

# VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"



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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

### 'Elokei Yaakov' and Not 'Elokei Yisrael'

“ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה” (יב) (ב)

There is a well-known question: Why do we say at the beginning of *Shemoneh Esreh* “*Elokei Yaakov*” and not “*Elokei Yisrael*”? Doesn't the *passuk* say (*Bereishis* 35:10): “Your name will no longer be Yaakov, but rather Yisrael”?

**Harav Shimshon of Ostropolye** explained:

The names of the three Avos together are comprised of 13 letters, which is numerically equivalent to אהח. Likewise, the names of the four Imahos, because they were the ones who publicized the *Yichud Hashem* in the world. In addition, the number of letters in the names of the Avos and Imahos together is 26, which is numerically equivalent to the *Shem Hava-yah*. Therefore, in order not to add to the number of letters, we use the name Yaakov and not Yisrael – because then there would be an additional letter to the total letters of the Avos' names.

Based on this, Rav Shimshon explained the words of *Chazal* (*Pesachim* 117b, cited in *Rashi* here) on the words “*Ve'agadlah Shemecha*” – “[This is the reason] that we say, *Elokei Yaakov*.” If HaKadosh Baruch Hu would not have expanded the name of Avram to Avraham, then there would have been one letter missing from the thirteen letters in the Avos' names. In order to fill that letter in, we should have said “*Elokei Yisrael*.” But because Hashem expanded the name of Avraham – “the reason we say *Elokei Yaakov*” – is not to add to that number.

This is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Yeshaya* 40:27): “*Lamah somar Yaakov usedaber Yisrael nistarach darki mei'Hashem*” – as if the Navi is asking: “Why should you say “*Elokei Yaakov*” and not “*Elokei Yisrael*?” And answers: Because if we would say “*Elokei Yisrael*” the number of letters in the names of the Avos would be greater than the numerical equivalent of the *Shem Hava-yah* – 26- and then it would be “*nistarach darki mei'Hashem*.”

*Nitzotzei Shimshon*

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### One Hundred Brachos With Gratitude

The holy *Zohar* in this *parashah* (77 1) writes that the words “לך לך” are numerically equivalent to 100. He explains that the first *passuk* in this *parashah* reveals that before the *neshamah* descends to the world, HaKadosh Baruch Hu stipulates that it will recite one hundred *brachos* each day.

Indeed, throughout the day, we are surrounded with *brachos*; *Birchos Hashachar*, the *brachos* of *tefillah*, *birchos hanehenin* and *birchos hamitzvos*. We merit to thank the Melech Ha'olam one hundred times each day – if not more.

The main principle of the *brachos* is gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for the goodness and abundance that He grants us from His generous Hand each and every minute, in both *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*. For this reason, it is important that we do not say the *brachos* out of rote and habit, but rather, we should pause, and think about what we are about to thank for, and only then, should we made the *brachah*.

The gratitude to Hashem is the essence of the Jew, and it is the meaning of the name “Yehudi.” If we are careful to recite the 100 *brachos* properly, with the right *kavanah* and concentration, then we will be declaring more and more, with pride and confidence that, “Yes, indeed, we are Yehudim!”

This *kavanah* is especially important when saying *Birchos Hashachar*, the *brachos* that center around our gratitude for the proper function of all the systems in our body. These *brachos*, which were originally instituted as separate *brachos*, each one to be said when that particular benefit was experienced, are said in one entity in our times, sort of as one long *tefillah*... This might easily cause us to miss out on that deep sense of gratitude that we would feel if we would be saying each *brachah* at the apt time for it.

I thought of a wonderful piece of advice that could be helpful for this: There are *siddurim* where, before *Birchos HaTorah*, there is a *tefillah*: “*Hineni muchan umezuman...I am ready to fulfill the mitzvas asech of making a brachah on the Torah...*” Although the *Birchos HaTorah* are a *mitzvah* from the Torah, why should we not do the same thing before reciting every *brachah*? For example, before reciting “*Hanosein Lasechvi Binah*” we can say, “*Hineni muchan umezuman...to fulfill the mitzvah of Chazal to thank Hashem for our knowledge,*” and before “*Shelo Asani Goy,*” we'll have in mind to thank for the Torah and *mitzvos* that only we, as Jews, merited to receive, and so forth.

There seems to be an allusion for the aforementioned requirement in the *passuk* with which we began: In order to recite לך לך *brachos* in a fitting way, you have to disconnect and elevate yourself “*mei'artzecha*” – from your earthly nature that brings you to recite the *brachos* out of rote, and without the proper *kavanah*.

In conclusion, let's not forget that within the obligation to recite one hundred *brachos* is also the obligation to recite them aloud, so that someone can answer amen to them. And as we know, amen is part of the *brachah*, and a *brachah* that is said when others can hear is said with *kavanah* and a sense of elevation.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein



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



The Shevet Halevi was known to all as a tremendous *gaon* in Torah and a *posek halachah*. But what not many know is his engagement in *Toras Hanistar*, and in the world of *Kabbalah*. Only very seldom did the Rav let on a tiny bit of his greatness in this area of Torah.

In his holy state, the Rav also merited visions from Above; often, early sages appeared to him in dreams and shared with him secrets from On High. The Rav merited tremendous levels in Torah and *avodas Hashem* because of his dreams, and due to his deep appreciation for this, he wrote a special compilation in which he shared a few of the revelations he had in dreams. This compilation was not widely distributed, but a few of his close *talmidim* merited to peruse it, and to marvel at their Rav's unbelievable greatness.

This story took place more than a decade ago, towards the end of the life of the Shevet Halevi, and it was one of the few times when the Rav shared a tiny bit of the secret world that he was part of:

The story is about one of his close confidants, a *chashuve* individual,



The tziyun of Rav Leib Baal Yissurim in the ancient cemetery in Tzefas. His yarhtzeit is this Monday, 15 Cheshvan.

whose daughter was getting older and *shidduchim* were very difficult. As a *zechus* for a *yeshuah* for her, this person took upon himself to travel to Tzefas and recite the entire *sefer Tehillim* at the *tziyun* of the *tzaddik* Rav Leib Baal Hayissurim. Rav Leib was one of the eminent disciples of the Baal Hatanya, and his final resting place in the ancient cemetery in Tzefas is known as a place where *tefillas* are accepted.

It was a stormy winter day, but man decided that this was the day he had

allocated for his trip, so he did not postpone it. He set out from Bnei Brak early so that he could have time to say the entire *sefer Tehillim*.

The bus from Bnei Brak to Tzefas had covered almost the entire distance, but as they neared their destination, it began to slow down. Our traveler looked out the window and realized why: snow mixed with rain had begun to fall, and the weather was becoming stormier as they headed further north. The news said that significant snowfall had already begun in Tzefas, and there was serious concern that those who came to the city might get stuck there for a while.

When the bus reached the outskirts of the city, some of the passengers decided to return to Bnei Brak, but this man was determined to fulfill his kabbalah and come to the *tziyun* no matter what.

He continued traveling, and when he finally reached the top of the cemetery in Tzefas, the whole area was covered in snow. For a moment, he worried he would not be able to find the site because of the snow, but he calmed down as soon as he saw a figure,

bundled up against the cold, standing near the *tziyun*.

The *avreich* carefully walked towards the *tziyun* and realized that the other person was also saying *Tehillim* at the *tziyun*. He took out his own *Tehillim*, and after tightening his scarf, he began to recite

the words. The other person stood at his side davening until he finished the entire *sefer*.

After making the effort to finish the *sefer* despite the weather, the man headed back to the bus stop so he could return home. But again, a problem arose: how would he find his way through the white, snowy conditions? He looked around; the place was deserted; everyone was huddled in their heated homes. He almost began to worry but then he was happy to see that same Yid who had been standing next

to him earlier suddenly appearing at his side. He volunteered to accompany him to the bus stop.

When they reached the bus stop, the *avreich* wanted to thank his escort, but surprisingly, the man had disappeared as fast as he had appeared. He seemed to have been swallowed up by the snowy expanse.

*Baruch Hashem*, the snow did not accumulate, and the bus service was soon restored; the visitor returned home. When he arrived, he told his wife what had happened over the day, and mused that perhaps his companion had been none other than Eliyahu Hanavi. In response, she shook her head and wondered that perhaps the cold had gotten to her husband's head and he was suffering hallucinations...

But her husband did not calm down; he was a serious person, and something in his heart made him believe that he was not off the mark. At first opportunity, he shared the story with his Rebbi, the Shevet Halevi, who smiled in response and reassured him that it was a shame for him to get caught up in his imagination, and surely it was a regular person who was just very quick...

The story could have been forgotten if not for the fact that the next morning, there was a knock at this *avreich's* door. There was a messenger from Rav Vosner: "The Rebbi wants you to come to him," the man said, and turned to leave. Excited and surprised, the *avreich* followed the messenger. When he reached the Rav's home, Rav Vosner welcomed him with a big smile and apologized: "I'm sorry that I doubted what you said yesterday. Although it was not Eliyahu Hanavi, it also was not a person who is among the living. It was Rav Leib Baal Yissurim himself. And if you ask how I know this, I'll tell you that he came to me in a dream last night and said to me, 'I'm Rav Leib Baal Yissurim; I was with the *avreich* the entire time he said *Tehillim* at my gravesite. I did not want to leave him alone on a snowy day, so I accompanied him until his bus. Please tell him that his *tefillah* has been accepted, and his daughter will find her *zivug* this month...'"

Needless to say, that is exactly what happened, when a month later, his daughter became engaged to a wonderful ben Torah.

Likras Shabbos Malkesa,  
Parashas Ki Seitzei



### Ninety Amens to *Brachos*

A person needs to answer at least ninety amens to *brachos* a day, aside for the amens answered to *Kaddish*. *Chazal* bring an allusion to this quota together with the quotas for other holy things in the *passuk* (*Yeshaya* 26:2): “*Pischu she’arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,” – ק”צדי is an acronym for 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. But some differ and hold that the amens that one answers to *Kaddish* are included in this quota.

❧ Explanations and Sources: ❧

The *Tikkunei Zohar* (*Tikuna Tashesrei* 40 2) brings that the quota of saying the holy things is alluded to in the word קצדי which is an acronym for 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 100 *brachos* and 5 *Chumshei Torah*. But *Sefer Chareidim* (Chapter 66, 177) and *Shu”t HaRema MiPano* (109) bring a version of the *Tikkunei Zohar* that the quotas of holy things are alluded to with the word קצדי – and instead of the 5 *Chumshei Torah*, they counted the 10 *Kaddishim* that are said. Based on this version, the *Rema MiPano* wrote (*ibid*) that the number of 90 amens should include specifically amens answered to *brachos*, because in this version, there are 90 amens listed as one thing, and 10 *Kaddish* as another, each in their own right.

But the *Yalkut Me’am Loez* (*Bereishis* 18:30, 175) wrote that the amens that one answers to *Kaddish* are also included in this number. And his words are based on the fact that he cited, like the *Tikkunei Zohar*, that

the quota of holy things is alluded to in the word קצדי. From the fact that the *Kaddish* is not a separate entity in this listing, it emerges that one can include the amens that are answered to *Kaddish* in the quota of ninety amens. *Sefer Shulchan Tahor*, by the author of *Heichal Habrachah* (215 4) concurred. The *Peirush Rashi Ubais Midrasho* on the *piyutim* for the 4 *Parshiyos* (published from manuscripts, New York 5774) explained why the amens for *Kaddish* are included in the quota of ninety (*Yotzer LeParashas Zachor*, p. 89): “Some explain “*goy tzaddik*” to mean the קצדי amens that one answers a day between *Shemoneh Esreh*, and the *Kaddish* that is answered each day at *Shacharis* and *Minchah*. And see there that in his view, the letter *yud* from קצדי is not alluding to 10 *Kaddish*, but rather to the ten people that are needed to complete a *minyana*.

But the *Rema MiPano* (*ibid*) notes that this version makes it seem that one needs to learn the 5 *Chumshei Torah* each day, unlike the other quotas, and he asks, if learning the 5 *Chumshei Torah* is equal for each person, like the other holy things that are listed in these quotas. How is possible that there is a requirement for each person to meet this quota each day? Hence he concluded that the version that the quotas are alluded to in קצדי is the main one. But see *Nitzotzei Zohar* (*Tikkunei Zohar* end of Introduction, 16 2) who explained that the *Zohar*’s intention when listing the five *Chumshei Torah* is to hear the Torah on the days that *Chazal* instituted that it be read, and not to obligate a person to learn all five *Chumshei Torah* each day. [Indeed, his words need further perusal, as it emerges from them that the 5 *Chumshei Torah* are not a daily quota like the others, because we do not read the Torah each day.]

## Otzros Emunim

Amen With Kavanah

### Proof From the *Mishnah* of the Extent We Need to Be Careful

The *Mishnah* in *Maseches Brachos* (34a) says that a *shaliach tzibbur* should not answer amen after *Birchas Kohanim* for fear that he might get confused later when he continues to read the *brachah* to the Kohanim.

Rav Eliezer Bentzion Brook, Rosh Yeshivas Novhardok, explained that from the fact that *Chazal* were worried about this confusion because of answering amen, even though it is a short word that everyone is familiar with, one should learn how important is the obligation to concentrate and answer amen with *kavanah*. He added that this is what *Rashi* meant when explaining (*ibid* ad loc. *Mipnei*): “And when he answers amen he will not be able to have *kavanah* quickly and then start the *brachah* that follows.” In other words, the concern is perhaps if he answers amen to the *chazzan* he will not have time to have *kavanah*, and at the same time to continue reading out the *brachah* (From a letter publicized with his signature in *Kuntress Shomer Amenim* p. 59).

### A ‘Widowed’ Amen

In *Maseches Brachos* (47a) *Chazal* warned not to answer amen without knowing which *brachah* it is for, and they called an amen that is thus answered an ‘orphaned’ amen because it is detached from the *brachah* like an orphan that doesn’t have parents.

**Harav Eliezer Horowitz of Tarnigrad** added that based on this, one should call an amen that is said without *kavanah* a ‘widowed amen.’ That is why answering amen needs to be done by both the body and soul together, meaning with utterance of the mouth and the *kavanah* of the heart, which belongs to the *neshamah*. As it says (*Tehillim* 150:6): “*Kol haneshamah tehallel K-ah*.” So we find that amen that is answered as lip service, disconnected from the *neshamah*, is like a widow that doesn’t have a husband. The *passuk* warns about these two amens (*Shemos* 22:21): “*Kol almanah veyasom lo se’anun*” – do not answer an *amen yesomah* and an *amen almanah* (*Noam Megadim Parashas Mishpatim*).

## Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

*This is an authentic story that is based on a letter sent to Bney Emunim by the person it happened to, which can give chizuk and increase our awareness to the power of answering amen to bring about yeshuos from every single tzarah, and to redeem those who observe it from disease and harm.*

Fear pervaded the R. family's home. Little Sruly, just two and a half months old, began to cry and choke, and the horrific reason became evident almost immediately. A short time earlier, as usual, his mother had prepared him a bottle of formula. She had poured 180 ml of warm water into the bottle from the electric kettle standing on the counter, added three scoops of formula, shook it and fed the baby in her arms, who sucked at it hungrily.

The mother didn't know that a few minutes earlier, someone in the house had decided to clean the electric kettle from limestone buildup. He had emptied the water in the kettle, and instead, poured into it a cup with an acidic substance that is used to remove limestone and left it to soak.

## An Angel in Every Home

Of course, this is a dangerous substance, and the poor baby drank a whole bottle of it. Only after he began to choke and gag, did his mother realize the mistake and, nearly paralyzed with fear, she sped with him to the hospital in the hope that they could save him.

As the older daughter, who accompanied her mother and witnessed this story, wrote:

“We flew to the hospital, our lips murmuring *kabbalos* and *tefillos*. On the way, we suddenly saw a Bney Emunim bus, with huge ads about the virtue of amen. We saw this as a sign from Above, and my mother and I took upon ourselves to strengthen our observance of answering amen, especially after *Birchos Hashachar*. When we came to the hospital, the doctor worriedly examined by brother, but soon, a smile crossed his face. The tests showed that *baruch Hashem*, the substance had already begun to pass from the body and had not caused any harm. We returned home shortly after, filled with gratitude to the *Elokei amen*... Thank you Bney Emunim.”

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav Avraham Erlander, zt"l,

### Harav Dov Yaffe 19 Cheshvan 5778

Harav Dov Yaffe was born in 5688 in Vilna, to his father, Rav Tzvi Yechezkel. In 5695, he came with his family to Eretz Yisrael, and they settled in Tel Aviv. He learned in Yeshivas Hayishuv Hachadash in Tel Aviv, and became close to Rav Yoel Klufit. From there, he continued to a yeshiva that his *rebbe* had established in Pardes Chana, and then to Chevron in Yerushalayim and Ponovezh and Slabodka in Bnei Brak.

When he became of age, Harav Aharon Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron, took him as a *chassan* for his orphaned niece who he had raised in his home. After his marriage, he lived in Geulah, near the yeshiva. In 5715, he was appointed *mashgiach* in Yeshiva Knesses Chizkiyahu in Kfar Chassidim, under his *rebbe* the *mashgiach* Harav Eliyahu Lopian. He kept this position until the end of his life. He became a role model and revered figure for his many *talmidim*. His *mussar shmuessen* were published in the series of *seforim* entitled *L'Ovdecha B'emess*.

He passed away after an illness on 19 Cheshvan 5778 and was buried in the cemetery in Rechasim.

This is a *ma'amar* sent from the home of the *mashgiach* to Bney Emunim in Elul 5775:

### Answering Amen – A Reminder to Live with the Creator

*Sefer Chovos Halevavos* says (*Shaar Habechinah* Ch. 5) that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world in a way that the thing most needed for human life is also the easiest thing to obtain – namely oxygen and water. Because they are the fundamental of the existence of the person, it's the easiest to find them. The Alter of Kelm learned that HaKadosh Baruch Hu also did this on spiritual matters – the thing we need most in our spiritual life is *emunah*, and it is also the most readily and easily found and attained. Because even though Hashem now runs the world with *hester panim*, there is still the order of creation that indicates that there is a Creator to the world, and as the *passuk* says (*Yeshayah* 40:26): “*Se'u marom eineichem* – raise your eyes and see Who created this.”

Harav Shlomo Brevda, zt"l, would often mention the words of Chazal (*Makkos* 23a): “Chavakuk came and resolved it with one thing: ‘*vetzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*.’” And the term *יחיה* teaches us that it's not enough to believe, but we must live with *emunah*, know what is the center of our lives – and to live with the Creator!

Indeed, we find that Rabbeinu Yona in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (*Shaar* 3 27) learned from the *passuk*: “*Hishamer lecha pen tishkach es Hashem Elokech*” – this is a warning and *lav*, that we should not forget Hashem Yisbarach in all our deeds. And that is because

*emunah* obligates us to act according to it, as it says there: “And a person must try to acquire for his soul practices that are obligated by *zechira*, like *yirah* and *tznius* and *kishut hamachshavos* and *tachsis hamiddos*, because the holy descendants will attain every pleasant practice that glorifies those who do it from remembering Hashem Yisbarach.”

This is the reason Chazal instituted the wording of the *brachos* “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” in second person, because we really do see Hashem through all the arrangements He has made that prove Who made them.

Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 110b) bring a number of opinions about when a child merits *Olam Haba*, and one of them is: “Rabi Meir says, from the time he says amen.” And they state further: “What is amen? Rabi Chanina said, ‘*Kel Melech Ne'eman*,’” meaning that the acronym of amen is *קל מלך נאמן*. I often bring the view of Harav Chaim of Volozhin (*Kesser Rosh* 55) that answering amen has the meaning of “*halevai*.” However, the *Maharsha* (Vol. I) there wrote lofty words of explanation that the word amen means the fulfillment of something and its truth, as it says in *Nazir* (66b): “The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.” And for this reason, a child merits to have the Gates of Gan Eden opened because of it, because when he says this word, it indicates the truthness of the Creator, then he merits the world to come.

Based on this, the *Maharsha* explains the intention of the *Gemara*, which asks how the word amen contains the fulfillment and confirmation of the Creator in this world and the World to Come, and answered that is the acronym of *אל* – in this world, *מלך* – to judge all the denizens of the world who come to *Olam Haba*, and *נאמן* – to mete out reward and punishment to each person based on his actions.

So we have an opportunity, every time we answer amen, to remember Hashem, to live with our job in the world, and that is to live with the Creator. And the plea of Rabi Yehuda Halevi is so apt: “*Elokai, where can I find You – Your place is so high and concealed, and where will I not find You – Kevodecha malei olam*.”

Prepared by his talmid, Harav Yedidya Yosef Schwartz,  
And reviewed by the *Mashgiach*, zt"l  
Caption: Harav Dov Yaffe delivering an address  
at a Bney Emunim gathering.