

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Tefillah of a Tzaddik Transforms a צרה to a צהר

“צהר תעשה לתבה ואל אמה תכלנה מלמעלה ופתח התבה בצדה תשים תחתים שנים ושלישים תעשה” (ו טז)

Harav Gershon Stern, the Rav of Marosh-Ludash, brought from this *passuk* a beautiful allusion in the name of “*tzaddik ehad*” to the words of Chazal (*Sukkah* 14a) that the *tefillah* of *tzaddikim* transforms the *middas hadin* to the *middas harachamim*:

אמה is an acronym for מדת הדין – אלקים – and that is what Hashem said to Noach: “ואל אמה” – “תכלנה מלמעלה” – with the power of *tefillah* you can wipe out the *middas hadin* that prosecutes On High, and through that “צהר” – “תעשה לתבה” – you can transform the word צרה, a trouble, to צהר a window. How? The “*pesach* of the *teivah*” – the letter צ that begins the word (*teivah*) צרה “*batzidah tasim*, put it aside” – leave it in its place on the side of the *teivah* while the תחתים – the letters beneath it, שנים ושלישים תעשה – switch between the second letter [ר] and the third [ה] and thus your *tzarah* will become a *tzohar*.

Yalkut Hagershuni

The Segulah of Forty Days

“ויהי מקץ ארבעים יום ויפתח נח את הלון התבה אשר עשה” (ח ח)

The *Bais Aharon* brings in the name of the *Zohar Chadash*: “Anyone who asks for something for forty days will surely be answered.” He explains that this concept is alluded to in this *passuk*, that after forty days of prayer, the window of the *teivah* opened and Hashem accepted the *tefillos*.

It should be noted that we did not find this statement in the *Zohar Chadash*, but the *Chachmei haMidrash (Devarim Rabbah* 2:17) state that “there is a *tefillah* that is answered for forty days,” and this is learned from Moshe, that after the *Cheit Ha'eigel*, he davened for Am Yisrael for forty days and forty nights (*Devarim* 9:18) and HaKadosh Baruch Hu was appeased.

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Who Is a Tzaddik? One Who Says Amen!

The only time in all of *Tanach* when the Torah describes a person as a “*tzaddik*” is in this *parashah*. At the beginning of the *parashah*, the Torah says that Noach was an “*ish tzaddik*,” and later, HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Noach: “*Ki os'cha ra'isi tzaddik lefanai bador hazeh*, for I have seen that you are righteous before Me, in this generation.”

What is the meaning of the description “*tzaddik*”? If you ask a random person, he will surely describe a person who has abundant *yiras Shamayim*, and is strict to perform all the *mitzvos* of Torah carefully.

But Rabbeinu Bechayei, in his *sefer Kad Hakemach (Emunah)* teaches us that a person merits the title of *tzaddik* specifically for answering amen. He proves his words with the *passuk* in which the Navi Yeshayah says (26:2): “*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,” and the Chazal explain (*Shabbos* 119b): “Do not call it *shomer emunim*, but rather *she'omrim amen*.” Chazal explain that it is as if the *passuk* is saying: “*Goy tzaddik she'omrim amen*,” and so we have a *passuk* that clearly calls the one who is strict to answer amen a “*tzaddik*.” The *passuk (Chavakuk* 2:4) “*Vetzaddik be'emunaso yichyehh*” alludes to this – that in the merit of “*emunaso*” – answering amen, a person merits to be called a *tzaddik* and to live a long life.

This is underscored by the fact that already in the first *passuk* in this *parashah*, it is alluded that Noach was strict to answer amen, as the acronym of the words איש צדיק is numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as amen. Another *remez* is that this *passuk* ends with the words “*es ha'Elokim his'halech Noach*” – האלקים is numerically equivalent to amen, to teach us that Noach did not only answer amen, but he also went through his days waiting with anticipation for an opportunity to answer amen. I thought to explain that this is also the oath that every Jew is sworn to before arriving in this world (*Niddah* 30b): “*Tehi tzaddik*, be a *tzaddik* and do not be a *rasha*,” meaning, be strict to answer amen and by doing so, “you will be a *tzaddik* and not a *rasha*.”

The *Yemei Hadin* have just passed, during which we all prayed to be inscribed in the book of *tzaddikim gemurim*. We hope that our *tefillos* were heard on High, and indeed, let us take upon ourselves, one man with one heart, to be a “*tzaddik she'omer amen*.” Let's begin our day with answering amen after *Birchos Hashachar*, and by doing so, we should merit to see the fulfillment of the *passuk* “*Ki os'cha ra'isi tzaddik lefanai bador hazeh*.”

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein



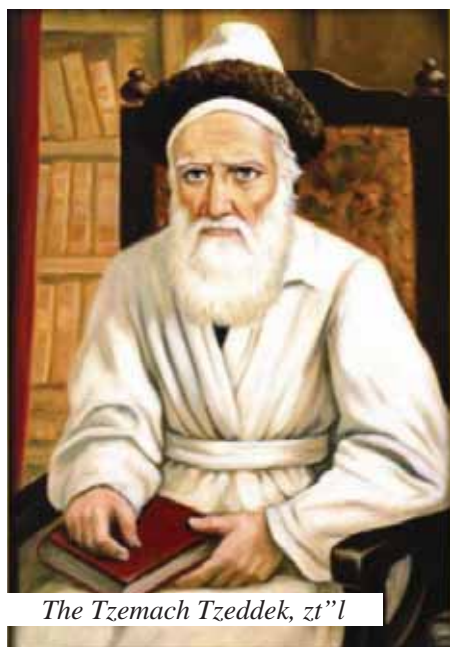
In memory of my esteemed mother, Devorah bas Reb Dov Marmurstein



Zalman was a kosher Jew, but definitely a very simple person. He was raised in a simple home and did not merit to learn any Torah, but his faith in the Creator was very strong.

As it happened, Zalman built his home in a small and remote village, whose few residents were all non-Jews. From the start, he'd intended to live there only for a short time, until he could earn a living and then move to live among Jews. But with *siyata diShmaya*, Zalman did well in business, and his dealings grew rapidly. He built himself a spacious estate in the village, and planted fields, orchards and vineyards around it, and soon became one of the biggest food suppliers to the surrounding villages. Years passed, and Zalman needed to live near where his business was, so he remained in the remote town without a shul or a *minyán*.

Zalman didn't really know much about the order of the *tefillos*, and certainly was unaware of the *halachos* involved, but he didn't let this influence his Jewish lifestyle. He tried to travel once every half a year to the nearby city, where he would visit the Rav holding a fat siddur that he



The Tzemach Tzedek, zt"l

had inherited from his father, and a large notepad. The Rav would sit with him and teach him the *tefillos* for the coming half a year, when it was Rosh Chodesh, when to say *Hallel* and when it was Yom Tov and he couldn't work. He marked when the fasts were, when he needed to say *Aneinu*, and when there were other special days.

The villager lived this way for many years in the remote village, and for most of the day he was busy in his fields, supervising the workers and marketing the produce. In the few hours that remained, he would recite *Tehillim* and daven according to the Rav's precise instructions.

It happened on one of the rare days Zalman spent in the city. He was used to meeting many Jews in the street, and a lot of them knew him and would greet him warmly. But this time, the streets were empty of Jews, as if it was a holiday. And as someone who followed the calendar and instructions that the Rav had given him, he trembled at the thought that perhaps he'd made a mistake.

Puzzled and wondering, he entered the shul, wanting to see if the city's Jews were there. His alarm grew even more. Indeed, it appeared that he had made a mistake, because the shul was packed with people, as if it was Shabbos or Yom Tov.

Who knew, perhaps I'm desecrating Shabbos or Yom Tov now... Zalman was terrified, but after he took another look at the *mispallelim*, he calmed down. They were wearing *tallis* and *tefillin*, and he knew that they did not wear *tefillin* on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

And yet, Zalman wondered, what was different today?!

Worriedly, he approached one of the *mispallelim* and asked about the gathering. Why had the Jews of the city convened in the shul on a regular day?! The man stared at him in surprise, and then said: "You don't know? It is a fast day today!" And he went back to his davening.

A fast day? Zalman was confused. He checked his notepad, but didn't find any mention of such a day. When the davening ended, he went to the Rav's room, and in a tone that contained both hurt and surprise, he asked: "Why didn't the Rav tell me during our last update about the fast day today? I didn't know and I ate breakfast this morning!"

"You can be calm," the Rav reassured him. "The notepad you are holding is accurate, and has no mistakes!"

"If so, why has everyone gathered here in the shul to daven?" Zalman asked.

"Very simple," the Rav explained. "In our region, the rains have not come, and we have made a special fast day to pray to Hashem to give us blessed

rains."

"You made a fast because of rain?" Zalman was very surprised. "There's a much easier to solution than that..."

"And what is that?" The Rav asked, and Zalman innocently explained: "I'll tell the Rav what I do when there is no rain to water my fields and vineyards; I go out to the field and I plead to Hashem to send rain. And what can I say...Hashem always answers my request and brings rains."

The Rav was very surprised by the innocent remarks, and thought for a moment before saying, "Well then, Zalman, perhaps you can do this now as well. We really need rain; now can you ask for us?!"

Without another word, the villager went out to the nearby field, spread his arms Heavenward, and began to ask, with innocent, and simple words that came from the depths of his heart: "Dear Father, Ribbono shel Olam, for whom did You create Your world? Is it not for Your children?! You bring the rains only for the Jewish people, who observe your *mitzvos*! If You are withholding the rains, surely You want to arouse them to do *teshuvah*. So, I myself saw how they davened in the shul, and repented for their sins and mistakes. Now, without the rains, it will be hard for them to serve You properly. Please, listen to their *tefillah* and bring them rain!"

For a long while, the villager offered his pure *tefillah*, which included more similar, simple pleas, as the Rav stood on the side and marveled. And wonder of wonders, just a short time later, the skies darkened with clouds and strong rain began to fall. The fields were watered and the waterholes were filled with clean drinking water. Everyone was astonished at the miracle.

This story was related by the Tzemach Tzedek, who would conclude and say: "Look at the power of *tefillah*. Yes, even such a simple Jew – when he poured his heart out to Hashem in prayer, with pure *emunah*, his *tefillah* was accepted right away and effected wonders.

"A *tefillah* does not need more than true *emunah* in its power. When the *mispallelim* truly believes in his *tefillah*, and holds it in esteem, with *emunah*, then he is guaranteed that it will be accepted with compassion and *ratzon*."

Tiv Hahis'chazkus – Tefillah p. 624

Derech Emunim

The Halachos of Answering Amen

The Gematria of Amen

The *mekubalim* wrote that one should have *kavanah* when answering amen, which is numerically equivalent to 91, which is equal to the value of the Names of Havayah and Adnus together. They also added that when answering amen, a person should envision in his mind the Names of Havayah and Adnus combined.

Explanations and Sources:

The *Kaf Hachaim* (56:9) cited the *Rema*’z (in his commentary to *Sefer Hazohar Vayeilech* 285 2) that one should have in mind when answering amen that it is the numerical value of the two Holy Names. He wrote there of this *kavanah* “that it is an easy thing to understand and to have in mind, as it is the simplest of the *sodos*.” *Seder Nehora Hashalem* (Ch. 16, in the author’s comments) brings an allusion to this *kavanah* from the *passuk* (*Divrei Hayamim* I, 16:36): “*Vayomru kol ha’am amen vehallel l’Hashem*.” In other words, when the nation answers “amen” they should have in mind to combine it with “הלל” – which is numerically equivalent to the Name of Adnus, and Hava-yah, which together are numerically equivalent to amen. And he added that the *chazzan*, when he cannot answer amen, should have this *kavanah* in mind when the *tzibbur* answers amen.

The Rishonim wrote (*Rokeach, Hilchos Seudah*, 330; *Baal Haturim, Devarim* 27:26) that this is why *Chazal*

Otzros Emunim

Amen With Kavanah

One Proper Amen

When Harav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk came to Eretz Yisrael, he said emotionally:

All the time when I was in *chutz l’aretz*, I yearned to daven one *tefillah* properly to Hashem. And from the moment I came to Eretz Yisrael, of which *Chazal* say (*Bava Basra* 158b) that the air makes one wise, I have been wise to understand that to daven a *tefillah* properly is not something that can be attained, and *halevai* I should merit to answer even one amen properly (*Ilna Dechayei – Ohr Haner*, 31).

Chassidim related that on the day that Harav Moshe of Kobrin reached the age of seventy, his *talmidim* held a *seudah* in honor of the occasion. Towards the end of the *seudah*, the Rebbe of Kobrin entered and said: “If only I could know that all my life I answered one amen the way I should, then it will all have been worth it...” And at another opportunity he said: “If I would know that in all my life I answered one amen properly, I wouldn’t worry at all” (*Imros Moshe [Bava Basra 5776] Vol. I, p. 192-193*).

The Kavanah of Amen

say (*Brachos* 53b) that “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*,” because the amen is the numerical value of the two Names, while the *mevarech* only mentions the Name of Adnus. And even though the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 5 1) that when mentioning the Name of Adnus in a *brachah*, one should also have in mind the Shem Hava-yah, still, the *mevarech* utters only one name with his mouth, in contrast to the *oneh* who answers amen, who utters both Names (*Seder Nehora Hashalem* *ibid*).

The *Kaf Hachaim* further wrote (5:13) in the name of *Sha’ar Hakavanos (Drushei Hachazarah Drush* 5) and *Pri Eitz Chaim (Shaar* 11, Chapter 2) that one should have in mind these two Names combined. And see there that when answering amen to a *brachah*, one should draw in his mind the combination of the letters, alternating, with the Shem Hava-yah first: *יאהדוניהי* – while when answering amen after *Kaddish*, one should envision the combination with the Name of Adnus first, *אידהנויה*.

The *Seder Nehora Hashalem* (*ibid*) brings another *kavanah* when answering amen, that one should have in mind that alphabetically, the letters that are after amen are *בנס* and they are numerically equivalent to 112, which is the same as *יבק*. And he added the virtue of this *kavanah*: “One who has this Name in mind will not have his *tefillah* turned down, and the *Gemara* says of this (*ibid*) that the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.”

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editors of *Vechol Ma’aminim*,

At this time, when we are about to begin asking for the rains in the Holy Land, I thought it would be fitting to point out a beautiful *remez* that I found which can illuminate the relationship between being strict about amen and the rains falling:

The *passuk* says in *Parashas Noach (Bereishis* 8:2): “*ויסכרו וימענת תהום וארבת השמים ויכלא הגשם מן הארץ*” I found that the *sefer Shemeinah Lachmo* brings that the final letters of the words *השמים מן הגשם* is “מאמן” – meaning that rains fall “from amen” in the merit of answering amen. And this fits in with the words of *Chazal (Taanis* 8a) that “the rains only fall for the *baalei amanah*.”

I thought to add another *remez* from the *passuk* that we say each day in *Krias Shema*, in *Vehayah Im Shamoa: “Venasati metar artzechem b’ito”* – נתתי מטר ארצכם is an acronym for amen.

With wishes for rains in the right time, *venomar amen*,

Chaim Tzvi Stein, Beit Shemesh

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the *Vechol Ma’aminim* email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

It seemed to be just another phone call made from the offices of Bney Emunim. On the other end of the line, the mother of one of the children who had won a raffle picked up the phone, and was happy to hear that her child had won a nice prize.

Such phone calls take place in our office a few times a day. The experienced staff has gotten used to hearing squeals of happiness, as well of words of gratitude. This time as well, the conversation should have ended there, but for some reason, the mother was in no hurry to hang up. She sounded even more excited than the standard, and after she asked if she could add something, she related the following amazing story:

“It happened last month, in the middle of the winter. My ten-year-old son had gone to sleep but not before he had done something dangerous: He connected a Shabbos clock to a little heater next to his bed, and set it to go on at six in the morning. He wanted to make it easier to get out of his warm bed into the cold morning. I later learned that before he did it, he asked my permission, but I hadn’t been paying enough attention to listen to him.

So that night, we all slept, not knowing about the danger hovering over our heads.

The story could have ended tragically, *chalilah*, if not for the fact that the next morning, I decided to wake up early. Why? Because a few days earlier, as part of one of Bney Emunim’s initiatives, my children had begun to be more strict about answering amen. They decided amongst themselves that they would say *Birchos Hashachar* at home, with one saying the *brachos* and the other answering amen.

Because during those first days, this led to a delay in the morning routine, I decided that from that day, I would get up earlier, so that I could get the children’s lunch bags ready before they woke up, and I’d then be available to answer

amen with *kavanah*, calmly.

I got up a bit after six, and immediately smelled something acrid. The smell was so strong that there was no doubt about it – there was a fire in the house! I jumped out of bed in alarm and began to look for the source of the smell. Naturally, I hurried to the kitchen, but it was clean and quiet, the way I’d left it the night before. The girls room was similarly quiet. But when I came to the children’s room, I shrieked in alarm.

The scene that met my eyes was unreal: My ten-year-old son was sleeping deeply, while the heater next to his bed was burning. The fire was already licking the pillow under his head, and in seconds, the flames would catch onto his hair. My shriek echoed through the house, waking everyone up. Someone put out the fire, and the morning that had begun in such a panicked state slowly settled down into the regular routine.

Only after I calmed down a bit, in the afternoon, did the magnitude of the miracle begin to dawn on me. It was a miracle that happened in the merit of amen! I told my children about this and said to them: Look, children, at the power of answering amen.

We were all very excited, and then my son, the hero of the story, pointed to the sheet from Bney Emunim that was hanging on the refrigerator. The title was “Amen in Every Home” and he suggested: “Let’s change the name of this initiative.”

“Change the name? Why? To what?” we wondered, and he explained: “Until now, we knew that amen is numerically equivalent to מלאך. But now that we saw this so clearly, it’s a good idea to change the name from “Amen in Every Home” to “A Malach in Every Home”!

Unsurprisingly, everyone accepted the idea, and we all redoubled our efforts to answer amen *k’halachah* and with *hiddur*, as this has become especially significant for us.”

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav Avraham Erlander, zt”l,

The Birchas Avraham 5 Cheshvan 5782

Harav Avraham Erlander, zt”l, was born in Switzerland in Teves 5692 to his father Rav Shimon Raphael Erlanger, z”l.

In 5712, he came to Eretz Yisrael and began to attend the Mir, where he learned under Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz, the Rosh Yeshivah. Later, he moved to Yeshivas Brisk, where he was close to Harav Yosef Dov of Brisk, and even had a regular session to speak in learning on Motzaei

Shabbos with the Gri”z – the Brisker Rav.

In 5716, he was taken as a *chassan* for the daughter of Rav Chaim Yosef Jacobowitz, one of the rabbanim of Yeshivas Kol Torah. A short time after his marriage, his father-in-law passed away and he was asked to take his place in the yeshivah.

When he reached the age of 70, he decided to retire from the yeshivah so he could invest his time learning *masechtos* that are not usually studied in *yeshivos*. But he continued delivering *chaburos* in his home to *bochurim* on all kinds of Torah subjects. His *seforim*, *Birchas Avraham*, on the *masechtos* of *Shas*, were very well received among *lomdim*. Despite his greatness, he was always very modest, eschewed publicity and tried to remain on the sidelines.

He passed away on 5 Cheshvan 5782, and a huge crowd accompanied him on his final journey to the Chelkas Harabbanim on Har Hamenuchos.

Amen Is Part of the Brachah

In his *sefer Birchas Avraham* on *Maseches Brachos* (47a), he explained the reason for the practice of Rav Chaim of Volozhin not to recite *Birchas Hanehenin* without there being someone to answer amen after him. He wrote:

The *poskim* wrote that because amen is part of the *brachah*, it is right, *lechatchilah*, for the *mevarech* to be *yotzei* his obligation of amen by hearing the amen that is answered by those who hear his *brachah* (*Rema Orach Chaim* 167 2; *Biur HaGra* *ibid*; *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid* 20).

Concerned about this view, which even his *rebbe*, the Gra, agreed with, the Nefesh Hachaim made sure that when the *brachah* was said there would be someone present to answer amen, this way, he could have *kavanah* to be *yotzei* the obligation to answer amen, and thus have a complete *brachah* in hand.

In light of this, the *Birchas Avraham* added that *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b) “the *oneh* amen is greater than the *mevarech*” and the words can be explained regarding the *mevarech* himself. When he hears the amen that is answered to his *brachah*, and he has *kavanah* to be *yotzei* with it and to complete the *brachah*, his *zechus* is greater than the *zechus* of saying the *brachah*.