

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

'Meah Brachos' in Two

"דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי" (כה ב)

The *Zohar* (*Vayakhel* 200 2) explains the word "terumah" as two words "תרי" two of a hundred, as an allusion to the fact that the measure of *terumah* is bigger because an "*ayin beinonis*," is one of fifty, meaning two out of one hundred.

Harav Eliezer Horowitz of Tarnograd explained that this also alludes to the one hundred *brachos* we make each day, which are also called a *terumah* and *nedavah*, as it says (*Tehillim* 110:108): "*Nidvos pi retzei na Hashem*," (see *Tanchuma Pekudei* 9). And we can learn from this that one hundred *brachos* need to be said with two – meaning with the utterance of the mouth and the *kavanah* of the heart together, and not just as lip service, as a body without a soul. Therefore, the *passuk* says: "*Me'eis kol ish asher yidvenu libo tikchu es terumasi*," to teach us that only one who makes a *brachah* with *kavanah* in his heart merits to have his *brachos* willingly accepted.

And this goes hand in hand with the explanation of **Harav Zusha of Anipoli** on the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 45a): "One who answers amen should not raise his voice louder than the *mevarech*, because the *kavanah* of the heart is the main thing. Therefore, one should not raise his voice more than he can enthuse in his heart.

Noam Megadim; Divrei Yechezkel
[Shineva] *Agudas HaShas Brachos 45a*

We can add in light of this that the explanation of "*trei mimeah*" contains an allusion that each one of the *meah brachos* said in a day have to be said in twos, pairs – one making the *brachah* and the other answering amen.

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A Small Investment With Tremendous Results

Whenever I study the deep significance of the word amen, I am amazed once again by the depth it contains, which is expressed with the many commentaries and *sodos* that are written about it, the *gematrios* and *roshei teivos* that are alluded to in it, and the extensive *dikdukim* in *halchah* that are derived about how to enunciate it.

Each day, we offer countless praises to Hashem, and with all that, *Chazal* say (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1) that "There is nothing greater in front of HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Am Yisrael answer." Anyone who has not delved into the secrets of amen will have trouble understanding this. Why specifically is amen so lofty to Hashem? But someone who does merit to know its secrets will never get enough of it! It is for good reason that the *gedolim* of the generations valued it so much, and who is greater than the Arizal, who dedicated precious time every day to answer amen to the *brachos* of many *mispallelim* "even if there a hundred he would answer amen after them" (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 6 5).

When we come to Shamayim we will also recognize the secret of amen, because we all need it to open the gates of Gan Eden, as *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b) "Anyone who answers amen with all his strength – has the gates to Gan Eden open for him, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*.'" The amen is like a password that opens all the gates in Olam Haba. And if that is the case in Olam Haba, how much more so in Olam Hazeh, where it

has the power to open gates and to effect wonders.

As stated, we do not understand the depth of amen, but we must know that in order for the amen to be effective, we have to answer it according to halachah. I thought this can be compared to payment on a credit card. The one who pays does not understand the entire process involved in the payment, but he knows that in order for the payment to be accepted, he has to punch in the PIN code accurately. Likewise with amen; it's like a secret code word – even if we do not understand its essence, it behooves us to be strict to answer it according to *halachah*.

And if we're talking about comparisons, in the investment world, the most highly sought after investment is one whose profits are inestimably higher than the investment. Is there a spiritual investment that answers this description more than answering amen, which is so easy to do, and which has so much power?!

Each morning, we hear many *Birchos Hashachar*, and throughout the day and night, countless *brachos* are made around us. We believe the words of *Chazal* about the great power of answering amen, and if so, certainly we will not forfeit even one amen. Let us ask each one who makes a *brachah* near us to make it out loud and give us the greatest merit of all – answering amen.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Maasei Emunim

A Story About Amen and Tefillah

— 1,000 Sifrei Tehillim That Saved the Jews of Iraq —

It was 1949. The winds of war in the Holy Land were starting to die down. A ceasefire agreement had been signed with the Arab states that had fought on Eretz Yisrael's borders, and it appeared that the quiet in the region would be restored.

In contrast to most Arab nations, the government of Iraq chose not to sign the ceasefire agreement, and for that reason, it saw itself in a state of constant war with the Jewish nation in Israel. Although its geographic location and the circumstances precluded Iraq from attacking the Jewish state, it instead chose to treat the tens of thousands of Jews who remained living in Iraq with cruel brutality. The ancient Iraqi Jewish community began to suffer from harsh discrimination and endless persecution: the Jews' property was looted and stolen, and from time to time, deadly pogroms took place. The desire of the Jews of Iraq had always been to make aliyah to the land of their forebears, and now

Yisrael. In Yerushalayim, signs were hung announcing the gathering of *tefillah* rallies to daven for the Iraqi Jews to gain permission to make *aliyah*.

At one of those rallies, men women and children, the young and old, gathered in the courtyard of the Yeshuos Yaakov shul in Meah Shearim. The *maggidim* fired up the crowd, and everyone shed copious tears over the fate of their brethren.

In a quiet corner stood one of the venerable figures of Yerushalayim at the time, Harav Shmuel Gefner. As always, he stayed on the sidelines, but the distress was visible on his face. His heart was torn in pain for his brothers who were in dire straits.

Rav Shmuel was a holy man, a *gadol b'Torah*, but he made every effort to conceal his greatness. He had a small candy store, from which he eked out a living. But while he sat in his store, he never stopped learning. The people of Yerushalayim always marveled when they saw him working: he held a *sefer* in one hand, and gave his customers what they asked for with the other hand.

Now Rav Shmuel stood, his heart wrenching in pain and worry, for the Jews he didn't even know. He was holding a *sefer Tehillim* and his eyes flowed with tears as he davened for a *yeshuah*.

The *tefillah* came to an end, and the people dispersed to their homes. But Rav Shmuel was still davening. He did not want to continue his routine before he resolved to undertake something for this cause. He made a decision that would not be so easy for him to implement: He took upon himself to say no less than one thousand *sifrei Tehillim* for the sake of Iraq's Jews.

Rav Shmuel, who was no longer young at the time, was already very busy with a packed learning schedule that took up his entire day. But he was not looking to give himself any leniencies. So for the coming few months, he managed to find more hours of his already precious time, and made the effort; he succeeded

in finishing three *seforim* every day. The first was at dawn, after *Tikkun Chatzos*, the second before *vasikin*, and the third in the morning hours.

Rav Shmuel did not share with anyone the *kabbalah* he had taken upon himself. No one would have ever known about it if not for the fact that a few months later, his son, Rav Mendel Gefner, happened to come for a visit on Shabbos afternoon. Rav Shmuel was busy saying *Tehillim*, as usual, and he was nearing the end of the *sefer*. Rav Mendel saw him emotionally reciting those last few *perakim*.

When the father finished reading the last *perak*, he sighed deeply with relief, which indicated to Rav Shmuel that his father had just completed something very major...

"What is different about today? Why is the Tatte so emotional?" Rav Mendel could not contain his curiosity.

Rav Shmuel did not respond right away. He seemed to be deciding if to say or not...and finally he blurted out: "I thought I wouldn't tell anyone, but because you came now, maybe it is from Shamayim that it is wanted that you know...Do you remember the *yom tefillah* for Iraq's Jews? The horrible news that we heard there really shook me. I couldn't return home after that event without taking upon myself to recite a thousand *sifrei Tehillim* for them. *Bechasdei Shamayim*, I have just finished that *kabbalah* and it is not yet a year since I made it. Now I am sure that their *yeshuah* is at hand..."

It was no wonder when a short time later, on 10 Adar 5710/1950, the residents of Israel were informed that reprieve had come for the Jews of Iraq. The brutal government had capitulated to the demands of the West and let the Jews leave their homes and possession to make *aliyah*.

The joyous news became the talk of the day, but Rav Shmuel was already back to his regular place where he learned. He now had much more precious time available to fill with more *sedarim* of learning and *avodas Hashem*.

Sippurim Yerushalmi'im, Vol. IV, p. 113



The Meir Tweig Shul in Bagdad, the only one of fifty six shuls still standing intact.

that sentiment became much more intense. But their government decided to prevent them from leaving. So despite the suffering that they had to bear, they had no option of leaving the land where they lived, and the country became a huge, cruel jail for its Jews.

Many Jews were thrown into prison on trumped up charges; if they tried to smuggle through the border and were caught, their suffering was even worse. They were immediately labeled as enemies of the state, and were subject to endless torture.

Rumors about the difficult state of the Jews of Iraq also touched the hearts of the Jewish people in Eretz

‘Mishpetei Pihu’ of HaKadosh Baruch Hu

”זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה מפתיו ומשפטיו פיהו”

Chazal say (*Mechilta Beshalach Parashah 4*, based on *Rashi Shemos 15:3*) that in contrast to a flesh and blood king, who, when fighting his enemies has no strength for anything else, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, even while punishing His enemies, still implements the *Middas Harachamim* and sustains His creations. The *Rosh* explains that this is what we are praising in this *passuk*: "*Zichru nifla'osav asher asah*" – what are those miracles? The fact that He has the power to simultaneously do "*mofsav*" – His wonders, in war, and "*mishpetei pihu*" – in leading the world in the way of *teva* (*Drashos Harosh, Drush 262*).

Harav Shlomo Kluger further explained:

The reason Hashem performed so many miracles and wonders during Yetzias Mitzrayim is that even if Am Yisrael sinned, and would be punished by annihilation, *chalilah*, He will not apply the *Middas Hadin* to them. Because just like in a difficult time a person does not hurry to get rid of a business into which he invested much effort in establishing, likewise, Hashem will not decree annihilation on Am Yisrael, even if they sin, after He took them out of Mitzrayim with such miracles and wonders, to be His Am Segulah. And Chazal say (*Shemos Rabbah 43 9*) that this was the intention of Moshe when he said after *Cheit Ha'eigel* (*Shemos 32:11*): "Hashem, why should Your wrath blaze against Your people whom **You brought out of Eretz Mitzrayim with such great power and a mighty hand?**" If so, this *passuk* likewise means: "*Zichru nifla'osav asher asah*" – and those are His "*mofsav*" – the powerful wonders that He

performed when taking Yisrael out of Egypt, which are the "*mishpetei pihu*" – through which HaKadosh Baruch Hu exonerates them in their judgement (*Koheles Shlomo 7:19*).

‘Mishpetei Pihu’ of the Tzaddik

”זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה מפתיו ומשפטיו פיהו”

The *Mabi"t* explains this *passuk* as follows:

"*Zichru nifla'osav asher asah*" – HaKadosh Baruch Hu, on His part, and also the "*mofsav*" that were done because of "*mishpetei pihu*" of the *tzaddik*, such as the miracle of keeping the sun in the sky during the war with Canaan, after Yehoshua decreed (10:12): "*Shemesh beGivon dom veyarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon*" (*Biur Hamabi"t lePerek Shirah*).

Similarly, Harav Nachman of Breslov explained: Sometimes HaKadosh Baruch Hu performs a miracle for someone, through "*mishpetei pihu*" of a *talmid chacham* who rules on *halachos*: "Just like he rules on *issur veheter* and such matters, his view is accepted, likewise, when he rules on another matter, his view is accepted, and miracles are carried out through him. That is the *mofsim* that are recounted from the *ga'onim* in the generations prior to ours" (*Likutei Mohara"n*, Vol. II, 47).

Harav Moshe Mordechai Shulsinger related: A Breslover *chassid* once came to me and recounted a tremendous *mofess* that he merited to see when he was *mazkir* himself to Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. When I heard this, I said to him: "This is what the Rebbe of Breslov said, that through the *poskim*, *mofsim* are brought about" (*Shiurei Mishmar Halevi Brachos 5a*).

"Kamah Ma'alos Tovos..."

When saying *Birchos Hashachar* every morning, together with people who answer amen, a person merits numerous virtues:



1. Complete *brachos* because "answering amen is part of the *brachah*" (*Rashi Brachos 47a*, ad loc. *Ad*)



3. The *zikkui harabbim* of answering amen. "And because the reward of the *mezakeh* is commensurate with the lofty virtue of the mitzvah, one who gives his friend the merit of answering amen has great reward" (*Pele Yoetz, Aniyah*).



2. His *brachah* rises to the Kisei HaKavod and it is announced: "this is the gift sent to the King" (*Zohar Eikev 271 1*).



4. Being strict about *Kavod Shamayim*, because "*Kevodo shel Hashem yisbarach* is to bless Him in front of many people" (*Yalkut Me'am Loez, Mishpatim p. 731*).



"A person does not receive the reward of ten golden [coins] for a *brachah* unless it is made in front of others, but a *brachah* that he makes to himself – does not [receive this reward]" (*Taz Choshen Mishpat 382 4*).





The *mashpia* Harav Eliyahu Roth

Harav Eliyahu Roth 10 Adar I 5752

Harav Eliyahu Roth was born to his father, Harav Yisrael Yoel in Yerushalayim in 5665. As a *bochur* he traveled with his parents to Austria for a medical matter, and while there, he became close to Harav Yosef Elimelech Kahana, *Hy"d*, and remained to learn in the yeshivah he led in Tzehlem. Later, after Harav Kahana became Rav in Ungvar, Rav Eliyahu went with him, and worked to reestablish his Rebbe's yeshivah; he was also appointed *mashgiach* there.

In 5694, after learning and serving his Rebbe for ten years, Rav Eliyahu returned to Eretz Yisrael, and became very close to Harav Shlomo of Zhvill. He became his close and trusted confidant. In Yerushalayim he served as a *mashpia* in Yeshivas Shomrei Hachomos and in

Ruzhin, and his *talmidim* remember what he taught them many years later. Although he never merited children, and suffered greatly in his lifetime, he was always thanking Hashem for showering him with so much goodness.

On 10 Adar I 5752, Rav Eliyahu was *niftar* in Shaare Zedek Hospital, with his *talmidim* crying *Shema Yisrael* at his bedside. He was buried on Har Hazeisim. After his *passing*, his *talmidim* published the *sefer Ish Tzaddik Hayah* that describes his life and teachings.

Amen Banishes Disease

Harav Eliyahu Roth shared with his *talmidim*: "Know that by answering amen properly, we can bring many positive *hashpa'os* on ourselves in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*, and we banish disease from the house. Every person needs to make the calculation what to prefer – to go and seek out doctors or to answer amen aloud." (*Ish Chessed Hayah*, p. 231)

People once came to him to be *mazkir* one of his students, a young *bochur* who was deathly ill. Rav Eliyahu gathered a group of people to his house, and placed a number of types of food on the table, which required different *brachos*. He asked each one to make a *brachah* aloud, with *kavanah* – a *brachah rishonah* and a *brachah acharonah* – on each type of food. They were all to answer amen in merit of this *bochur*. Rav Eliyahu said that this practice is a "great *tikkun* that rectifies the *dinim* and it is wondrous for the sick person" (ibid p. 268).

Brachos Aloud and With Kavanah

While setting the table with the Tu BiShevat fruits for the Zhviller Rebbe, *zt"l*, Rav Eliyahu would ask the participants: Please, don't be ashamed, give me the merit of hearing how you make *brachos* on the fruits in a loud voice, with *kavanah*." Likewise, he would mention the words of the Arizal (*Shaar Ruach Hakodesh* p. 9, cited in the *Kaf Hachaim* 158 76), that when saying *Birchos Hanehenin* with *kavanah* one can merit *ruach hakodesh* (ibid p. 347).

Lifework

Rav Eliyahu's lifework was to arouse people about saying *brachos* aloud, clearly and with *kavanah*. He could always be heard pleading: "*Tayere Yidden! Bentch hoich di brachah, make the brachah loud!*" His face glowed with loftiness and happiness whenever he saw people acceding to his request, and the sounds of the *brachos* and the amens resounded in the *Bais Medrash* and could be heard for quite some distance (ibid p. 348).

One Hundred Brachos

Harav Eliyahu would urge and plead anyone who stepped through his door to make sure to recite "*meah brachos*" each day aloud and with *kavanah*. He explained that being strict to do so is what reminds a Yid to conduct himself according to *halachah* the entire day.

On one *yahrtzeit* of Harav Shlom'ke of Zhvill, *zt"l*, Harav Eliyahu inspired the *tzibbur* with the importance of reciting *meah brachos* aloud and with *kavanah*, and answering amen after them. At the same opportunity he added: Know that the *neshamah* does not want to detach from the Higher Source from which it was hewn to come down to this lowly world. Only when it is told that in this world, people are *mamlich* Hashem as King one hundred times a day by saying *brachos* does it agree to come down (see *Zohar Hakadosh Lech Lecha* 77 1).

He further said: *Chazal* cite the *passuk* (*Devarim* 10:12) as proof of the obligation of *meah brachos*: "*V'atah Yisrael* מה *Hashem Elokecha sho'el me'imach*," and as *Rashi* says (ibid ad loc. *Mah*): "Do not read it מה rather מאה" – "One hundred [*brachos*] is what Hashem Elokecha demands from you." From the words of the *passuk* it is evident that this is *kaviyachol* all the requests that Hashem has of us, and it is explained that reciting *meah brachos* is the only way to get to *yiras Hashem*. That is because each and every *brachah* is an expression that reminds us that there is a Leader and He created every single thing (ibid p. 230).

Effect of the Brachos

The *talmidim* of Rav Eliyahu related: There were two Jews who lived near him who were influenced by his words on the loftiness of reciting a *brachah* aloud. But while one would make the *brachah* aloud, the second one made sure recite the *brachos* so loud that even people passing in the street heard the *brachos* and answered amen. Their reward was commensurate; both of them merited great *brachah* in their *parnassah*, but the one whose *brachos* could be heard all over the city, merited such great blessing that he was even able to sustain others (ibid p. 410).