

# VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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## Amen Around the Year

Succos

## Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

### The Mitzvah of Sukkah Is as Easy as Amen

The following segment, which explains the connection between the mitzvah of sukkah and the mitzvah of answering amen, is based on the words of Harav Tzvi Hirsch Horowitz, the successor of his father, Harav Pinchas Horowitz, the Baal Hafla'ah, as Rav of Frankfurt am Main, in his *sefer Lachamei Todah* (Offenbach 5576, p. 210):

In *Maseches Avodah Zarah* (3a) Chazal call the mitzvah of sukkah an "easy mitzvah" because it does not require spending money. But we ask: Despite the fact that it is possible to fulfill the mitzvah without an expenditure, the building of the sukkah requires a lot of effort; why then it is called a "mitzvah kallah", an easy mitzvah?

In *Maseches Nazir* (66b), Chazal say that the "one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*," and compares reciting the *brachah* to the simple soldiers that confront the enemy at the beginning of the war, and amen to the strong, heroic soldiers that follow and triumph in battle. The *Maharsha* explains (Vol. I *ibid*) that this is not just a random parable, but rather, an accurate illustration of what happens when saying the *brachah* and answering amen. Because Chazal say (*Pesachim* 118a): "The sustenance of a person is as difficult as splitting the sea." It is very hard for a person to obtain his sustenance because of the *mekatregim*, the hostile forces, that put up obstacles, and by saying *brachos* properly, he creates compassionate angels that fight for him against the *mekatregim*. But when answering amen, the strong angels are created, which can "win the war against the *mekatregim*, the destructive angels."

The reason for the fact that the triumph over the destructive angels is achieved specifically

with amen, is because the numerical equivalent of amen is 91, which is the same as the Names of Hav-ayah and And-nus together (see *Baal Haturim*, *Devarim* 27:6). The Shem Hav-ayah alluded to in amen hints to the *Middas Harachamim* that sweetens the *Middas Hadin*, which awakens the destructive angels. Therefore, the power of amen has a very potent influence to bring down blessing on a person more than the power of the *brachah* in which only the Name of Adnus is mentioned.

This is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 145:16): "*Pose'ach es yadecha umasbia lechol chai ratzon*." The acronym of פותח את ידך is numerically equivalent to אמן to teach us that from the power of answering amen, the *dinim* are sweetened, and then *parnassah* can be brought down to the denizens of the world.

Now we can understand why sukkah is called a "mitzvah kallah." Because like amen, sukkah is also numerically equivalent to 91, which is the Names of Hava-yah and Adnus. Therefore, in contrast to the rest of the *mitzvos*, where the *mekatregim* block us from observing them, because the Name of the mitzvah of sukkah neutralizes the *mekatregim*, one who has this *kavanah* when he fulfills it can do so with ease. This is also alluded to in the words of the *Gemara* (*ibid*): "*Mitzvah kallah yesh Li u'sukkah שמה*," its name of the mitzvah of sukkah is what makes it an easy mitzvah.

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### The Mitzvah of Amen Should Not Be Light in Your Eyes

Sitting in the sukkah is called, in the *Zohar* (*Emor* 103 1) "*Betzeila demeheimnusa*" [in the shadow of *emunah*], and for good reason. Because when a person leaves his regular residence in favor of a temporary one, he shows that he does not rely on his possessions and assets, and rather, he places his trust solely in the *Hashgachah* of the Creator.

This fact explains the deep connection between the mitzvah of sukkah and the fundamental of *emunah* – which is the mitzvah of answering amen, as manifested by the fact that סוכה is numerically equivalent to אמן.

The Aruch Laner begins his *sefer Bikkurei Yaakov* (on *Hilchos Sukkah* and *Lulav*) with the following words: "The righteous should rejoice...in this holy Yom Tov called 'Yom Simchaseinu,' and our joy is doubled. And they should be very careful to fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah those number [numerical equivalent] is 91, which is the same as the two holy Names [Hava-y-ah] whose total [numerical equivalent] is אמן. And its holiness is doubled and one who fulfills it according to *halachah* will see his reward doubled from Above."

Because the fact that סוכה is equivalent to אמן is brought down in many *seforim*, we should try to delve a bit into the connection between the mitzvah of answering amen and the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah, and learn about the special attention we must give to the mitzvah of answering amen.

First and foremost, because sitting in the sukkah "*betzeila demeheimnusa*" strengthens the *emunah* in our hearts, likewise, answering amen is meant to strengthen the *emunah* in our hearts, as *Rabbeinu Bechaye* expounds in his commentary on the Torah (*Shemos* 14:31). Moreover: the sukkah is comprised of walls upon which the *sechach* rests, and סכך is numerically equivalent to 100, alluding to the one hundred *brachos* that we must make every day. סוכה is equivalent to אמן and that is what gives it strength and lets it stand.

Furthermore, we say in the *piyut*, "the mitzvah of sukkah should not be light in your eyes – because it is equivalent to all the statutes and *mitzvos* of the religion," and based on this I will conclude this segment with a call to you, dear reader: "The mitzvah of answering amen should not be light in your eyes!" After you have learned how precious and important the mitzvah of sukkah is, which the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 3a) calls a "mitzvah kallah," learn to do likewise to the mitzvah of amen, whose concepts are endlessly deep, and value it and deem it important, as it is the foundation of *emunah* and the heart of *tefillah*.

If we try to be a "tzaddik shomer *emunim*," then surely Hashem will answer our requests as we say on *Hoshana Rabbah*: "*Ta'aneh *emunim* shofchim Lecha lev kamayim*," and He will grant us good and happy lives. *Amen v'amen*.

Wishing you a *chag same'ach*  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

### A Brachah Completed With Tefillah

Harav Levi Yitzchak Greenwald, *zt"l*, known as the Gaavad of Tzehlem, was one of the leading *poskim* and kashrus pioneers in America in the generation following the Holocaust. He was extremely busy working on behalf of the *klal*, but when the phone rang in his home, and the caller identified himself as Reb Hershel, the manager of the Jewish nursing home B'yeshishim Chochmah in Boston, and him to come and visit an elderly Jew named Reb Berel, who had been pleading for days for someone to invite the Rav to speak to him about something urgent, the Rav could not refuse.

"I wanted to ask the Rav a very strange and unusual request," the man began as soon as the venerable Rav sat down in his room. "But in order for the Rav to understand me, I need to first tell a story that happened to me in my native village in Hungary more than eighty years ago. It was Erev Succos, and Harav Hillel of Kolomaya, *zt"l*, came to our town and asked to spend Yom Tov with us.



Harav Levi Yitzchak Greenwald, *zt"l*,

We, the *frum Yidden*, were of course very happy with this news. Rav Hillel was one of the eminent Rabbanim of Hungary, and his arrival was a huge honor for us. But there were people in the town who did not take kindly to the visit, and for good reason: Rav Hillel was known to have very strong opinions, and he closely adhered to the path of his Rebbe, the Chasam Sofer, when it came to preserving

Jewish traditions in their purest form. His battles against reform Jews and neologs had earned him many enemies among them. In our town, there were such people as well. So when the news spread that the Rav of Kolomaya had come to spend Yom Tov with us, these people decided to prevent this from happening at all costs.

One of them, a hulking, impudent individual, went very far – he went to the Rav's lodgings and declared with chutzpah: 'The Rav should know that he is an unwanted guest in our town. We know that the purpose of his visit is to incite against us and we will not allow it to happen. So we are warning, that if the Rav does not leave the town today, we promise that tonight, we will destroy the Rav's sukkah until there isn't one whole wall left of it!'

The Rav, who although was very strong in spirit, was unnerved by the message. He shared his concern with his hosts, who, knowing that this group was not joking about their intentions, were even more afraid.

That was not the case for me. I was around twenty years old at the time, and Hashem had granted me a tall, husky build, and lots of physical strength. I took the initiative, approached the Rav of Kolomaya, and told him, 'The Rav doesn't have to worry. Please stay in our town, and I promise that throughout Succos, I will not leave the Rav. I will protect his sukkah with my body, and *b'ezras Hashem*, nothing bad will happen to the Rav.'

Upon hearing my confident words, the Rav calmed down, and after studying me for a long moment, he agreed to stay.

From that moment, I didn't leave the Rav for a moment. On Yom Tov night, while the Rav slept in his sukkah, I stood guard outside. A few quiet hours passed, when suddenly, there was a noise, and I noticed the leader of the hooligans approaching the sukkah with a heavy hammer in his hand. He waved the hammer towards the sukkah, but then froze in place when I shouted at him "Halt!!!"

He looked in fright at the strapping figure who was approaching him in the darkness, and I took advantage of his panic, and waved my fists as I shouted threateningly: 'You should know, and warn your friends, that if any of you dare to touch the Rav or his sukkah, you will feel my wrath!'

I didn't need more than that. Despite

the impudence of the ruffian, they knew that it wasn't worth starting up with Shimon the Gibbor, as I was known in the town. So throughout Succos I didn't leave the Rav, while they did not dare approach.

After Yom Tov, as the Rav was set to leave, he called me, thanked me and warmly gave me a *brachah* that I should merit exceptionally long years with good health, and that none of my offspring should predecease me."

And this is where Reb Berel reached the point for which he had asked the Tzehlemer Rav to come and visit him:

"*Baruch Hashem* I am healthy and quite old," the man said. "I even look relatively young for my age. I'm more than 105 already, but my heart aches for my oldest son, who lives here in the nursing home with me. He's 'just' eighty-five, but in contrast to me, he has severe ailments and is suffering terribly. It's clear to me that he is hanging onto life because of the power of the *brachah* of the Kolomaya Rav that my offspring should not die in my lifetime, so I'm asking the Rav to daven to Hashem, and to tell Him that I forfeit the Kolomaya Rav's *brachah*. I want to die so that my son can leave this world in peace..."

The Tzehlemer Rav, who was aghast at the request, thought for a long moment and then wisely responded:

"Rav Berel, instead of davening that you should die, I'll daven for your son to get well, and then you can both live out your years, in fulfillment of the Rav's *bracha*."

Reb Berel did not relax until he saw the Rav davening tearfully for his son to recover. Then the Tzehlemer Rav wished Rav Berel well and departed.

Fifteen years later, Reb Hershel, the manager of the nursing home, was once again on the line in the Tzehlemer Rav's home. In a moving voice he briefly told the Rav the end of the story:

"A short time ago, Reb Berel Weiss passed away – he was 120 years old, but as healthy and lucid as a young man. About half an hour later, his son, who also merited old age and good health – passed away at the age of 100." In their lives and in their deaths they did not part.

Heard from author  
Rabbi Yair Weinstock, *shlita*  
Who heard it from someone

who heard it from the Tzehlemer Rav, *zt"l*



## “אומין לסעודתי אושפיזין עלאי, אברהם יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

In the *sefer Pri Eitz Chaim* (Chag Hasuccos Chapter 4) Harav Chaim Vital writes that the word סוכה is numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same value as אמן. Indeed, much has been written about the connection between the sukkah – which is called in the *Zohar Hakadosh* (Emor 103 1) “*tzila demeheimnusa*” – and answering amen.

This connection is also manifested in the connection between the seven *Ushpizin* and this lofty mitzvah. Following is a collection of insights from *gedolim* throughout the generations about the secrets of the seven *Ushpizin* who bask with us in the *tzel ha'emunah* – our holy sukkah, in the context of reciting *brachos* and answering amen after them.

### Avraham Avinu

One the first say he says:

“במתי מנח אברהם אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

Avraham Avinu answered amen after the Word of Hashem in the *Bris Bein Habesarim* that his offspring should multiply like the stars of the sky, and therefore it is said of him (*Bereishis* 15:6): “*Vehe'emin b'Hashem veyachshevehah lo tzedakah*.” The word “*he'emin*” is in the *hif'il* tense, meaning, he conveyed to the next generations the mitzvah of answering amen, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu considered this a “*tzedakah*” (*Bais Avraham* [Rav A. Kreiswirth] *Lech Lecha*).

### Yitzchak Avinu

On the second day he says:

“במתי מנח יצחק אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
אברהם יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

The *passuk* says about Yitzchak Avinu (*Bereishis* 25:21): “And Yitzchak prayed to Hashem in front of his wife, because she was barren,” and *Chazal* explain (*Bereishis Rabbah* 63 5): “He stood in one corner and prayed and she stood in the other corner and prayed.” Because Rivka knew that the “one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*” (*Brachos* 53b), she did not pray herself, and instead, stood in the corner of the room and listened to Yitzchak’s *tefillah* and answered amen. We find an allusion to this in the *passuk* itself, as the acronym of the words *אשתו כי עקרה* are numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same value as amen (*Divrei Yisrael Toldos*).

### Yaakov Avinu

On the third day he says:

“במתי מנח יעקב אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
אברהם יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

While Yaakov Avinu was sleeping on Har Hamoriah, the secret of amen was revealed to him. Therefore, when he arose, he said (*Bereishis* 28:17): “*Vezeah sha'ar haShamayim*,” because *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b) that “anyone who answers amen with all his strength, *poschim lo sha'arei Gan Eden*” (*Megaleh Amukos Vayeishev*). His name also proves this: יעקב is numerically equivalent to twice amen, and sometimes it is written יעקוב, with the *vav*, which makes it equivalent to *אמן ואמן* (*Asarah Ma'amaros, Ma'amar Chikur Din* 2:15). All of Yaakov’s conduct was according to the *Sod* of answering amen (*Ma'or Vashemesh, Vayigash*) and this fact is alluded to in the *passuk* (ibid 33:17): “*VeYa'akov nasa Succosa* [to Succos]” and we know that סוכה is numerically equivalent to *אמן* (*Sukkah Na'ah, Sukkah* 38 2).

### Moshe Rabbeinu

On the fourth day he says:

“במתי מנח משה אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
אברהם יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

We were cautioned to answer amen by Moshe Rabbeinu, because *Chazal* explain the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:3) “*Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu godel l'Elokeinu*” (*Yalkut Shimoni Ha'azinu* 942) as follows: “Moshe said to Yisrael: When I call the Name of Hashem to bless Him, you who hear it should give greatness to Hashem by answering amen.”

### Aharon Hakohein

On the fifth day he says:

“במתי מנח אהרן אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
אברהם יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

Aharon and his sons were commanded to bless Am Yisrael every day (*Bamidbar* 6:23), and we are commanded to answer amen after their *brachah*. A beautiful allusion for answering amen is found in one of the *bigdei Kohein Gadol* – the *Eifod* – because אפוד is numerically equivalent to amen. At the top of the *Eifod* was the *Cheshev Eifod*, which is an allusion to answering amen with *kavanah* (*Divrei Shmuel* [Rav S. of Nikolsburg] *Tetzaveh*).

### Yosef Hatzaddik

On the sixth day he should say:

“במתי מנח יוסף אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי  
אברהם יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

Yaakov Avinu revealed to Yosef the secret of amen, as alluded in the acronym of the final letters of the words of the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 37:3): *בן זקנים הוא* and therefore, Yaakov was already 91 when Yosef was born. Yosef Hatzaddik is in charge of the gates to Gan Eden, because as *Chazal* revealed (*Shabbos* 119b) these gates are opened to whoever answers amen (*Megaleh Amukos, Vayeishev*).

### Dovid Hamelech

On the seventh day he says:

“במתי מנח דוד אשפיי עלאי דיתבי עמי ועמך כל אשפיי עלאי אברהם  
יצחק יעקב משה אהרן יוסף ודוד”

The *passuk* says (*Shmuel* II 26:1): “ואלה דברי דוד האחרנים נאם: – *דוד בן ישי ונאם הגבר הקם על* – and the word על is numerically equivalent to 100. During the times of Dovid Hamelech there was a decree that one hundred people died each day. Dovid, with his *Ruach Hakodesh*, instituted that Am Yisrael should recite one hundred *brachos* each day and the plague was halted (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:21). The word סך, which is numerically equivalent to 100, alludes that these 100 *brachos* protect a person. And therefore, the *sechach* is placed over the sukkah, which is equal to amen, because the fulfillment of the *brachah* is by answering amen (*Ohr Yitzhar, Yamim Noraim*, Introduction p. 24).

The obligation to answer amen is mentioned by Dovid Hamelech (*Tehillim* 106:48): “*Baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam v'ad ha'olam v'amar kol ha'am amen*,” in other words, whenever the *brachah* to Hashem is made, it behooves the nation to answer amen after it (*Chochmas Shlomo* [Harav S. Kluger] *Orach Chaim* 215 1).

## Peninei Emunim

Pearls for Chag HaSuccos

### This World Is a Temporary Dwelling

The **Chida** wrote that performing the mitzvah of sukkah completes the *teshuvah* process that began during the Yamim Nora'im. Because leaving one's permanent dwelling teaches the person to look at the world with the right perspective, and reminds him to disconnect from his possessions and not to invest himself in temporary acquisitions, but rather with eternal acquisitions, which are Torah and *mitzvos*.

**Harav Dovid of Tolna** added that this message is alluded to in the words of *Chazal* (*Sukkah* 2a): "Leave your permanent dwelling and sit in your temporary dwelling": Remove from your heart the mistake that was ingrained in you that one should treat *Olam Haze* as the permanent dwelling, have it settled in your mind that it is merely a temporary dwelling.

**Harav Moshe Feinstein** thus explained the words of the *piyut* (*Shacharis* on 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Succos): "The mitzvah of sukkah should not be light in your eyes because it is equivalent to all the *mitzvos* and statutes of the religion." This concept is learned from the mitzvah of sukkah is the fundamental premise of all the *mitzvos*. The more a person recognizes his temporary status in this world, the more he invests in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos*, and refrains from wasting his time making physical acquisitions in a temporary and fleeting world.

*Simchas Haregel Limud Aleph LeChag HaSuccos; Knesses Dovid p. 26; Darash Moshe 22*

## Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editorial board of *Vechol Ma'aminim*, headed by the *mezakeh harabbim* Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*,

Many *brachos* for your wonderful work and for this beautiful pamphlet that is dedicated to enhancing the mitzvah of answering amen.

It is needless to expound on the *segulos* and virtues of the mitzvah of answering amen. In the *seforim* of *Chazal* – *Gemara*, *Midrashim*, and the holy *Zohar* – they expounded and described at length the reward for one who answers amen, and on the other hand, the severity of the sin of one who is not careful about this mitzvah. It is also evident in the *seforim* of the Rishonim and Acharonim how important they deemed this mitzvah.

I thought of a beautiful *remez* for the *segulah* of answering amen, from the words of blessing that we wish one another after Yom Kippur: "פתקא טבא" – where the acronym of the first and last letters [פ,ט;א,ט] are numerically equivalent to amen. So now, צ"א ולמד, go out and learn that the merit of answering amen advocates for the one who is strict about this mitzvah, that he should have a *piska tava*.

With the blessings of Kohanim, with love,

**Gamliel Hakohein Rabinowitz**

Author of *sefer Gam Ani Odecha* and *Pardes Yosef Hachadash* on Moadim

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## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Jewish cemetery in Mantua.

### The Rema"z

16 Tishrei 5458

Harav Moshe Zakut was born to his father, Rav Mordechai in 5385 in Amsterdam, and already as a child, it was evident he was destined for greatness. After learning under Rav Shaul Mortiera, the Rav of Amsterdam, he traveled to learn in Posen, Poland. There, he learned under Harav Yitzchak of Posen, and later traveled to

Italy, where he learned *Kabbalah* under Harav Binyamin Halevi, the disciple of the disciple of Harav Chaim Vital.

Beginning in the year 5405, the Rema"z served as a Rav in Venice, and after 28 years, in the year 5433, he was asked to serve as the Rav in Mantua. On Yom Tov Sheini of Succos, 5458, he passed away in Mantua, where he was laid to rest.

Aside for being renowned for his commentary on the *Zohar*, and other compilations that he wrote, the Rema"z had many *talmidim*. His disciple, Harav Binyamin Hakohein Vitali [הרב"ב] thus described him in his *hesped*, printed in his *sefer Gvul Binyamin* (Vol. II, *Drush* 48): "And this *tzaddik*, whose *hesped* we are engaged in, was a man that contained everything; *Mikra*, he was proficient in the text, and especially in the wisdom of *dikduk*, there was no one like him in ... *Mishnah*, which he knew by heart and also made many *chiddushim*; he was proficient in all *Midrashim*, and also spoke prolifically with words that were accepted by the heart of others. He was also an expert in ... *Gemara*, and was an *oker harim* [lit. mountain mover] in his expositions... And above all, he was a great *mekubal* who was *mechadesh* numerous insights in the words of the *Zohar* according to the... words of the Ari and his disciples."

### Birchos Hashachar Together

In his commentary on the *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2), the Rema"z said of himself that he would hear *Birchos Hashachar* each morning from the *mispallelim* of his *beis medrash* in order to meet the daily quota of answering 90 amens to *brachos* and added that this practice is "an ancient *minhag* in Eretz Yisrael, and the Rav ruled this in the *Shulchan Aruch* as well (*Orach Chaim* 6 4)."

### Brachah, Tovah, Simchah

The holy *Zohar* (ibid) writes: "And when Yisrael down below watch themselves to answer amen and to have *kavanah* the way they should, how many openings of *brachos* are open Above, how much *tov*, goodness, is found in all the worlds, how much *simchah* is there in everything."

The Rema"z in his commentary on the *Zohar* brings an allusion to the words of the *Zohar* that answering amen with *kavanah* elicits three benefits: *brachah*, *tovah* and *simchah*, because amen in its full form [א"ל"ף מ"ם נ"ן] is numerically equivalent to 297, which is equal to the words: גילה [=שמחה] טובה, ברכה].

### Opening the Gates of Tefillah

Regarding the words of the *Zohar* (ibid) that the *tefillah* of the one who answers amen is accepted, the Rema"z explains: "Because their mouths were sanctified by answering amen and with *kavanah*, therefore, their breath rises on High and breaches all the barriers."