

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Parashas MIKEITZ | 5784 | Issue No. 512

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

Purity of Heart as Preparation for Tefillah

"וישלח פרעה ויקרא את יוסף וירצהו מן הבור ויגלה
ויחלף שמלתיו ויבא אל פרעה" (מא יד)

Harav Shmuel ben Chofni Gaon wrote: From the description of Yosef's preparations for his meeting with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, we can learn how we have to prepare before we pray to the King of all kings. To appear before a flesh and blood king, who cannot see more than his eyes show him, Yosef prepared by cleaning himself externally – with a haircut and change of clothes. But to come before the King of kings, Who can discern the feelings of our heart, we have to prepare by "cleansing our souls and purifying them from the impurity of our sins."

*Peirush HaTorah LeRabi Shmuel ben Chofni
Gaon p. 110*

Harav Zev Edelman expounded on this subject:

The *Mishnah* in *Brachos* (30a) says: "One should only stand up to pray with *koved rosh*, solemnity. The early *chassidim* would linger one hour and then would pray, so that they could prepare their hearts for their Father in heaven. The question on the words of the *Mishnah* is obvious: Doesn't the *halachah* that "one should only stand up to daven with *koved rosh*" apply to each person? Why does the *Mishnah* cite the practice of the "early *chassidim*," which makes it sound as though this is not something for everyone, but only those who are on a loftier level?

Rav Zev explained that, on the contrary, the *Mishnah* calls upon us to extrapolate a *kal vachomer* for ourselves: If the early *chassidim* still needed an hour of preparation before they began to pray, how many hours do we need to properly prepare ourselves for *tefillah*?!
"Reb Velvel" p. 25

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A Perfect Protection Plan

Amidst all the pain and anguish that have accompanied us since the tragedy on Simchas Torah, as well as the stories of miracles that abound, we have internalized that there is no one for us to trust aside for our Father in heaven. Indeed, Dovid Hamelech tells us (*Tehillim* 23:4): "*Gam ki eilech begei tzalmaves*, even when I walk through the valley of death I will not fear because You are with me." Even in the most serious situations, we merit Divine protection and *Hashgachah pratis*.

Dovid Hamelech also conveyed to future generations a clear plan to merit full protection: It is well known that *Chazal* relate (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:21) that in the days of Dovid Hamelech, one hundred people in Klal Yisrael died each day. After Dovid was given to understand, with his *Ruach Hakodesh*, that this calamity was because they do not thank Hashem sufficiently for all the good He bestows upon them, he instituted that they should recite one hundred *brachos* each day. Indeed, this *takanah* was effective and the decree was nullified.

It's important for us to pay attention to the fact that Dovid Hamelech did not institute the *takanah* of *meah brachos* just for that time, but rather, for all the generations that followed as well. The *Bach* (*Orach Chaim* 46) learns from this that the same horrific death sentence that was in those days still hovers over our heads, and that in our generation as well – if we are only strict to recite one hundred *brachos* each day, we will be able to protect ourselves from it (*Bach, Orach Chaim* 46).

At this time of *tza'ar* for us all, we seek out a *segulah* that can give us a sense of protection in such days, even *segulos* with vague or questionable sources...And here we have a clear promise that Dovid Hamelech gives us, and it applies exactly to dangers such as the ones we are threatened by at this time. Can we imagine not grasping onto it?!

This is the place to add that in light of what is explained in the *poskim* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 167 16) that answering amen is part of the *brachah*, and only a *brachah* answered by amen is a complete *brachah*, it is fitting for anyone who wants this complete 'protection program,' to make sure that his *brachos* are completed with amen. We have an allusion to this in the *passuk* with which this section begins: "*Gam ki eilech begei tzalmaves* – the acronym of the words *כי אתה עמדי* is numerically equivalent to amen, to teach us that the merit of one hundred *brachos* that are completed with amen is what advocates for us to merit the Divine protection that is expressed in the words *כי אתה עמדי*! "

We, who are *chareidim lidvar Hashem*, must not ignore the fact that the protection of the generation is our responsibility! It behooves us to recite one hundred complete *brachos* a day, with amen, and thus to merit and to give merits for the entire generation to have maximum protection from the dangers that hover over us in this world.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

This story happened when the Chasam Sofer hosted a distinguished Yid, a *meshulach* from Eretz Yisrael, for a meal at his home. During the meal, there were lots of *divrei Torah*, as was fitting for a *seudah* of *talmidei chachamim*. As they spoke, the discussion rose about the *Gemara* (*Chulin* 87a) regarding the value of a *brachah*.

The *Gemara* there brings a story of a person who slaughtered a chicken and his friend covered the blood in his stead. Rabban Gamliel, who was asked to render judgment on this, ruled that the one who grabbed the opportunity needs to pay the *shochet* ten gold coins. The sages of the *Gemara* discuss among themselves if this obligation is because of the mitzvah that he took away, or in exchange for the *brachah* “*Al Kisui Dam B’Afar*” – that the *shochet* lost out on saying because of him.

As a supporting proof, the *Gemara* brings the case of a person who grabbed *Birchas Hamazon* from another person. This is one mitzvah, but it is comprised of

Surprisingly, the Sadducee opted to earn the mitzvah and lose out on the forty gold coins, and declared: “I am drinking the *kos shel brachah!*” As such, a Bas Kol emerged and announced, “*Kos shel brachah* is worth forty gold coins” – in other words, ten coins for each *brachah*.

At this point, the halachic discussion stopped and the meal ended as the Chasam Sofer presented his guest with a cup of wine and said to him, “If so, please be honored with the *kos shel brachah*, whose value is forty gold coins.”

The *meshulach*, whose purpose for his trip was apparently money and that was his top priority, made a mistake and replied jokingly that if it was up to him, he would actually prefer the forty gold coins to the *kos shel brachah*, whose reward is in the World to Come...

For the *meshulach*, this was a witty comeback, but the Chasam Sofer took it as a mockery of the words of *Chazal*. Without saying a word, the Chasam Sofer took the cup from his guest, and then

counted forty gold coins from his wallet, tied them up in a sachet, and handed them to his stunned guest. From that moment on, the Chasam Sofer did not say a word to him. At the end of the *seudah*, the guest rose with heaviness, and sadness, from his place, bid the Chasam Sofer farewell,

and turned to leave back to his lodgings.

If that was not enough, that evening, when the guest arranged his belongings, he was horrified to discover that the sachet with the forty gold coins he had received from the Chasam Sofer had disappeared. He’d lost the *brachah*, with its eternal reward, and didn’t even get to benefit from what he had exchanged it for. But he did retain the piercing lesson he had learned for the rest of his life.

As a postscript to this story, it is fitting to bring here a story that took place years later, with the disciple of the Chasam Sofer, Harav Moshe Schick, known as the Maharam Schick. This story illustrates his Rabbi tried to convey for generations what the tremendous value of each and

every *brachah* is.

It was in 5637, many years after the passing of the Chasam Sofer. Harav Moshe Schick had been widowed from his wife. Some time later, a distinguished *shidduch* was suggested for him with the widow of one of the *rabbanim* of the generation. Maharam Schick wanted to consult with his good friend, Harav Aharon Dovid Deutisch, author of *Goren Dovid*, and the Rav of Balassagyarmat, who was also one of the *talmidim* of the Chasam Sofer. Rav Aharon Dovid enthusiastically endorsed the suggestion, and he even sent a messenger to call the woman so that the *shidduch* could be completed as soon as possible.

The *shidduch* came to be. Some time later, a small wedding was held, with close family and friends in attendance. They came to rejoice that one of the giants of the generation was establishing a new home.

During the *seudah*, a guest suddenly arrived. It was Reb Mendel, the *shadchan* who had first made the suggestion. He came with a letter from the Divrei Chaim of Sanz, who ruled that although he had not brought the *shidduch* to fruition, he had first suggested it, and therefore, he deserved to receive fifty gold coins as *shadchanus* money.

The Maharam Schick was surprised at the ruling, because as far as he knew, the main part of the *shidduch* had been carried out by the one who brought it to completion, his friend the Goren Dovid. But he accepted the words of the Divrei Chaim, and invited the *shadchan* to wash his hands and join them for the *seudah*. When it came to *Birchas Hamazon*, all were surprised that among the many distinguished people who were there, the Maharam Schick honored specifically Reb Mendel with *bentsching*. The reason soon emerged – when at the end of the *brachah*, the Maharam Schick took ten gold coins from his pocket and handed them to the *shadchan* and said: “You received *Birchas Hamazon* in lieu of the forty gold coins, and here are ten gold coins to complete the fifty – the *shadchanus* money that the Divrei Chaim ruled is coming to you...”

When the *shadchan* returned to the Divrei Chaim and related the Maharam Schick’s clever way of handling the situation, the Divrei Chaim’s face lit up and he praised the wisdom of the Maharam Schick and said he agreed with what he had done.

Sapir Veyahalom – Birchas Hamazon p. 462



The path leading to the tziyun of the Chasam Sofer in Pressburg (today, Bratislava)

four *brachos*. If the obligation is for the mitzvah, then the one who took it away should pay ten gold coins, but if it is for the *brachah*, then he would have to pay forty gold coins – because there are four *brachos*.

The *Gemara* explains this with a story that happened: A Sadducee (Tzedoki) was a guest at the table of Rabbi, and Rabbi wanted to prevent him from joining the other diners for *Birchas Hamazon*, and offered, “Will you drink the *kos shel brachah* or will you take forty gold coins?” In other words, would you prefer to join us for *Birchas Hamazon*, or perhaps you want to leave before *Birchas Hamazon* and we will pay you forty gold coins – for the four *brachos* that you will lose out on.

This story was heard from Reb Mattisyahu W., shlita, who each morning, for many years already, has served in the Satmar and Seret Viznitz shuls in Yerushalayim as a gabbai amen. It's hard not to envy Reb Mattisyahu's merit, as each day, he hears the brachos of more than seventy people and answers amen after them. A cautious estimate indicates that he says amen more than 1000 times each morning.

Reb Mattisyahu merits to be able to do all this because of his structured daily schedule, which begins with *Shacharis vasikin* in the Satmar Bais Medrash in Yerushalayim, where he says amen to the *msipallelim* of the two *minyanim* that take place one after another. From there, he walks to the Seret Vizhnitz shul in order to answer amen after the *mispallelim* in the *minyanim* there. After that, he travels to the Kosel, and there as well, he is *zocheh* to answer amen after those who daven with the final *minyanim* each morning.

Reb Mattisyahu shares a moving story that led to him adapt this practice:

Twelve years ago, I suddenly contracted a serious infection that caused me to be paralyzed on the left side of my body. As a result, I was not able to eat by mouth, and the doctors connected me to medical devices through which I received nutrition directly to my body. My condition was complex, and the doctors expected my recovery to take no less than three years.

But as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 19:21): “*Rabbos machshavos b'lev ish v'atzas Hashem he sakum,*” and with *siyata diShmaya* after eight months, I began to get back to myself.

Throughout the period of the paralysis, and later, as I recovered and began to speak again, I took upon myself to cherish the merit that I have to say *brachos* and to answer amen. At the time I thought to myself that if I would have been able, I would have made *brachos* the whole day, but what could I do that we are limited in making *brachos* and cautioned not to make *brachos* that are not needed.

But with amen, I knew I have no limitations. And because *Chazal* state (*Brachos* 53b) that “one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech,*” I started to focus on amen, and since then, I have not stopped seeking out opportunities to answer amen. I am never satiated and I try to collect more and more of these precious diamonds.

Two months ago, Sunday 21 Cheshvan, I merited to see a real miracle in the merit of being so careful about amen each day:

On that day, after I finished my regular schedule in the shuls where I usually go to answer amen, at around eight o'clock I set out for the Kosel. When I entered the Kosel plaza, I suddenly began to feel horrible headaches, and within a few minutes, my vision went dark. I couldn't see anything.

I panicked, and one of the other people there who saw my distress immediately took me to my doctor in the clinic near my home. The doctor took my blood pressure and was alarmed to see that it was sky high. He said that he thought I was having a

stroke, and summoned an ambulance. Within minutes, I was in the speeding ambulance on the way to the hospital.

There, I was taken to the emergency room, where they began testing me; the results matched what I was feeling. My blood pressure did not bode well, and the doctors appeared very worried. I knew that my condition was not good; I was sure the end was near.

As per the doctors, I was taken for an urgent CT of the head. I was terribly afraid, and as they wheeled my stretcher, a *tefillah* suddenly burst out from deep in my heart: ‘*Ribono shel Olam, You know how much I made the effort today, like every day, to*

honor You by answering amen after the brachos of many Yidden. Today, even though I did not finish my job, I already answered amen to 67 people. Please, I did for Your Kavod, now, asef lema'an Shemecha, for the sake of Your Name, have mercy on me and take me out of this darkness to light, and send me a refuah sheleimah quickly.’

As they did the CT scan, I was much calmer, as if I was sure that the heartfelt *tefillah* had breached all the walls and gone straight up to the Kisei Hakavod.

Indeed, miraculously, a short time later, the results of the tests came back showing that my condition had improved, *baruch Hashem*. The blood pressure was slowly going down and my pulse stabilized. I asked to be released, but because of my overall health and advanced age, the doctor suggested keeping me for observation. I refused, “Sir, I cannot stay here, I have work to do...” I told him. “Early tomorrow morning, people will be waiting for me in shul to answer amen to their *brachos*. Please, let me go home so I can get to sleep in time and get up in time.”

To my joy, the doctor acceded to release me, and *bechasdei Hashem*, I even managed to daven *Minchah* that day with a *minyana*. When I arrived home, I leafed through the *Vechol Ma'aminim* pamphlet, as I usually do, which had come out for *Parashas Vayeira*, and I

was stunned to see that Rabbi Marmurstein's weekly segment seemed to have been written specially for me. The subject that he had chosen to address that week was about the *segulah* of answering amen for a *refuah*. I copied the segment many times, and the next morning, I distributed it to all my friends who say the *brachos* for me so that I can say amen.

“You need to realize,” I told them, as I am telling you, readers, “amen is a small word, but it contains everything. It's easy to do, it's a *segulah* for everything. Try it and you'll see. So many things in your life, in health and in *parnassah*, can change in one minute, if you'll just be strict about answering amen. And anyone who is not strict about it should know that he is taking upon himself a heavy responsibility regarding his health and the *yeshuah* of Klal Yisrael.”

Gates Open to a Brachah With Amen

Reb Mattisyahu has a moving message about the virtue of answering amen:

The *sefer Hazohar Hakadosh* (*Eikev* 271 1) brings that when the *brachos* answered with amen rise On High, all the gates are opened for them, and a Bas Kol declares in all the firmaments: This is the gift that So-and-So sent to the King. This is the gift that was fulfilled properly. The *Zohar* stresses that only a *brachah* that was answered by amen has fulfillment.

From the words of the *Zohar* we can clearly understand that a *brachah* that does not have amen answered is not as desired On High, and the gates to not open for it. Now, dear Yidden, see what a powerful effect amen has on the *brachah*. It is what causes the *brachah* to be wanted On High, for the gates to be opened for it, and that a special announcement should be made in greeting. Would we want to possibly lose this?! Is it possible that before saying a *brachah* we don't make sure there is someone to answer amen after it?! Is it possible that we shouldn't make the effort to look to answer amen after the *brachos* of a friend, and thus to dispatch perfect gifts to the Creator?!

Derech Emunim

The Halachos of Answering Amen

Birchos Hashachar Completed by Amen

There are those who write that the concept of the custom to recite *Birchos Hashachar* together in shul was intended so that each one of the *mevarchim* should fulfill his obligation to answer amen from those who answer amen to his *brachah*, because as we know, the *mevarchim* are also obligated to answer amen, as it is a part of the *brachah*.

Explanations and Sources:

This is explained by *Teshuvos Vehanhagos* (Vol. I, 7, and Vol. II 72), and it is a different opinion to that of the *Mishnah Berurah* (6 23), which holds that the reason for this practice is in order to meet the quota of ninety amens to *brachos* per day. And see further in *Teshuvos Vehanhagos* (ibid) that all those who recite *Birchos Hashachar* in shul “it is pleasant for them to be *mehader* and to make the *brachah* aloud, so his friend can answer amen.” Because the basis of the custom to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in shul, and not at home as written in the *Gemara* (see *Brachos* 60b), is in order to complete the *brachah* by answering amen. The Ateres Tzvi wrote in the name of his Rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin, that it is preferable to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in shul and not at home as the *din* is in the *Gemara*, “so that each one should answer amen after his friend’s *brachah*, because a *brachah* without amen is like half a body, as is well known” (*Pri*

Kodesh Hilulim, Shaar Habrachos Ch. 4).

However, all this is for those who hold that amen is part of the *brachah* even when the *mevarech* is not *motzi* the listeners of their obligation (as the *Teshuvos Vehanhagos* explains, ibid). Those who hold that answering amen is part of the *brachah* only when the *mevarech* is *motzi* the listeners in their obligation, should not attribute the custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* to this (as explained in the name of Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv in *sefer Peninei Tefillah*, p. 66).

The *Yesod Veshoresh Ha’avodah* (*Shaar Ha’ashmores* Ch. 10) wrote: “*Birchos Hashachar*...it is good to recite them in shul with the rest of the *tefillah*, so that others should answer amen to the *brachos*, because the virtue of the *brachah* is very great when amen is answered after it.” The words of the *Yesod Veshoresh Ha’avodah* are based on the *Zohar* (*Eikev* 271 1) that states that every *brachah* that is answered by amen is given fulfillment and *kiyum* is not based on what is said here that amen is part of the *brachah*. Rather, it is a separate definition, that even if answering amen is not part of the *brachah*, it is needed for the *brachah*, because it brings the *brachah* to fulfillment. That is what is evident from the *Nitzotzei Zohar* (ibid) which refers to the words of *Rabbeinu Bechaye* (*Shemos* 14:31) comparing the *brachah* to testimony from one witness and the answering of amen to a second witness that joins, in whose merit the testimony gains validity.

It is brought in *sefer Manchil Emunah* (20) that *Chazal* instituted *Chazaras Hashatz* in order to adorn the *brachos* of the *Amidah*, which are said in a whisper, with amen.

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav Zev Edelman
6 Teves 5760

Reb Zev was born in Brisk in 5674 to his father, Harav Avraham Edelman, *Hy”d*. As a youth, he learned in Yeshivas Brisk, under Harav Moshe Sokolovsky,

the Imrei Moshe. After the passing of his *rebbe*, he went to learn in Kamenitz, under Harav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, the *Birchas Shmuel*, who he considered his *rebbe muvhak*. While he was in Brisk, he became close to the *mara d’asra*, Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveichik, from who he learned, until he needed to move to Eretz Yisrael in 5697 following a draft notice that he received. When the Brisker Rav came to Eretz Yisrael, he became even closer to him, and followed many of his practices.

Rav Zev was known as a *gadol* in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, and was respectfully known as Reb Velvel. Until the end of his life, people flocked to him to learn Torah, *avodas Hashem*, for advice and for *brachos*. Some of his *divrei Torah* were published after his passing in the *sefer* “*Reb Velvel Der Edelman*.”

He passed away on 6 Teves 5760 and was buried in the Zichron Meir Cemetery in Bnei Brak.

This Is How He Made a Brachah

Following is a compilation of Rav Zev Edelman’s practices when reciting *brachos*, as described by his *talmidim* in the *sefer Reb Velvel* (p. 291 and 351):

- He was strict to concentrate seriously before each *brachah* he was about to make. His *brachos* were said with intense *kavanah*, word for word, and when he recited the Name of Hashem, he did so with evident awe and fear.
- When saying a *brachah* he stood in one place, without doing anything else.
- *Birchas Hamazon* was like *tefillas Shemoneh Esreh* for him, and he was very careful about it.
- Every *brachah* of *Birchos Hashachar* was said with awe and emotion, and with great *avodah*. When he said the *brachah* of *Elokai Neshamah* he would cry.
- He tried to have people answer amen after his *brachos*, even though he sometimes had to wait a long time for that to happen. Once, people came in late at night and saw that he had refrained from eating for a long time while he waited for someone to come and answer amen to his *brachah*. When they expressed surprise at this, he said that Harav Chaim of Volozhin had done this as well.

The Practice of the Birchas Shmuel

Reb Velvel had an interesting tidbit that he witnessed from his *rebbe* the *Birchas Shmuel*:

When people came to ask the *Birchas Shmuel* for a *brachah*, he would ask those standing near him to answer amen after his *brachah* (ibid p. 184).

A heartfelt plea from the Nasi of Bney Emunim,
Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

To my dear friends and brothers,

I write these lines from the deepest place in my heart. These are words that emerge from my heart with great pain, and I sincerely hope that they will penetrate hearts, and will awaken the love and effect the desired results.

We are all broken and grieving from the horrific massacre that struck us. The brutal murder and abduction of so many Jews from Eretz Yisrael has wounded the collective heart of the Jewish people, wherever they may be.

From then until now, it has not been quiet in Israel. Jews are in captivity deep in that bloody place; masses of wounded are suffering; tens of thousands of families have been exiled from their homes, and are wandering, bereft of everything. Above all, our enemies who seek to annihilate us are rejoicing at our struggles and are plotting to destroy us, may it never happen. The heart of the Jewish people is united in prayer for the welfare of our brethren, and with the hope that very soon, these difficult days will be behind us and we will hear only good tidings and *yeshuos*.

At this time, we all agree that it behooves each and every one of us to do everything in our ability for the sake of the *yeshuah* of Am Yisrael. Our obligation at this time is to open our eyes and to carry the burden with them. Every Jew understands that one must not stand by and observe. Indeed, in the *yeshivos* and shuls, *kollelim* and schools, all those who fear the Word of Hashem have undertaken to strengthen their learning and davening, each one to the extent that he is able. *Ashreichem Yisrael!*

But dear brethren, I would like to suggest, and perhaps even warn, about a very important matter, which regretfully, still needs *chizuk*. Who knows if at this time, an opportunity has arisen for all of us to elevate ourselves and to give merits for all of the Am Hashem waiting for His *yeshuah*:

We all know about the wonderful *segulah* of answering amen. We find in *Chazal*, in numerous places, that the merit of answering amen protects Am Yisrael, **especially in a time of war!**

Answering amen does not only protect the one who answers, but also all of Klal Yisrael, as the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu (Rabbah 11)* writes: **In whose merit to Hashem take revenge for Am Yisrael on the nations of the world? In the merit of people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* in the morning and evening and answer amen...**

These are clear words from Eliyahu Hanavi: **In the merit of those who rise to answer amen, Am Yisrael merits to prevail over its enemies.** And that is aside for the many merits that are added in the world from every amen that is answered. **After we realize how important it is to strengthen the answering of amen, especially at this difficult time, I turn to you with piercing cry:**

HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to give us protection; He is not demanding a lot, just that we should be more strict about the amen, which in any case we are obligated to answer. **This is such an easy request to accede to. Will we turn away from it, *chalilah*?!**

Chazal say (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1) that **anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the decree** of seventy years torn up, and when we see the *Middas Hadin* that is hovering over us, then it is only fitting for us to hear the cry of the *gedolim* through the generations, to this day, and to choose to strengthen our answering of amen, and of saying the *brachos* that are completed by amen.

It is worthwhile for each one of us to ask himself: **Did I do what is required of me at this difficult time??** Did I make at least a minimal effort for the sake of the *yeshuah* of Am Yisrael? This is a task that does not request physical effort or putting oneself in danger. It is simply honoring Hashem by coming early to davening and saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, to answer amen to the *brachos* of our friends, and to say our *brachos* aloud so others can answer amen. We have a responsibility! **“You cannot turn away!”**

Chazal tell us that thunder was only created to straighten out the crooked part of our hearts. Fortunate is one who merits to strengthen himself from the sounds of the thunder of war that we hear in these days, and to take part in the spiritual effort that Klal Yisrael so desperately needs.

**A loving and worried brother,
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**

Ein K'Elokeinu In Lieu of Answering Amen

The *piyut* of “Ein K'Elokeinu” is comprised of five stanzas, and each one has four praises. The first three stanzas begin with “Ein,” “Mi...” and “Nodeh” – which are an acronym for amen, while the other stanzas begin with “Baruch...” and “Atah...” The *Eitz Chaim* commentary on the *siddur* brings an early tradition according to which this *tefillah* was arranged in the order of the letters of “amen”, because “once, the evil regime cast a decree on Am Yisrael not to answer amen. What did they do? They instituted to say it allusively, with the acronym of ‘Ein...Mi...Nodeh...’” (*Eitz Chaim, Tefillas Ein K'Elokeinu*)



The Neis Follows Amen

Being strict about answering amen is the proper preparation for the mitzvah of lighting the *ner Chanukah*, which we light in memory of the miracles in the Mikdash. In the order of the aleph-beis, the letters אמנ come before the letters of בנס, “and after amen, the miracle is drawn down” (*Ner Yisrael [Kozhnitzer Maggid] Kavanas Chanukah*).

The First Tactic of the Greeks

The first tactic that the Greeks implemented to make Klal Yisrael forget the Torah was the prevent them from davening properly. Because if one does not daven properly, it is impossible to learn Torah. Only through davening according to *halachah* can one be a *ben Torah*, “but if his *tefillah* is not proper, even if he is missing only one amen, then that is already an obstacle to meriting to learn Torah.” Therefore, when the Chashmona'im prevailed over the Greeks “they stablished the eight days of Chanukah to thank and praise Your great Name.” The first obstacle that the Greeks placed was preventing *tefillah*, and therefore, when they were defeated, it was established that Am Yisrael should strengthen themselves in *tefillah* and *hoda'ah*. (*Shefa Chaim Rava Deravin, Vol. I, Parashas Toldos, Ma'amar 2:5*)

*Birchos Hashachar k'halachah:
Aloud, with kavanah, bechavrusa*



*"Al Hanissim v'al hapurkan...
she'asisa l'avoseinu bayamim haheim bazman hazeh."*

— Dear Yidden, —

During Chanukah, a time mesugal for miracles and yeshuos, let us all strengthen the mitzvah of amen, let us strengthen in saying **Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa every morning**, and we will merit to see miracles, purkan, gevuros and yeshuos, nechamos and milchamos – in this time as in those times, amen v'amen!

*Birchos Hashachar k'halachah:
Aloud, with kavanah, bechavrusa.*