

Ve chol Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

The Tefillah of the Mevarech Said Aloud Is Heard On High

"האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי" (לב א)

Harav Yechiel Yehoshua of Biala said:

This *passuk* alludes that in the merit of saying *brachos* aloud, a person merits to have his *tefillos* heard. "Ha'azinu haShamayim," to my *tefillos*, so that "vesishma ha'aretz imrei pi" – that on the land, the *brachos* of my mouth should be heard. Because aside for the voice arousing one's *kavanah*, by reciting *brachos* aloud the *mevarech* gives the listeners the merit to answer amen. The acronym of פי ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי – is numerically equivalent to 92, which is the same as אמן with the *kollel*, alluding to this.

Chelkas Yehoshua

Emunah Is Connected to Answering Amen

"ויאמר אסתירה פני מהם אראה מה אחריתם כי דור תהפכת המה בנים לא אמן בם; הם קנאוני בלא אל כעסוני בהבליהם" (לב כ-כא)

In this *passuk*, Moshe Rabbeinu explains the reason why Hashem will conceal His Face from His nation, which will bring to the destruction of the Land and the exile. Chazal explain it as follows (*Sifri Ha'azinu Piska* 320): "Don't read it "lo emun bam" but rather "lo amen bam" – that they did not want to answer amen after the Nevi'im when they blessed them."

Harav Eliyahu Hakohen of Izmir explained that the next *passuk* continues to explain the great sin involved in refraining from answering amen: By the fact that they "kiasuni behavleihem" – that they didn't answer amen with the breath of their mouth, "heim kinuni belo el," it was considered as if they rejected Me. Because amen is numerically equivalent to the two Holy Names – Hava-y-ah and Adnus – and by answering amen we are *meyached* these two Names, therefore, not answering it is considered *kefirah*, heresy.

Minchas Eliyahu, Chapter 32

Answering Amen Is a Condition for Techiyas Hameisim

"ראו עתה כי אני הוא ואין אלקים עמדי אני אמית ואחיה מחצתי ואני ארפא ואין מידי מציל" (לב ט)

The second letters of the words ואני ואחיה are אמן. Rabbi Yosef Ghig, of the sages of Tunis, derived from this an allusion to the words of the *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 286 1) that someone who is not careful to answer amen does not arise in *techiyas hameisim*.

Haggadah Shel Pesach Pi Hamedaber,
Nishmas, ad loc. Mechayeh Meisim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Ha'azinu Vezos Habrachah

At the beginning of *Shiras Ha'azinu* (32:3), Moshe Rabbeinu says to Am Yisrael: "Ki Shem Hashem ekra, havu godel l'Elokeinu." Chazal explain that he said: "At the time that I recite the Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in a *brachah* – you should give greatness to Hashem by answering amen" (*Yoma* 37a, based on *Rashi Brachos* 21a ad loc. *Ki Shem*.)

I thought to add that the name of the *parashah*, "Ha'azinu", alludes to the obligation to answer amen, as if the *passuk* is instructing: "Ha'azinu," listen to every single *brachah* and answer amen according to *halachah* after it. The fact that the *parshiyos* of *Ha'azinu* and *Vezos Habrachah* are adjacent to one another can be explained in a similar manner: When you listen to a *brachah* and answer amen after it, that *brachah* will be "vezos habrachah," with the definitive "hei", as the *Zohar* says (*Eikev* 271 1) that only a *brachah* that is answered by amen is a perfect *brachah*.

Furthermore, the proximity of the two *parshiyos*, *Ha'azinu* and *Vezos Habrachah*, allude that someone who shakes off the power of rote, and listens with attention to all of the *brachos* being said around him, will merit "zos habrachah" – "the *brachah*" – with the definitive "hei", which is the *brachah* we constantly have in our hearts at this time of year, to merit a good and sweet year. Because

we all know the many promises and special *segulos* are promised in the Torah sources for those who are strict about answering amen.

The *Midrash* says (*Shir Hashirim* 5:2): "HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Am Yisrael: 'My children, open for Me one opening...like the eye of a needle and I will open for you an opening that will be large enough for wagons and carriages to enter through it.'" I once heard that the words of the *Midrash* are referring to the gates of blessing that are opened in the merit of answering amen. HaKadosh Baruch Hu is asking of us something small and easy – "like the eye of a needle" – to be strict to answer amen according to *halachah*, and in exchange, he opens for us On High tremendous gates of blessing and goodness whose value is inestimable.

Amen is compared to the signing of a check. Just like the signature gives validity to the check, answering amen gives validity and fulfillment to the *brachah*. Let us take upon ourselves to sign off every *brachah* with an amen, and in that merit, Hashem should hear our cries in *Ne'ilah*: "Avinu Malkeinu, chasmeinu lechaim tovim," amen v'amen.

Wishing you *gmar chasimah tovah*,
Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Avraham Avinu Completes the Minyan

Anyone who has had the privilege of visiting the City of the Patriarchs, the holy city of Chevron, will surely not have missed stopping at the main, historic shul there that has been standing for hundreds of years, which is known as Beis Knesses Avraham Avinu. This shul is still active, and was built more than five hundred years ago by the some of the first settlers in Chevron, who were exiles from Spain, led by their Rebbi, Harav Malkiel Ashkenazi. During the riots of 1929, the shul was destroyed, and the Arab residents of Chevron installed a goat pen among the ruins, in their efforts to defile the place.

For decades, the holy shul stood in ruins, until its remains were discovered about fifty years ago, with the renewal of the Jewish settlement in Chevron. The new residents worked to rebuild it, and it has been active since then.

The shul merited its unique name because of a truly wondrous story that took place there on Yom Kippur many years ago, a story that was discovered and publicized by the *mekubal* Harav



The interior of the Avraham Avinu shul in Chevron

Naftali Hertz Bachrach, a *talmid* of the *mekubal* Mahar"i Srug – one of the disciples of the Arizal – in his *sefer Emek Hamelech*.

The story took place in the early days of the renewed Jewish settlement in Chevron, during the beginning of the rule of the Ottoman Empire in Eretz Yisrael. The Jewish settlement in Chevron had been suspended for a number of years after the massacre of the city's Jews towards the end of the Mamaluke rule there, by the occupying forces of the Ottoman Empire, and following the massacre, the remnants of the community dispersed throughout the Land.

About twenty years after the massacre,

a handful of holy, Chassidic Jews began to resettle Chevron. Because at first, they did not even have a *minyan*, each Shabbos, a few Jews from surrounding villages were invited to spend Shabbos in Chevron, so that they could have a *minyan*.

It happened during one of those first years of the new settlement. On Erev Yom Kippur, nine *mispallelim* gathered in the shul, waiting anxiously for the residents of the villages, who did not turn up. As every Shabbos and Yom Tov, a few Jews from the neighboring villages had been invited to complete the *minyan*, but for some unknown reason, they did not turn up. Apparently, they preferred to pray in the Holy City of Yerushalayim. The sun was already setting, and the *tzaddikim* of Chevron began to shed tears, which soon turned into stormy weeping. They recoiled at the thought that they would have to daven the *tefillos* of this holy day without a *minyan*, and prayed fervently for Hashem to send them a *yeshuah*.

Some time before the sun set and the onset of Yom Kippur, as they were standing and davening, the *mispallelim* raised their eyes and noticed a figure approaching. At the end of the alleyway, they saw a venerable looking figure walking slowly towards the shul.

The door to the shul opened, and an elderly, unfamiliar Jew entered. He had a most distinguished appearance. The man slowly walked into the shul, and greeted the *mispallelim* with a glowing expression. Someone offered him a bite to eat for the *seudah hamfasekes*, but the man thanked him and said he'd already eaten, and as such, the *chazzan* immediately launched into the recital of *Kol Nidrei*.

Throughout the holy day, until after *Nei'lah*, the elderly man did not leave the shul. He davened with the *mispallelim* all the *tefillos* of the holy day, with exceptional fervency, until the day came to a close.

The *mispallelim* sensed that a great man was among them, and they had

even more *kavanah*. They honored the man in every way they were able. On Motzaei Yom Kippur, after *Havdalah*, they *mispallelim* began to discuss who would merit to host their guest for the special *seudah* that Jewish communities have a custom of holding on Motzai Yom Kippur, in memory of the meal that the Kohein Gadol used to hold on Motzai Yom Kippur for his friends and for all of Klal Yisrael, after he emerged unharmed from the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (see *Mishneh Yoma* 7:4).

Because they all wanted to merit to host their guest, they drew lots, and the winner was the *chazzan*. They all agreed that he had won the privilege fairly. The *chazzan* was also known as a holy person, and he was surely worthy of this honor.

The *chazzan* emerged from the shul overjoyed at his good fortune, and accompanied by his distinguished guest. The two walked together for some time, but when they reached the *chazzan's* home, and the *chazzan* wanted to honor his guest with stepping into the door first, he was surprised to find himself walking alone. His guest had simply disappeared.

The *chazzan* quickly began to search for the guest in the courtyard and in the immediate surroundings, but did not find him. He walked out to the quiet street and sought him out, but the man had disappeared. This did not remain a mystery for long, because that very night, as the *chazzan* slept, the elderly man came to him in a dream, and revealed that he was none other than Avraham Avinu. In his compassion for his descendants, the *chassidim* of Chevron, who were so distraught over not having a *minyan*, he asked permission On High to complete their *minyan*.

This was a tremendous wonder, as well as a powerful *chizuk* for the community in Chevron, who, according to the *Emek Hamelech* "rejoiced a great joy and blessed Hashem for His wonders."

Anyone who visits the refurbished Avraham Avinu shul today can find this story etched into a large board hanging on the wall of the shul, as it appears in the *sefer* of Rav Naftali Hertz Bachrach, *Emek Hamelech*.

‘Teshuvah Gedolah’ For not Answering Amen

One of the obstacles that prevents one who seeks to repent from doing *teshuvah* is his natural tendency to focus on sins that he perceived as significant, while ignoring sins that he perceives to be minor (see *Rambam Teshuvah* 4 4). One example is the sin of being lax about answering amen, which many consider to be a minor sin. The *mekubal*, Rav Meir Hakohein Papirash, wrote that specifically for this sin, one should do “*teshuvah gedolah*”, and he wrote:

“*Teshuvah gedolah* is required for one who does not answer amen – even if he failed to answer only one time – meaning that he heard a *brachah*, even on a fruit, or that his friend makes a *brachah* on a mitzvah, and certainly in the *tefillah* of the *shaliach tzibbur*... and in *Viduy* of *Ashamnu*, he should shed tears each day for those amens that he did not answer.”

Ohr Hayashar 7:18-19

The *dorshei reshumos*, those who convey the *mesorah* through the generations, cited an allusion to the obligation to repent for the sin of being lax about amen from the fact that the acronym of the words that begin the *brachah* of *teshuvah* in *Shemoneh Esreh* – לנה לנו – is numerically equivalent to אמן.

Amen Opens the Gates of Teshuvah

Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b): “Anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him.” Harav Shlomo of Karlin explained that this is why *Chazal* use the present tense – “*poschim*” – because the “gates of Gan Eden” are actually the gates of *teshuvah*. And *Chazal* teach us that in reward for answering amen with all his strength, a person receives an opening of *teshuvah* “and he tastes in this world the pleasure of Gan Eden and Olam Haba.”

The Be’er Moshe of Ozherov explained that this is what *Chazal* intended (*Zohar Chadash* Vol. II 43 2) in explaining the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 27:4): “*Lachazos benoam Hashem*” – “this is *teshuvah* and Olam Haba,” meaning that *teshuvah* brings a person to live a life of Olam Haba in this world. And for this reason *Chazal* say (*Avos* 4:17): “One hour of *teshuvah* and good deeds in this world is worth more than all of Olam Haba,” because through *teshuvah* and good deeds, one merits the essence of life in Olam Haba in this world, and this essence is even more lofty than life in Olam Haba.

Bais Aharon Bereishis and Haggadah Shel Pesach ad loc. Ha Lachma Anya, for Rosh Hashanah ad loc. Ksiv veyashuv; Be’er Moshe p. 135

Amen – The Way to Repent

Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, the Rav of Shamloi, explained:

The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 86b) explains that the *teshuvah* of a person is complete only after he encounters the same sin again, in the same place and the same time that he sinned, and when at that time, he overcomes, and does not sin, he proves that his repentance is genuine.

Based on this we can say that a person who wants to do complete *teshuvah* must fulfill *mitzvos* that are of the same characteristic as the one he sinned with, because that is also an essence of the sin that he committed.

In light of this we can say that someone who committed a sin in public, with *azus*, impudence, will have to rectify it, *middah kenegged middah*, by davening and answering amen aloud in shul, with *azus d’kedushah*, without being ashamed of those who may mock him. If he does this, it is proof that he has repented completely.

The *passuk* alludes to this, stating (*Hoshea* 14:3): “*Kechu imachem devarim veshuvu el Hashem*,” take with you – to holier realms the traits with which you sinned, and that way, your *teshuvah* will be complete and accepted.

Drashos Lechem Shlomo for Shabbos Shuvah

Teshuvah Sheleimah in the Merit of Answering Amen

The *passuk* (*Hoshea* 14:2): “*Shuva Yisrael ad Hashem Elokecha ki kashalta be’avonecha*” is explained by the Shomer Emunim as follows: שובה is an acronym for ברוך הוא וברוך שמו. The word ישראל is an acronym for לענות אמן יהא שמיה רבה. And the Navi alludes that by being strict about answering amen, *Baruch Hu uBaruch Shemo* and *Yehei Shemei Rabbah*, “you will draw upon yourself a great light so that you can reach with your *teshuvah* ‘ad Hashem Elokecha.’”

The Navi is likewise saying (*Hoshea* 14:3): “*Kechu imachem*” – take with you in your treasures “*devarim*” holy things, because by being strict to say them aloud and with *kavanah*, the gates of *teshuvah* will be opened to you and “you will return to Hashem.”

The Shomer Emunim added something very moving on this concept: “If a person will be careful with all the details of amen and *Yehei Shemei Rabbah* that are brought in this *ma’amar* [*Ma’amar Pischu She’arim* in *sefer Shomer Emunim*], then without a doubt, he will have a greater *tikkun hanefesh*, more than a few thousand fasts...and his soul will be connected to the *Shoresh Ha’elyon*, and he will remove the detritus and the rust from his soul and his spirit.”

Shomer Emunim Ma’amar Pischu She’arim Chapter 14

Amen – Beginning of Teshuvah

The Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Aharon Kotler, explained:

The beginning of *teshuvah* needs to be done specifically with the good deeds we already do – by doing them the right way. This is possible with a bit of attention, especially regarding things that a person tends to be lax about, even though they are very serious, for example, answering amen. We have learned many *halachos* about this, and everyone knows how strict *Chazal* are (*Brachos* 47a), in a frightening way, about answering amen in an improper way, and it is possible to understand from this the severity of the sin of someone who completely negates answering amen.

Mishnas Reb Aharon, Ma’amarim Vol. II p. 80

To the board of Bney Emunim, may you be blessed for your work to disseminate and imbue the importance of the mitzvah ,of amen

I wanted to share with you a great *yeshuah* that we merited in the merit of strengthening our observance of answering amen: Many years had passed since our wedding and we had not yet been blessed with children. During these years, we visited top doctors, and unfortunately, experienced countless .disappointments

One Shabbos, we were in Bnei Brak for a family *simchah*. Participating at such events in our situation was not easy, but we did our best to keep our pain in our hearts and to attend all the *simchos*. The apartment where we were staying was next to the Modzhitzer Beis Medrash, and on Shabbos afternoon, I went in there to learn. On the table was the *sefer Divrei Yisrael*, and I began to peruse it. With *Hashgachah pratis*, the *sefer* opened to *Parashas Toldos*, and a *vort* that caught my eye ultimately led me on the path to the *yeshuah*. The *passuk* says (*Bereishis* 25:21) "And Yitzchak prayed to Hashem on behalf of his wife because she was barren. Hashem granted his prayer and his wife, Rivka, conceived." *Rashi* there explains, "He stood in one .corner to pray and she stood in another corner to pray

The Divrei Yisrael wrote: "We can say that in truth, Rivka did not pray, she just stood and listened to the *tefillah* of Yitzchak, and answered amen, and it is like *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): 'The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*'..." And this is alluded to in the *passuk*...that when you will look *הקרה* closely you will see that the acronym of the words is numerically equivalent to amen, so we see that Yitzchak stood and prayed, and she stood across from him and answered "... .amen, may it be Hashem's Will

When I saw this I was very touched, and told myself that this was a sign sent from Above that in the merit of answering amen, we should also merit a *yeshuah*. There is a good reason why answering amen is alluded to specifically in the *parashah*

of remembering Rivka, and it is not for naught that the Divrei Yisrael wrote what he did on this subject. From thoughts to actions: We took upon ourselves to try and answer amen as much as possible. At home, we recited each *brachah* aloud and answered amen to one another's *brachos*, and in shul, I would listen to *Birchos Hashachar* from a number of people. My wife .made a great effort on this front as well

My friends who saw my *hishtadlus* for answering amen helped me with fulfilling my *kabbalah*; they made their *brachos* aloud .in front of me, and their participation gave me a lot of *chizuk*

With *siyata diShmaya*, eleven years after our marriage, and eleven months after I started to strengthen my observance of amen, we merited to welcome twins – a healthy boy and girl – .may Hashem continue to shower us with blessings

At the emotional bris, after I described the events of the past months, one of the people added to what I had said the words of the Ramban in *Parashas Vayeira* on the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 18:13): "*Lamah zeh tzachakah Sarah*, why did Sarah laugh saying, 'Can I really give birth when I am old?'" and there (*Passuk* 15) the Ramban explains that HaKadosh Baruch Hu's claim against Sarah was that she should have said "*amen kein ya'aseh Hashem*," to the words of the angel (*Passuk* 10): "*Shov ashuv eilayich ka'eis chayah*, I will return to you next year... and your wife will have a son." And here, as well, the subject of .amen is mentioned regarding granting a barren woman children I wrote these words down to underscore how grateful I am to the Gomel Chassadim Tovim, Who has granted me so much good, and so that others should recognize the greatness of .answering amen

,Gemar Chasimah Tovah
Respectfully yours
Y.G., Haifa

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Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Baal Hasulam, ז"ל

Baal HaSulam Yom Kippur 5715

Harav Yehuda Leib Ashlag, author of the *HaSulam* commentary on the *Zohar Hakadosh*, was born on 5 Tishrei 5645 to his father, Rav Simcha, in the city of Lukov, Poland. Already from an early age, his *hasmadah*, brilliance and depth of thought were evident. By the time he was nineteen, he had already earned *semichah* for Rabbanus, and served as a *posek* and *dayan* in Warsaw. In his youth, he was close to the

Rebbe, Harav Meir Shalom of Kaluszyn, and after his passing, Rav Yehuda Leib traveled to his son, Harav Yehoshua Asher of Porisov, who he considered his *rebbe muvhak*. He learned most of his *Kabbalah* from a hidden *tzaddik* during the course of just three months, until that *tzaddik* passed away. As the Baal HaSulam described in a letter to his uncle: "And my holy teacher would earn a living from big deals and he was known throughout the city as an honest merchant, but no one, to this day, was aware of his wisdom in *Kabbalah*, and he did not give me permission to reveal his name."

In 5682, when he was thirty-six, he made *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael and settled in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. First, he concealed himself from others, but the residents of Yerushalayim quickly picked up on who he was, and *talmidim* began to flock to him. He would learn with his *talmidim* every night from one o'clock until dawn. Later, he moved to the Givat Shaul neighborhood, and from there, to Givat Rokeach in Bnei Brak and Tel Aviv.

After writing several compilations in *Kabbalah*, he began to write his comprehensive commentary on *Sefer Hazohar*, which he called *HaSulam*. On Yom Kippur 5715, he passed away in his home in Tel Aviv at the age of 69. He was laid to rest on Har Hamenuchos in Yerushalayim.

A Brachah Recited in Full

Following is a short passage from the *Zohar* (*Parashas Eikev, Raya Meheimna* 271 1) with the commentary of the Baal HaSulam:

לשון הזהר: "כד סלקין אינון ברכאן מתתא, לית פתחא ופתחא לעילא, ולית ממונא לעילא, דלא פתח כל אינון פתחין, ומכרזי ואמרי בכל אינון רקיעין: דא איהו דורונא דמלכא דשדר פלוני, דא הוא דורונא בקיומא כדקא יאות. ומאן איהו, ברכה דאתיבו עליה אמון, דכל ברכה "דאתיבו עליה אמון דא איהו בקיומא כדקא יאות

HaSulam:

When these *brachos* rise from below, there is no opening after opening Above, and there is no one appointed from On High not to open all these openings, and they declare and say throughout the firmaments: This is the gift from the King that Ploni sent, this is the complete and fitting gift. And what is a complete *brachah*? It is a *brachah* that is answered by amen. Because every *brachah* that is answered by amen is a *brachah* that is fittingly complete.