

# Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"

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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah  
in the Parashah

### Chassadim Whose Good Is Apparent

“ואתה אמרת היטב איטיב עמך ושמתי את זרעך כחול היום אשר  
לא יספר מרב” (לב יג)

Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev explained the double use of the words “*heitev eitiv*” as follows: There are situations where HaKadosh Baruch Hu treats a person with *heshter Panim*, even though He is really doing good things for him. In the person’s eyes, it seems as though he was struck with something bad. That is why Yaakov asked “*heitev eitiv*” – that Hashem should benefit him with things that are clearly good.

Based on this, the *Pri Migadim* explained our request after *Birchos Hashachar*: “*Vesigmeleinu chassadim tovim.*” There would seem to be a question: what is the meaning of the words “*chassadim tovim*”? Are there any “*chassadim ra'im*”? We are asking that Hashem should grand us *chassadim* whose good is evident, not *chassadim* whose good is concealed from the eyes of the person.

The *Mahari”tz Dushinski* would add an explanation of the request we make at the end of the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* in *Birchas Hamazon*: “*Umikol tuv l’olam al yechasreinu*” – that Hashem should not do good things for us whose goodness is hidden. Rather, “*al yechasreinu,*” we should not lack good things that are apparent to the world.

It is related that a grandson of **Harav Bunim of Peshischa** passed away one Shabbos. Throughout the Shabbos, there was no difference in his demeanor to any other Shabbos. Only on Motzaei Shabbos, after *Havdalah*, did he break down crying and said: “Although we believe in the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 60b) that everything HaKadosh Baruch Hu does is for good, Hashem should protect us from such good things.” And he added that this is what Yaakov Avninu asked for: “*V’Atah amarta heitev eitiv imach*” – “*shetiten li tov-mitov.*”

*Kedushas Levi; Pri Migadim Orach Chaim Eshel Avraham 46 5; Chashavah Letovah, New Edition p. 111; Bais Yisrael Hashalem*

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder  
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### The Act of the Fathers Is a Sign for the Sons

In the previous segment, we cited the words of *Chazal* (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabba* 11) that the merit of answering amen is what advocates for Am Yisrael to be spared from their enemies and to have revenge taken against those who hate them. In this *parashah*, we see that this protection has already been in place for Am Yisrael since its inception as a nation.

The *Megaleh Amukos* reveals that when Eisav sought to harm Yaakov, Yaakov mentioned the merit of answering amen to be spared from him. He brings a beautiful allusion from the words of Yaakov’s prayer (32:12): “*Hatzileini na miyad achi miyad Eisav.*” נא מיד אחי – is an acronym for אמן. As *Chazal* say: “*ma’aseh avos siman lebanim*” (see *Bereishis Rabbah* 40 6); even today, we have to know and remember that the best strategy against the “hands are the hands of Eisav” is the “*kol Yaakov*,” the voice of answering amen. In light of the words of *Chazal*, it is clear without a doubt that the millions of amens said each day by Am Yisrael are a powerful protection for them from their enemies.

I thought that this can be the reason that the mitzvah of answering amen is one we can do throughout the day, from morning to evening. There is no limit to how many times we can do it; we can amass countless amens each day. The danger from our enemies that surround us is constant, and therefore, we need constant salvation – and we have that, in the merit of amen.

We invest top dollar in the best insurance policies that cannot save the person from catastrophe. They can only compensate him financially after the fact... Wouldn’t it make more sense for us to invest in amen, which is available, free, to everyone who wants it, and aside for opening the gates of abundance and blessing, also protects us from bad?!

We issue a call to every Jew wherever he is: It is a time of *tzarah* for Yaakov, let us unite in being strict about the mitzvah of answering amen. We will strengthen those who daven with us to answer amen, and to have their *brachos* answered with amen. If we do this, we will surely see the fulfillment of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 91:11): “*Ki malachav yetzaveh lach lishmorcha bechol derachecha,*” amen v’amen.

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

More than 300 years ago, a young *avreich* by the name of Rav Shlomo Tzayag lived in Meknes, Morocco. He sat in the *beis medrash* from morning to night, learning diligently, and immersing himself in the wellsprings of wisdom. The *parnassah* situation in his home was dire, but while he toiled in Torah, he felt like the richest man in the world.

The day came when Rav Shlomo's wife gave birth to a son. While he was standing outside the room, murmuring words of gratitude to Hashem and praying for the welfare of the new mother and baby, the midwife emerged suddenly from the room and said to him, "Listen, your son is *baruch Hashem* hale and healthy, but the mother is extremely weak and she needs to eat some high quality meat to build up her strength. It's a good idea for you to hurry and go buy it for her."

Reb Shlomo left the house, brokenhearted. He wanted the best for his wife, with all his heart, but his



The Jewish Quarter in Meknes

pocket was empty, and he had no idea how he could do what he had been asked to. But he went out to the market, his lips murmuring a prayer, in the hope that somehow, Hashem would provide assistance and a *yeshuah*. While he was walking, deep in thought, he came across a poor man with torn clothes and no shoes. The poor man pleaded with him, "Please, fellow Jew, my wife and children are at home, and they are terribly ill. They need some healthy food, and my house is empty. Please,

can you give me some money..."

For some reason, Reb Shlomo was perceived by the poor man to be a person of means, but in fact, he had no choice but to turn him down, and to relate that he was in a similar predicament. He suggested that, "Because we cannot do anything to help one another, let's both go to the only One who can save us..." "Who is that and where does he reside?" the man asked innocently. Rav Shlomo explained: "It's the King of kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, who answers all those who truly call to Him. Let us go into the shul and pray to Him with broken hearts; surely He will not turn us away."

Nearby was a shul that had been built by the wealthy resident of Meknes at the time, Reb Moshe ben Attar. The two walked in, and closed the door behind them. They approached the *aron kodesh*, and began to weep pleadingly to Hashem.

At the same time, not far from there, a drama was unfolding. A deplorable, money-hungry Arab, who had dishonestly earned the title of City Minister, had gone into huge debts. In his desire to expand his wealth, he had invested all his money, plus loans that he had taken, in a failed venture. And in keeping with the habits of the evil people at the time, he demanded that the Jews pay the price for his failure.

Rav Moshe ben Attar, the leading philanthropist in Meknes, was summoned to the minister's house. There, he was firmly told that within five days, he needed to raise among the city's Jews no less than five thousand gold coins, and if not, they would be expelled immediately from the city, and their homes and assets would be confiscated.

This decree landed on Reb Moshe's head like a thunderbolt on a clear day. He emerged from the minister's home in utter shock. He had no idea how to digest this terrible news. But as a believing Jew, he knew the first step he needed to take. Before going home, he turned towards the shul that he had built, in order to daven to Hashem to help resolve this decree hanging over the heads of the city's Jews.

The shul should have been empty at that hour, but Rav Moshe was surprised to find two Jews, pouring their hearts out in *tefillah* to Hashem, sobbing bitterly. Their cries echoed from one end of the shul to the other.

Rav Moshe, who sensed that he was witnessing a holy scene, approached them, and they were startled. He told

them about the terrible decree that had been cast on Meknes' Jews, and the two, who were still under the influence of their own fervent *tefillas*, suggested that he join them.

After a long while of the three men davening, the door was suddenly opened by a servant, who called to Reb Moshe to hurry to his home, as a messenger from the minister was waiting for him.

Reb Moshe became alarmed and hurried home, but already at the door he realized that there had been a turnabout. The emissary, who was supposed to look proud and confident, seemed hunched and pain-stricken.

"What happened?" Reb Moshe inquired. And the messenger replied quietly, "It's about the city minister...he's dead..."

Reb Moshe could barely contain his joy as he listened to the messenger's description. Apparently, the minister, who was corpulent, was climbing the stairs in his home. On the last step, he suddenly tripped. He tried to grab the banister, but it collapsed together with him. He tumbled down the stairs and sustained fatal blows; all the doctors could do was declare him dead.

"I was sent to invite your honor to the funeral this evening," the messenger concluded sadly and turned to go. Reb Moshe accompanied him outside, pretending to sigh in grief. Right after that, he returned to the shul, where the other two men were still immersed in prayer.

At the sight of his glowing face, they stopped davening; the wealthy man invited them to his home. On the way, he told them briefly what had happened and the sudden turnabout. Only once they were sitting in his house did he remember to ask them what they had been davening about, and each man described his predicament.

Still in a joyous frame of mind, Reb Moshe opened his heavy safe, and handed each of them a fistful of coins, which would be enough to comfortably support their homes for the near future. He promised them that he would support them and assist them with anything they needed in the future as well.

The three parted, each one's heart overflowing with gratitude at his personal *yeshuah*, and their hearts collectively united in *emunah* in the power of *tefillah* that emerges from a truly broken heart. As they had merited to experience, such *tefillah* has the power to transform the most dire situation to good.



## Derech Emunim

The Halachos of Answering Amen

### In the Repetition of the Tefillah

In the repetition of the *tefillah*, the *sha"tz* should not start saying one of the *brachos* before most of the *tzibbur* finishes answering amen to the previous *brachah*. But if there is a minority that prolongs their amen more than is necessary, the *sha"tz* does not have to wait for them. Some say that the *chazaras hatefillah* has the same *halachah* as *brachos* that one is *yotzei*, and there, as well, the *sha"tz* needs to wait even for a minority that is prolonging the amen.

🌀 Explanations and Sources: 🌀

The *Biur Halachah* (124 9) wrote that the *poskim* are divided regarding the *din* of the *brachos* of *chazaraz hasha"tz*. Are they like *brachos* that one is not *yotzei* his obligation when hearing them, because today one is not *yotzei* the obligation of *tefillah* with them? Or, because the *tzibbur* is obligated to hear *chazaraz hasha"tz*, is the *din* like the *brachos* that one is *yotzei* (see *Mishnah Berurah* 124 33)? The Mahara"m Mintz (*Shu"t*, 81) and the *Eliyah Rabbah* (128 37) rule that the *brachos* of the *chazarah* have the *din* of a *brachah* that one is *yotzei* an obligation, and therefore, one must wait even for a minority that prolongs the amen improperly, so that they should also hear the *brachos*. The *Pri Migadim* wrote (124 *Eshel Avraham* 15) that this is the

## Amen Is Part of the Brachah

view of the *Magen Avraham*. But according to the *Prishah* (124 13), the *din* of the *brachos* of *chazaraz hasha"tz* is like that of *brachos* when one is not *yotzei* his obligation, and therefore, one should wait with them only for most of the *mispallelim*, because when most of the *mispallelim* finish amen, the *brachah* ends. The *Ma'amar Mordechai* (124 12) rules this way. However, the *Ma'amar Mordechai* wrote (ibid, cited in *Biur Halachah* ibid) that if it happens that most of the *tzibbur* answered amen faster than they should have, and the minority answered it properly, then all agree that the *sha"tz* has to wait for the minority. But he noted that this is something that is not common, and it is not necessary to be concerned about it. See *Kaf Hachaim* (124 52) who wrote that according to the Arizal there is an obligation to hear *chazaraz hasha"tz*, and that its virtue is even greater than that of the whispered *tefillah*, and if so, the *sha"tz* must certainly wait even for the minority.

As noted, everyone agrees that it is an obligation for the *sha"tz* to wait in the *chazarah* at least for the amen of most of the *mispallelim*. It is fitting to bring on this subject what the *Mishnah Berurah* points out: "And with our many sins, many people stumble on this when they daven at the *amud*, that they hasten to start the following *brachah* right after finishing the *brachah* before it, and they do not wait between them at all."

The *Mishnah Berurah* further wrote (ibid 37) that this *din* is also practiced with the recital of *Kaddish*, that the one saying *Kaddish* has to wait for most of the people to answer amen.

## Taaneh Emunim

Pearls on the Mitzvah of Tefillah

### The Obligation of Kavanah in Tefillah

#### The Main Part of Tefillah Is the Kavanah

In *Maseches Taanis* (2a), Chazal explain that the *passuk* (*Devarim* 11:13) "Ule'ovdo bechol levavchem" instructs the obligation to *tefillah*, which is "avodah shehi balev." From the fact that the *passuk* attributed the mitzvah of *tefillah* to service of the heart, it proves that the main part of *tefillah* is the *kavanah* (*Iggeres Hateshuvah Rabbeinu Yona, Hadrush Harishon* 6). The *Avudraham* (*Seder Shacharis shel Chol, Tefillas Shemoneh Esreh*) brings in the name of the *Raavad* that from the fact that the *tefillah* is called "avodah" we should learn about the extent of the investment that a person must make in having *kavanah* of the heart when davening, as he wrote: "It is a term of 'avodah,' to remove the distracting thoughts about matters of this world, and to bring the thought to submission to *kavanah*."

#### The Name Tefillah Indicates Kavanah

The *Avudraham* further writes that the obligation for *kavanah* in *tefillah* is alluded to in its name, because "תפלה" is numerically equivalent to "עבודת הלב" and to "בכונה הלב". The *Maharal* (*Be'er Hagolah Be'er* 4) added that the root of *tefillah* is from the term of *machshavah*, thought. Because *tefillah* is from the term פלל as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 106:30): "Vaya'mod Pinchas Vayepallel." And the word פלל means thought, as *Rashi* explains on the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 48:11): "ראה: 'פניך לא פללתי', I never thought I would see your face.

## Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editorial board of *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

In recent issues, you have expounded on words that the *poskim* have written in numerous places that answering amen to a *brachah* is part of the *brachah*. It is remarkable that although the *brachah* is said by the *mevarech*, and the amen is said by the listener, it is from both of them together that a complete *brachah* emerges.

I thought to illuminate this concept with the words of the *mekubal* Harav Shlomo Alkabetz, zy"va, composer of *Lecha Dodi* (his words are cited in the *Alshich, Shemos* 30:13) on the mitzvah of *machatzis hashekel*. He says that the Torah instructed each person in Am Yisrael to give half a shekel and not a whole one, in order to teach about the virtue of unity in Am Yisrael, that only two Jews together are considered a whole entity, but one person alone should not consider himself a complete person.

This concept is also expressed in this *halachah*, in the fact that every Jew who makes a *brachah* is like a 'half' until his friend comes and completes the *brachah* by answering amen.

I also thought to add that this concept is alluded to in the words of *Birchas Hamazon* – "bivrachah sheleimah venomar amen." One who wants to receive a *brachah* from Above in completion, should answer amen and complete the *brachah*, and thus he will be blessed, *middah kenegged middah*, with a *brachah sheleimah*.

Shmuel Scharf, London

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## Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

## Amen That Prevented Aggravation

Erev Shabbos in the A. Family home. The hands of the clock indicated that it was four thirty in the afternoon; combined with the aromatic pots bubbling on the hotplate, it was evident that Shabbos was fast approaching.

The children were puttering around the house, dressed in their Shabbos best. The candles had been prepared, and very soon, the siren heralding candle-lighting time would sound. Then, the mother would cover her eyes and make the *brachah* on the candles, as she offered warm *tefillos* for her family.

The tranquil atmosphere was suddenly broken by a shriek from the dining room.

The father of the family was sprawled on the floor in a faint, and his children were surrounding him hysterically. Hatzolah was summoned, and arrived within a few minutes to begin resuscitation. The children gathered their wits and began to say *Tehillim* with great emotion.

And then, a miracle happened: The father came to, and looked around him, as if not understanding what the fuss was about.

"It looks like dehydration!" the doctor, who had come in the interim, declared. The father nodded weakly. Indeed, he had returned home from an exhausting shopping trip, in the heat of the day, and for some reason, had forgotten to drink properly.

Although Rabbi A. was already feeling better, the doctor urged him to be taken to the nearest hospital. When Shabbos came, he was in the emergency room, accompanied by his oldest daughter. At the time, his wife at home was lighting Shabbos candles; she then tearfully davened for her husband's welfare.

One of the neighbors volunteered to watch the children, and the mother set out for the hospital, carrying a package of Shabbos food. But at the door to the house, her young daughter stopped her and asked, "Ima, please answer amen

to my *brachah*!"

In the A. Family, everyone, from old to young, is strict to answer amen with *kavanah* to every *brachah*. Although she still had a half hour walk ahead of her, the mother agreed to the request. When she was about to leave again, the young girl decided to make another *brachah*...and then her brother decided to give his mother the merit of another few amens... The challenge was hard, but the amen prevailed, and the mother had to wait a few more precious minutes before she finally left the house. This time, she was accompanied by a few angels created by the amens.

She had just left the house when she was astonished to see her husband and daughter walking towards her...

"They took lots of tests, and they decided to give me an IV of fluids. After the IV, I felt better, and the doctor agreed to release me right away," the father explained. "When we returned, we decided to take a different route so that we could avoid a hill that is on the regular route..."

"Another *siyata diShmaya* of amen!" the woman cried excitedly, and then explained:

"When I was about to leave the house, the children kept holding me up so I could answer amen to them. Now that you told me that you took a different route home, I realized that if I would not have been delayed, then I would have found myself walking to the hospital, with this heavy package, only to hear that *baruch Hashem*, you'd already been released, and I would have to make the same way back, alone, at night, to the family who would be worried and waiting to start the *seudah*...I was spared so much aggravation because I was held up to say amen properly."

Tiv Hakehillah Tetzaveh 5776

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The ohel over the ziyun of the Maggid of Mezeritsch

### The Maggid of Mezeritsch 19 Kislev 5534

Harav Dov Ber was born in 5464 to his father, Rav Avraham, in Lokachi, Ukraine, and as a youth, he was one of the prime *talmidim* in the yeshiva of the Pnei Yehoshua.

A few years after his marriage, he moved to Koritz, and served as the *maggid* there. In 5512, he met the Baal Shem Tov for the first time,

and became very close to him; in time, he became known as one of his prime disciples. The Tiferes Shlomo (*Rimzei Purim*) described his greatness: "It happened that the Baal Shem Tov gave over to the Maggid all the wellsprings of wisdom, and he merited to be the leader of the generation, and the light of his holiness still glows in his *talmidim* that followed in every generation."

After the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, his son Harav Tzvi Hirsch appointed the Maggid as his successor. With this appointed, the Maggid moved to Mezeritsch, where thousands of *chassidim* flocked to him, learning Torah and *chassidus* from him.

On 19 Kislev 5534, the Maggid passed away; he was laid to rest in Anipoli, where he had moved to a few months before his passing.

### Answering Amen Reveals the Light of *Emunah*

The Maggid of Mezeritsch beautifully explains the reason for the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 53b) "the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*."

When a person says something and one of the listeners casts doubt on his words, and a third person comes and confirms the words of the first one, then he causes the words to be accepted. This is what happens every time a *brachah* is said. The *mevarech* wants to reveal the Malchus of Hashem in His World, but the material nature conceals and blurs this declaration. By answering amen, the *oneh* affirms the words of the *mevarech* and thus causes the light of *emunah* in the world to be revealed.

For this reason, *Chazal* (*ibid*) compared the *mevarech* to a simple soldier who cannot alone prevail in the war, while the *oneh* amen is compared to the heroic soldiers that lead the army to triumph. Because the *mevarech* is struggling with the material nature that seeks to conceal the revelation of Malchus Hashem in His world, and only the *oneh amen* is the one who tips the scale and reveals the light of *emunah* in the world. The Maggid added that by revealing the light of *emunah*, the *oneh* amen draws down *shefa* and *brachah* into the world. (*Maggid Devarav LeYaakov*, Kurtz Edition, 5541 p. 43)