

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"



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Parashas VA'EIRA | 5784 | Issue No. 516

## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah  
in the Parashah

### The Tefillah of Am Yisrael Because of the Egyptians

"וגם אני שמעתי את נאקת בני ישראל אשר  
מצרים מעבדים אתם ואזכר את בריתי" (וה)

Harav Dovid Shlomo Eibeshitz,  
author of *Arvei Nachal*, explained:

By nature, as long as things are going well for a person, he does not really seek to submit himself to his Creator. Only when he is in trouble does he submit himself and plead to be spared from his troubles. At that time, it is fitting that he should express regret and shame to his Creator for not having submitted himself before the troubles beset him. His regret for the past is considered for a person as if he prayed even before the trouble beset him. This is the correct *tefillah*, as *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 32a): "A person should always ask for mercy that he not fall ill, because if he falls ill, they tell him: bring a merit and you will be absolved."

Therefore, the *passuk* alludes: "נאקת בני ישראל" was "because Egypt was enslaving them" – the Egyptians are the ones that aroused them to do the "*avodah shebalev – tefillah*" (*Taanis* 2a) and they did not awaken of their own accord to submit to their Creator and to daven to Him while they were dwelling in peace and tranquility, before the *shibud* of Egypt.

*Arvei Nachal*

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Baruch Matir Assurim

At night, when we sleep and do not control our limbs or move them as we wish, we are considered prisoners. Therefore, *Chazal* instituted that each morning, when we arise, when the power to move one's limbs is restored, we thank our Creator with the *brachah* of *Matir Assurim* for taking us out of the prison of our night's sleep and giving us power to move, safely and with stability.

The *nusach* of the *brachah* of *Matir Assurim* is based on the words of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 146 6): "*Hashem matir assurim*." Indeed, it is intentional that *Chazal* instituted that we thank Hashem for the emergence from the bondage of the night's sleep with the language that Dovid Hamelech uses to praise Hashem, Who opens the bonds of prisoners in the jails and sets them free. The basis of these two actions is similar, as with both, the person is released from confinement.

I thought to further explain that the reason *Chazal* chose the term "*matir assurim*" as gratitude for the renewal of the ability to move one's limbs is so that we should internalize the simple truth: If not for Hashem renewing our power to move our limbs each morning, we really would be like prisoners in a jail! We clearly see, *lo aleinu*, that when a person is paralyzed and cannot move his arms and legs, in a way, his movement is much more limited than the movement of a prisoner in jail.

During these days, when we are all feeling the pain of the many hostages who are being held captive by a harsh and cruel enemy, it is fitting for us to strengthen our

*kavanah* when reciting this *kavanah*. Before reciting the *brachah*, let us pause for a moment and think about the immense gratitude that is incumbent on us. Through that, we can continue to have *kavanah* to ask from the depths of our hearts to have our brethren released from captivity, and that they should merit very soon to recite "*baruch matir assurim*."

Moreover, the many people who are hospitalized are also like prisoners, and it is fitting for us to ask that they should be healed and released from the bondage of their injuries. It is possible that for this reason, the praises of "*rofei cholim*" and "*matir assurim*" are written next to each other in the *brachah* of *Atah Gibor* in *Shemoneh Esreh* – because a sick person who is healed is like one who is released from prison.

This is the place to reiterate the importance of this *kavanah*, especially when answering amen to this *brachah*. As we know, the acronym of the words of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 2:3): "ננתקה את" – is amen. And surely there is an allusion here to the *nituk*, the disconnection of the bonds of captivity from the prisoners of Am Yisrael in the merit of answering amen.

May it be Hashem's Will that in the merit of strengthening our *kavanah* when saying the *brachah* of *Matir Assurim* and answering amen after it with *kavanah*, we should merit very quickly to see the fulfillment of the promise of "*veshavu banim ligvulam*" (*Yirmiyahu* 31:16), amen v'amen.

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

It was Friday morning in Paris, France. The Eiffel Tower, the pride and symbol of the city was clearly visible from the window of the office in which Shimon sat biting his nails nervously. He was facing a difficult dilemma.

Shimon, a Torah-observant French Jew, had taken upon himself some time before not to work on Friday after *chatzos*. He was an agent in a successful real estate agency, and despite the difficulty involved, he had managed to obtain the consent of his non-Jewish boss that every Friday, ahead of *chatzos*, he would lock the door of his office and travel home to prepare for Shabbos.

For many months, he was able to meet his goal, usually pretty easily. But today, he was facing a challenge: Shortly before *chatzos*, the boss had invited him to a meeting at which he wanted to finalize the percentage that he was going to get for a big deal that Shimon had successfully negotiated.

Shimon deliberated; should he agree



A traffic jam in Paris

to the boss's request and on a one off instance, be delayed in the office on Friday after *chatzos*? Or should he postpone the meeting for another time...

In the end, he decided to accede to the request, convinced deep down that this was not "work" but rather a matter of getting paid. Besides, he promised himself that he would make every effort to shorten the meeting and end it by *chatzos* or just a short time afterwards...

In fact, the boss was delayed and Shimon began the meeting late. If that was not enough, there was lots of paperwork to review, and it took much longer than expected. The meeting was only over at three thirty; Shimon

received a large cash payment, and hurried out to head home.

At 3:45, Shimon got into his car. It was an hour's drive, and all being well, he should be home before five, and at this time of the year, Shabbos in Paris began at a quarter to nine. But his heart was heavy that he had violated his *kabbalah*.

He had already driven halfway home when traffic came to a standstill. There was a long traffic jam on the road ahead of him, the result of a bad accident. As the moments ticked by, Shimon realized that if he wanted to get home in time, he would have to park his car on the side of the road and start walking towards home.

However, at that time, Shimon found himself near a neighborhood that was notorious for its crime. It was an area where many immigrants lived, natives of countries from all over the world. Naturally, it was a place with lots of crime and violence. Every French citizen knew that it wasn't worth passing through this place, and it was not advisable to even slow down, certainly not to park. Let's not even mention leaving things in a parked car...

The neighborhood was known as a home base for cells of vehicle thieves that operated all over Paris. Shimon knew that a car that was left there would be dealt with very quickly by one of these cells.

He glanced at his watch; it was very late, and when he realized that he would arrive home long after Shabbos began, he decided to leave his car in that neighborhood. With a heavy heart, he hid the money, his wallet and documents under the driver's seat. He locked the car and hid the keys in the inner part of one of the tires, and then left the scene quickly, hoping that none of the residents had noticed him.

He walked quickly. Paris is a huge city, and he had a very long walk ahead of him. Throughout his walk, he mulled over the events of the day. He realized that he was being sent a message from Above. He should have kept to his *kabbalah* firmly, without any rationalizing, and he offered a quiet *tefillah* that he should get home

safely, and that nothing should happen to his money.

"Ribbono shel Olam," Shimon davened. "I got the message...I promise that from here on in, I will keep to my *kabbalah* firmly. Please, lead me and get him home safely, and send Heavenly Angels to protect my possessions and prevent me from suffering a loss."

On his long way home, he stopped at a shul to daven. It was only close to eleven by the time he got home. His family was very worried, and he calmed them down and told them what had happened. Then he washed his hands for the Shabbos meal. Throughout Shabbos, he forced himself not to worry, and made every effort to bask in the sanctity and enjoyment of Shabbos.

On Motzaei Shabbos, Shimon called his brother-in-law and asked him to take him to the place where he left his car. When his brother-in-law heard the story he gasped: "You left the car in such a place? And you left money inside it?! It's a waste of a drive, the car is for sure not there, not to mention that sum of money that you left inside it." But Shimon was not ready to give up. He had learned his lesson, and he had davened.

They drove over and were happy to find that the car was still there. Shimon excitedly got out of the car and bent down to take his keys from where he had left them, but that minute, two detectives in black descended on him.

After a short conversation, the magnitude of the miracle became clear. Apparently these detectives were part of an undercover police force stationed in the neighborhood to keep an eye on the people and prevent crime. On Friday, they had noticed a figure suspiciously bending down near a parked car. It was Shimon, bending down to hide his keys, but they assumed it was a criminal planning some type of unsavory act. So they decided to wait nearby, hoping to catch the criminal in the act. Now that he had come back, they were sure they had nabbed their criminal.

Shimon's *tefillah* had been heard. The detectives were looking for thieves, and without knowing it, were emissaries from Above to protect his possessions.

*Sas B'Imrasecha, Parashas Shelach, p. 263*

### During Pesukei Dezimrah

One who in the middle of *tefillah* and hears a *brachah* from another person must figure out based on where he is up to if he is allowed to stop and answer amen. The *halacha* is as follows: If one hears a *brachah* while saying *Pesukei Dezimrah* when he is in the middle of two *pesukim*, or in the middle of a *passuk* but at a place where one *inyan* ends, he may answer amen<sup>1</sup>. And if he is in the midst of an *inyan*, he should only stop to answer amen to the *brachos* of “*HaK-l HaKadosh*” and “*Shome’a Tefillah*,”<sup>2</sup> and to answer amen after the first part of *Kaddish* until “*d’amiran b’alma*”<sup>3</sup>. But one should not answer amen after the additions in *Kaddish*, meaning after “*tiskabel*,” “*al Yisrael*,” “*yehei shlama*,” and “*oseh shalom*” during *Pesukei Dezimrah*, even in between passages<sup>4</sup>. There is an opinion that after “*tiskabel*” and “*al Yisrael*” one may answer amen in *Pesukei Dezimrah*<sup>5</sup>.

1. From when a person begins saying “*Baruch She’amar*,” he must not stop to speak, even for a *dvar mitzvah*, until after the *tefillah* (*Shulchan Aruch* and *Rema Orach Chaim* 51 4). One should not even stop to say “*Baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo*” (*Shulchan Aruch Harav* 124 8; *Mishnah Berurah* 51 8). But the *poskim* write (*Keshet Godel* [Chida] 7 34; *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, *ibid* 5; *Pri Migadim Eshel Avraham* 51 3, according to *Magen Avraham*; *Kaf Hachaim* *ibid* 21) that to answer amen after every *brachah* one may stop in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimrah*, because answering amen is a praise like *Pesukei Dezimrah*, and it is not considered a *hefsek*. [And see *Pri Migadim* (*Eshel Avraham* 51 3) who wrote that answering amen after a *brachah* where one asks for his needs, where one should have the *kavanah* of “*yehi ratzon* that the words of the *mevarech* should be fulfilled,” is considered a praise.] And see *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayigash* 10) who wrote in *Sha’ar Hakavanos* (*Inyan Birchos Hashachar*) that the Arizal would answer amen after those who recited *Birchos Hashachar* in his Beis Medrash even while saying *Pesukei Dezimrah*. And in any case, the *Ketzos Hashulchan* (18 2) wrote that one who answers amen in the middle of a *passuk* should go back and begin that *passuk* again. But the *Chayei Adam* wrote (20 3) that in the middle of a *passuk* of *Pesukei Dezimrah* one should not answer amen unless he is up to a pause, a *hefsek*, in a certain subject. The *Mishnah Berurah* concurs (*ibid* and see what he wrote in *Biur Halachah* *ibid*).

But it was not permitted to answer in *Pesukei Dezimrah* unless it is an amen whose obligation is *min hadin* to answer, such as after a *brachah* that has *Shem* and *Malchus*, or after *Kaddish*. But one should not answer amen that is not an obligation to answer, such as after a *brachah* without Hashem’s Name, after a *Mi Shebeirach* or a *Yehi Ratzon* said on Monday and Thursday after *Krias HaTorah* (*Derech Hachaim*, *Din Pesukei Dezimrah*, 3; *Piskei Teshuvos* 51 11; *Notrei Amen* Vol. II, Ch. 20, 15).

2. The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 4 6) says that answering amen after the *brachos* of *HaK-l HaKadosh* and *Shome’a Tefillah* have a special importance. The *Bais Yosef* explains (*Orach Chaim* 66) in the name of Rav Yitzchak Abuhav that this importance stems from the fact that the *brachah* of *HaK-l HaKadosh* ends the first part of the *Amidah*, meaning the *Birchos Hashevach*. The *brachah* of *Shome’a Tefillah* ends the second part – the *brachos* of *bakashah*. The *Rema* (*ibid* 3) rules like the *Yerushalmi*, while the *Bais Yosef* (*ibid*) holds that because the *Bavli* did not cite this *halachah*, it differs from the *Yerushalmi*. Therefore, it is not ruled in *halachah* like the *Yerushalmi*, and answering amen to these *brachos* has the same *din* as answering amen to the other *brachos*. Based on the *Rema*, the *Biur Halachah* ruled (51 4) that to answer these amens one should pause in *Pesukei Dezimrah*, even in the middle of an *inyan*. And it should be noted that even according to the *Ben Ish Chai* (*Shemos* 6) and the *Kaf Hachaim* (*ibid* 23), who rule like the *Bais Yosef* that the *din* of answering amen to these two *brachos* is the same as answering amen to the rest of the *brachos*, still, they don’t differ on the practical application of the *halachah*, because as explained in the previous footnote, in their view, it is permitted to answer amen to all the *brachos* during *Pesukei Dezimrah*, even in the middle of an *inyan*.

3. See *Mishnah Berurah* (51 8); *Shaar Hatziyun* (*ibid* 12) and *Biur Halachah* *ibid*. *Sefer Ishei Yisrael* (16:23) brings in the name of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach that even in the first part of *Kaddish*, one should not answer amen after “*Vikarev Meshichei*,” and after “*Brich Hu*,” because answering amen after them is a *minhag* and not *me’ikar hadin*. But the *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayigash* 10) and the *Kaf Hachaim* wrote that one is permitted to answer all five of the first amens of *Kaddish*, and the *Halichos Shlomo* (*Tefillah* p. 79) also wrote that one who is strict not to miss any of the five amens in the main part of *Kaddish* may answer in *Pesukei Dezimrah* all of the first five amens in *Kaddish*.

Regarding saying “*Brich Hu*” in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimrah*, the Acharonim wrote that it should not be said even in a place where there is a pause between *inyanim*. See *Shu”t Levushei Mordechai* (*Orach Chaim Tanyana* 10), *Shu”t Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. II end of 16) and *Shu”t Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. XI, 3).

4. The *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayigash* 10) questioned the *din* of answering amen after these requests, and concluded that one should not to answer in the middle of *Pesukei Dezimrah*, and the *Kaf Hachaim* concurs (*ibid* 22). Likewise, *sefer Ishei Yisrael* (*ibid*) cites Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach not to answer amen after these requests in *Pesukei Dezimrah* because it is not an obligation to say them.

5. *Shu”t Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. IV, 14).

## Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

## Amen in a Dream

Motty is a fine Jew who works as a courier. He has earned the reputation of being trustworthy and a *yerei Shamayim*, and therefore, he is in high demand for deliveries that require someone faithful, such as money to banks, documents to lawyers and suchlike.

One day, Motty was sent to deliver a valuable envelope to a bank branch in Tel Aviv. He'd already been sent there a number of times. When he reached the branch, he saw that the clerk who was supposed to receive the envelope was busy on a phone call, and he used the opportunity to take a drink of cold water. As was his practice, he recited the *brachah* with *kavanah*, and in a loud voice, but while in the middle of the *brachah* he was surprised to hear a loud shout from one of the clerks, a person whose appearance confirmed that he was far from Torah and *mitzvos*: "Not here! This is not a *beit knesset!*" the clerk yelled angrily. Embarrassed, Motty had to finish the *brachah* quietly. He handed over the envelope in silence and turned to his next stop.

A short time after that, he had to be in the same bank once again. His throat was dry and he wanted a drink but this time, due to what had happened on his previous visit, he made the *brachah* quietly. But once again, his *brachah* was cut off by someone shouting at him. This time, however, the tone was

softer, and the content was different:

"Why are you making the *brachah* quietly?" the same clerk who had silenced him last time asked. "Make the *brachah* out loud, so that we can all hear and answer amen...!"

Motty was both stunned and confused. He approached the clerk's desk and noticed that there was emotion on his face. The clerk motioned for him to sit down and told him, with tears in his eyes: "You probably remember that last week, you were here and made a *brachah* aloud, and I got very upset," the clerk said, somewhat shamefacedly. Then he explained:

"I grew up in a religious home, and since I remember myself, my mother was strict to answer amen to *brachos* that she heard. Over the years, I have cut off all connection to Judaism, and totally threw off all observance of *mitzvos*. In my desire to erase my past, I settled in secular Tel Aviv, in a place where I hoped not to see people who would remind me of my past... And then you came in and made a *brachah* aloud, and the memories inundated me. I couldn't bear it and I scolded you aggressively. I hope you can forgive me..."

Motty nodded, and the clerk continued: "On the night after my encounter with you, I had a dreadful dream: I saw my mother, who passed away a few years ago, and she looked at me with

a pained expression and chided, 'My dear son, I am suffering a lot from your behavior, but this time, you've really crossed every line! From Above, you were given an opportunity to answer amen, and if you would have taken advantage of it, you would have given me the merit to rise to another level in Gan Eden. Then, not only did you not respond, you even prevented the person making the *brachah* from finishing his *brachah* and the other people there from answering amen. Why? Why did you do it?!' My mother spoke with great pain and then disappeared."

The clerk bowed his head. It was clear that the dream was very alive in his head, as if it had just happened.

After a few minutes, he raised his head and said to Motty: "I need to appease my mother. Please, help me get stronger, so that I can do something to benefit her dear soul. I am ready to take anything upon myself... I can't bear the thought that I caused her so much anguish."

Motty left the bank with the clerk's phone number. They made up to keep in touch, and that connection later resulted in wonderful results.

Above all, Motty emerged with the powerful message about the power of one amen, which opens the gates to Gan Eden.

*Heard firsthand*

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



*The matzeivah on the kever of Harav Yaakov Katina in Chust.*

### Harav Yaakov Katina of Chust 9 Shevat 5650

Harav Yaakov Katina was born to his father Rav Yitzchak Mordechai between the years 5570-5580. As a youth, he basked in the presence of the *tzaddikim* of his generation, among them Harav Asher Yeshayah of Ropschitz, Harav Yehudah Tzvi of Razla and the Divrei Chaim of Sanz.

For some forty years, beginning in 5610 until his passing, Rav Yaakov served as a *dayan* in the Chust community, and taught Torah in the yeshivah that he headed. Although he was famous as a learned *talmid*

*chacham* and as a holy person, he conducted himself with utmost modesty. The Tzehlemer Rav wrote of him in his approbation for the *sefer Korban He'ani al HaTorah*: "Hagaon hatzaddik chassida uprishah, an *anav* like Hillel, who was famed to all in his city as a holy person of great stature, and all of his deeds are *l'Shem Shamayim*."

In addition to *sefer Korban He'ani*, Rav Yaakov authored a small *sefer* entitled *Rachamei Ha'av*, with 58 sections on *mussar* and *chassidus*. This *sefer* was printed in dozens of editions.

He passed away on 9 Shevat 5650 and was buried in the cemetery in Chust.

### The Great Shame on the Yom Pekudah

In his *sefer Rachamei Ha'av* (56) Rav Yaakov Katina wrote that because answering amen is an easy *mitzvah* that does not require much effort from a person, there is a special obligation for a person to fulfill it. And he explained: While regarding *mitzvos* whose fulfillment requires effort of monetary outlay, the *melitzi yosher* can judge a person favorably for not fulfilling them. Regarding amen: "what will he answer on the *Yom Pekudah* when he will be asked: why didn't you answer amen – what effort does it take?!" And he concludes by describing the great shame that the person will have in Olam Haba, alluded to by the words in *Tehillim* (87:17): "מלא פניהם קלון" – their faces will be filled with shame – and the acronym of the last letters is amen.