

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



ת.ד. 102 בני ברק | פקס : 03-5055919
9139191@gmail.com

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

They Accepted the Heavenly Decree With Patience

“ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו
וירא בסבלתם” (ב יא)

The words “*besivlosam*” is explained by Onkelos as בפולחנהוון, meaning, in their work. Why didn't the Torah explicitly write “*Vayar b'avodasam*”?

Harav Dovid Kviat, one of the *roshei yeshivah* of Mir Brooklyn, explained:

The Torah describes the slave labor of Am Yisrael in Mitzrayim with a term that could be explained also as “*savlanus*,” patience, to teach us that beyond their work and their suffering, Moshe Rabbeinu noticed their patience. Despite the slave labor, they did not lose their *emunah* and their hopes for being redeemed. They accepted the bondage and the hard work with patience and acceptance. This patience served as a merit for them to be redeemed from Mitzrayim, and it is what will serve as a merit for us to be redeemed with the *Geulah Sheleimah*, speedily in our day. As we ask in the *Hoshanos* on Hoshana Rabba: “*Hosha na soveles sivlecha*” – please send salvation to Am Yisrael who accept the suffering decreed on them with patience, with *emunah* and with *hatzdakas hadin*.

Sukkas Dovid

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A ‘Privilege’, Not a ‘Burden’

As we know, answering amen has very clear halachic guidelines, that determine, among other things, the time when the obligation to answer amen applies, and the way in which it should be answered. In this segment, I will focus on the *halachah* that determines the length of time one should devote to pronouncing the word ‘amen’, and as the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 124:8): “One should not answer a short amen, rather a bit of a longer one.” The *Shulchan Aruch* (ibid) adds that the ideal length of time is the amount of time it takes to say the words ‘*K-l Melech Ne’eman*.’ As is known, amen is an acronym for these words.

One who peruses this *halachah* might wonder: Why did *Chazal* obligate us to prolong the recital of one word to be as long as it takes to recite three words? The question intensifies in light of the fact that *Chazal* also noted the severe punishment for one who does not do this, as the *Tur* (ibid) brings the version of many of the Rishonim in the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 47b): “One who answers a short amen – will have his days shortened.” This needs to be explained!

The *Mishnah Berurah* explains as follows (ibid *s.k.* 36): One who answers amen quickly expresses a derision for amen! From his deeds it seems that answering amen is a burden for him that he wishes to get rid of as quickly as possible. When derision of *Kavod Shamayim* is involved, it is no wonder that the punishment is so severe.

Based on this explanation, we can understand why, on the other hand, *Chazal* (ibid *amud aleph*) expounded on the greatness of the reward of one who “prolongs his amen,” saying that “his days and years are prolonged.” Because one who prolongs his

amen shows how beloved *Kavod Shamayim* is to him, and therefore, *middah kenegged middah*, the *Ruach HaMakom* is pleased and his days and years are prolonged. This is not necessarily a matter of prolonging corresponding to prolonging, in the literal sense. It is prolonging because of the fondness for the mitzvah corresponding to prolonging because of *Shamayim*'s fondness for the person.

I thought to add that an “*amen ketzarah*” and an “*amen aruchah*” also allude over time that a person is ready to invest in order to hear *brachos* and to answer amen after them. One who dedicates a long time to hear *brachos* from other *mispallelim* and to answer amen after them is undoubtedly classified as one who answers an “*amen aruchah*” and he is guaranteed to have his days and years prolonged.

Someone who does not recognize the value of amen might see in front of him a person who loses out long moments of his precious time. But the truth is that on the contrary, for every minute that a person invests in amen, he will merit a longer life.

An allusion to this can be found in our *parashah*, in the *passuk* (*Shemos* 2:18): “מדוע מהרתן בא היום,” why did you hurry to come today. The last letter of the last three words is amen, to teach you that with regard to answering amen, one should not rush!

Let us take care to answer amen with the requisite amount of time, and to prolong the time we invest in order to hear *brachos* from others and to answer amen to them. And we are guaranteed that the words of *Chazal* – “his days and years are numbered” – will be fulfilled.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Alumni of Yeshivas Kfar Chassdim will never forget the remarkable *bochur*; the *illuy* and *masmid*, Shimon Schechter, ז"ל, who throughout his short life was a role model for the fulfillment of the commandment (*Devarim* 6:5): “*Ve’ahavta es Hashem Elokecha bechol levavcha uvechol nafeshecha.*” And as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 54a) “even if He takes your soul.”

Shimon Schechter was disabled from birth, and throughout his life was confined to a wheelchair. He could hardly move any of his limbs. He couldn’t even hold his head up straight. Due to his fragile state of health, and because of his special needs, he was assigned a private room in the dormitory. The room was adapted to his special medical needs, and contained extensive medical equipment. As result of his overall condition, Shimon suffered from a number of serious health issues, but despite his struggles and his suffering, he constantly was davening, learning



Yeshivas Kfar Chassidim

and investing himself in a way that astounded those around him.

The students in the yeshiva would observe him with envy and astonishment, as for the entire first *sefer*, four hours, Shimon would sit in his place with one *chavrusa* on his right and another *chavrusa* on his left. He would learn with them with unbelievable *hasmadah* that put to shame even the biggest *masmidim* in the yeshiva.

Likewise, in the afternoon, Shimon would learn with *hasmadah* in the same place, in the same way, in a three way *chavrusashaft*, for the whole *sefer*. They learned for hours without letup.

Aside for his *hasmadah* and diligence in Torah, Shimon was also exceptional in *tefillah*. His friends used to say that every *tefillah* that Shimon davened, weekday and Shabbos alike, looked like *Ne’ilah* on Yom Kippur. He would spend a lot of time on his *tefillah*, *brachos*, and especially *Shemoneh Esreh*, when he shed tears and davened with tremendous *kavanah*. His *Shemoneh Esreh* never took less than half an hour.

At his *levayah*, the Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Dovid Mann, ז"ל, was *maspid*, and related:

When Shimon applied to the yeshiva, I was very hesitant to accept him. I thought that my concerns were justified. It required a lot of responsibility to keep in the yeshiva a *bochur* in such fragile health. The yeshiva is not built to house a *bochur* who, in essence, needed a full time hospital setting.

“Shimon was already thinking of giving up, but someone decided to fight for him. It was his father, who, as he had fought for Shimon every step of the way since his birth, did not take the rejection to yeshiva sitting down. Without saying anything, he took his son, with the wheelchair, to the famous apartment at Chazon Ish 5 in Bnei Brak, the home of Harav Ahron Leib Steinman, ז"ל. He shared with Rav Steinman how upset he was at the

hanhalah of the yeshiva in Kfar Chassidim for refusing to accept his son, even though he was a *bochur* who suffered *yissurim*, was holy and pure, and all he did was learn Torah diligently.

Harav Steinman listened to the pained father and when he finished, explained gently that because Kfar Chassidim did not belong to him, he had no way to force the *rosh yeshiva* to accept any one boy or another. However, he gave the father and son a warm *brachah*, and promised that in any case, he would try to do something.

Already the next day, Harav Steinman asked to meet with the *rosh yeshiva*, and this is what he told him: “I cannot instruct you to accept this *bochur*,

but I will tell you, that more than the yeshiva will give to the *bochur*, this *bochur* will contribute to the yeshiva...”

The *rosh yeshiva* decided on the spot to accept Shimon. Unsurprisingly, the words of Harav Steinman came true. From the day he arrived until his passing, Shimon was a role model for the rest of the *bochurim*, both in learning and davening. He was an inspiration for them in *mesirus nefesh*, and the way he sacrificed for learning and *avodas Hashem*.

On 2 Cheshvan 5768, Shimon passed away, and the yeshiva decided to publish a *sefer* in his memory entitled *Ohalei Shem*. A *chashuve avreich* who had good writing skills was asked to write a biography, and he decided to try and find out the secret of Shimon’s special *tefillos*, and what was behind his extraordinary *hasmadah*.

After making inquiries among his friend, he discovered this unbelievable story, that Shimon told his friend at one time:

It was pretty early in his life, after hearing the doctors speak, that Shimon realized that the biggest risk for him was a sudden respiratory failure. His respiratory system was so damaged, that any respiratory distress, even the most minor, could cause his death within minutes.

From that moment that I heard the doctors’ diagnosis, Shimon told his friends, I resolved in my heart to view every learning *sefer*, and every *tefillah* as the last *sefer* or *tefillah* in my life. I lived with the sense that every day could be my last one on this earth. As such, I learned each *sefer* and davened each *tefillah* like a person would learn and daven if he knew that these were the last in his life.

The doctors’ grim predictions ultimately were realized. When he was twenty six years old, Shimon Schechter suffered respiratory distress, and within minutes, he returned its pure soul to his Maker, with his head slumped on the *shtender* in the *beis medrash*, the place where he had learned for years and poured out his tears in his fiery *tefillos*.

Leromem, Parashas Naso

Derech Emunim

The Halachos of Answering Amen

Answering Amen Is Part of the Brachah

Two Who Answer Amen

There is an opinion that one should be *mehader* to have two people answer amen to his *brachos*.

Explanations and Sources:

The *Machatzis Hashekel* (*Orach Chaim* 69) brought this in the name of the Rema MiPano (*Asarah Ma'amaros, Ma'amar Chikur Din*, Vol. II, 15). This practice is sourced in the words of the *Zohar* (*Vayeitzei* 160 1) who wrote: "The whole secret of the *brachos* is – one should make the *brachah* and two should answer amen." The *Zohar* (*ibid*) cited the words of the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:3): "*Ki Shem Hashem ekra, havu godel l'Elokeinu.*" "*Ki Shem Hashem ekra*" – referring to one who makes the *brachah*, "*havu godel l'Elokeinu,*" – this refers to two who answer amen, as "*havu*" is plural. And see *Eshel Avraham* (by the Da'as Kedoshim of Butchach, *Orach Chaim* 487 4), who wrote that Harav Yosef Hollis, the Gaavad of Tysmenytsia, and the Rebbe of

the Pnei Yehoshua "would stand at *chatzos* in the night and recite *Birchos Hashachar*, and he would wake two people to answer amen to him."

Sefer Aderes Eliyahu, by Harav Emmanuel Chai Riki (*Shabbos* 119b) added that when the *mevarech* himself hears the amen from the *oneh kedin*, one who answers according to *halachah*, and has in mind to be *yotzei* with it (see Rema *Orach Chaim* 167 2), it is as if he answered amen after his *brachah* as well, because *shome'a k'oneh*, one who hears is like he answers. So we find that whenever there is amen answered after the *brachah*, there are at least two who answer amen – the *mevarech* and the *oneh*. For this reason, when they explain the *passuk* (*Yeshayahu* 26:2): "*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim,*" Chazal write (*Shabbos* 119b) "do not read it *shomer emunim*, but rather *she'omrim amen.*" They specifically explained it in the plural "*she'omrim amen*" and not "*she'omer amen,*" because, as noted, regarding answering amen to the *brachah* there are at least two "*she'omrim amen.*"

Taaneh Emunim

Pearls on the Mitzvah of Tefillah

The Obligation of *Kavanah* in *Tefillah*

Tefillah with Body and Soul

In his effort to illustrate the importance of *kavanah* in *tefillah*, the *Chovos Haleavos* (*Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh* Ch. 3) compares the words of *tefillah* that a person utters with his mouth to the peels of a fruit, while the *kavanah* and the concentration on the words are like the fruit itself. Similarly, he also compares the utterance of the words of *tefillah* to the body of a person, while the *kavanah* is compared to the soul. He writes that this is why, when a person davens only with his tongue, and at the same time, his heart is thinking about other things, his *tefillah* is like a body without a soul and like a peel without a fruit.

Based on this, the Yismach Moshe of Alexander (*Beha'alosecha* 3) added that just like *tefillah* without *kavanah* is like a body without a soul, likewise, *tefillah* that has *kavanah* yet without uttering the words of *tefillah* is like a soul without a body, and it is like the *avodah* of the Heavenly angels. However, because "Hashem has many *malachim* in Shamayim, the main point of creating man in this world is for the **action** of the mitzvah, meaning to do the mitzvah with the body, and to elevate it with the proper *kavanah*, because this gives life to the mitzvah, which is the *neshamah* of the mitzvah." That is why a person is commanded not to suffice with *tefillah* just with *kavanah*, but rather with the *kavanah* he should also utter the words of *tefillah* with his mouth.

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editors of *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

As a regular reader of your pamphlet, who greatly enjoys its contents, I would like to thank you for the tremendous effort evident in every word. May you see much success.

I have been *zocheh* to be able to answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* each day, five and sometimes even six or seven times. I see *baruch Hashem* tremendous *siyata diShmaya* in all that I do.

You have cited the words of the *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) a number of times, that when Am Yisrael are careful to answer amen properly, then their *tefillah* is accepted, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2) "*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*" – do not read it "*emunim*" but rather "*amenim.*" They explain there that the language of "*pischu she'arim*" is opening the gates of *tefillah*.

I thought of a *remez* to this from the fact that in the words of *Kaddish* after davening we say: "תקבלו צלותהון ובעותהון דכל בית ישראל קדם אבוהון דבשמיא" – and the final letter of each word of "*kadam avuhon dibe'Shmaya*" is amen.

Shimon Rotman
Beit Shemesh

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the Vechol Ma'aminim email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

— Baruch She'asah Li Ness in the Place of Answering Amen —

This story was sent by Reb Shlomo, who for a long time served as a *gabbai amen* in the shul where he davened, and like many, he merited to see great *yeshuos*:

It happened a few years ago, one of the times when Bney Emunim urged people to join the *mezakei harabbim*, the *gabbai amen*, who merit each day to complete the *brachos* of many *mispallelim* with amen.

On the spur of the moment, Reb Shlomo decided to call and join the initiative. The next morning, he rose early to daven *vasikin*, and right after that, he began to do the work. The fact that he was a pretty familiar figure in his community worked in his favor, and within a few days he was 'loaded down with work.' At first it was a bit hard for him, but he quickly got used to it and it became natural.

Each morning, Reb Shlomo dedicated a few hours to the mitzvah. He felt tremendous fulfillment from the *zikui harabbim* that he was able to facilitate. The *mispallelim* also expressed their appreciation. Many of them told him that they had always wanted to be strict about reciting *Birchos Hashachar* in the optimal way, but the barrier of shame blocked them from doing so. Now that this was lifted, their appreciation was tremendous.

A year later, due to circumstances, Reb Shlomo had to move to a different city. In the new, unfamiliar place, he struggled to continue with this

mission. So although he continued to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, he stopped being a *gabbai amen*, to his regret...

In his new city, Reb Shlomo opened up a branch of a well-known business that should have been very successful. It was a unique and highly sought after field, and some members of his family were already working in it very successfully. There was every reason for him to succeed as well, but surprisingly, as the days went by, he realized that nothing was predictable... In contrast to the thriving success of the other branches, for some reason, he had very few customers. The profits he had hoped for remained a dream, and he was beside himself with distress.

One evening, due to a family *simchah* in the city where he had lived previously, Reb Shlomo found himself late in the afternoon standing in his familiar beloved shul where he had served as a *gabbai amen*. He was elated to find that the *mispallelim* hadn't forgotten him, and inquired about how he was doing. But when someone asked about how his new business was going, he felt his heart wrench in pain.

Really...how was business?!

After *Minchah*, Reb Shlomo was about to leave the shul for the *simchah*, when one of his good friends approached and spoke to him candidly:

"You should know that I have a warm spot in my heart for the fact that you

listened each morning to my *brachos* and completed them with amen. Since you left, I have continued to do this with a *chavrusa*, but you still get the credit for being first."

Reb Shlomo paused for a moment. He remembered longingly the feeling of fulfillment that he felt during that unforgettable period of time. And suddenly, he had a thought: I need a *yeshuah*; why should I not use this opportunity to ask for it?!

Spontaneously, he went to the corner where he used to stand each morning when he served as a *gabbai amen*. He turned his face to the wall, and with tears in his eyes, he offered a heartfelt *tefillah* to the Source of all *brachah* that in the merit of the many amens that he had merited to answer in this place, Hashem should open the gates of success and grant him abundant *parnassah*.

What happened next defies all imagination. Not even two weeks later, the wheel of fortune turned for him. Suddenly, residents of the area began to take an interest in his new business. Word of its existence spread, and *baruch Hashem* he was able to make a few good deals and earn a nice profit that even covered most of the debts he had incurred in the past few months.

Reb Shlomo saw this as an open miracle. He saw the power of answering amen and resolved to once again become a *gabbai amen* in his new city.

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav of Ozherov, zt"l

The Be'er Moshe of Ozherov 1 Shevat 5731

The Rebbe Harav Moshe Yechiel Halevi Epstein was born in 5650 to his father, Harav Avraham Shlomo of Ozherov, zt"l. Already as a child he was known as a tremendous *masmid* and *illuy*, and as a youth, he was proficient

in all parts of Torah, *nigleh* and *nistar*.

In 5672, when he was just 22 years old, he began to serve as *rav* and *moreh hora'ah* in Ozherov, and in 5678, after the passing of his father, he was appointed to succeed him as Rebbe. In 5686 he settled in New York, where he began to write and publish his famous series of *seforim Aish Dos* and *Be'er Moshe*. In 5713, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Tel Aviv; he was one of the leaders of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. He passed away on Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5731 and was buried in the Zichron Meir Cemetery in Bnei Brak.

'Hashkamas Beis Hamedrash' to Answer Amen

Regarding the *passuk* (*Shoftim* 5:2): "*Bifroa per'aos b'Yisrael behisnadev am barchu Hashem*," Chazal explain (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah* 10): "In whose merit does HaKadosh Baruch Hu 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* morning and evening to answer amen...."

The *Be'er Moshe* (*Shoftim* p. 165) noted that from the words of the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* it is apparent that the primary virtue of answering amen is when one makes the effort to seek it out, such as when he comes early to the *beis knesses* ahead of time to answer amen after people's *brachos*. That is why Chazal say "*shemashkimim...v'onim amen*," and the words of the *passuk* are "*behisnadev am*," meaning that they volunteer to bring themselves to the obligation of answering amen. Answering amen that a person seeks after is on a higher level than the amen that is answered by a person who made no effort on his part, and that is why its *segulah* is so great.