

VeChol Maaminim

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A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

The Segulah of Birchas Halevanah

"החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה" (יב ב)

Chazal (Sanhedrin 42a) instituted that one who sees the new moon should recite *Birchas Halevanah*. There are many *segulos* attributed in our sources to the fulfillment of this mitzvah according to *halachah*:

Sefer Ohr Chadash, by Harav Chaim Bochner, one of the sages of Krakow (*Birchas Kiddush Hashem*) brings a story that he heard from the "aluf hachassid Moreinu Harav Moshe Meizlish of Krakow" of whom he testifies is a "bar samcha," one who can be relied on:

There was a Jew who was attacked one night by a non-Jew at night who wanted to kill him. Because it was the beginning of the month, when the moon was in its renewal stage, the Jew asked the non-Jew that before he carried out his plans, he should allow him to make *Birchas Halevanah*. The Jew stood up and recited the *brachah* with tremendous *kavanah*, and at the end of the *brachah*, when he jumped three times, as is customary when saying "Keshem she'ani roked kenegdech, just like I dance in front of you, and I cannot touch you, so, too, all my enemies should not be able to touch me to harm me," a miracle happened, and the wind picked him up and carried him away, and he was spared.

The *Ohr Chodosh* added in the name of Rav Moshe Meizlish that "from the day that someone sanctifies the new moon, he should not worry that he will die that month" [cited in the name of the *Eliyahu Rabbah* (*Orach Chaim* 602 7)]. This *segulah* became so widespread and well-known, that **Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz** wrote about it: "And *Kiddush Levanah* each month will prove itself for those who are careful about this mitzvah more than any other mitzvah, because it is printed that there is a guarantee that he will not die in that month."

Ohr Chodosh Birchas Kiddush Hashem; Ye'aros Dvash, Vol. 1, Drush 9

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Hours of Spiritual Pleasure

This week's *parashah*, *Parashas Bo*, describes the Geulah of Am Yisrael from Egypt, which they merited because of their firm *emunah* in Hashem. As Chazal say (*Yalkut Shimoni Beshalach* 240): "Our fathers were only redeemed from Mitzrayim in the merit of *emunah*." This Shabbos seems like an eminently suitable time to raise the subject and highlight out the Bney Emunim revolution. In fact, there is an allusion in this *parashah* to it, as נב is an acronym for Bney Emunim.

More than ten years ago, at the beginning of Bney Emunim's activities, when my Rebbe the Shevet Halevi, zy"א, sought to be *mechazek* me, he quoted *Sefer Chassidim* (261) that a mitzvah that is neglected, and which is not performed by many people, is like a "meis mitzvah," and therefore, one should strengthen oneself specifically in this mitzvah. "The *minhag* of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*," he added, "is like a *meis mitzvah*, as it was forgotten over the years, and therefore, it is a great mitzvah to work to arouse the *tzibbur* to cleave to it."

Bechasdei Hashem, from that point until now we've come a long way, and that same practice that was forgotten has been restored to its former glory. Today, in every shul, you can see many people who are strict to recite *Birchos Hashachar* for someone who will answer amen, and many dedicate a lot of time to answering amen after the *mevarchim*.

As someone who merits to stand

each day for several hours to answer amen after *mispallelim* in the Brizdovitz shul in Boro Park, New York, it's hard for me to describe that lofty feeling I have during these hours. I can only say that these are hours of spiritual pleasure for me, and a time when I feel a closeness to Hashem, both of which are hard to describe with words. It's like the words in this *parashah* (10:26): "v'anachnu lo neida, we do not know with what we will serve Hashem until we arrive there," and I will clarify that point that only someone who has merited to actually do this, who has "been there," can understand what I'm saying.

In this *parashah* we can also find a significant *remez* that indicates the loftiness of answering amen: The last letters of the words of the *passuk* (12:2) "ראשון הוא לכם" is amen. And Chazal say (*Devarim Rabbah* 6 1) that "there is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Am Yisrael answer."

Someone who believes in the power and loftiness of answering amen has no difficulty that will prevent him from standing and answering amen each morning. That is besides the fact every amen that we merit to answer creates an angel that accompanies the one who answers amen and the *mevarech*, and protects them. Is there someone who would not want to keep amassing more amens?!

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

When Reb Moshe entered the room of his son Shimon, the first thing that hit him was the mess in every corner. The mess was very discordant to Reb Moshe and his wife, who were scrupulous about cleanliness and order, but Reb Moshe was not disturbed by the scene. What did bother him was the second thing that caught his eye: the *tallis*, which in contrast to the raging mess, was folded neatly in its place on the shelf.

A short time before, Reb Moshe had received an urgent telegram summoning him to travel to a financial conference in a far off city, at which a decision was set to be made that would have a decisive impact on his business.

At his advanced age, Reb Moshe was not used to these types of hasty trips, and his son Shimon had volunteered to go in his stead. He hurried to leave on the first train going towards that far off city. He had many hours of travel ahead, and if he would not depart immediately, he would not make it in time.



A traffic jam in Paris

Shimon had hastily put together his things, and had not paid any attention to the mess that was generated by his frenzied preparations, which was rather out of character for him. His *tefillin* was the first thing to go into the suitcase, but his *tallis*, in his haste, was left behind. Shimon had not yet married, but in their community, it was customary to wear a *tallis* from the age of bar mitzvah.

Reb Moshe could have judged his son favorably. He knew very well that even after Shimon had gone into business, he was still very strict to maintain every *halachah* and *minhag* that he had seen in his parents' home. This included the custom of wearing the *tallis* from the age of bar mitzvah, and he had surely forgotten the *tallis*

because of his hurried state. But Reb Moshe sensed that this was not a time to give in on this matter.

As the member of one of the veteran German communities, most of whose members were in business, and at the same time were very careful to maintain their heritage and to educate their children in the path of their *rebbe*, Harav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, *zt"l*, Reb Moshe knew how important it was to preserve each *minhag*, with every detail.

He knew how many *nisyonos* his son might encounter during his life in the business world, and believed that the only thing that would help him stand strong in his Yiddishkeit would be not to deviate one iota from the path of Torah and *mesorah*. Now the moment had come where this was being put to the test. Reb Moshe knew what he had to do and didn't think twice. He took the *tallis*, and without considering his age, and the many things he had to do, he hurried to put together a suitcase for himself. Meanwhile, he asked his assistant to check when the next train was to the city where Shimon had traveled.

Within a short time, Reb Moshe was standing in the train station. He had many hours of travel ahead of him, but he didn't regret it for a minute, not the effort of the trip, not the business he had left behind. All he saw in his mind's eye was the future of his son, and his offspring, and that was what gave him the fuel to do what he did.

About ten hours later, all the people gathered for the conference were most surprised when Reb Moshe, the distinguished businessman, appeared himself at the entrance of the conference hall. The participants rose out of respect and greeted him warmly, but Reb Moshe ignored them all. He apologized for the disturbance, and ask his son – who was astonished to see his father – to come with him out of the room.

Shimon hurriedly followed his father to the hallway; he was afraid something terrible had happened, and driven by his fear, he began to assail his father with questions: "What happened? Is everyone okay at home? Is the business alright...?"

"Relax," his father reassured him with

a smile on his face. "*Baruch Hashem*, we are all fine, and the business is doing wonderful."

"So why did you come all the way here?" Shimon was very puzzled. In response, his father took out the velvet pouch from his valise. "I came to bring you this!" he said, and pointed to the *tallis*.

"You forgot your *tallis* at home..."

His son could not understand: "You came all the way here for that? You made such an exhausting trip to bring me the *tallis*?! What would have happened if I would have davened once or twice without a *tallis*? In most communities of Ashkenaz they start to wear a *tallis* only after marriage!"

Shimon could not fathom how a person who was as wise and calculated as his father was acting this way. His father did not leave him wondering for long, and explained: "Indeed, that is exactly why I made this effort! Because it is a *minhag* that our ancestors have practiced since time immemorial, so I could not think of the idea that you would forego it, not even once, so that you should learn how important the obligation is to preserve every nuance of a *minhag*. From my personal experience, and from the lives of my ancestors, I have learned that mild laxity in a *minhag* can have an effect for generations. Being lax in a *minhag*, even a small one, is an opening for a decline whose effects cannot be foreseen!"

Know, my son, that preserving the customs of my fathers is more important to me than any business dealing, even one that can lead to huge profits. I gave up a business trip, but I could not give up on this trip," the father concluded emotionally.

Many years passed until the fruits of that effort were reaped. Apparently, the action of the father left a tremendous impression on Shimon's soul. He built his home in the subsequent years, and remained careful to bring his children up in the same way his father had so arduously set for them. In time, his father merited to see beautiful generations of progeny from him.

Shimon merited to establish a very well-known family, whose children were *talmidei chachamim* and *tzaddikim* who adorned the *mizrach* wall of Torah Jewry around the world. They all had wonderful families, and many students who proudly carried on with their glorious heritage.

Tiv Hakehillah Vayeitzei 5780

Pausing in the *Passuk* “*Hashem Melech*”

When a person says “*Hashem Melech, Hashem Malach, Hashem Yimloch l’olam va’ed*,” he should not stop at all to answer amen¹. But there is an opinion that one should only not pause between Hashem and *Melech* or *Yimloch*, but between *Hashem Melech* and *Hashem Malach*, and between *Hashem Malach* and *Hashem Yimloch* – one may pause².

1. *Mishnah Berurah* (51 12) in the name of the *Eliyah Rabbah* (ibid 4), and as ruled that one should not pause between “*Hashem Elokeichem*” and “*Emes*” (See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 66 5).

The *Ketzos Hachoshen* wrote that in *nusach Sephard* where this *passuk* is said before *Baruch She’amar*, one does not have to be strict not to pause, except when saying this *passuk* in *Yehi Kevod*. But when saying *Hashem Melech* before *Baruch She’amar*, one is permitted to answer amen even in the middle of the *passuk*, as in the *piyut* of *Adirei Ayumah* in *Shacharis* of Rosh Hashanah, where we pause in this *passuk* to say the words of the *piyut*. See also *Notrei Amen* (Vol. II, Ch. 20, 25) and what he writes on this subject.

This *passuk* does not appear in its full form in *Tanach*; it is compiled from three different *pesukim* (*Tehillim* 10:16; ibid 96:10; *Shemos* 15:18), and the source is in *Pirkei Heichalos* (Ch. 7) and in the *Zohar* (*Raya Meheimna Pinchas* 223 1).

2. *Kaf Hachaim* (ibid 15), because if he stops between Hashem and Melech, then the meaning of the words is distorted, and it is considered that the person uttered Hashem’s Name in vain. The *Kaf Hachaim* added (ibid) that in every place where Shem Shamayim is mentioned, one should be strict not to pause between the mention of Hashem’s Name and the word before or after it, if doing so will distort the meaning of the *passuk*, so as not to be considered uttering Hashem’s Name in vain. The *Ben Ish Chai* wrote (*Parashas Vayigash* 11) that that one should say the last *passuk* in *Yehi Kevod* adjacent to *Ashrei*, and he should not pause between them. Therefore, one who is about to recite the last *passuk* in *Yehi Kevod*, and sees that a person starts making a *brachah*, or starts saying *Kaddish*, should stop and answer amen, and then he should say this *passuk* adjacent to the recital of *Ashrei*. But if he is presented with an opportunity to answer amen after he finishes the last *passuk* in *Yehi Kevod*, he may pause to answer, but after he answers, he should say the last three *pesukim* in *Yehi Kevod* and then right away follow them with *Ashrei*.

Taaneh Emunim

Pearls on the Mitzvah of Tefillah

Hodu

Calling the Name of Hashem

“הודו לה’ קראו בשמו הודיעו בעמים עלילותיו”

Let’s try to understand the meaning of the words “*Kir’u biShemo*” and what is the call to Hashem that is referred to here?

The *Ibn Ezra* (*Tehillim* 105:1) explains that the *passuk* “*Kir’u biShemo*” is an instruction to call the Name of Hashem in front of all the denizens of the world – “Do not read it *vayikra*, but rather *veyakri*,” because after the guests of Avraham Avinu ate at his table, they wanted to bless him and thank him. “He said to them: Did you eat from mine? It was from the Master of the World that you ate! Thank Him and praise Him and bless the One Who declared and created the world.”

In the *Siach Yitzchak* commentary, by Rav Yitzchak Moltzan (*Siddur Ishei Yisrael*), he explains (based on the *Gra*, *Divrei Hayamim* I 16:8): “*Hodu l’Hashem*” for all the good things that He did for you, “*kir’u biShemo*” – call out about all that Hashem has done for you, meaning recognize the fact that all that you have is from Him, and do not attribute it to your strength and your powers. And as it says of Avraham Avinu (*Bereishis* 13:4): “*Vayikra sham beShem Hashem*,” which means that Avraham recognized that the whole world and all

that is in it belongs to Hashem and he called Hashem’s Name about it all. And *Chazal* say (ibid) that he said to those who dined at his table: “Did you eat from mine? It is from the Master of the World that you ate.” And the *Siach Yitzchak* concludes that when saying this *passuk* with *kavanah*, the *mispallel* fulfills the commandment (*Devarim* 8:18): “And you should remember Hashem Elokecha because He gives you strength *la’asos chayil*.”

The *Alshich* further explained (*Tehillim* 105:1) that the declaration of “*Hodu l’Hashem kir’u biShemo*” said at the beginning of the *tefillah* comes to teach the person that he should thank Hashem for the fact that he has the merit to call the name of Hashem, to praise Him – “*Hodu l’Hashem*” for the merit of “*kir’u biShemo*.”

Harav Yaakov Abuchatzera, author of *Abir Yaakov*, explains that when Dovid Hamelech says “*Hodu l’Hashem kir’u biShemo*,” he is calling upon us to be strict to thank Hashem and to mention His Name by saying one hundred *brachos* each day. An allusion to this *kavanah* is explained by the *Abir Yaakov* from the fact that the numerical equivalent of the *passuk* “הודו בשמו קראו לה’” is the same as the numerical value of the words מאה ברכות ביום. (*Shaarei Teshuvah Ofan* 21)

Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

It happened on one of the *chizuk* trips that Harav Meir Michoel Greenwald, *shlita*, the *mezakeh harabbim*, took to the communities of Argentina. The Rav went to speak to a large audience in the central shul, and at the end of the *drashah*, he noticed out of the corner of his eye a Jew with a distinguished bearing, waiting for him impatiently. Rav Meir Michoel turned his attention to him. This Yid had a remarkable story to tell about a *yeshuah* that he merited because he was strict about answering amen. Rav Greenwald is used to hearing stories of *yeshuos*, but the story that man told defied all imagination.

“About two years ago, the Rav was here and spoke at length about the importance of being strict to recite *brachos* and answer amen according to *halachah*,” the man reminded Rav Greenwald, and continued: “My family and I emerged from the *drashah* with the decision to strengthen our recital of *brachos* and answering amen.

I will not exaggerate if I say that the house was transformed since then. The secular atmosphere that always prevailed made way for an atmosphere of *kedushah* and *yiras Shamayim*. The children also grew stronger and it had a positive effect on their studies.

I am a dealer in precious stones, and

because the neighborhood where we live is surrounded by crime-ridden neighborhoods, we have no choice but literally to barricade ourselves. Our home is surrounded by a high wall and is wired with cameras that are always connected to an emergency center.

But if Hashem doesn't guard a city, all the defenses that we built could not withstand those two determined and wily thieves, who two weeks ago, were able to overpower our security system and break in at the hour that my family was eating supper together.

When the two masked intruders burst into the kitchen, the whole family froze in place. They were armed with a few weapons, and were infused with a desire to kill – thus clearing their path to the safe. That could have all happened – if not for the angels that appeared from Above to protect us. Let me explain:

A minute earlier, my wife had poured herself a cup of cold water, and the rest of the family gathered around her, as our practice has become, to answer amen. When the two thieves entered, the cup nearly fell from her shaking hand, but on the spur of the moment, she decided to ignore them and to say the *brachah* out loud.

The Rav can only imagine how a *brachah*

in such a situation is said, and likewise the amen – the children shouted it like they had never shouted before.

I have no way to explain why, and I have no one to ask, but surprisingly and in the most unbelievable way, when they heard the amen, the thieves simply turned on their heel and fled.

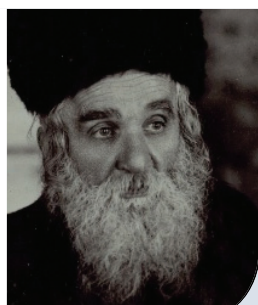
“Like I said, I have no way to explain this miracle, but it would be an honor for me if the Rav has a way to do so,” the man concluded his story and fell silent.

Rav Greenwald noticed that meanwhile, quite a large group had gathered around them. It was only fitting for him to respond, and he suddenly had an inspiration from Above, and he remembered the *remez* that is cited by *Ohr Hachaim* on the *passuk* (*Bamidbar* 26:8): “*Umeah mikem revavah yirdofu*” – the one hundred *brachos* that you make each day will pursue and submit the ten thousand harmful forces that always surround a person, and as the *Rokeach* says (320) the mitzvah of *Meah Brachos* is intended to save Am Yisrael from one hundred curses written in the Torah.

“If the power of a *brachah* is so great,” Rav Greenwald concluded, “how much more so is the power of amen, because we know that the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*.”

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Maharsha"m of Brezhan

The Maharsha"m of Brezhan 16 Shevat 5671

Harav Shalom Mordechai was born to his father, Rav Moshe Hakohen Schwadron in 5595. Already as a child, he excelled in many ways, was clearly brilliant and studied with great diligence. As a youth, he learned from Harav Yoel Ashkenazi, the Rav of Zlotchov.

After his marriage, he refused to benefit from the crown of Torah, and worked in business. But after he lost all his assets, he was compelled to take on a rabbinical

position. From 5627, he served as Rav in various towns, and in 5640, he was chosen to serve as the Av Bais Din of Brezhan, where he established a yeshivah that he then led.

He became known as one of the eminent *poskim* of his generation, and people turned to him from all over the world to render decisions on complex halachic questions. The power of *is hasmadah* was boundless, and indicative of that is an inscription found in his *sefer Arba'ah Turim*: “Today *baruch Hashem* I finished the *Tur* and the *meforshim* for the 101st time.”

He passed away on 16 Shevat 5671 in Brezhan, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in the city.

His *seforim* include: *Shu"t Maharsha"m*, with more than 2300 *teshuvos* in nine volumes; *Da'as Torah*, comments and explanations on the *Shulchan Aruch* – *Orach Chaim* and *Yoreh Deah*; and *Techeiles Mordechai al haTorah*.

The Path to the Goal Precedes the Goal

The Maharsha"m of Brezhan wrote:

Although answering amen is only caused by the *brachah* said before it, in any case, *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): “The one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*,” because answering amen is the goal, and the *brachah* is the way to reach the goal. That is the way of the world: that the path to reach the goal precedes, chronologically, the achievement of the goal itself. It is like one who builds a house for himself – the process of building is long, and precedes the goal – residing in the house.

This is the concept Rabi Nehorai referred to when he declared on this statement: “*Hashamyim kein hu!*” *Chazal* say (*Chagigah* 12a) that at the time of Creation, the creation of the land preceded the creation of the *shamayim*, because the Heavens are the goal and the land is only a means to get to it, as it says in the *Mishnah* (*Avos* 4:15): “This world is compared to a corridor before *Olam Haba*, prepare yourself in the corridor so that you can enter the banquet hall.” So just like in *Brias Ha'olam* – when the land was created before the Heavens, because the latter is the goal, likewise, amen is greater than the *brachah*, and it is said after the *brachah*, because it is the goal.

Techeiles Mordechai, Bereishis