

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Purpose of Tefillah From Two Angles

“ויעתר יצחק לה' לנבא אשתו כי עקרה הוא ויעתר לו ה' ותהר רבקה אשתו” (כה כא)

The words “*lenochach ishto*” are explained by *Rashi* (according to *Bereishis Rabbah* 63 5): “He was standing in one corner and praying, while she was standing in another corner and praying.” And there are a few explanations for why they prayed this way:

The *Taz* explained that because *avodah* of *tefillah* is like the *avodah* of *korbanos* (*Brachos* 26b), the room where *Yitzchak* and *Rivka* davened is compared to a *mizbe'ach*. As such, just like the blood of the *korbanos* was placed on two corners of the *mizbe'ach*, diagonally across from one another, in a way that it spread to all four directions of the *mizbe'ach* [“two that are four”], so, too, *Yitzchak* and *Rivka* davened at two corners of the room, diagonally across from each other, so that their *tefillah* would be directed in all four directions.

Harav Chaim Halevi Horowitz explained in the name of his grandfather *Rav Pinchas*: In *Maseches Bava Basra* (25a) *Chazal* say that we owe our ancestors a debt of gratitude for telling us that we should turn to the *mizrach* to pray. So now we can explain that *Yitzchak* and *Rivka*, who in their time, did not yet know to which side to daven, chose to stand at two corners of the house – one at the southeast, and the other at the northwest. This way they were sure that in any case, their *tefillah* would be directed to the side that is fitting to daven.

Another explanation is offered by **Harav Dovid Tevel**, the *Rav* of *Lissa*: In *Maseches Bava Basra*, *Chazal* say (25b) that one who wants to be wise should pray to the south and one who wants to be wealthy should pray to the north. Therefore, *Yitzchak* and *Rivka* prayed in two different directions. *Yitzchak*, who was an *olah temimah*, a pure sacrifice, didn't even consider davening for matters of this world at all. He wanted only to have a son to serve *Hashem*, and therefore, he davened to the southern side, the side of wisdom. But *Rivka* also worried that their son should be blessed with the *brachos* of this world, and therefore, she stood and prayed to the north – the side of wealth.

Divrei Dovid; Mayim Chaim [Dyhernfurth 5450]; Nefesh Dovid

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

The Meaning of Grabbing Onto a Heel

In this *parashah*, we read about the birth of *Yaakov Avinu* as follows (*Bereishis* 25:26): “After that his brother came out, his hand grasping the heel of *Eisav*, and he [*Yitzchak*] named him *Yaakov*.” One who reads this *passuk* will surely wonder: Why was the action of *Yaakov* holding onto *Eisav's* heel so significant that it determined his name for generations to come? And even after we understand the reason for this, we still need to ask why he is called ‘*Yaakov*’ for the heel that he grasped, and not a name that reflects the actual grasping? The *Kli Yakar* explains that *Yaakov's* grip on *Eisav's* foot has a very deep meaning: “It was a sign that in the future, *Eisav* would become derisive of the firstborn status, like a person who grinds something with his heel in derision, and that is the heel that *Yaakov* will grasp onto. Meaning: What *Eisav* grinds with his heel – *Yaakov* will grasp onto.” The *Kli Yakar* continues: “Likewise, all the easy *mitzvos* that people tend to grind with their heel and the satan is *mekatreg* on them for it – *Yaakov* will grasp onto them and fulfill them.”

This explains it all beautifully: The Torah does not mean to note *Yaakov's* literal grip on *Eisav's* foot. Rather, it is about his grip on the ‘*eikev*,’ a grip that was a symbol and a declaration that *Yaakov* would, in the future, be especially scrupulous about *mitzvos* that a person grinds with his heel, and that is why he is named for it.

The *Rema MiPano* (*Asarah Ma'amaros, Chikur Din* 2 15) further expounds on the secret of the name ‘*Yaakov*,’ and says that *יעקב* when written with the *vav* is numerically equivalent to *אמן ואמן* [a combination mentioned a number of times in *Tehillim*], while *יעקב* – without the *vav*, is numerically equivalent to twice *amen*.

The name *Yaakov*, in any form that it will be written – with the *vav* or without – includes the word *amen* twice. This can strengthen the knowledge that this name was given to him because of his adherence and his grasping of *mitzvos* that a person grinds with his foot, which includes the *mitzvah* of answering *amen*.

It behooves us, the descendants of *Yaakov*, who merited the “*kol Yaakov*,” to follow his ways and be strict about the *mitzvah* of answering *amen*. And if we ‘grasp onto the heel’ without letting go, then we will merit that very soon to see the fulfillment of the *passuk* (*Ovadiah* 1:21): “*V'alu moshi'im beHar Tzion lishpot es Har Eisav vehaysah l'Hashem hameluchah.*”

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

It was Erev Shabbos Kodesh, one of the many times that Harav Shlomo Hakohein of Radomsk, author of *Tiferes Shlomo*, arrived to spend Shabbos with his Rebbe, the Saba Kadisha of Radoshitz, who at the time was serving as the Rav of Pshedborzh.

This time, the Radoshitzer Rebbe seemed exceptionally pleased when he saw his *talmid*. He welcomed him warmly and said, "I'm very happy that you came for Shabbos; I need you to be here next to me, as a Kohein and *tzaddik*, in order to effect a *yeshuah* for someone who needs it."

At the same time, the Saba Kadisha whispered a few words in the ears of the *meshamesh*, who hastily left the room and came back a few minutes later, accompanied by a visitor who looked very different than the Polish-Chassidish appearance of those environs. The man looked typically German-Jewish, without a beard and *peyos*, but his eyes radiated purity and *temimus*.

The Saba Kadisha sat the Jew down and began to ask where he was from and what he did for a living. The man replied in a German-accented Yiddish, that he was a member of one of the veteran Jewish communities in Germany. Then he expounded on his many business dealings, and noted



The entrance to the town of Radoshitz, Poland

that he tried to trade with honesty, and *bechasdei Hashem* he saw great blessing in his business.

"And what has brought you here?" the Rebbe asked him softly. In response, the Yid grimaced and said with bitterness: "I came here on behalf of my only son, the center of my life, who unfortunately was born deaf-mute. From the day of his birth to this day I have visited the top doctors, but they all have despaired of finding a cure for him. I came here as a last

hope, because I heard that the great Rabbiner has the power to effect *yeshuos*."

"The Rabbiner should tell me any sum that he wants," the man declared. "I'm ready to give up almost all my money for a *yeshuah* for my suffering son." The Rebbe looked at his guest compassionately and said, "My dear Yid, I will not take from you even one penny. You've spent enough on your son, and it's a shame....His cure is dependent on such a minor, minute thing...like a hairsbreadth..."

"A hairsbreadth?" the man was taken aback, and the Rebbe explained: "In order for your son to be healed, all you need to do is to take upon yourself seriously to grow a beard and *peyos*!"

"Grow a beard and *peyos*?!" The man almost fainted. "I can't do that! If I would walk around like that where I live, people will say I went mad...No one will want to do business with me anymore..."

The man pleaded for something easier...but the Rebbe did not back down.

"Can the Rebbe at least wait for me two weeks to start growing the beard and *peyos*?" the man asked, after capitulating. Then he explained: "In

a few days, my sister is marrying off her daughter. My whole family is expected to attend the wedding. How will I be able to show up there with overgrown hair? I promise that in two weeks, after the wedding, I will come back here and I will do whatever the Rabbiner tells me to do."

"Absolutely not!" the Rebbe said very firmly. "In order for your son to see healing, against all odds, you have to do an act of *mesirus nefesh* that is not *derech hateva*. You must start now, and you have no other choice!"

When he saw that there was really no choice, he promised: "I take upon myself from this day on to wear a beard and *peyos*, if it will help my dear son see a *yeshuah*." Then a smile crossed the Rebbe's face and he said, "Go back to your lodgings and come back this evening for the

tisch, together with your son. *B'ezras Hashem* together, we will see miracles and wonders."

The news began to spread among the *chassidim* that that very night, the Rebbe was going to effect miracles, to make the deaf hear and the mute speak...On that Friday night, the shul was packed to the rafters.

Silence fell on the crowd as the Rebbe sat down to conduct his *tisch*. At his side was his loyal *talmid*, the Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk. At the end of the table was the guest from Germany; his deaf-mute son stood beside him.

The Rebbe began singing *Shalom Aleichem* in a poignant tune. After he sang the rest of the *zemiros* customarily said before *Kiddush*, he prepared to make *Kiddush*.

After drinking most of the wine, the Rebbe turned to the Tiferes Shlomo, seated at his side, and asked him to put his hand under the hand holding the *becher*. Then the Rebbe turned to the youth and instructed him to recite the *brachah* after him, word for word, so that he could taste from the cup. To the astonishment of everyone, the boy heard the instructions and nodded in understanding.

Now everyone waited to see the second half of the miracle, which also was not long in coming. The Rebbe began to make the *brachah*, and all those present were astonished to see the youth following him word for word. The Rebbe said *Baruch*, and the youth repeated it. *Atah*— and the youth repeated. So it went word for word until he said the whole *brachah*.

When the youth concluded the *brachah*, the Rebbe gave him the *becher* and he drank what remained there in front of his father, who was sobbing with joy.

When Shabbos was over, the Yid set out for home with his son, who was not stopping to talk...It was not for naught that he appeared not long after at the Rebbe's court again with a totally different appearance. He had a full beard.

He decided to sell his businesses in Germany and to move with his family to be near the Rebbe of Radoshitz, and he became a *chassid* with his heart and soul.

Nifla'os HaTiferes Shlomo 88

The One Who Cuts the Bread Should Wait for the Amen

Answering amen after the *brachah* is considered part of the *brachah*, and the *brachah* is not finished or complete until there is amen answered to it. Therefore, one who makes a *brachah* on bread in order to be *motzi* those who are at the table, should wait to slice the bread until most of them have finished answering amen. Because one should not cut the bread before the end of the *brachah*, and, as noted, until most of the people have answered amen, the *brachah* is not over. However, the one cutting does not have to wait for a minority of people who prolong their answering of amen more than they should. Some think that even when the cutter is not *motzi* those around the table with the *brachah*, and each one makes the *brachah* for himself, he should not cut the bread until most of the people have finished answering amen.

🌀 Explanations and Sources: 🌀

In *Maseches Brachos* (47a) the *Breisa* instructs that one who makes a *brachah* on bread should not cut it before the ones who heard the *brachah* finish answering amen. *Rashi* gives the reason for this (ibid ad loc. *Ad*): “As answering amen is also part of the *brachah*,” and because one should not cut the bread before the *brachah* ends, then the cutter should wait until the listeners finish answering amen. Based on this, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (167 16) that the cutter needs to wait for the people to answer amen. The *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 85) explained: “As answering amen is also part of the *brachah*.” The *Sifsei Chachamim* (*Brachos* ibid) explains that the reason that one must answer amen right when the *brachah* ends (as ruled by the *Rema* 124 8) is because it is part of the *brachah* (and see further in *Shulchan Aruch* ibid 2 and *siman* 124 11 and in the *poskim* there). The *Mishkenos Yaakov* added in his *sefer Koheles Yaakov* (*Brachos* ibid) that from the fact that *Chazal* compared (*Brachos* 53b) the *mevarech* to the simple soldier that serves at the beginning of the war, while the one who answers amen is the heroic soldier that comes in at the end and triumphs, likewise, answering amen is the end of the *brachah*.

In the *Gemara* (ibid) Rav Chisda explains that the *Breisa* means that one should wait only until most people finish answering amen because “anyone who answers amen for too long is making a mistake.” And the *Tosafos* explain (ibid ad loc. *Kol*) that when one

spends too long on his amen, he empties the amen of its meaning. Based on this, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (ibid) that one should wait “until most of the people answer amen” and the *Mishnah Berurah* adds (ibid 85): “But the minority that prolong their amens too long – it is not necessary to wait for them.” Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv explains that the reason that they used the majority and minority terms is only because usually, the majority does as they are supposed to. Although halachah does not depend on majority and minority, those who do the right thing should wait even if they are the minority and when there are those who do the wrong thing, one should not wait for them even if they are the majority (*He’aros Rabbeinu Hagri”sh Elyashiv Brachos* ibid).

In his *sefer Rosh Yosef* (*Brachos* ibid) the *Pri Migadim* asks if the words of the *Gemara* that amen is part of the *brachah* is said only when the *mevarech* is *motzi* those who are hearing the *brachah* of their obligation, or is it also when a person makes the *brachah* for himself. He answers that amen is part of the *brachah* even when a person is making the *brachah* himself, and that is the *Pri Migadim*’s practical ruling (ibid *Eshel Avraham* 36). The *Kaf Hachaim* (ibid 120) also ruled this way. And see *sefer Darchei Chaim* (*Hilchos Amen* Vol. 9) that wrote that one should adopt this strict view. But the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid 3) differs, and thinks that answering amen is part of the *brachah* only when those who answer are being *yotzei* with this *brachah*, and not when each one makes the *brachah* for himself. The *Mishnah Berurah*’s view needs further perusal. On the one hand, he ruled here (*se’if katan* 84) like the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* that this *din* is only stated when the *mevarech* is being *motzi*, but previously (124 8) he wrote in *Biur Halachah* like the *Pri Migadim*, that this *din* is also the case when one makes the *brachah* himself.

The *Divrei Chamudos* (*Brachos* Ch. 7, 38) wrote that this *halachah* applies to all the *Birchos Hanehenin*, that the *mevarech* should not taste anything until most of the people have finished answering amen, because that is the end of the *brachah*. But in the *brachah* on bread one should refrain also from slicing the bread, because the slicing should also be done only after the *brachah* is completed. And see *sefer Darchei Chaim* (ibid) that when two people make the *brachah* together, and the second one ends within *kedei dibbur* of when the first one did, the first one should wait to eat until people finish answering amen to the *brachah* of the second person as well.

Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

Amen Saved Them in Beit Choron

This is a story of salvation sent to us a few years ago by someone who witnessed the story, a resident of the *Yishuv* of Beit Choron in the eastern Binyamin Hills, where a bloody terror attack took place, and which miraculously, had ended with many fewer casualties than it could have:

It was Tu BiShevat time at the preschool in Beit Choron, and the children were very joyful. This year, one of the teachers decided to conduct an “amen *seudah*” for all the children of the preschool. Aside for eating fruits in honor of the day, it would also be a way to infuse the children with *emunah*, and to accumulate many hundreds of merits and pure *malachim* to advocate for the town and for all of Am Yisrael.

In the days preceding Tu BiShevat, the teachers explained to the children the essence of the mitzvah of amen. They explained to the children in simple terms that answering amen completes the *brachah*, and that a pure *malach* is created from every amen. They also mentioned the words of *Chazal* in praise of answering amen, and the tremendous reward that is promised to anyone who is strict about it: “The gates of Gan Eden are opened for him,” and others.

So, when the awaited day arrived, the children were ready to fulfill the mitzvah. At the appointed time, all the preschool classes joined together for the “amen *seudah*.” During the meal, the children made *brachos* happily on the many fruits that were served, and answered amen aloud and with *kavanah* to all the *brachos*.

A short time later, it emerged that the pure *malachim* that rose On High from those amens uttered by the pure children who had never sinned, was a *zechus* for the whole *yishuv*. The angels protected the residents with their wings and ensured that no bad would befall them.

Dismissal time for the preschools came. Many of the parents who picked up their children immediately walked towards the

local grocery that was in the building next door, to purchase things for the approaching Shabbos. Fifteen minutes later, while the children and their parents were browsing through the store, two Arab terrorists took advantage of the stormy weather that day. They cut the gate into the town and entered, loaded with lethal weapons. With murderous fury, they approached the preschool and the grocery, and on the way, they murdered a young woman who was in their path, *Hashem yikom damah*.

A moment before they were to enter the grocery, an older woman emerged. She was none other than the teacher in the preschool next door. The terrorists quickly got to work attacking her with their knives, but miraculously, despite being injured, she was able to flee from them into a passing car whose driver realized what was going on. She fled from the scene, but not before the terrorist threw an improvised explosive device they had with them, that shattered the windows of the car, but miraculously did not cause serious damage.

From there, the terrorists hurried to the grocery, which was filled with customers, including the preschool children and their parents. They threw explosives inside, and after miraculously, *bechasdei Shamayim* did not explode, tried to go in and stab the patrons. Miraculously, again, the owner of the store was able to chase them away with nothing more than a shopping cart.

The security guard of the town hastened to the scene to kill the terrorists – and they tried to harm him with their weapons as well, but before they were able to do so, they fell into a pool of their own blood, as he did what he needed to.

“It’s hard to ignore the Hand of Hashgachah that we so clearly saw,” the letter-writer concluded. “It led to the fact that the amen *seudah* with the many *segulos* took place on that specific day when those terrorists wanted to harm as many residents of the *yishuv* as they could, and saved the teacher and the children who had participated.”

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



An old photo of the Jewish cemetery in Karlin, Belarus

The Mishkenos Yaakov

6 Kislev 5605

Harav Yaakov Baruchin was born in 5541 in the town of Minsk to his father, Rav Aharon, who was the son of a *talmid* of the Gra Harav Baruch of Shklov. He was known as a brilliant child, and when he grew up, he traveled to study in Yeshivas

Volozhin, and was one of the prime *talmidim* of the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Chaim of Volozhin. At first, Rav Yaakov tried to support himself in business, but after he was not successful, he accepted a rabbinical position, first in the town of Davyd-Haradok, and then in the Karliner community there, which is why he was called Rav Yaakov Karliner. In 5598 he printed his responsa *sefer, Mishkenos Yaakov*, which took the Torah world by a storm with its brilliance. His second *sefer, Kehillos Yaakov*, was published two years after his passing.

On the afternoon of 6 Kislev 5605, Rav Yaakov passed away, and was buried in the cemetery in Karlin.

Amen Is the Main Part of the Brachah

There is a famous statement indicating the great virtue of answering amen that is found in two places in the Talmud: In *Brachos* (53b) and *Nazir* (66b): “Rabbi Yosi says: ‘The one who answers is greater than the *mevarech*.’ Rabi Nehorai said to him: ‘*Hashamayim* [a term of oath]! Indeed, it is this way. Know that the simple soldiers begin the war and the heroic strong ones triumph.’” In other words: Just like during war, the strong soldiers are the ones that come in the rear to decide the battle, likewise, the one who answers amen after the *brachah* “is more praiseworthy than the *mevarech*” (*Hamefaresh Nazir* ibid ad loc. *Sheharei*).

The *Mishkenos Yaakov* explained (*Koheles Yaakov Brachos* 46a) that from the fact that *Chazal* (*Brachos* 53b) compare the one who says the *brachah* to a simple soldier who begins the battles, and the one who answers amen to the strong soldier who wins the war, we can learn two fundamental points in answering amen:

- Just like the strong soldiers in the parable in the *Gemara* are engaged in that battle, in the *nimshal* as well, both the *mevarech* and the one who answers amen are doing one thing, and from here we learn that amen is part of the *brachah*.

- Like the victory in the battle depends on the strong people, to which *Chazal* compared the *oneh* amen, likewise “the main part of fulfilling the *brachah* is by answering amen.”