

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A Time for Torah and a Time for Tefillah – Separately

“ושנתם לבניך ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך
ובשכרך ובקומוך” (ז 1)

A person has the obligation to learn Torah the entire day, but he is not allowed to learn during davening, because at that time, a person must focus his heart and his *kavanah* on *tefillah* and answering amen. The **Reishis Chochmah** wrote (*Sha'ar Hakedushah* Chapter 14) that this is what *Chazal* mean when they say (*Brachos* 17a): “Praised is someone who is great in Torah and toils in Torah and makes *nachas ruach* for his Creator,” meaning praised is someone whose greatness and toil in Torah is done at a time that he makes *nachas ruach* for his Creator, and not during *tefillah*, because then “HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not want his Torah.”

Based on this, the Rishon LeTzion, **Harav Chaim Nissim Abulafia** explained the words of the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 5a): “If a person sees that *yissurim* overcome him, he should introspect into his deeds...If he does that and doesn't find anything, he should attribute it to *bittul Torah*.” Someone who is overcome with *yissurim* and despite introspecting into his deeds, doesn't find a sin to attribute them to should attribute them in the fact that he wasn't *mevatel Torah* at the time that he should have been *mevatel Torah*, meaning during the time of *tefillah*, when he should have been listening to *Chazaras Hashatz* and answering amen. In his modesty, Rav Chaim Nissim added: “I looked into my deeds and I saw that the *yissurim* come upon me because of this sin.” The **Derech Emunah** instructed: “One who learns or reads the *parashah* at the time of *Chazaras Hashatz* and *Kaddish* will not only not receive a reward, he will be punished for it...And it is possible that even *bedieved*, he did not fulfill his obligation of reading twice *Mikra* and once *Targum*.”

Reishis Chochmah Sha'ar Hakedushah, Chapter 14; Pesach Hadvir Orach Chaim Vol. II 236 5; Orchos Yosher, Ketzas Dinei Tefillah (at end of the sefer) 28

Let Us Be Strong in Amen and We'll Strengthen Our Emunah

The previous segment addressed *emunah* and anticipation for the arrival of *Mashiach* that is imbued in us from the power of answering amen on the *brachos of Geulah*. In this segment, we will expound that answering amen imbues us with all 13 *Ikrei Emunah*.

The fundamentals of *emunas Yisrael* are planted in this *parashah*, in the *dibros* of *Anochi* and *Lo Yihiyeh Lecha*, and they extend to all the 13 *Ikrim*, which comprise the basis for fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos*.

The constant strengthening in *emunah* is a basic obligation in the life of a Jew. It is a power supply that enables him to stand firm in the face of the strong waves of challenges and difficulties that threaten his spirituality and his physical wellbeing. It is not for naught that the Rambam urges us (*Peirush Hamishnah l'Sanhedrin*, Introduction to *Perek Chelek*) after he listed the 13 *Ikrim* of *emunah*: “Review these words many times and study them well.”

In fact, this is exactly the purpose of the *mitzvah* of answering amen! It is not my *chiddush*; these are concepts that are explicitly laid out by *Rabbeinu Betsyah* in his renowned commentary on the *passuk* (*Shemos* 14:31): “*Vaya'aminu b'Hashem ubeMoshe avdo*” – “and because *emunah* is the fundamental of the entire Torah, *Chazal* instituted that in *tefillah* and *brachos* we answer amen, which is derived from the term *emunah*...” The *Megaleh Amukos*, whose 390th *yahrtzeit* will be this Tuesday, wrote (*Parashas Ha'azinu*), that the main principle of *emunah* is dependent on answering amen.

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Strengthening the principles of *emunah* begin with reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*; by answering amen after them, we declare our *emunah* in the fact that the Creator leads us with constant *Hashgachah pratis*, which is manifested in our power to see, our ability to move our limbs, and all the good things that we merit each day. It continues with the *brachos* of *tefillah*, and in our care to listen to the *brachos* and answer amen according to *halachah*. By doing this we establish our *emunah*, our faith, in reward and punishment, in *Torah min HaShamayim*, in the words of the *Nevi'im*, in the promises of the future *Geulah* and in all the *ikrim* mentioned in *tefillah*. It is possible that this is why it was instituted to recite the 13 *Ikrim* right after davening, because there is no better time to strengthen one's *emunah* than this time, after answering the *amens* in the *sefer hatefillah*.

Thanks to the tens of thousands of *amens* that we answer, *emunah*, with all its many facets, becomes part and parcel of us, and as a direct result of that, our power to withstand the challenges of the time, and to remain close to *Hashem* at all times and in every situation is strengthened.

Let us strengthen ourselves in answering amen to all the *Birchos Hashachar*, and to *brachos* throughout the whole day, and by doing so, we will merit to discover the pure *emunah* that is concealed deep in our hearts.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Cookies Coated in Tefillos

Harav Nosson Nota Shapira, *zy" a*, known as the Megaleh Amukos, served as Rav in the city of Krakow. The admiration of the community in Krakow to him was boundless; they all admired his greatness in Torah, *Nigleh* and *Nistar*. And as such, it is no wonder that they were extremely shocked when the news landed on them like thunder on a clear day: "The Megaleh Amukos is leaving Krakow."

"What happened??" The community leaders cried. "Why does the Rav want to leave us?" The community members could not contain their surprise. But the Rav, who confirmed the rumor, enveloped himself in silence and offered no explanation.

At first, they tried to persuade him, but when the community leaders realized that the situation was not going to change, they decided at least to organize a dignified goodbye party. All the members of the community worked to prepare the *seudah*, but then, just a few hours before it was supposed to begin, the Megaleh Amukos announced that the party was cancelled, and that he'd decided to stay in the end.

This news was met with even more



astonishment. The people close to the Rav pleaded for an explanation, and the Megaleh Amukos acceded, and told the following story:

It was on the last day that I was supposed to be in the city, just before the goodbye party you arranged for me was supposed to happen. Unexpectedly, Reb Zalman the *gvir* and Reb Reuven, the *masmid* entered my home. Reb Zalman the *gvir* was suing Reb Reuven the scholar. And when I heard the reason why, I was

stunned.

Reb Reuven the Torah scholar, who had a large family, had been struggling with *parnassah*, and as a result, he had to close the *Gemara* for a few hours each day to be able to earn some money for his children. Anyone who passed the market square in recent days was able to see him standing next to a cart filled with cookies, calling to passersby to purchase his wares.

One morning, Reb Zalman passed by in his elegant carriage. When he heard Reb Reuven's pleas to passersby to purchase his cookies, he could not help himself. He stopped the carriage and hurried over to Reb Reuven.

"Tell me, Reb Reuven, how many hours do you stand here each day?" Reb Zalman asked. "About three hours," Reb Reuven replied with a sad look on his face. "And how much do you earn a month?" Reb Zalman asked, "Something like one hundred florins, sometimes a bit more," Reb Reuven answered.

Reb Zalman mulled this over and then said: "I have an excellent offer for you. If you close the stand, and go back to the *beis medrash*, I'll pay you 120 florins each month. I want us to have a Yissachar-Zevulun agreement. You'll learn a whole day with peace of mind, without the worries of *parnassah*, and both of us will divide the merits."

Reb Reuven didn't need to think for long. On the spot, he closed the cart, and distributed the cookies to poor people. Then he turned to the *beis medrash*, to his beloved *Gemara*. Throughout that month, he sat and learned peacefully. When Rosh Chodesh came, a courier knocked at the door and gave him an elegant envelope. Inside were seven thousand rubles – no less.

The wealthy man had paid his share in the deal and expected the scholar to maintain his share, but to his surprise, the next morning, when he walked through the city square, he saw a familiar figure. It was none other than Reb Reuven, standing there next to a cart filled with crackers, offering his wares to the passersby.

"Reb Reuven," he cried in alarm, as he got out of his carriage. "What happened? Did the courier not get the envelope to you?"

"He did give it to me," Reb Reuven replied calmly.

"So what are you doing here?!" the rich man was irritated. "You belong in the *beis medrash*!"

"I'm here because I'm not interested in the deal," the scholar replied simply.

This made the *gvir* furious. "What right

do you have to drop our agreement without my permission? We had a deal!"

The two decided to come to me and ask for my opinion. "Don't you want to learn?" I asked Reb Reuven. "Sure I do," he replied. "But I will cancel the deal because it's a *mekach ta'us*, a deal based on an error."

"Why is that?" I asked. And the story that Reb Reuven told me moved me to tears:

"I want to tell the Rav that during the time I sold my cookies, I would get up each night to say *Tikkun Chatzos*. Then I sat down to learn until *vasikin*. When I returned home from *tefillah*, the whole family got together to prepare the cookies. We began with grinding the wheat into flour. That is a hard and complex job, so as we did it, we davened for success, some with *tefillah* some with *Tehillim*.

'At the end of the grinding, we began to sift, and again, we needed to daven that the sifting should be completed successfully and that nothing bad should emerge from our hands. During the kneading with prayed that the dough would come out soft and would rise well. During the baking we davened that the crackers should come out good, and then we davened that they would sell, that customers should buy, and that there should be blessing in the money. The *tefillos* were all accompanied by the tears of my wife and daughters, and the house became the fulfillment of the words 'Ki beisi bais tefillah...'

The walls of the house absorbed the heartfelt *tefillos*, and the children merited a powerful *chinuch* – that nothing can be done without *tefillah*.

Now, for an entire month, although things are very calm, there are no *tefillos*. We all feel the void, and we cannot give it up. As a father, it's preferable for me to give up a large salary than to give up the closeness to Hashem. It's better for me to be dependent on the Hands of the King of kings, with a feeling of spiritual connection, than to rely on the support of a human *gvir*, because while I am calm, I am also disconnected."

"Reb Rueven finished speaking and tears of emotion rolled down from my eyes," the Megaleh Amukos concluded. "At that moment I resolved: If there are such Yidden in Krakow, who merited *emunah* and *kirvas Hashem* like this through *tefillah*, then I'm staying here!"

— The Kavanah of Amen —

The Last Brachos of the Amidah

The last three brachos in the Amidah are classified as *Birchos Hoda'ah*, brachos of gratitude, or *Birchos Preidah*, parting brachos. There is a difference in the kavanah of amen in these brachos: Regarding *Modim*, we have in mind, “emes, it is true,” while for the brachos of *Retzeh* and *Sim Shalom*, which have requests and tefillos, we should also have in mind “*Yehi Ratzon*, may it be.”

Sources and Explanations

The Rambam (Tefillah 1:4) wrote: “The three last ones – are gratitude.” In his view, the kavanah of the Gemara (Brachos 34a): “The last ones – are like a servant that receives a prize from his master and then takes leave and goes.” That means that the *mispallel* thanks Hashem for accepting his tefillah, and the Tur wrote (Orach Chaim 112): “What are the final brachos compared to? To a servant who received a reward from his master, praises him and then leaves.”

But one who takes a closer look will see that of the three final brachos, only *Modim* is one of gratitude. The Radbaz explained (Shu"t Vol. 8, 15) that indeed, the brachah of *Modim* is the main point of the final brachos, and the two additional brachos – *Retzeh* said before it and *Sim Shalom* said after it – were instituted with *Modim* and are considered part of it.

But Rashi (Brachos ibid ad loc. *Veniftar*) explains the words of Chazal as follows: “The last ones – are like a servant that receives a prize from his master and then takes leave and goes,” that at the end of the tefillah the *mispallel* receives permission from Hashem to leave. In *Sefer Habatim* (*Sefer Mitzvah* Ch. 13) added that when a servant takes leave of his master, he includes in his parting words the things that are most important to him. That is why the final brachos include “the things that are most needed for Yisrael.” See *Tosafos* (Brachos ibid ad loc. *El*) who write: “the principle of the final brachos are needs of the *tzibbur*.”

The Shelah (*Maseches Tamid, Ner Mitzvah* 61) and the *Eliyah Rabbah* (124:10) wrote that the brachos of *Retzeh*, *Sim Shalom* and *Shalom Rav* [said in *Maariv*, according to the nusach of *Bnei Ashkenaz*] are requests and tefillos, and therefore, one should have in mind when answering amen to them both “it is true” and “*yehi ratzon*.” And the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid 9) concurs. From their words it emerges that when answering amen to the brachah of *Modim*, which is about praise and gratitude, one should have in mind only ‘it is true.’ The *Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah* (5:4) agrees. The *Seder Nehora Hashalem* detailed the kavanah of amen on these three brachos: “It is true that Your holiness will be restored to Tzion, but I ask that You return it speedily in our day”; “it is true that the benefits are from Your Great Name, and that it is only fitting to praise You”; “it is true that Your middah is to bless Am Yisrael with peace, and may it be Your Will that You bless us at all times with Your peace.”

Ro'ei Emunim

From the Words of Our Gedolim on Answering Amen

Harav Moshe Bransdorfer

Av Beis Din Heichal Hora'ah Yerushalayim



To the directors of the Bney Emunim organization, which are *mezakei rabbim* with their work to inform Klal Yisrael about the virtues of answering amen,

I have come to give strength and support in their lofty work with a few words about what I heard and saw with my father, the Knei Bosem, *zy"ra*, and what he was strict about. He always said brachos aloud, in a way that all those who were in his presence could answer amen. When there were other people standing a bit further away, he would raise his voice so that they should hear and answer amen to his brachos.

My father inculcated those in his home to be very strict to answer amen to every brachah that they heard. If he noticed one of the children, or someone at the table, was distracted and didn't answer amen aloud, he would immediately ask: why don't I hear you answering amen? His words included two rebukes at the same time, first that one needs to answer amen, and second that one needs to answer it aloud.

Likewise, when he said *Birchos Hashachar* in his home, he would call members of the family to his room so that they should hear him make the brachos and answer amen after him. It's the essence of what we say in *Birchas Hamazon* “*Bivrachah sheleimah venomar amen*.” The *Divrei Yisrael* of *Modzhitz, zt"l*, said: When is the brachah complete? When amen is answered after it (*Divrei Yisrael Parashas Noach*).

Even though in general, he would be slow to rebuke, and

waited for the right time to do it, so that his words would be most effective, when it came to amen, he issued rebuke right away, because this was so important to him. As mentioned, when he noticed someone being remiss about amen, he would often ask “Why don't I hear you answering amen?”

A woman once came to his house with her son, and at the time, he was eating, and she was told to wait a short time in the waiting room until he finished. A short time later, my father finished eating and recited *Birchas Hamazon*, and he was told that there was a woman and her son waiting a long while already. When he heard this he hurried out and asked her what she wanted, and she replied that her wish had already been fulfilled. She knew that the Rav was eating, so she brought her son, who was almost bar mizvah, to answer amen to the Rav's brachos, and to hear how one needs to recite *Birchas Hamazon* aloud.

Writing and signing and blessing and answering amen to all the brachos that you are blessed with,



A precondition for answering amen according to *halachah* is reciting the *brachah* properly. When a person makes a *brachah* out loud, and doesn't mumble the words, aside for the benefit of saying the *brachah* properly, he gives another person the mitzvah of saying amen. In this segment, we will present a compilation of insights from the *gedolim* through the generations who address the virtue of reciting a *brachah* out loud.

Virtue of One Who Makes Brachos Aloud

Rabbi Yitzchak of Vienna brings in his *sefer Ohr Zarua* (Vol. II, *Shabbos* 42 6) a moving story that indicates the great reward of one who makes his *brachos* aloud:

"I knew a Jew from Worms, and his name was Reb Bunim; he was an older man and [worked] burying the dead. I heard it from a reliable source, that once, he arose to go to shul and saw a person sitting in front of the shul. The person wore a wreath on his head made of an herb known as *zeppel* [an herb with an exceptionally good smell.]

Reb Bunim was afraid, perhaps this was a *shed*, a spirit. And he called and said to him: 'Are you not So-and-So who just died and I buried you?' Replied the figure: 'Indeed.' And he said to him, 'How are you in that world?' And he said, 'Very good.' And he said, 'Which merits do you have? Were you not just a regular person?' And he replied, 'Only for the merit that I would say *brachos* in a pleasant voice in the shul, in this merit I was brought to Gan Eden and I'm respected! And as a sign that I am talking to you, you will see the sleeve of my robe that is torn, as you tore it when you donned my *tachrichim*.' And he asked him, 'What is on your head?' and he replied, 'These are herbs from Gan Eden and I put them on my head in order to banish the bad odor from this world.' The author, wrote this story so that a *yarei Shamayim* should see it and take heart and say the praises of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in a pleasant voice and with *kavanah*, and he will merit Gan Eden."

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

I truly value your pamphlet that arouses our awareness us and strengthens us to be strict about this very precious and virtuous thing, and also includes many things about the tremendous reward promised to those who are strict with this mitzvah.

Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b) that "everyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him." From these words it emerges that answering amen is the key to Gan Eden. Even though it appears externally that it is an easy mitzvah, *Chazal* tell us (*Avos* 2:1): "Be careful about an easy mitzvah like a difficult one because you do not know the reward of *mitzvos*."

I had an idea of a nice *remez* that indicates the reward of one who answers amen in Gan Eden. In *Maseches Taanis* (25b) it states that in Gan Eden there are rivers of persimmon oil. The word אפרסמון is made up of the words פרס אמן. That is an allusion to the great reward that one merits in Gan Eden if he is strict to answer amen.

With best wishes,
Isamar Ginsburg
Bnei Brak

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Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The tziyun of the Megaleh Amukos in the old cemetery of Krakow

The Megaleh Amukos

13 Av 5393

Harav Nosson Nota Shapiro was born in 5345 to his father, Rav Shlomo. Already in his youth, he became renowned as an *illuy* with a fantastic memory, who was proficient in all areas of Torah.

When he became of age, he married the daughter of the *gvir*, Rav Moshe Reb Yekel's of Krakow (the brother of Rav Eizik Reb Yekel's), who provided for all his needs, and even built him a special shul in Krakow.

From an early age, Rav Nosson Nota was enveloped in a halo of holiness. His son, Rav Shlomo, wrote in the introduction to his father's *sefer*, *Megaleh Amukos*, that he merited the revelation of Eliyahu. This was so renowned that his *matzeivah* is inscribed with the words: "Here lies the *Ish Eloki Kadosh Min Hakadmonim*, *Megaleh Amukos* – revealer of the deepest and the hidden secrets, of whom it is said that Eliyahu spoke to him face to face." In 5377, he began to serve as *rosh yeshivah* and *darshan* in Krakow.

Rav Nosson authored a special compilation in which he offered 252 explanations for the first *pesukim* in *Parashas V'eschanan* that describe Moshe Rabbeinu's *tefillah* to enter the Land [and remarkably, he passed away during the week when we read *Parashas V'eschanan*, which he worked so hard to explain]. Likewise, he authored a *sefer* that offers one thousand explanations for the "small aleph" written at the beginning of *Sefer Vayikra*, but we did not merit to have it published. Over the years, his *sefer Megaleh Amukos* on Torah and *Megaleh Amukos* – an expansive commentary on the *Rif*, *Ran* and *Nimukei Yosef*, were published.

He passed away on 13 Av 5393 and was laid to rest in the old cemetery in Krakow.

Answering Amen Imbues Emunah

The *Megaleh Amukos* (*Ha'azinu*) wrote that answering amen imbues *emunah* in the heart of a person. The *passuk* says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): "*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.*" *Chazal* explain (*Zohar Vayeilech* 285 2, and see *Shabbos* 110b): "Do not read it אמורים [from the term *emunah*] but rather אמנים [from the term amen]." The Torah wrote *emunim* and we read it *amenim* because *emunah* and amen are one and the same "because the main point of *emunah* depends on answering amen," and the *emunim* depends on the *amenim*.

Answering Amen Silences the Mekatregim

He further wrote: By answering amen we can silence all the *mekatregim*, and the merit of amen is what stood for Yaakov, when the minister of Eisav was not able to harm him (*Megaleh Amukos Vayishlach*, *Vayeishev Ofan* 32).