

# Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"



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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah  
in the Parashah

### One Must Not Mistreat Another, Even *L'Shem Shamayim*

"אם ענה תענה אתו כי אם צעק יצעק אלי שמע  
אשמע צעקתו; וחרה אפי והרגתי אתכם בהרב  
והיו נשיכם אלמונות ובניכם יתמים" (כב כב-  
כג)

It would seem more correct for the *passuk* to say: "*im aneh se'aneh oso – im tza'ok yitzak*" – why is the word "*ki*" added? Usually, the word "*ki*" indicates a reason.

Harav Shmuel Modiliano, the Rav of Salonika, explained this in the name of his *rebbe*, Harav Eliyahu Kubo, based on a story that took place in a certain city: The rulers of that city imposed a heavy tax on the Jews, and when the community leaders struggled to withstand the decree, one of the leaders had an idea: "Let us stop supporting widows and orphans, so that they will be distraught and cry to Hashem, and because their cries are heard, we will all be saved in their merit." The *passuk* warns against adopting such tactics: "If you will mistreat" the widow and orphan – "*ki im tza'ok yitzak Eilai*" – so that they should scream to Me and through that you will be saved from your troubles, know that you will not gain anything from it because "*shamo'a eshma tza'akaso*" – I will hear their screams and not yours!

Aruchas Tamid [Rav S. Modiliano]  
Parashas Tzav

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Amen Is the Soul of the *Brachah*

Each morning, after we thank Hashem in the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* for the gift of our body, we then say the *brachah* of *Elokai Neshamah* in which we thank Him for the main thing – the pure *neshamah* that Hashem in His *chesed* and compassion has infused us with.

While the body is the physical creation that is plainly seen by the human eye, the *neshamah* that Hashem has infused in us, and upon which our lives depend, is a spiritual creation that is invisible to the human eye. As Chazal say (*Brachos* 10a): "Like HaKadosh Baruch Hu sees and is not seen – so, too, the *neshamah* sees and is not seen."

If we think about this, we find that not only a person has a body and a soul; so does *tefillah*, and so does a *brachah*! The *Chovos Halevavos* (*Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh* Ch. 3) compares the words of the *tefillah* that a person utters to a body, while the *kavanah* is like the soul. He adds that this is why when a person utters the words of *tefillah* from his mouth, and at the same time is thinking about other things, his *tefillah* is like a body without a soul.

Based on this, *tzaddikim* have said that a *brachah* that is not answered by amen is like a body without soul. Even if a person made a *brachah* with the proper *kavanah*, if there is no one to answer amen after him, his *brachah* will be classified as a body without a soul. That is because as *kavanah* is to *tefillah*, the amen is to the *brachah*. Answering amen is not a separate mitzvah that stands alongside the

*brachah*; rather, it is what gives life to and sustains the *brachah*, and without it, the *brachah* is like a body without a soul.

Often, when I am invited to speak about the importance of answering amen, and I express this idea, I find that there are people who struggle to digest it: Is it really to such an extent?! But the explanation for this is simple:

The *gaonim* of the generations compare the *brachah* to writing the body of a document, and answering amen to the signature on the document (Maharshal, *Amudei Shlomo*, *Aseh* 27, and the Kli Yakar in *Ollelos Ephraim* Vol. III, 460). So, just like everyone understands that a check made out for one million dollars has no value without a signature and is equal a body without a soul, likewise, a *brachah*, which is compared to a document, is like a body without a soul when it is not answered by amen.

Just like the *neshamah* is hidden from the human eye, the action of answering amen is hidden from us. But we have to know and believe the words of Chazal that amen seals the *brachah*, and it is needed for a *brachah* like a *neshamah* is needed for a body. With a bit of effort, we can all infuse our *brachos* with soul by making sure that every single *brachah* that we make, especially *Birchos Hashachar*, which we say right after *Elokai Neshamah*, should be completed by answering amen.

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Recently, the Torah and *mussar* world in Eretz Yisrael and around the world mourned the passing of the renowned Lakewood *mashgiach*, Harav Mattisyahu Salomon, *zt"l*, author of *Matnas Chaim*. He was one of the eminent *baalei mussar* in our generation, and in recent years, he suffered terribly from illness.

The Mashgiach's life story is filled with constant growth. He was born in Gateshead, England in 5698 to his father Rav Yaakov, who named him Mattisyahu because he was born on Chanukah. As a youth and a *bochur*, he studied in Gateshead Yeshivah, and later, as per the advice of the Rosh Yeshivah Harav Leib Gurwitz, *zt"l*, he traveled to Eretz Yisrael, where he learned under Rav Leib's father-in-law, Harav Elya Lopian, *zt"l*, in the famed Yeshivas Kfar Chassidim.

In Kfar Chassidim he made great strides in his Torah and *mussar* studies, and became one of the prime *talmidim*. After his marriage, he returned to Gateshead, and a few years later, while still relatively young, he was appointed

members of the community were in a constant state of dreaded alert – when would the next blow strike...

At the end of that year, with the onset of a new year, on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the community received another piece of bad news, that a *bochur* in the yeshivah had passed away. This terrible news compounded that already intense pain that the community was feeling.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the Yidden of Gateshead gathered in the yeshivah, as they did every year. But this year, their *tefillos* literally stormed the heavens in an exceptional manner. The entire city yearned for a better year, and because they knew how crucial these holy days were for the rest of the year, they all tried to make an effort to daven and plead to Hashem for compassion and for an end to the *tzaros*.

The Aseres Yemei Teshuvah ensued, and the community strengthened itself in *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. Rav Mattisyahu, the Mashgiach, fired them

up with his *shmuessen* about how these days had the power to affect the entire year. The members of the Gateshead community each did what they could toward this end.

The pinnacle was *Mussaf* on Yom Kippur, when Rav Mattisyahu davened from the *amud*, as he usually did. He was aching with the families in the community, and he davened with tears and weeping, drawing all the

*mispallelim* after him. Throughout the *tefillah*, their cries tore the heavens, and when they reached the *tefillah* of *Unesaneh Tokef*, there wasn't a dry eye in the yeshivah.

Every word of the *tefillah* had significant meaning for every one of the *mispallelim*, who, over the course of the previous year had experienced an overwhelming dose of pain and loss of different kinds, *R"l*.

When it came time for the *shaliach tzibbur*, the Mashgiach, to repeat the *tefillah*, he could hardly utter the words, and between each word, he choked on his tears. When he reached the words that conclude the holy *tefillah*: "*Uteshuvah utefillah utzedakah ma'avirim es ro'a hagezeirah*" – a

terrible cry emerged from the depths of his heart, which could be heard for a great distance.

At those moments, the people were shocked to see that the Mashgiach had cried and shouted so much, that his throat was bleeding, and drops emerged from his mouth and splattered on the large *machzor* open in front of him. Those who stood close to him were aghast to see how the blood was covering the words with the most painful meaning for them "*roa hagezeirah*" – and they saw this as a sign that their *tefillos* had been accepted, and that the decree had been nullified.

The holy day came to an end. When the words "*Barchu*" of *Maariv* were said, heralding the end of Yom Kippur, the atmosphere in the yeshivah shifted drastically. The community was sure that Hashem had heard their cries and that their *tefillos* had been accepted, with *rachamim* and *ratzon*.

Succos came, and was celebrated with exceptional joy, with a sense of holiness and salvation, a joy that expressed appeasement and purity, the joy of a *tefillah* that was answered.

Indeed, their sentiments were not in vain. During the course of the next year, *baruch Hashem*, there were no tragedies in Gateshead. No one died at a young age, and in complete contrast to the previous year, there were abundant *simchos* in the community, one after another.

To this day, the Yidden of Gateshead are sure that the Mashgiach's power of *tefillah* tore the decree that hovered above their heads. They even point with awe to the old *machzor*, that is kept in the yeshivah in Gateshead, on which the bloodstains covering the words "*roa hagezeirah*" are visible – the words that the Mashgiach cried on that unforgettable Yom Kippur with such a cry that it came from the blood of his heart, in the most literal sense, and lifted the decree from Above their heads.

The Mashgiach served in Gateshead for more than thirty years, and later was asked to serve as Mashgiach in Beis Medrash Govohah of Lakewood, where he was *marbitz Torah* and *mussar* for almost thirty additional years, until his passing on 22 Teves 5784.

*Heard from talmidim of the Mashgiach*



Bloodstains on the Mashgiach's machzor

*mashgiach* in the yeshivah. He held the position for more than thirty years.

Aside for his greatness in Torah and *mussar*, the Mashgiach was known for his compassionate heart. His home was a place where anyone in need could find what they lacked. People came to share their pain and to find balm for their anguish, and the compassionate Mashgiach ached with them, and showered them with consolation.

One year, the skies darkened over the Gateshead community, as a number of tragedies occurred one after the other. Each incident in itself was dreadful, but the numerous incidents of young people and children who passed away led to a collective state of fear and grief. Things reached a point that the



In the *brachah* of *Baruch She'amar*, until the first “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” the *mevarech* may answer amen to all the *brachos*, even to the *brachah* of “*Baruch She'amar*” that he hears from another person<sup>1</sup>. After he begins “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” he can answer amen to all the *brachos*<sup>2</sup>, but he must not answer amen to *Baruch She'amar* that he heard from someone else, because this *brachah* is not mentioned in the *Gemara*<sup>3</sup>. But there are those who differ, and hold that after saying “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” one may only answer the first five amens in *Kaddish*<sup>4</sup>, while others hold that the amen after *HaKel HaKadosh* and *Shomea Tefillah*<sup>5</sup> are permissible as well, but after saying *Baruch Atah Hashem* that concludes the *brachah*, one must not answer amen at all until the end of the *brachah*<sup>6</sup>.

1. *Mishnah Berurah* (51 2), and see there that he explains that the first part of *Baruch She'amar*, until “*Baruch Atah Hashem*” are “*shivcha b'alma*.” [And see more in *Aruch Hashulchan* (51 3) who says that the *brachah* begins with “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” and the praises that are said before it are not part of the *brachah*]. The *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayigash* 9) concurs and writes: “But if he has not yet begun the *brachah*, and he is still in the middle of the first 12 “*Baruchs*”, then he is permitted to stop for any *davar shebikedushah*.” According to *Sefer Notrei Amen* (Vol. II, Ch. 20:16), during the first part of the *brachah*, one may also answer “*Baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo*”. But the *Kaf Hachaim* (ibid 11) wrote that even one who is up to this part should only answer an amen that they are obligated to answer *mitzad hadin*, but an amen for the *bakashos* at the end of *Kaddish* [like “*al Yisrael...*”, and “*Yehei shlama rabba...*”] which are only a custom, and certainly “*Baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo*” should not be answered, because these are only a *minhag* so “why should he pause in this great praise.”
2. According to the *Magen Avraham* (ibid3) the *halachah* of *Baruch She'amar* is more lenient than the *din* of the other *brachos* because it is not mentioned in the *Gemara*. Therefore, one is permitted to answer amen to all the *brachos* in this *brachah*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid) concurs. The *Pri Migadim* (*Eshel Avraham* 3) explained that even though the *brachah* of *Baruch She'amar* was also instituted by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, as brought by the *Taz* (ibid 1) in the name of the *Ohr Zarua*, one should still be more lenient about it, because it is not mentioned in the *Gemara*.
3. This is the *din* regarding answering amen after *Yishtabach*; because these *brachos* are not mentioned in the *Gemara*, one should not stop in the middle of the *brachah* to answer amen after them (*Mishnah Berurah* ibid). And see *Biur Halachah* (ibid) which brings the view of the *Pri Migadim* (ibid *Eshel Avraham* 2) who did not differentiate between the *brachah*, and in his view, even after one starts *Baruch Atah Hashem*, it is permitted to answer amen even to the *brachah* of *Baruch She'amar* and rejected his words.
4. The *Chida* (*Kesher Godel* 7 29-30) wrote that according to the *Arizal*, even though *Baruch She'amar* is not mentioned in the *Gemara*, its *halachah* is the same as that of the *Birchos Krias Shema* and the other *brachos* mentioned in the *Gemara*, because it was also instituted by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* (see *Taz* ibid 1). Therefore, if one is in the middle of the *brachah*, he may not answer amen to all *brachos*, and should only answer amen and words of *kedushah* that one is permitted to answer in the *Birchos Krias Shema*. The *Kaf Hachaim* (ibid) concurs. The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid 3) brings this opinion, and the *Ketzos Hashulchan* (18:5) wrote that this is what the *Rav* ruled in the *Siddur Harav*.
5. *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid) according to the *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 66 3), that answering amen after these *brachos* has special importance. But according to the *Shulchan Aruch* (ibid), its *halachah* is like the other amens.
6. *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid) in the name of the *Chayei Adam* (*Klal* 20, 3), because by doing so he “completely ruins the *brachah*.”

### Pausing in Devarim Shebekedushah to Answer Amen

Towards the end of the life of *Harav Avraham Dovid Rosenthal*, the *Rav* of the *Shaarei Chessed* neighborhood in *Yerushalayim*, one of his grandsons came in to visit him, and he saw him perusing a *sefer Mishnah Berurah*. When the grandson asked which *halachah* his grandfather was studying, the latter replied: “I am not clarifying a specific *halachah*, I am just reviewing the *Mishnah Berurah*.” The grandson was very surprised: “Zeide, you are already ninety years old, which *halachah* could possibly be new for you after you’ve studied the *Mishnah Berurah* so many times? Isn’t it preferable to learn new things?! In response, his grandfather replied: “Know, that every time one reviews, even the hundredth time, *dinim* and *halachos* become clearer and there is something new to be found. Come and look at this *halachah* that just became clearer to me now:

The *Mishnah Berurah* (51 2) rules that one who is in the middle of *Baruch She'amar* can answer amen, because this *brachah* is not mentioned in the *Gemara*. That is despite the fact that the wording of *Baruch She'amar* was composed by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* based on the *nusach* written in a note that fell from *Shamayim* (*Taz, Orach Chaim* 51 1, in the name of the *Ohr Zarua*), and the *poskim* also wrote that this *brachah* has 87 words and the sign is: “אשן ׀אש” (Shir Hashirim 5:11). Therefore, one should not add or subtract a single word from the 87 words that it was composed with (*Mishnah Berurah* 51 15). Nevertheless, in the middle of the *brachah*, one is allowed to answer amen after the *brachos*, while in every other *brachah* mentioned in the *Gemara*, this is not permitted.

We learn from here a tremendous *chiddush* about the power of Torah: A *brachah* mentioned in the *Gemara* has stricter *halachos* than a *brachah* not mentioned in the *Gemara*, even though it was written in *Shamayim* with a specific number of words, and it was sent down from Above to be included in the *Siddur Tefillah*.”

“And isn’t it worth reviewing another time to learn such a *chiddush*?” the grandfather concluded with emotion.

*Notrei Amen, Vol. II, p. 337*

## Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

This moving story was heard from Harav Moshe Steinman, *shlita*, the son of the Ayeles Hashachar, Harav Aharon Leib Steinman, *zt"l*. He spoke at a *seudas mitzvah* held in honor of a *Hachnassas Sefer Torah* by the Nasi of Bnei Emunim, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*, to Yeshivas Orchos Torah in Bnei Brak on Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5779.

“One day, a Yid who lives in a foreign country called his Rebbi, who was one of my father’s longtime *talmidim*, and complained about the many *tzaros* in his life. He had married several years earlier but had not been blessed with children, he struggled with *parnassah*, and worst of all, he had just learned that he was seriously ill and that his life was in danger.

The *talmid* asked his *rebbe* to go to my father for a *brachah* that he should merit to emerge from his *tzaros* to better times, and asked for guidance about what he could do to become stronger.

My father shared the pain of this Yid, and asked about his spiritual situation. When he heard that there was much room for improvement, he first shared a parable brought in early *seforim*:

There was a great king who employed an expert violinist in his palace. Whenever the king wanted to relax and garner strength, the violinist was summoned. As soon as the pleasant notes of the violin

began to play in the room, the king began to feel a sense of peace and tranquility, and his mood lifted.

However, despite this violinist’s expertise, his character was corrupt and despicable. From time to time, the king heard rumors about the terrible deeds committed by his beloved violinist, but as the wise man said: “Love causes a disregard for the standard.” The king closed his ears and refused to listen to the rumors. So, despite his misdeeds, the violinist visited the palace each day and played for the king.

One day, the violinist’s finger was suddenly severed, and he could no longer play. Surprisingly, as soon as news of this got out, the king instructed that the violinist be thrown into prison, and punished severely for all his terrible deeds. That was when it emerged that as long as the violinist could serve in his role and provide the king pleasure with his music, the king had turned a blind eye to his sins. The minute he could no longer provide the service, he was punished.

“The Ribbono Shel Olam has a special *niggun* that he loves,” my father concluded, and explained: “*Chazal* say (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1) that ‘there is nothing greater in front of Hashem than the amen that Am Yisrael answers.’ And as such, it is not for naught that they said (*Tikkunei Zohar* 70 1) that one who answers amen has the decree of seventy

years torn up, because a person who sings in front of Hashem with His most beloved song – the *niggun* of amen – is worthy of having his sins condoned.

‘Tell your student that if he wants that from Above, his sins should be looked away from, and his decree should be nullified, he should take upon himself to pursue more and more amens each day. The more he does this, the more Hashem will send him salvation and *yeshuos*.’

The Rav updated his *talmid* about the answer, and the man promised to improve, and hopefully to be able to share good news...

About a year later, the *talmid* called his Rav to tell him about the birth of his oldest son, and added: ‘In the last year, as instructed by the Rosh Yeshivah, I decided to strengthen my answering of amen, and since then, I dedicate a lot of time each morning to go from shul to shul, to hear *brachos* and to answer amen to as many *brachos* as I can. My friends who know my past...looked at me like I had gone crazy, but I knew that my life depended on this, and I ignored their looks and kept on going.

*Bechasdei Hashem*, during this year, I saw *yeshuos* in all areas. I have been cured of my illness, *baruch Hashem*, my *parnassah* has stabilized, and now the great *yeshuah* has happened with the birth of my son.”

— Baruch Rofei Cholim – Amen! —

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The shul of the Sifsei Kohein in Holesov, Czech Republic.

### The Sifsei Kohein 1 Adar I

Harav Shabsi Cohen was born in 5383 to his father, Rav Meir, who was Av Beis Din in Vilna. As a youth, he learned from his father, and when he turned twelve, his father sent him to learn in the yeshivah of the Maginei Shlomo. Later, he learned from Harav Heshel of Krakow, and already at a young age, he made a great impression in the world with his brilliance.

After his marriage, he settled in Vilna, and at the age of twenty-four, he published his *sefer Sifsei Kohein on Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah*.

In 5415, the Cossacks invaded Vilna and he fled for his life with all the Jews of the city. After that he wandered for a time, until he was appointed Rav of the city of Drezhnitz. He described the tribulations that he and his brethren endured during that time in his *sefer Megillah Afah*. Later, he became Rav in city of Holesov, where he finished his compilation of *Sifsei Kohein on the Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat*.

On 1 Adar 5423, he passed away at the young age of forty-one, and was buried in the cemetery in Holesov.

### The Value of a Brachah

*Chazal* (*Chulin* 86b) determine that the value of every *brachah* is ten goldens, and they said that anyone who withholds a *brachah* from his friend has to pay him this sum. The *Sifsei Kohein* (*Choshen Mishpat* 382 4) added a *chiddush* that “A person only receives the reward of ten goldens for a *brachah* if he makes the *brachah* in front of others and they answer amen to it, but when he makes a *brachah* to himself – he does not receive it.” So we have another layer of the importance of amen for the *brachah*, because this amen is what determines the value of the *brachah*.

An allusion to these words that the value of a *brachah* is ten goldens only after amen is answered is offered by Harav Avraham Stern, author of *Gapei Aish*, from the fact that the numerical equivalent of amen [with the *mispar katan*] is 10 [1+4+5], to say that only in the merit of answering amen does one earn a reward for ten goldens for a *brachah*. He added that the reason the reward of ten goldens is alluded to in the *mispar kattan* is to teach that this reward is given in this world is the small reward for amen, but the real reward will be given in Olam Haba, and it is alluded to in the regular numerical value of the word amen [*mispar gadol*]: Amen is 91, which is equivalent in value to *היים וטוב*, and therefore one who answers amen will merit eternal life and much goodness in Olam Haba (*Shulchan Aish, Orach Chaim* 6).