

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

'Sabeinu Mituvah' in the Merit of 'Vesein Brachah'

"ונתנה הארץ פריה ואכלתם לשבע וישבתם לבטח עליה" (כה יט)

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained: In *Maseches Megillah* (17b), Chazal say that the *brachah* of *Kibbutz Galuyos* was placed in *Shemoneh Esreh* after the *brachah* of *Mevarech Hashanim* because the *brachah* of the Land and its fruits will be fulfilled before the exiles will be ingathered to the Land, as it says (*Yechezkel* 36:8): "V'atem harei Yisrael, and you, the mountains of Israel, will produce your branches, and you will bear your fruit for My people Yisrael because they are about to come."

The reason that the blessing on the Land will precede *kibbutz galuyos* is because when the Geulah does come, we will merit to be redeemed even if we are not worthy of it. As Chazal say (*Taanis* 8b), when famine and plague reign in the world together, one should pray for the famine to be lifted, because when the plenty will come – the plague will go away in any case. That is because HaKadosh Baruch Hu provides plenty with which to sustain people with, so when the blessing will be sent to the Land, then the exile will end, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu provides for the plenty of the Land for Am Yisrael to benefit from it.

That is also the intention of our request in *Birchas Hashanim* – "Vesein brachah al pnei ha'adamah vesabeinu mituvah" – because Hashem will give "brachah al pnei ha'adamah" then in any case we will merit "sabeinu mituvah." And this *passuk* alludes to that: In the merit of "and the land will give its fruit" then the words "and you will dwell there securely" will be fulfilled.

Kuntress Derech Hachaim, printed at

the beginning of *Shu"t Shnos Chaim*;
Chochmas HaTorah p. 168

Brachah Depends on Tefillah

"וכי תאמרו מה מאכל בשנה השביעית הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף את תבואתנו; וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים" (כה כ-כא)

Why did the Torah precede the question of "and if you will say what will we eat" to the promise of the *brachah* of Hashem to those who observe *shemittah*? And in general, we need to understand what this question is – doesn't Hashem sustain and provide for all?

The *Noam Elimelech* brought that his brother Harav Zusha of Anipoli explained this as follows: When HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world He bestowed in His goodness that each one of the creations would always find its sustenance in the world. But when a person does not have a lot of *emunah*, and he asks "what will we eat?" that leads to a suspension of the abundance "and Hashem Yisbarach...needs to command that abundance from new...like from the beginning of Creation." This is what the Torah warned here: Have faith in Hashem that He will provide all that you need, because if you ask "what will we eat" you will make your Creator need to once again command the *brachah*.

Additionally, Harav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger explained:

The *passuk* "and if you will say what will we eat" is not explained as a question, but rather as a form of *tefillah* – "and if you will say" – in your *tefillah* "what will we eat" – and the *passuk* comes to teach us that because Hashem anticipates the *tefillos* of Am Yisrael, He does not fulfill the words "and I will command My *brachah*" until they daven for *parnassah*.

Noam Elimelech; Toras Yechiel

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Answering Amen Is Respectful

Lag BaOmer, which took place this past week, closed out the first thirty three days of the counting of the Omer. During these days, we practice customs of mourning, in memory of the terrible tragedy that took place during these times – the passing of 24,000 of Rabi Akiva's students. These tremendous *talmidei chachamim*, who merited to draw from the wellsprings of Torah of the holy Tanna Rabi Akiva, passed away "because they did not treat one another respectfully."

You will surely wonder about the fact that this segment that always addresses the importance of strengthening the mitzvah of amen is now addressing this sad event that we usually associate with the mitzvah of "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho". But if you think about it, you will see that answering amen really has a direct correlation to this matter as well.

Picture it: You are standing one morning to recite *Birchos Hashachar*, and someone approaches you and asks you to recite the *brachos* aloud so that he can answer amen after you. Is there any greater form of acting with "kavod zeh lazeh – respect for one another" than this? That same Yid is not looking to bless himself, rather, he wants to treat you with respect by affirming and fulfilling your *brachos*.

That is the truth! Each time you listen to the *brachos* of another person and answer amen after him, you are respecting him, because with this act, you have shown how important his *brachah* is in your eyes, to the extent that you wish to affirm it and have it fulfilled by answering amen.

During these days, especially, we should internalize and realize that whenever we approach someone else and offer them to answer amen after their *brachos*, aside for the mitzvah of answering amen, we also merit to treat another person with respect, a *middah* that Hashem deems so important. It is clear that "middah tova merubah," the good *middah* is greater, and if HaKadosh Baruch Hu so severely punished those who did not treat one another respectfully, then how much more so will He reward one who does so.

That is also one of the reasons Chazal say (*Brachos* 53b) that "the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*." Because aside for the mitzvah of answering amen, the *oneh* is also praised for treating the *mevarech* with respect. That is why his virtue is greater than the *mevarech*, who did not merit this.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Baruch Matir Assurim

With the outbreak of World War II, Reb Yisrael Yitzchak Pomerantz fled from his home town of Dlugosiodlo in Poland, and found himself in Russia. Reb Yisrael Yitzchak had fled in order to spare both his physical life and his spiritual one, but he quickly realized that while he may have accomplished the former, he would need to battle valiantly to preserve his spiritual life.

It was at the height of those dreadful years, under the Communist regime of the dictator Stalin, *ym"ss*, and Reb Yitzchak, who tried to smuggle across the border to Lithuania, where there still was Jewish life, was caught and imprisoned.

The refugees from Poland, and from other countries under Nazi occupation, were considered by the Soviets to be dangerous revolutionaries, and their lives were worth nothing to the Russians. How much more so was that the case when it came to the life of a Jew among dozens of gentiles...

Reb Yisrael Yitzchak endured horrible suffering in the Soviet prison, alone and helpless; at the same time he was very worried about his family, which had been left to cope on its own. Much later, he

my surprise, he was in a pretty relaxed frame of mind. Without saying a word, he grasped my hand and dipped it in ink. "Sign that this is your fingerprint!" the officer instructed, pointing to a sheet of paper in front of him.

The officer was very surprised when I shook my head in refusal. 'It is Shabbos today and I cannot sign,' I said, adding, 'I am a Torah observant Jew, and the Torah forbids us to write on this day. Tomorrow, I can sign!'

The officer looked at me with absolute disbelief. He was not used to such responses, especially not from lowly prisoners like me...He looked at me with barely contained anger, and ordered me again to sign. But I refused, and explained again why I was refusing.

The officer was furious. He stood up, went out to the corridor, and called out, "Boris, come here!" A tall officer with Jewish facial features, entered. The first officer explained to him briefly about this 'hard nut to crack' sitting in front of him.

The Jewish policeman tried to explain to me in Yiddish the trouble I was getting myself into with my refusal. He was also able to explain to me in a scholarly way that '*pikuach nefesh* overrides Shabbos...' But I strongly rejected his words and even chided him, 'Don't incite me to do a sin! And in any case, it's a waste of your time, because I have resolved not to sign.'

The policeman could not tolerate my refusal, and tried both the carrot and the stick: one minute he threatened me harshly, and the next minute he promised me all kinds of things...My refusal stayed firm.

When he saw this, he was so, so incensed that he ordered his soldiers to throw me into a solitary confinement cellar. A minute later, I found myself in the cellar – a tiny cement room with no windows aside for a tiny grille in the door, through which the prison guards kept watch over the inmates.

A few minutes passed, and then I could see the face of the officer through the grille. He tried again to get me to sign, but I remained firm. When he heard this, he ordered a soldier to come into my cell and to tie my hands behind my back. I was tied up like a calf being prepared to the slaughter, but my heart was overwhelmed with joy that I was able to merit this rare *zechus* – to be *moser nefesh* for *mitzvos*.

My hands ached terribly, but despite that I continued to refuse the officer who tried from time to time to get me to sign. The officer could not get down from the ladder he had climbed onto, and ordered my hands bound even more tightly. The *nisayon* was getting harder, and in my heart I began to feel a war raging. A voice deep inside me tried to persuade me that I was fighting for naught, and on the contrary, I was risking so much for no reason, and I was transgressing the *issur* of *pikuach nefesh*.

I had no strength left, and I almost capitulated to that voice inside me. When I wasn't able to suffer anymore, I cried out in *tefillah* to Hashem: 'Ribbono shel Olam, help me! I can't fight anymore, I did my best for Your Name and I have no strength left. Please, Hashem, help me that I should not have to desecrate Shabbos.'

Right after that, my lips, of their own accord, murmured the words '*Yotziem michoshech vetzalmaves umosroseihem yenatek*.' And when I finished, I moved my hands, and wondrously, I saw that they were free. In total surprise, I quickly untied the bonds from my feet as well. Finally, I could stretch a bit, and I felt stronger.

When I heard the footsteps of the guard, I quickly lay down again in the position that I had been in when tied up, and when he left, I stretched again. This is how I survived until I was sure Shabbos was over, and then I shouted to the guard, 'I'm ready to sign!'

The guard immediately called the officer, who was sure that I had capitulated because of his insistence, and was smiling from ear to ear. He turned to release my bonds, and was surprised to see them already open.

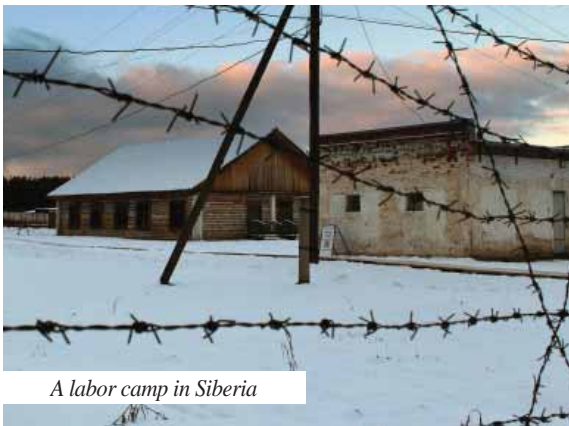
'You dirty Jew,' he cried, 'of course the rope was released...Your G-d always helps you when you're in trouble...' I didn't respond. What should I have said to the uncouth gentile, that our G-d does indeed listen to a *tefillah* offered from the depths of a broken heart?!

The next day, I became the hero of the prison...Word of the miracle that had happened to me spread rapidly, and everyone looked at me with admiration...

In time, when Reb Yisroel Yitzchak told this story to his family, he concluded:

"Although I had a big miracle happen for me at that time, in my eyes, the bigger miracle was the fact that I was able to withstand the *yetzer hara*, and to firmly refuse all his plans."

Haggadah Shel Pesach Sapir
Veyahalom, Hallel



A labor camp in Siberia

told his family about a crucial moment that he experienced in the prison:

"One Shabbos morning, I stood in the corner of my cell and davened *Shacharis* for Shabbos. Because *tefillah* was virtually the only mitzvah I could keep in that prison, I always tried to invest all my energy into it. Now, as well, I poured my heart out to Hashem, as I tried to forget all my troubles. Suddenly, I heard the rattle of keys.

The door to my cell opened roughly, and there was a burly Russian prison warden, who ordered me to come with him. My heart pounding in fear, I followed him reluctantly; who knew what the Russians wanted from me now. I was brought into the room of the prison director, and to

The Halachos of Amen Chatufah

Change in Enunciation

1. The aleph at the beginning of the word ‘amen’ needs to be pronounced and emphasized, and should not be swallowed or pronounced with a shva or a chataf pasach. Answering amen with a shva (uhmen) is referred to by Chazal (Brachos 47a) as an “amen chatufah.”

• Sources and Explanations •

The *Shulchan Aruch* (124 8) cites *Rashi* (ibid ad loc. *chatufah*) that an *amen chatufah* means “that the aleph is recited with a *chataf* and not with a *pasach*, and the Acharonim explain that the *chataf* is a vowel that we call the *shva*, and a *pasach* is what we call a *kometz* (*Ma’adanei Yom Tov* ibid Ch. 2, 3:10; *Ba”ch Orach Chaim* 124). Harav Yehonasan of Lunil (ibid) also explained similarly: “That he reads the aleph with a *chataf pasach*, and it needs to be said with a *kometz gadol*. And he should prolong it.” From his words, it sounds like the main flaw in answering an *amen chatufah* is because of the haste and the speed that answering amen with this pronunciation involves. This is also evident from the words of Rabbeinu Manoach, who wrote (*Brachos* 1:13) that “He should not say the aleph with a *chataf*, meaning that he says it in a hurry, the way the Christians say it.” But even according to those who hold that the flaw in answering amen in this way is the haste and speed with which it is answered, still, it emerges from their words that the description of *amen chatufah* is because of the *chataf* vowel, which speeds up the pronunciation of the word.

But from Rabbeinu Bechaye (Shemos 14:31) it seems that the main flaw in the change of the vowels when pronouncing the word amen is the fact that the meaning of the word is changed. The *Levush* also wrote this (ibid 3): “He should not answer an *amen chatufah*, as if the aleph is vowelized with a *chataf*, which is not a word in *Lashon HaKodesh* and it has no meaning.” The *Mishnah Berurah* concurs (ibid 29).

2. The word should be pronounced a-men, only with the precise vowels, a komatz under the aleph and a tzeirei under the mem, so that it’s meaning is the ha’amanah, the confirmation of the words of the mevarech, and it should not be pronounced with any other vowels.”

• Sources and Explanations •

The *Levush* wrote (ibid) “one should not answer an *amen chatufah*...and it looks to me that this is the *din* that one should not say amen with one of the other vowels as the meaning will not be the same as *ha’amanas devarim*, confirming the words, such as with a *shuruk* of *chalam* or *malupum* and suchlike.” The *Mishnah Berurah* ruled (ibid 29) that one should pronounce the aleph in amen only with a *kometz gadol* and not with any other vowel. In *sefer Avodas Hakodesh* (*Keshar Gadol* 9 4) the Chida cites in the name of Rav Menachem di Lonzano (the Ramd”al) that one should also be strict to pronounce the letters *mem* and *nun* in amen properly, and he wrote: “One should not answer am-in or ameni, and the nun does not have a *dagesh* or a *tzeirei*.”

Ro’ei Emunim

From the Words of Our Gedolim on Answering Amen

Harav Mordechai Shmuel Edelstein, shlitā
Rav of the Ne’ot Yosef neighborhood of Bnei Brak



It is known that the virtue of answering amen is very great, and Chazal have explained the *passuk* “*Pischu she’arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*” – “do not read it *shomer emunim*, but rather ‘*she’omrim amen*.” It is related in the name of one of the eminent *mussar* giants [I think in the name of the Alter of Kelm] that when he was told regarding the words of Chazal (*Avos* 4:17): “One hour of pleasure in Olam Haba is better than all of life in this world,” that it is possible that *koras ruach*, pleasure in the World to Come is the reward for answering amen, he said with wonder: “And for answering amen will one get only ‘*koras ruach*’ in Olam Haba?! It is a tremendous thing for which they get tremendous reward in Olam Haba! The reward of *koras ruach* is received for far less important things, such as added emphasis relating to the fulfillment of a mitzvah...”

And I will tell you what is known from my father, *zt”l*, who, *lo aleinu*, in his final years, struggled to speak, and yet, he delivered his *shiurim* on a normal schedule, with tremendous effort. In the final years of his life, he had to have surgery on his vocal cords, which completely took away from him the power of speech, and he had to speak by writing notes. At the end of his life, we found thousands of such notes, many of which were printed in *seforim* that were published after his passing.

After he recovered from the surgery, the doctors want to teach him to speak with the new condition, so that he should accustom himself slowly how to do it. When they asked him which words he wanted to start practicing with, he said he wanted to start with two words, one was amen, and the second one was *today*, thank you.

My father saw that these two words

contained the entire basis for the *adam hashalem*. By answering amen he expressed gratitude and belief in the Creator, and as the early sages explained, amen comes from the word *emes*, truth, and this includes all of *Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim* and the yoke of *mitzvos*. Likewise, the word *today* is to express gratitude to anyone who does something good for him, which is the basis of all the *mitzvos* of *bein adam lachaveiro*.

May the tremendous merit advocate for us and for all of Klal Yisrael, and for anyone who strengthens their answering of amen, with all the details, and may it be a *meilitz yosher* for us and for all of Am Yisrael, amen.

Menai Mordechai Shmuel ben Harav Yaakov, zt”l, Edelstein

Razei Emunim

Pearls of Amen in the Parashah

‘Amen V’amen’ To Bring the Geulah Closer

“וזכרתי את ברייתי יעקוב ואף את ברייתי יצחק ואף את ברייתי אברהם אונר והארץ אונר” (כו מב)

Rashi explained that this *passuk* is one of the five places in the Torah where the name of Yaakov is written with the *vav* – יעקוב – which correspond to the five places in the Torah where the name Eliyahu is written without the *vav* – אליה. Because Yaakov took a letter from the name of Eliyahu as a guarantee that he will return to inform Am Yisrael of the *Geulah*.

From the words of *Rashi*, it emerges that the name יעקוב alludes to the future *Geulah* [and see *Toras Moshe* of the Chasam Sofer on this *passuk* that *l’asid lavo*, the name Yaakov will be written with a *vav*.] Based on this, **Harav Tzvi Hirsch Meisels**, one of the Rabbanim of Chicago, explained the meaning of the special *hiddur* in answering amen brought by the Rema MiPano (*Asarah Ma’amaros*, *Chikur Din* 2 15, cited by the *Machatzis Hashekel Orach Chaim* 6 9): “It is ideal for each person to have two friends, who listen and answer amen after his *brachos*,” because it says (*Tehillim* 89:53): “*Baruch Hashem l’olam amen v’amen*.” Meaning that every single *brachah* will be completed by two who answer amen. As an allusion to this practice, the Rema notes that the name יעקוב is numerically equivalent to אמן ואמן.

In light of this, we can explain that the intention of the Rema is that when a person is strict that two people should answer amen after him, and thus alludes to the name יעקוב that is an allusion to the *Geulah*, he is expressing his faith, his *tefillah* and his hope that Hashem will hasten to redeem us.

Agra D’Tzvi [on Agra Depirka] Remez 59, 1

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editorial board of *Vechol Ma’aminim*, headed by my dear brother, Rav Yaakov Dov, *shlita*, who opens the gates of answering amen to Bney Emunim all over the world,

“*Shalom rav l’ohavei Torasecha*.” And as someone who sets aside time each week to go over your insightful pamphlet, and sees in the compilation of segments that are skillfully laid out and arouse the heart to strengthen this mitzvah, I can testify that you are also the fulfillment of the end of the *passuk* “*v’ein lamo michshol*.” May Hashem give you strength to continue.

As is known, at the end of *Maseches Nazir*, which we just recently finished in Daf Yomi, *Chazal* repeat their well-known phrase of “*gadol ha’oneh yoser min hamevarech*,” and right afterwards, they brought the famous words: “*Talmidei chachamim marbim shalom b’olam*.” The connection between these two statements is explained in *sefer Ein Eliyahu* (ibid) by Harav Eliyahu Schick, the Rav of Lida, as follows:

If *Chazal* would not have stated that “the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*,” then in a place where only one person makes the *brachah* and is *motzi* everyone else, there would constantly be disputes among the people, because everyone would have wanted the merit of saying the *brachah*. But once *Chazal* determined “*gadol ha’oneh*” these arguments were prevented— and we find that with these words, *Chazal* disseminated peace in the world.

But I thought that the connection between these two can be explained simply: The whole essence of amen is the opposite of discord, because its concept is to join and agree with the words of the *mevarech*. Aside for that, the whole mitzvah of answering amen is formulated from the unification between one person and another, because it is only possible to fulfill this mitzvah with at least two people, who fulfill “*uneromemah Shemo yachdav*.” For this reason, after *Chazal* elevated the status of the one who answers amen, they immediately brought the words “*Talmidei chachamim marbim shalom b’olam*,” because as noted, when they established the mitzvah of answering amen, whose essence is to bring to a meeting of minds among people, then they fostered peace in the world.

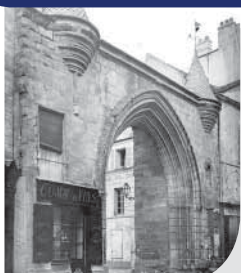
We can also add that this is what they wanted to teach by placing these two phrases near each other. If a person who is learning asks why “the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*,” the answer is right there: Because with the mitzvah of answering amen, there is also an element of peace between man and his fellow Jew, and therefore, he is greater than the *mevarech*, who does not have this element.

With the *brachah* of Torah
Aharon Tzvi Marmurstein, Bnei Brak

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Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Gates of the old city of Corbeil [Corbeil-essones]

The Sma”k

28 Iyar 5040

Harav Yitzchak ben Rav Yosef of Corbeil, was one of the Baalei Hatsofot who settled in France at the beginning of the fifth millennium. He lived in Corbeil, near Paris, and was known for his *sefer*, *Sefer Mitzvos Katan*, or the acronym Sma”k.

He learned from his father-in-law, Harav Yechiel of Paris, and from the *chachamim* of Ivra. His renowned disciple was Rav Peretz of Corbeil, who wrote many

comments on the Sma”k, which are integrated into the printed works.

Rav Yitzchak compiled *Sefer Mitzvos Katan*, a brief version of the *Sefer Mitzvos Gadol*, which omitted the long discussions; it just brings the summary of each mitzvah. Likewise, it also omits all the *mitzvos* that are not practiced in this time. The *sefer* was originally called *Amudei Hagolah*, and it was divided into seven parts, corresponding to the seven days of the week. This was done to encourage, and to make it easier for, people to learn it with a weekly review. The *sefer* was widely studied in communities of all kinds, and was especially recognized by the sages of France and Germany, to the extent that some incorporated it into the Siddur, so people should peruse it each day. Rav Yitzchak passed away on 28 Iyar 5040.

Woe to Those Who Prevent Their Children from Going to Olam Haba

In the *Sefer Mitzvos Kattan* (12) Rav Yitzchak of Corbeil rules like Rabi Meir (*Sanhedrin* 110b) that a child merits Olam Haba from the time he says amen. In light of this, he adds some very harsh words for those who speak in shul, and by doing so, are lax about answering amen:

“*Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b) ‘the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*,’ and ‘the Gates of Gan Eden are opened for him, as it says (*Yeshaya* 26:2): ‘*Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,’ don’t read it *emunim*, rather *amenim* (*Shabbos* 119b). And from that time, the babies merit life in Olam Haba (*Sanhedrin* 110a). **And if so, woe to those people who speak idle chatter or joke and chat in shul during davening, and they are withholding from their children life in Olam Haba.**”