

VeChol Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in Sefer Tehillim

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

The Cord of Amen Will Not Be Severed

“ננתקה את מוסדותינו ונשליכה ממנו עבתימו; יושב בשמים ישהק ה' ילעג למו” (ב ג ד)

The Rebbe, **Harav Yosef Tzvi of Gruchov** explained:

We know that the foundation and root of *emunah* is dependent on answering amen (see *Megaleh Amukos, Parashas V'eschanan*). For this reason, the evil people who seek to undermine the foundations of Yiddishkeit, connive to prevent Am Yisrael from answering amen. This is alluded to in the *passuk* “ננתקה את מוסדותינו” as the acronym of these words is amen.

On this subject we can note the early tradition cited by Rav Y. Salach, one of the sages of Yemen, in his commentary on the siddur, *Eitz Chaim* (in the *piyut Ein K'Elokeinu*) that an evil regime once decreed that Am Yisrael was not allowed to answer amen. In order to ensure that the practice of amen was not forgotten, the sages instituted the *piyut* of *Ein K'Elokeinu*, because the first words of each of the stanzas “אין...מי...” are an acronym for amen.

The *Shomer Emunim* offered a different explanation:

When Klal Yisrael are careful about answering amen, then a sort of “cord” is woven, through which the *mekatregim*, the prosecutors, are tied up so they cannot advocate for bad on Am Yisrael, as it says (*Tehillim* 149:8): “*Le'esor malcheihem bezikim [azikim, handcuffs].*”

The *mekatregim* who seek to sever this cord say “*nenatkah, we will cut off, es mosroseimo*” – which is an acronym of amen. “We will cut off from us this cord that Am Yisrael tie us up with, by ensuring that we prevent them from answering amen.” But if Am Yisrael stand strong and reinforce their answering of amen, then these *mekatregim* who rise against them fall, and the words of the *passuk* are fulfilled: “*Yoshev baShamayim yischak, Hashem yilag lamo, He Who dwells in Heaven laughs; Hashem mocks them.*”

,Givas Yosef; Shomer Emunim
Ma'amar Pischu She'arim 15

Am Yisrael Is Redeemed in the Merit of Amen

“משד עניים מאנקת אביונים עתה אקום יאמר ה' אשית בישע יפיה לו” (י ב)

Sefer Derech Moshe (For Day 11) speaks about

‘Vayevarech Dovid es Hashem’

We are now on the eve of Shavuot, both the birthday and *yahrtzeit* of Dovid Hamelech, whose light and strength accompany us to this day.

When describing the virtues of Dovid Hamelech, the *passuk* says (*Shmuel* II, 23:1) that he “הקם על משיח אלקי יעקב ונעים זמרות ישראל”, was alluding to the two big treasures that he left for generations to come: The *Sefer Tehillim* – “*zemiros Yisrael*” and the institution of *meah brachos*, – the *hakem* alluded to in the words is numerically equivalent to 100 (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18 21).

Through the *Sefer Tehillim*, Dovid conveyed to Am Yisrael messages for generations to come about the power and the merits of always praising and thanking Hashem, and of asking and praying to Him. Through the *sefer*, every single Jew can find an outlet for any pain and plea that he has, for any *tefillah* or gratitude that he feels. It is the eternal *sefer*, and even thousands of years after it was written, it is still close to the heart of every Jew wherever he is.

Aside for that, Dovid Hamelech instituted for us the *takanah* of saying one hundred *brachos* a day, which also accompanies us 365 days a year – throughout each day. *Chazal* tell us (*Bamidbar Rabbah* *ibid*) that Dovid instituted this *takanah* following a plague that broke out in his times, and took the lives of one hundred people in Am Yisrael each day. With his *Ruach HaKodesh* it was revealed to him that the plague was a punishment for Am Yisrael not thanking their Creator in a fitting manner. Therefore, he instituted *meah brachos* – to correspond to

the one hundred victims a day – and the plague was halted.

From then until this day, Am Yisrael take care to recite one hundred *brachos* a day, and that is how they merit to be protected from pain and troubles.

This *takanah* also provides us with spiritual protection, because Dovid Hamelech based it on the *passuk* (*Devarim* 10:12, and see *Rashi Menachos* 43b): “*V'atah Hashem Elokecha [מאז] Yisrael sho'el me'imach ki im leyrach,*” to teach us that the one hundred *brachos* instills *Yiras Shamayim* in a person's heart, and that is the best protection against spiritual dangers.

Unfortunately, as we live in a world full of plagues and dangers that lie in wait for us, both spiritual and physical, there is no doubt about the necessity of redoubling our efforts to uphold Dovid Hamelech's holy *takanah* to say one hundred *brachos* each day.

So let us take upon ourselves to make a greater effort to be careful about this, and as we know that a perfect *brachah* is one that is answered with amen – let us also make sure to recite our *brachos* in front of others. Moreover, when we say the *brachah* for someone who is listening to answer amen, we say it with more care and *kavanah*. May it be His Will that the *brachos* of Hashem should be conveyed upon us so that we should see success and *yeshuos* in all matters, in the *zechus* of Dovid Hamelech, amen.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

the two amens that many are lax about and answer without attention. They are the amen after the *brachah* of *Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion* – because the *tzibbur* is hurrying to say *Modim D'Rabbanan*, and the amen after the *brachah* of *Haporess Sukkas Shalom...V'al Yerushalayim*, said on Friday night, because the *tzibbur* quickly begins saying *Veshomru*. He adds that a *chassid* asked to know the reason the Geulah has not yet come, and it was revealed to him in a dream from Above that “How can the Geulah come if the world is not careful to answer amen to the *brachos* in which we ask for the Geulah – *Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion* and *Hapress Sukkas Shalom...?*”

An allusion to these words can be found in this *passuk*: “עֲתָה אָקוּם יֵאֲמֵר ה'” – the acronym of these words are numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as amen, as if HaKadosh Baruch Hu is telling Klal Yisrael: When you are strict about answering amen, immediately, I will rise to redeem you.

Bnei Binyamin p. 72

One Who Answers Amen Is in the Presence of Chassidim

“לְמוֹנֵצָה עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד; הוֹשִׁיעָה ה' כִּי גִמַּר חֲסִיד כִּי פָסוּ אֲמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם” (יב א-ב)

Harav Chaim Katz, a grandson of the Sm”a, explained that in this chapter, Dovid Hamelech is referring to answering amen, which is known as “*sheminis*” because it alludes to the numerical equivalent of the two holy Names of Hava-yah and Adnus, which together have eight letters. The holy *Zohar* (*Terumah* 178 1) brings that someone who is careful about answering amen with *kavanah* “will merit in Olam Haba to stand in the presence of *chassidim*, even though he did not learn Torah as much as he should have.” And that is what Dovid Hamelech asked: Even though “*gamar chassid upasu emunim mibnei adam*” – that even though we do not have among us people who are strict about answering amen with *kavanah*, who are destined, as stated, to stand in the “*mechitzas chassidim*”, and yet, “*hoshiah Hashem*,” please send us salvation.

Eretz Hachaim

Spared from Gehinnom in the Merit of Amen

“גַּם כִּי אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיט צִלְמוֹת לֹא אִירָא רַע כִּי אַתָּה עֲמָדִי שְׁבִטָךְ וּמִשְׁעֲנֶתְךָ הַמָּה יִנְחֲמֵנִי” (כג ד)

Harav Avraham Koriati, of Tetuan, said that this *passuk* alludes to the words of Chazal (*Yalkut Shimon* Yeshayah Remez 429) that answering amen opens the gates of Gan Eden even to the *resha'im* who are sentenced to Gehinnom. As Dovid Hamelech says: Even if I will be cast to “*Gei Tzalmaves*” – to Gehinnom, “I will not fear bad,” why? *כי אתה עמדי* – whose acronym is the same value as amen, in other words, I have the *zechus* of answering amen, which has the power to redeem me from the depths of Gehinnom.

Bris Avos [570] Parashas Va'eira

Dovid Hamelech Relied on the Merit of Answering Amen

“אִם תַּחֲנֶה עָלַי מַחֲנֶה לֹא יִירָא לְבִי אִם תָּקוּם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה בּוֹאֵת אֲנִי בּוֹטָח; אַחַת שְׁאֵלָתִי מֵאֵת ה' אוֹתָהּ אֶבְקֵשׁ שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי לַחַיּוֹת בְּנֶעֱם ה' וּלְבָקֵר בְּהִיכְלוֹ” (כז ג-ד)

In *sefer Tanna Devei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* 10), Chazal explain the *passuk* (*Shoftim* 5:2): “*Pifroa pera'os b'Yisrael*

behisnadev am barchu Hashem” as follows: “With whom does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael from the nations of the world? With the people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* morning and evening and answer amen...”

Based on this, Rabbi Chaim Palagi explained that Dovid Hamelech is saying: Because “*achas sha'alti*, I asked one thing from Hashem...to sit in the House of Hashem all the days of my life” – to go in the morning and evening to the *beis knesses* all the days of my life, and for that reason “*im takum alai milchamah*” – if the nations of the world will rise up against me in war, I am sure in this *zechus* I will be saved, as Chazal say that HaKadosh Baruch Hu avenges for Am Yisrael from the nations in reward for going to the House of Hashem morning and evening to answer amen.

Luach Erez on Tanna Devei Eliyahu, ibid

Dovid Hamelech Answered Amen from Childhood

“לֹלֵא הָאֲמוּנָתִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹב ה' בְּאַרְץ חַיִּים” (כ זיג)

Harav Eliyahu Hakohein of Izmir, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained that in this *passuk*, Dovid Hamelech testified of himself that already from an early age, he was careful to answer amen. Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 110b) that a child in Am Yisrael merits life in Olam Haba from when he says amen, and that is what Dovid Hamelech says in this *passuk*: “*Lulei he'emanti*” – if I would not have habituated myself from an early age to answer amen after each *brachah*, I would not have merited “to see the good of Hashem in Eretz Chaim” – in Olam Haba, because we merit Olam Haba in the *zechus* of answering amen.

Minchas Eliyahu Ch. 32

Answering Amen Sweetens the Judgement

“נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֹאסְפוּ עִם אֱלֹקֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם כִּי לְאֱלֹקִים מִגִּי אֶרֶץ מֵאֵד נֵעֲלָה” (מז י)

The Abir Yaakov explained:

This *passuk* concludes with the words “*ארץ מאד נעלה*” whose acronym is amen, which teaches us that this *passuk* can be explained as referring to the virtue of answering amen, as follows:

The *passuk* that begins *Shiras Devorah* (*Shoftim* 5:2): “*Bifroa pera'os b'Yisrael behisnadev am*” is explained by Chazal (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah* 10): “With whom does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael from the nations of the world? With the people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* morning and evening and answer amen...” So the *passuk* calls those who answer amen “*behisnadev am*.” And the fact that the *passuk* says: “*nedivei amim ne'esafu*” – when reciting *Kaddish* [that is only recited with an *asifas am* – a *minyan* of ten], when the nation volunteers [*menadvim libam*] to answer amen with *kavanah* after *Kaddish*, they are following the path of Avraham Avinu, who knew to be *meyached* the lofty *yichudim* included in the word “amen” and therefore they are called “*Am Elokei Avraham*.” They also merit to be called “*maginei eretz*, protectors of the land” – because by answering amen they sweeten the *Middas Hadin* that the Name “*Elokim*” alludes to, and bring HaKadosh Baruch Hu to treat Am Yisrael once again in a manner of “*me'od na'alah*.”

Shaarei Teshuvah, Ofen 22

An Unexpected Yeshuah in the Middle of the Night

One morning, as the Rebbe, Rav Avraham of Slonim, the Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah, was deeply immersed in a serious *sugyah*, the door opened suddenly and a panicked *bochur* ran in, gasping for breath. He could hardly get his words out. "Rebbe, help!" he cried, and then tearfully described the dismal situation:

He had just received his draft notice for the Russian army. He knew very well that in the tsar's army, there was no way to live a life of Torah and *chassidus*, and he didn't know how to help himself get out of this harsh decree.

The Rebbe listened to the *bochur* and sighed in sympathy. He then became engrossed in his thoughts, and after a few moments, said to the *bochur*: "If you listen to my advice, two days before the call-up date, try to be up all night, and to recite the whole *Sefer Tehillim*, tearfully and with much pleading. Hashem will surely come to your aid, and redeem you from any trouble."



The words seemed like a riddle to the *bochur*. The Rebbe hadn't told him to be awake the night before his draft date, but two nights before. There seemed to be some hidden meaning to his words, and the *bochur* resolved to heed the Rebbe's words to the letter. On the appointed night, instead of going to sleep, he took a *Sefer Tehillim* and began to recite the words, slowly, with deep emotion and *kavanah*. He wept and poured his heart to Hashem with Dovid Hamelech's words, pleading to be spared from the decree hovering over his head.

Some time after midnight, he suddenly heard a loud knocking at the door.

The *bochur* put down his *Tehillim* and hurried to the door. Three soldiers stood there, wearing Russian Army uniforms, adorned with many medals and badges that indicated their high ranks. They looked rather miserable at that moment, shaking with cold, and asked to come inside.

The *bochur* welcomed them in cordially. He made some place for them near the burning hearth so that they could warm their freezing bones. Then he put up a kettle and prepared them steaming tea, and set the table so they could eat a meal.

After they warmed up a bit, and sated their hunger, they explained to their host that they had been returning from a military mission in the area, when a storm suddenly set in and it began to snow heavily. They could not continue and looked for a place to rest until the storm subsided. When they saw a light on in the house, they knocked at the door, with the hope that someone would let them in to rest until the weather changed and they could continue on their way.

After serving the meal, and preparing them a place to sleep near the fire, the *bochur* continued his *tefillos* where he had left off. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched the generals finish up their meal, drink another cup of tea, and then stretch out on the mattresses. Within moments, he heard them snoring.

When dawn broke, and the storm eased, the generals woke up and set out on their way, but not before they warmly thanked the young man for his generous hospitality.

Two days later, the *bochur* tremulously presented himself at the military recruitment center listed on his draft notice. He was brought into the room of the military doctor, who took a comprehensive physical exam. The doctor studied him from head to toe, asked in detail about his health, and finally wrote: "The young man is healthy and strong, and he is perfectly suited to serve in a military capacity in the tsar's army." He signed the paper and sent the youth, with the signed document, to one of the camp commanders, to begin processing him

for recruitment.

Despite his desperate situation, the *bochur's* *emunas chachamim* did not waver for even a moment. The Rebbe had promised that if he would do as instructed, he would be spared, so surely, that is what would happen.

His knees shaking, he entered the commander's office, and after the officer read the medical approval, began processing the *bochur's* recruitment. He explained to the frightened young man about the division he would be joining, and then invited him for a tour of the camp.

The *bochur* was so frightened, he could barely drag his feet as he followed the commander, but he focused on strengthening his *emunas chachamim*. The commander showed him the barracks, the mess hall and the classrooms. Suddenly, he noticed a familiar figure. At the same moment, his escort stopped in his tracks and saluted with respect. The *bochur* didn't need even a moment to recognize the face...it was one of the three generals who had spent the night in his home two days ago.

The general looked at him for a long moment. Then he went over to the commander who was escorting the *bochur*, and conferred with him in a loud whisper for a few moments. Then he turned to go on his way.

At this point, the tour was cut short. The commander retraced his steps, and the *bochur*, who began to see what was happening, followed him with more confidence in his steps. When they went into the room, the commander took the medical document that he had received from the doctor, tore it to pieces, and instead, wrote for the *bochur* an official statement exempting him from serving in the army, and sent him on his way.

It turned out that one of those three generals that had entered his house that night that the Rebbe had instructed him to remain awake, was the commander of the camp to which the *bochur* had reported. The general, noticing them walking around the camp, realized right away that enlisting in the army was not something the *bochur* wanted, and instructed the commander, who was of an inferior rank, to exempt him immediately.

Tiv Hahischazkus, Tefillah p. 729

Amen Around the Year

Pearls of Amen for Shavuos

The Connection Between Amen and Emunah

The first mitzvah in the *Aseres Hadibros* is the mitzvah of *emunah* (*Rambam Sefer Hamitzvos Mitzvas Aseh 1; Sefer Hachinuch 25*). In contrast to most mitzvos, which are contingent on time, place or various factors, this mitzvah is constant, and whenever a person ponders the existence of Hashem, he is fulfilling it. The *Ohr Zarua* (1 140) explained that this is why *Chazal* did not institute to recite a *brachah* on the mitzvah before fulfilling it, like we do for most other mitzvos, because they did not institute a *brachah* for mitzvos that are fulfilled intermittently. That is because the *brachah* of the mitzvah expresses the love for the mitzvah, which is only relevant to a mitzvah whose obligation is renewed from time to time, and not with a mitzvah that must be fulfilled all the time.

However, even though no *brachah* was instituted for this mitzvah, the entire *ikkar*, the main principle, of the mitzvah of answering amen after the *brachos* and *tefillos* was instituted because of this mitzvah. As *Rabbeinu Bechayei* said (*Shemos 14 1*): “And because *emunah* is the basis of the entire Torah, *Chazal* instituted that we answer amen in *tefillah* and to *brachos*, as amen is derived from the word *emunah*, and from the concept of *hoda’ah*, he accepts and affirms the words of the *mevarech*.”

Indeed, the meaning of answering amen is the declaration of absolute *emunah* in the Creator. In *Maseches Shabbos* (119b), the *Gemara* asks: “What is amen?” And explains: The word amen is an acronym for the words “*Kel Melech Ne’eman*.” And as *Rashi* explains (*ibid ad loc. Kel*) that one who answers amen testifies that His Creator is a “*Kel Melech Ne’eman*.” The *Shulchan Aruch*, when explaining the simple meaning of the word amen, emphasizes the declaration of *emunah* that it contains, and writes (*Orach Chaim 124 6*): “And they answer amen after each *brachah*, whether those that they were *yotzei* the *tefillah* and whether those that they were not *yotzei*, and with the *kavanah* in his heart that the *brachah* that the *mevarech* recited is *emes*, truth, and **I believe it.**”

Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote in his *sefer Kad Hakemach* (*Emunah*): “A person needs to be careful in *tefillah* and *brachos*, to answer amen after them – as it is a word derived from *emunah*. And anyone whose ancestors stood at Har Sinai and received the Torah that is called *emunah*, and he is a descendant of Avraham Avinu, who was the *rosh emunah*, as it says (*Bereishis 15:6*) “*Vehe’emin b’Hashem*” must have *kavanah* in his heart and mind when answering amen.”

The *Megaleh Amukos* (*V’eschanan*) added that amen and *emunah* are tied one to another. The *passuk* says (*Yeshayah 26:2*): “*Pischu she’arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,” and the *kri*, the way it is read, is *emunim*, from the word *emunah*, while the *ktiv*, the way it is written, is “*amenim*” without a *vav*, like amen. This is to teach us that “*emunim*” is contingent on “*amenim*,” because “the *ikkar* of *emunah* is dependent on answering amen.”

Answering Amen at Har Sinai

Rashi explains (*Shemos 20:1*, based on *Mechilta Masechta*

Debachodesh, 4) that after each one of the mitzvos *aseh* in the *Aseres Hadibros*, Am Yisrael answered “*hein*” (yes) while after each one of the *lo sa’aseh* mitzvos, they answered “*lav*” (no). The *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni Yirmiyah 266*) states that “*Anochi* and *Lo Yihyeh Lecha* were said in one *dibrah*” and we ask, if so, how did Am Yisrael answer this *dibur* – because it includes both a positive and negative commandment? Did they answer *hein* or *lav*?

The **Bais Avraham** of Slonim explained:

Rashi does not mean that Bnei Yisrael explicitly answered “*hein*” or “*lav*” to the *dibros*, rather that they answered amen after each *dibur*, and this way, it was considered as if they answered *hein* for a positive commandment and *lav* for a negative commandment. The purpose of all the mitzvos is to purify the person and to reveal the *emunah* hidden in his heart (see *Ramban Shemos 13:15*), and by answering amen, which means *emunah*, there is a declaration about the acceptance of the mitzvos of the Torah and the purpose that stems from fulfilling them.

Based on this explanation, we can understand the words of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in his *piyut* “*Yona Matzah*” – “*Uba’u kulam bivris yachad, na’sseh venishma amru k’echad upaschu v’anu Hashem Echad.*” Where do we find that Am Yisrael answered “*Hashem Echad*” at Har Sinai? But based on this we understand that because they answered amen, expressing their *emunah* in Hashem, it is considered as though they answered “*Hashem Echad*” (*Bais Avraham Michtavei Kodesh 12*).

Declaration of Emunah at Har Sinai

The Mashgiach Harav Shlomo Wolbe wrote (*Alei Shur* Vol. II, Ch. 16): All the thirteen Principles of Faith that the Rambam lists are based on three primary principles, upon which all our *tefillos* are also based. These are the three times of the revelation of the Creator: Bria Ha’olam, Creation; the giving of the Torah and the future redemption.

Answering amen is “a small act of *avodah* that includes *emunah*, an expression of faith, in these three revelations.” As *Chazal* say, amen is the acronym for “*Kel Melech Ne’eman*” and the Name “*Kel*” expresses the *middah* of *chessed*, as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim 52:3*): “*Chessed Kel kol hayom.*” The world was created with the *Middas Hachessed*, as it says (*ibid 89:3*): “*Olam chessed yibaneh,*” and we find that mentioning it is a declaration of *emunah* in the Creation of the world. HaKadosh Baruch Hu has been referred to as Melech since Matan Torah, when we accepted upon ourselves the yoke of Torah and mitzvos. “*Ne’eman*” is a declaration that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is faithful to fulfill His promise to bring the Geulah and to resurrect the dead, and that we are greatly anticipating this. The Mashgiach concluded his words with a resounding message: “By answering amen, we hear a resounding note of all three revelations. *Talmid chacham*, have you ever felt when saying amen how much this little word contains?!”