

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



ת.ד. 102 בני ברק | פקס: 03-5055919
9139191@gmail.com

Parashas VAYEIRA | 5784 | Issue No. 506

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

Don't Mention the Name of the Sick Person

“וירא אליו ה' באלני ממרא והוא ישב פתח האהל כחם היום”
(יה א)

Rashi explained (based on *Sotah* 14a) that HaKadosh Baruch Hu came to Avraham on the third day after his *bris milah* to visit him when he was ailing. Where is it alluded to in the *passuk* that this revelation was due to *bikur cholim*?

Harav Shmarya Zalman of Leipnik explained:

The early sages have told us that one who goes to visit a sick person should not mention his name “lest it is decreed on this name that he should die” (see *Zohar Hakadosh Noach* 69 2, and see also *Brachos* 34a and in *Iyun Yaakov* *ibid*). Because of this, Chazal also say (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) that changing the name of a sick person tears up his decree. In light of this we can say that Chazal learn from the fact that Avraham's name is not mentioned in this *passuk*, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared to Avraham in order to visit him when he was sick.

Nachalas Yaakov – Avnei Shoham [Amsterdam 5484], Avnei Shoham 10

For Whom Did Avraham Daven?

“ויגש אברהם ויאמר האף תספה צדיק עם רשע; אולי יש המושים צדיקים בתוך העיר האף תספה ולא תשא למקום למען המושים הצדיקים אשר בקרבה” (יה כג-כד)

Avraham Avinu began with a smaller request, that the *tzaddikim* of Sodom should not die together with its *resha'im*, and only afterwards did he expand his request that the *tzaddikim* should protect the *resha'im* in the city. Why?

The *Ksav Sofer* explained:

Avraham Avinu knew that if he would include the *tzaddikim* in his *tefillah*, his *tefillah* would be effective only for them, because we have a rule: “*Tefillah* accomplishes half” (*Vayikra Rabbah* 10 5). Therefore, he preceded by saying: “*Ha'af tispeh tzaddik im rasha*, will You [actually] destroy the righteous with the wicked?” The meaning of this is, I don't have to daven for the *tzaddikim*, because their *zechusim* are worthy of protecting them. My *tefillah* is directed only about the wicked people of Sodom, who should be spared in the merit of the *tzaddikim* in the city.

Ksav Sofer

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

יהלום Is Numerically Equivalent to אמן

Chazal tell us (*Bava Basra* 16b) that “A precious stone was hung around the neck of Avraham Avinu, and every ill person who saw it immediately recovered.” There are many commentaries on this statement, and I thought perhaps to add that the “*even tovah*,” the good stone, alludes to the answering of amen.

Answering amen is the essence of *emunah* that Avraham Avinu conveyed for generations. It is the pinnacle of our *emunah* in the Creator, and he was *moser nefesh* for it. Answering amen is the shining diamond that hung on his neck, and evidence of this is the fact that אמן is numerically equivalent to יהלום, diamond.

Indeed, amen is a precious stone that opens the gates of healing to people. There are many stories that we have received and continue to receive from people who testify that strengthening their answering of amen has brought them reprieve and recovery in various situations.

We know that the early sages told us that the *Geulah* is being withheld because we do not answer amen to the *brachos* of the *Geulah* (*Derech Moshe* Day 11). Based on this we can say that being negligent about answering amen to the *brachos* of *refuah* also prevent the gates of healing from opening.

The *brachos* of *refuah* are not necessarily *Asher Yatzar* and *Refa'einu*, because many of the *Birchos Hashachar* thank Hashem for the *chessed* that He does with us each day by renewing the health and functioning of our body. Thus, in *Poke'ach Ivrim*, we thank for the light of our eyes, and in *Matir Assurim*, we thank for the ability to move our limbs as we please, and so forth, each *brachah* and its subject.

There is no doubt that answering amen each morning to *Birchos Hashachar* is worthy of being defined as a “good stone,” and anyone who is strict about doing this every day, aside for being “immediately healed” he is also protected from any disease or harm.

In this *parashah*, there is also an allusion to the power of answering amen to heal a person. Regarding the *passuk* (18:1): “*Vayeira Hashem eilav b'Elonei Mamrei*,” Rashi explains that the objective of this visit was “to visit the sick.” When we calculate it we see that אלני has the same value as amen, while ממרה is numerically equivalent to רפא – to teach us that answering amen is what brings healing to the sick person.

I heard this wonderful *remez* from the Brizdovitz Rebbe, *shlita*, in whose Boro Park *beis medrash* I have the *zechus* to daven. It is there that I am *zocheh* to answer amen after the *Birchos Hashachar* of many people.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein



In memory of my esteemed mother, Devorah bas Reb Dov Marmurstein

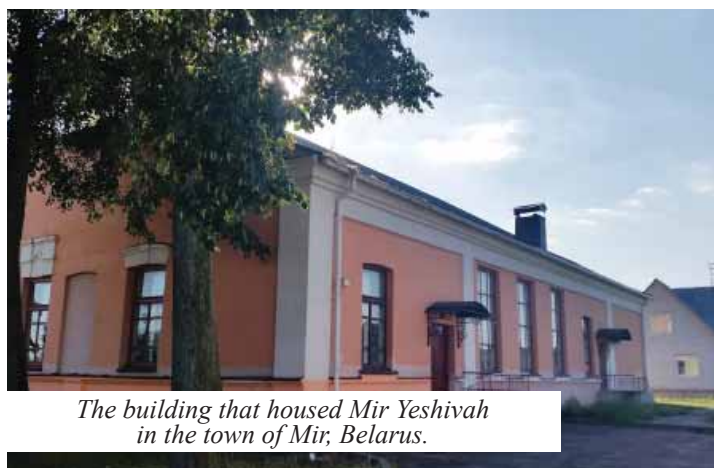


In the renowned town of Mir lived a very clever and pious young lady, who was orphaned from her father at a young age, and had to go out and work to support her mother and younger siblings. She spent most of her meager salary on supporting her family, but she did allow herself to put away a little bit of it to fulfill a dream she had deep in her heart.

This girl knew well that “*im ein ani li mi li,*” if I’m not for me, then who is for me. Because she had no father to save money for her wedding expenses, she would have to worry about herself – by herself...

Her salary was modest, and the part she could deduct from it for her future was much smaller than what she needed to give to the family. So even after years of work, when she became of age, she didn’t have the sum needed for a good Jewish girl wanting to get married to a *chassan* who was a *yarei Shamayim*.

All kinds of *shadchanim* knocked at her door to persuade her to agree to various suggestions of men who were not demanding a dowry, but these proposals were far from fulfilling her great aspirations to build a house on foundations of Torah and to be the wife of a *ben Torah* and *talmid chacham*.



The building that housed Mir Yeshivah in the town of Mir, Belarus.

So the years passed, and she remained alone – wanting a *talmid chacham* no matter what!

One day, while she was sitting in her room and reciting *Tehillim* with great emotion, she suddenly had a strange and unusual idea: She decided to write a letter to Hashem, her compassionate Father – to ask Him to help her.

The girl knew that HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears the *tefillah* of every single person, and does not need a letter of any kind to fulfill her request. But still, she decided to write it, thinking that even if

it was not needed as a form of *tefillah*, it would be beneficial for her to channel her pain into words. Over the years, her burden of pain had grown, and it was too heavy to bear.

For a few hours, she sat at a table and wrote a detailed letter to Hashem about her situation. She expressed her high aspirations and her insistence not to forego them. She wrote about the many difficulties she’d experienced until that point, from her early years as an orphan to this point, when she was a mature adult, and yet so alone. Then she poured onto the page her extensive *tefillos* to merit a husband who is a *talmid chacham*, despite her meager dowry, so they could establish a *bayis ne’eman b’Yisrael*.

She concluded her emotional letter with heartfelt words: “You Hashem, the Father of orphans, the Dayan of widows, Sustainer of the poor Who elevates the low ones, please, answer my *tefillah* and find a worthy *chassan* for me. I trust only You, please make sure that I will not be shamed and humiliated for eternity!”

When she finished writing, she felt a sense of relief, as if she’d eased the heavy burden she’d been carrying in her heart and transferred it to the paper in front of her.

She took the sheets of paper, packed with tight writing, and put them into a long envelope. On one side she wrote: “To our Father in heaven,” and on the other side she wrote her name and address in the town of Mir.

She then went to the open

fields that surrounded the town. A brisk autumn wind was blowing, and she waited for a gust to help her complete her task. She held the letter loosely between her fingers, and when the wind began to pick up she waved her hand to the sky and opened her fingers.

The letter flew into the open air, and got carried away with the wind. She watched it for a long moment, until it was out of sight on the horizon.

A few days later, Yitzchak Yechiel Davidowitz, one of the prized students of Mirrer Yeshivah, went out to walk in

the fields in the evening. He was trying to work through a complex *sugya* and hoped that the expanses and the fresh air would give him the right insights that would lead him to understanding of the *sugya*.

He was walking slowly, his lips murmuring his Torah thoughts, and suddenly, his eye caught a white envelope in the bushes on the side of the path.

He wondered if perhaps he was being sent an opportunity from Above to do the mitzvah of *hashavas aveidah*. He bent down to pick up the envelope. He glanced at the address and was surprised to see that the addressee was none other than Father in heaven.

The *bochur* wondered if he was allowed to open the envelope. His scholarly mind raised various opinions in favor of and against, and he ultimately decided to open it. With bated breath he read the contents of the letter; his heart ached with the pain of the young women and tears flowed from his eyes as he read.

The *bochur* read the letter over and over. The words spoke for themselves, and he realized that it was not coincidental that of all the residents of Mir, Jews and gentiles alike, from Above it was ordained that he be the one to pick up this letter. He decided to consult his rebbi about it.

With a trembling hand, he handed the letter over to the venerable Rosh Yeshivah. The Rav was familiar with the kindhearted girl and her distinguished family, and also shared the *bochur’s* sentiments that this was his destined mate. Although she was six years older than him, that ‘minor’ detail was not enough to put a damper on the clear message sent from Above – literally – and thus, a short time later, the two married.

Tears of joy flooded the *kallah’s* eyes as she stood under the *chuppah*. Her letter had reached the right destination, and she was meriting to establish a home with a *bochur* who was a *ben Torah*, as she had aspired.

As she’d hoped, it didn’t take too long for Rav Yitzchak Yechiel, her husband, to make great strides in his Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, and he was appointed the *menahel ruchani* in the yeshivah in Minsk. He had many eminent *talmidim* – among them Harav Yaakov Kaminitzky, *zt”l*, who later related this wondrous story to his close confidants.

Saying *Birchos Hashachar* Together

In order to meet the quota of answering ninety amens that Chazal set, it was customary to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in shul, together, where one makes the *brachah* aloud and his friends answer amen. Then one of the people who answered amen would stand up and make his *brachos*, and the others answered amen, until each one in the group had said the *brachos*.

Explanations and Sources:

This practice is brought down in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 6 4), and the *Shaarei Teshuvah* (ibid 6) wrote that it was renowned in the times of the Bais Yosef. And see *Shu"t Mabi"t* (180) that this practice was established by Rav Yisrael De Curiel, one of the sages of Tzefas in the times of the Bais Yosef. The basis for this practice is explained by the *Magen Avraham*:

"It seems to me that they do this in order to answer ninety amens," and the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid 9) and the *Mishnah Berurah* quote him (ibid 13). The need to complete the quota of ninety amens by hearing *Birchos Hashachar* teaches us that in their view, the quota of ninety amens set by Chazal refer to amens answered to *brachos*. One must answer ninety amens to *brachos* aside for the amens answered to *Kaddish*. Indeed, in response to a person who asked him how one can meet the quota of ninety amens to *brachos* a day, the *Rema MiPano* wrote (*Shu"t*, 119): as follows: "And how good it is to institute that the *shaliach tzibbur* should recite *Birchos Hashachar* aloud, and the ones who answer should have in mind not to be *yotzei* the *brachah*. And not only that, but friends who sleep in one room, or *talmidei chachamim* who sleep in the *beis medrash* (see *Brachos* 25b, and *Rashi* ibid ad loc. *Tzipi*) should rise early to recite the *brachos* for himself and his friends should answer amen. Then they should together to the Bais Elokeinu. And this also applies to someone who makes the *brachos* for himself, and then his wife and children make the *brachos* after him; and there are no friends who are more beloved than this. And it is the *din* for those making the *brachos* in shul, one after another, to be *mezakeh* the *rabbim* to answer amen in a group." The *Magen Avraham* (ibid) cites this *teshuvah*.

The *Rema"z*, the commentary on the *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 1), derives from the words of the *passuk* (*Yeshaya* 26:2): "*Shomer emunim*," that among all the holy words that Chazal instituted to say each day, one has to await only to answer amen [see *Rashi Berieishis* 37:11, that the word "*shomer*" in this *passuk* is interpreted as a term meaning waiting]. Because in order to meet the other quotas that Chazal gave for words that are holy: the 100 *brachos*, the four *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish*, there is no need for an exceptional effort. Anyone who davens three times a day with *minyan* accumulates the necessary quota. And the *Rema"z* concludes that as a result, he follows the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in a group each day. He then adds that this custom is a "*minhag vasikin* in Eretz Yisrael." It then spread to the Diaspora, as the Chida wrote (*Birchei Yosef Orach Chaim* 5677 2): "And as is known, the practice spread to the cities and larger towns."

In *Hagahos Bnei Abba* on *sefer Pesora D'Abba*, by Harav Chaim Vital (*Inyan Birchos Hashachar* 6), he added that even if we think that answering amen after *Kaddish* is included in the quota of ninety amens, we still should adhere to this *minhag*, because the quota of 90 amens should be completed before the *Shemoneh Esreh* of *Shacharis*, and there is no way

to do this unless one keeps to this practice.

Rav Chaim Vital testifies that his *rebbe*, the Arizal, would answer amen after people who recited *Birchos Hashachar* in the *beis knesses*, and he writes: "And when he was in the *beis knesses*, and there was a person reciting *Birchos Hashachar*, he would sit and listen and answer amen. Even if he was in the middle of davening, he would stop and answer amen, and even if there were many people making the *brachos*" (*Pri Eitz Chaim, Shaar Habrachos* Chapter 4, and see ibid that it appears from his words that those who made the *brachos* in the *Beis Medrash* of the Arizal would recite *Birchas HaTorah* in front of him as well). The Mekbual Rabi Meir Papirash also cited the practice of the Arizal to answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* of many people, but he detailed that "even if there were 100 [*mevarchim*], he would answer amen after them" (*Ohr Tzaddikim*, 6 2, and he also copied this in *Shaarei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim* 6 5). As a result, Harav Papirash rules: "One who hears *Birchos Hashachar* must answer amen, even if he heard them one hundred times" (*Ohr Hayashar, Amud Ha'avodah* 7 11).

But the *Shu"t Maharshd"am* (*Orach Chaim* 1) and *Shu"t Hamabi"t* (180) questioned this practice, and wrote that if a group gathers to make the *brachos* together, it is preferred that one should make the *brachos* and be *motzi* the other ones. In their view, anyone who hears a *brachah* from another person and then recites that *brachah*, even though he might be *yotzei* his obligation by hearing it, then this is a "*brachah she'einah tzrichah*." And see *Shaarei Teshuvah* (ibid 6) who shares this view, and notes that *lechatchila* the *mevarchim* should not gather one beside the other, and each one should make the *brachah* in his place.

But aside for the fact that the *Shulchan Aruch* did not rule this way, the *Mishnah Berurah* cites the *Shu"t Teshuvah Me'avahah* (Vol. II, 212) that today, when we are not customarily *yotzei* *Birchos Hashachar* by hearing them from a *shaliach tzibbur*, everyone agrees that one should not be concerned about the "*brachah she'einah tzerichah*," when performing this *minhag*.

The *Pri Migadim* (6, *Eshel Avraham* 9) wrote that it is fitting that only the *shat"z* should say *Birchos Hashachar* aloud in a way that the whole *tzibbur* can hear and answer amen. But see *Shu"t Divrei Yisrael* (*Orach Chaim* 20) that one who peruses his words will see that he does not mean to criticize those who wish to practice the ancient *minhag*, but rather that youths who are unaware should not stand and make the *brachos* aloud and disrupt the *tefillah*. In any case, the *Mishnah Berurah* wrote (ibid 13) that where there is a practice that each one in the *tzibbur* says the *brachos* aloud, they have who to rely on.

It is also very well known that many *gedolei Yisrael* adhered to this practice. The Shevet Halevi, in words he delivered to a Bney Emunim gathering in Elul 5770, addressed this custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and said: "There is an ancient *minhag Yisrael*, that they would say all the *Birchos Hashachar betzibbur*, as well as the *seder brachos* before "*Hanosein Lasechvi Binah*." And the whole *tzibbur* would say the *brachos* together; one made the *brachos* and his friends answered amen. Then they would switch. The second one made the *brachos* and the first one answered. This practice was forgotten in recent generations and our *chashuve* friend, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, merited to grasp onto this *eitz hachaim* of *zikui harabbim* in his efforts to strengthen the answering of amen, and in his desire to revive and reestablish this ancient *minhag*, and it is like "those that were forgotten and then once again instituted" (*Shabbos* 104a)."

The Ayeles Hashachar also instilled this practice in the *minyan* that took place in his house (*Notrei Amen* Vol. II, p. 26).

This story was related by Rebbetzin Kanievsky, a"h, about three weeks before her passing, in a special speech that she gave to hundreds of teachers at a chizuk gathering held by Bney Emunim in Elul 5771. (It is also brought in the Haggadah Shel Pesach Chashukei Chemed, p. 367)

The story took place in the home of an American family, where tragically, the mother of the family passed away at an early age and left young orphans.

After the *shivah*, her children gathered, and sought to take upon themselves something as a merit for their mother's *neshamah*. Each child announced a *kabbalah* that they took upon themselves. When it came the turn of one of the younger girls, they were all surprised to hear her very special, not simple *kabbalah*: Not to make any *brachah* without having someone answer amen after her!

It is doubtful if the girl knew how anchored this *kabbalah* is in the words of the *poskim* (see *Rema, Orach Chaim 167 2*). It is doubtful if she heard about the Gedolei Yisrael who were strict about it. But there is no doubt that she was given special fortitude from Shamayim. Her family was sure she would not be able to keep to her *kabbalah*, but they were surprised to see her adhering to it with full seriousness, and for a few months, she was able to keep to it.

One night, the girl faced a very difficult test: She woke up in the middle of the night, feeling a burning thirst in her throat. She needed to take a drink of water, but had to refrain from doing so because she didn't have anyone to answer amen to her *brachah*. Everyone in the house was sleeping, and it didn't enter her mind to wake them up.

Her thirst grew stronger, and really bothered her, but with tremendous fortitude that was exceptional for a child her age, she waited. In her heart, she already thought of just giving up... just this time...but she withstood the test with great strength,

and she returned to bed, her throat dry with thirst.

After a few minutes, she fell asleep, and had a dream...In her dream, she saw her mother, a"h, with a glowing face: "My daughter," she told her, "you should know how much your fortitude accomplished in Shamayim! I received permission to reveal to you that this *zechus* was very beneficial for Klal Yisrael, and also was able to effect a *yeshuah*, in defiance of nature, for your sick friend..."

'My sick friend?' the girl wondered in her dream. She didn't know what this was about. And the mother revealed to her daughter that a girl in her class, her best friend, had been sick for a while already with the dreaded disease, and she hadn't told a soul. "Tell your friend's parents," the mother requested, "that in the merit of your strength to keep to your *kabbalah*, their daughter has been cured of her illness and they do not need to worry about her condition..."

The dream then ended, and the child woke up, completely overcome and alarmed. She had no doubt that this was real, and she could hardly hold herself back until morning to call her friend's parents to tell them about the dream, as her mother had requested.

At seven in the morning, the friend's parents were surprised to hear the phone ring. They were even more surprised to hear the story of the orphaned girl, a story in which they recognized the truth. Even though until then they had tried to conceal their daughter's illness, they now had to admit, and tell the friend, that for several weeks their daughter had been in and out of hospital due to the serious illness she had been diagnosed with.

The doctors were not optimistic, and some even predicted that their daughter's end was near. This wondrous dream infused the anguished parents with new hope. And indeed, miraculously, not long after, their child was given a clean bill of health, and returned to school as before.

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The matzeivah of the first Kossoner Rebbe the Bnei Shileishim

The Bnei Shileishim of Kosson

23 Cheshvan 5672

Harav Yehosef Rottenberg was born in 5613 to his father, Rav Tzvi of Tlust, who was the grandson of Harav Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichoiv. Already as a youth, he became known as an *illuy*. When he was thirteen, he was taken as a *chassan* for the daughter of

Harav Meshulem Feish of Tosh. After his father-in-law's passing in 5633, he took over as the Rav of Tosh, and later served as Rav of Debrecen.

He was close to his uncle, Harav Yitzchak Eizik of Zidichoiv, as well as to the Divrei Chaim of Sanz and the Yitav Lev of Sighet. In 5657, he was appointed Rav of Kosson, where he also began to serve as Rebbe and established the dynasty of Kosson. He wrote many *chiddushim*, most of which were lost in the Holocaust; all that remained was the *sefer Bnei Shileishim*.

He passed away on 23 Cheshvan 5672 and was laid to rest in the cemetery in Kosson.

The Gates of Gan Eden

Chazal (*Shabbos 119b*) promise exceptional reward for one who is careful to answer amen properly. "Anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him," as it says (*Yeshayah 26:2*): '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.*' Do not read it '*shomer emunim,*' but rather '*she'omrim amen.*'"

The *passuk* says "*Pischu she'arim*" - how do Chazal learn that this refers to the gates of Gan Eden? The Bnei Shileishim explained that they learned this from the fact that the words "אמן בכל כח" are numerically equivalent to גן עדן (*Likutei Bnei Shileishim p. 174*).

Life in Olam Haba

Rabi Meir answers the question from which age does a Jewish child who passes away merit life in *Olam Haba*, (*Sanhedrin 110b*): "From the time he says amen." An allusion to this is explained by the Rebbe of Kosson from the words of Yosef to his brothers (*Bereishis 42:2*): "*V'es achichem hatakan tavi'u eilai veyei'amnu divreichem.*" In what merit will "your little brother" merit to come "to Me" in *Olam Haba*? In the merit of "ויאמנו דבריכם" - that he is taught to answer amen (*Likutei Bnei Shileishim Mikeitz*).