten *chometz*. He remembered that emotional night, and the tears that had accompanied his recital of the *Haggadah*, and was so ashamed of himself. It had been a wonderful Purim show, nothing more.

For many years thereafter, Shaul kept his pain in his heart. Even when, *baruch Hashem*, he was able to leave the Soviet Union, and settled in America, he did not share with anyone the pain that he felt every single day, the pain of a Yid who was *moser nefesh*...and had eaten *chometz* on Pesach. One day, he was happy to hear that his Rebbe, Harav Yochanan of Karlin, was coming to visit his *chassidim* in America. He hurried to get in line with the crowds waiting to get a *brachah* from the Rebbe.

When it was Reb Shaul's turn, he could not contain himself. He burst into sobbing and shared his pain with his Rebbe: "Woe is me, that I ate *chometz* on Pesach" – he wept.

The Rebbe thought a bit and then said: "*Chazal say 'Ushemartem es hamatzos – ushemartem es hamitzvos*,' to teach us that just like one must not be *machmitz*, must not miss out on the *matzos*, one should also not miss out on the *mitzvos*. It is true you lost out on eating matzah, but you did not miss out on the mitzvah. HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not look at the result, but rather at the effort. He knows how much of an effort you made, and even gave away your own food, to do this mitzvah. He knows what you did with so much love and good will, and He accepted your offering as a precious treasure. You can be calm; your *korban* is a very important and desirable one to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and therefore, your reward is guaranteed for eternity."

Reb Shaul closed his eyes, and allowed the words to penetrate his soul. He felt a sense of tranquility spread all over his body, filling his entire being. He believed the Rebbe's words, but hesitatingly asked the Rebbe to write down the "*psak*" on a piece of paper, so that he could have it for himself for the future. The Rebbe agreed and wrote: "*Ushemartem es hamatzos – ushemartem es hamitzvos*."

Years later, when Reb Shaul was about to pass away, at a ripe old age, he asked his family to give this piece of paper to the *chevrah kaddisha* to bury it under his head, and said, "This will be my passport to Gan Eden."

*Haggadah Shel Pesach Niflaosecha Asichah*



The Brodsky Shul in Kyiv, Ukraine

along with other "enemies of the regime."

The KGB operatives, who thought that the *bochur* had agreed to "reeducation", did not dream that he had other plans entirely. He simply would transplant his work from Kyiv to the Siberian labor camp. With tiny *tefillin*, a few *sifrei kodesh* and lots of *emunah* and *dveikus*, he began to disseminate Yiddishkeit and *emunah* to the Jewish prisoners in frozen Siberia.

The commanders at the camp were stunned and confounded by what was happening in front of their eyes; they thought it would have been better to leave him in Kyiv. This was a "catastrophe" taking place in front of their eyes... Their "reeducation" efforts were going to go down the drain, and they were determined to stop that from happening at any cost. They decided to exile Shaul to an even more remote location, where there were no Jews at all. So Shaul found himself at the

## The Segulah of Reciting the Haggadah with Kavanah and Simchah

### Kanfei HaShechinah Spread Over Him

In his *sefer Yesod Yosef* (Chapter 85) the Mekubal **Harav Yosef of Dubno**, the Rav of Harav Tzvi Hirsch Kaidenover, author of *Kav Hayashar*, promised that one who is careful to recite the *Haggadah* on Seder night with *kavanah* and *simchah*, will merit a reward that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will perform miracles and wonders for him. He wrote:

“And in every generation, on Pesach night, anyone who says the praise and *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and story of the *Haggadah* with joy and happiness, without any anger and laziness and sense of a burden *chas veshalom*, but with *kavanah* and *simchah* of the heart, he will have the Wings of the Shechinah spread over him always, to save him from all places and in all ways. And he merits to have miracles performed for him. But if someone feels that the *Haggadah* is burden, and says it with laziness and with no joy, then he does not merit to have miracles performed for him when he is a place of anger.”

### Story of the Miracle Brings About More Miracles

This concept is brought down in *sefer Shnei Luchos Habris* (*Pesachim*, *Matzah Shemurah* 159). After the Shelah Hakadosh brings the words of the *Zohar* (*Parashas Bo* 40 2) on the loftiness of relating the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and the joy and abundance that it evokes On High, he concludes that from the words of the *Zohar* it is evident (ibid) that “When we praise Hashem for the *chessed* that He did, then there is a *hisorerus* that there should be more *chessed*.” Based on this, the Shelah (ibid) explained the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 107:8): “*Yodu l’Hashem chasdo venifle’osav livnei adam*,” that when a person thanks Hashem for the *chessed* done for him, then

he merits that Hashem will do miracles and wonders for him in the future.

### Letters of the Story Evoke Miracles

The Chozeh of Lublin also derives a similar thought from these words of the *Zohar*. He wrote (*Divrei Emes, Parashas Beshalach*): “We explained a few times a rule: from what was already good, then more good can be continued, as it says in *Zohar Parashas Bo*, in *Raya Meheimna* (ibid), on the stories of miracles. I heard from the Maggid of Zlotchov, z”l, that in the letters of the story we awaken the root of all the miracles, because everything is in the letters.” This is how the Chozeh explained the *passuk* (*Shemos* 10:2): “*Ulema’an tesaper b’oznei bincha uben bincha es asher hisalallti beMitzrayim v’es ososai asher samti bam veyedatem ki Ani Hashem*.”

There is a well-known question: Isn’t the story meant so that our children and children’s children should know about the Kingship of Hashem? Why is it said about the one who relates the story “*veyedatem ki Ani Hashem*” and you should know that I am Hashem? The *passuk* means to say: In the merit of the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, you should merit that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will perform miracles and wonders for you until you know and recognize clearly that *Hashem Hu Ha’Elokim*. The Chozeh further explained based on this concept the *passuk* (ibid 12:27): “*V’amartem zevach Pesach hu l’Hashem asher pasach al batei Bnei Yisrael beMitzrayim benagfo es Mitrayim, v’es beseinu hitzil*.” If you relate the miracles of Hashem in *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, you will merit to see the fulfillment of “and our homes were saved.” As the *Yesod Yosef* wrote, cited earlier, “The Wings of the Shechinah are always spread over him to save him from all places and in all ways.”

## Razei Emunim

### Allusions of Amen in the Haggadah

### Yetzias Mitrayim Imbues Emunah

“מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר  
בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין  
בבני ברק, והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל אותה  
הלילה”

The *Sefer Hachinuch* (*Mitzvah* 21) explains that the Torah commanded to relate the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on Pesach night in order to arouse in the heart of a person and to imbue within him the fundamentals of *emunah*. The mitzvah of answering amen, like the mitzvah of *sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, is meant to imbue *emunah* in the heart of a person (see *Rabbeinu Bechayei*,

*Shemos* 14:31). And it is remarkable that “amen” is alluded to in the names of the Tannaim who “would relate the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*,” and as the **Chida** wrote in his commentary *Peh Echad on Haggadah Shel Pesach*, that the numerical value of the first letters of the names of the Tannaim Eliezer, Yehoshua, Elazar, Akiva and Tarfon are equal to the numerical value of amen.

### Kaddish After the Haggadah

“אחד מי יודע”

If we combine all the numbers of “*Mi Yodea*” to one another, from “*Echad*”

until “*Sheloshah Asar*”, the result will be 91, which is numerically equivalent to amen.

We can explain the reason for this according to the *Gemara* (*Sotah* 49a) that the world exists in the merit of “*Yehei Shemei Rabba d’aggadeta*,” in other words, answering “amen, yehei Shemei Rabba” to *Kaddish* said after discussing matters of *Aggadah*. Therefore, we conclude the *Haggadah* with the *piyut* of *Echad Mi Yodea*, which alludes to the word “amen,” so that it should be considered like answering amen to “*Kaddish* after *Aggadah*.”

Reshima DeHaggadeta p. 252



Address of the  
Shevet Halevi

### The Shevet Halevi

15 Nissan 5775

Harav Shmuel Halevi Vosner was born on 2 Elul 5673 in Vienna, Austria, to his father, Rav Yosef Tzvi. From an early age, Rav Shmuel made great strides in his learning, and when he was 18, he traveled to attend the renowned Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. He learned there diligently and also served the *roshei yeshivah*, Harav Meir Shapiro and Harav Shimon of Zelichov. When World War II broke out, he came to Eretz Yisrael, and after a tumultuous journey, settled in Yerushalayim; not long thereafter, he was asked to

serve as a *rav* and *moreh tzeddek* there.

In 5707, he moved to Bnei Brak to serve as the Rav of the Zichron Meir neighborhood. There, he reestablished the yeshivah of his Rebbe, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, and led it for the next 70 years. Harav Vosner forged a *derech* in *psak*, and taught many *talmidim* in his unique fashion. He printed his many *piskei halachah* in the series *Shu"t Shevet Halevi*. In his final years, he accompanied, guided and encouraged the activities of Bnei Emunim, and even attended gatherings that were organized to strengthen the initiative of *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*. He passed away on Seder night of 5775, at the age of 102. Tens of thousands accompanied him to his final resting place in the Zichron Meir cemetery in Bnei Brak.

### Address of the Shevet Halevi at Bnei Emunim Convention for Cheder Principals – Elul 5770

### The Obligation of Being *Mechanech* Children to Answer Amen

The *Sefer Hachassidim* (261) wrote that when there is a mitzvah that is neglected, and lacks people to engage in it, or a *masechta* that people do not commonly learn, they are considered a *meis mitzvah*. A person should work to strengthen specifically this mitzvah or learn this *masechta*. He said: "Love the mitzvah that is like a *meis mitzvah*, that no one does, such as when you see a mitzvah that is shamed, or Torah that is not learned a lot, or when you see that the people in your city are learning *Mo'ed* and *Nashim*, you should learn *Kodshim*..."

We can also say that there was an ancient practice in Am Yisrael, that they would say all the *Birchos Hashachar betzibbur*, including the *brachos* before *Hanosein Lasechvi Binah*, and onwards. And everyone would recite the *brachos* together, one recited and his friend answered amen; then they would switch, with the *oneh* reciting the *brachos* and his friend answering amen. This practice has been forgotten in recent years, and our *chashuve* friend, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, merited to grasp this *eitz hachaim* of *zikui harabbim* with his work to strengthen the answering of amen, and with his desire to revive and reestablish this ancient practice. It is a practice considered (*Shabbos* 104a): "forgotten and then reestablished."

*Chazal* speak about the greatness of the answering of amen of children in *Perek Cheilek* (*Sanhedrin* 110b): "From when does a child merit *Olam Haba*...from the time that he says amen, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26b): '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,' do not read it *shomer emunim*, rather *she'omer amen*." And the reason for this is explained later in that *Gemara*:

"What is amen, Rabi Chanina said 'K-I Melech Ne'eman.'" That means that the content and essence of answering amen is the testimony of *emunah*, to testify of the Creator that He is a K-I Melech Ne'eman. And this is what is meant in the first *passuk* of *Krias Shema*, which is a testimony of the *emunah* and *Yichud Hashem*. And the words "K-I Melech Ne'eman" were added to be said right before this *passuk*, and therefore, it is so lofty that one can merit this *Olam Haba* with it.

It also says in the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 63b) that at the time of the *Churban*, Elyahu Hanavi walked among people who were bloated with hunger, and the corpses lying on the ground. He saw among them a sweet child who was still alive, and Elyahu said to him: Say with me the *passuk* of *emumah* "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*," and you will merit life. This child was an offspring of idol worshipers, *R"l*, and he took out the *avodah zarah* that he had with him, and died right away.

Regarding *kavanah* that a person has to have when answering amen, it is brought down in the *poskim* and in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 124 6) that there are two *kavanos*: 1. 'The *brachah* that the *mevarech* is making is true.' And 2. 'I believe it.' In a *brachah* that contains a request, he should additionally have in mind: 'May it be that this request is fulfilled.' And it is fitting to teach these *kavanos* to little children.

This is a great *tikkun*, strengthening answering of amen among the children. Aside for the virtue of answering amen, there are also two other good things about it: 1. With it, we strengthen the pillar of *tefillah*, and it is known that

children often are lax about this. 2. By this, we strengthen the pillar of *emunah*, which is one of the things that need to be strengthened. **And from here it is clear that this *takanah* has a tremendous merit, and it is a step towards the greeting of Mashiach.** Because with it, we give a new opportunity of *Kabbalas Elokus*, and the acceptance of *emunah* in Klal Yisrael, through the children. As we know, the hope of the Jewish people to welcome Mashiach is in the merit of the generation of the future, the *tinnokos shel bais rabban*.

I would also like to mention on this topic of *chinuch* of generations, that at the end of Moshe Rabbeinu's words to Bnei Yisrael, before his passing, in *Parashas Ha'azinu* (*Devarim* 32:46) he said: "And he said to them *simu levavchem lechol hadevarim asher anochi me'id bachem hayom asher tetzavum es bneichem* lishmor la'asos es kol divrei haTorah hazos, Focus your thoughts on all the statements that I am bringing to witness against you today; which you are to command to your sons to guard and fulfill all the statements of the Torah."

These are the virtues of this *takanah* instituted by our friend Reb Yaakov Dov, and that is the tremendous *zikui* of the *yachid* and *zikui harabbim*, and he should be praised that he merited this mitzvah. And may it be that the merit of answering amen, and the merit of the words of the children that have not sinned, should serve as a protection for the one who renewed this *takanah*, and for all those gathered here. This *hischazkus*, strengthening, should purify Bnei Yisrael ahead of the arrival of Mashiach, with great Heavenly compassion, amen.