

Vechol 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

Success of the Emissary Is a Good Sign for the Sender

"ככל אשר צוה ה' את משה בן עשו בני ישראל את כל העבדה; וירא משה את כל המלאכה והנה עשו אתה כאשר צוה ה' בן עשו ויברך אתם משה" (לט מב-מג)

The *Chasam Sofer* explained:

That is why it says "*kein asu Bnei Yisrael es kol ha'avodah*" and not "*es kol hamelachah*," to teach us that Bnei Yisrael brought their donations to the *avodah* of the Mishkan for the sake of *avodas Hashem*. And as it says (*Devarim* 13:5): "*V'Oso sa'avdu*." The Torah adds and explains that Moshe concluded that Bnei Yisrael had brought their donations *l'Shem Shamayim* and that is why he blessed them. We learn from this that those who carried out the *meleches haMishkan* were able to do it with *shleimus* – "*ka'asher tzivah Hashem kein asu*." Because if Bnei Yisrael would not have brought their contributions wholeheartedly, those who they sent – the ones who did the *melachah* – would not have been able to carry out their task with *shleimus*. As *Chazal* teach us (*Brachos* 34b), when a *shaliach tzibbur* errs while davening, it is a bad sign for those who send him, because the "emissary of a person is like the person himself." So, too, the *shaliach tzibbur* who succeeded in the task that the *tzibbur* imposed on him reflects well on those who sent him.

Toras Moshe

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Countless Amens

From morning to evening, we merit to be surrounded by *brachos*; *Birchos Hashevach*, *Birchos Hanehenin*, *Birchos Hamitzvos*, all of which accumulate to one hundred *brachos* or more. But even with all that, the reserve of *brachos* is limited, because more than we have been instructed to make the necessary *brachos*, we have also been cautioned not to recite *brachos* that are not needed. And *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 33a): "One who makes a *brachah* that is not needed transgresses the commandment of '*Lo sisa es Shem Hashem Elokecha lashav*' (*Shemos* 20:7)."

In contrast, answering amen has no limits. A person can accumulate a countless treasure trove of amens each day, if he will only be a "*shomer emunim*," by trying to hear *Birchos Hashachar* and other *brachos* from other people and to answer amen after them.

I believe this concept is alluded to in the first question that a person will be asked when he comes in front of the *Beis Din Shel Ma'alal* (*Shabbos* 31b): "*Nasasa unasata b'emunah*?" – is the attention to answering amen = the fundamental of *emunah*, the same attention that you gave your business dealings?

One who merits while he is in this world to understand that every amen is a diamond with inestimable value, will treat the matter like a business in every way. The *passuk* says (*Kohes* 5:9) says: "One who loves money will never be satisfied with enough money." *Rashi* explains: "One who loves

mitzvos will never be satiated by them." Just like a businessperson seeks to accumulate more and more money for himself, likewise, one who loves *mitzvos* will never be satiated and will seek to accumulate many more *mitzvos*.

At one of the Bney Emunim gatherings, the Mashgiach Harav Dov Yaffeh, *zt"l*, spoke, and he shared a simple but remarkable message:

The *baalei mussar* explain that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His material world in a way that the most vital things that a person needs are also the most easily found. Oxygen, without which a person cannot live for a moment, is found in an unlimited quantity; likewise water, basic food products and so forth. The more vital something is, the more available it is.

"It turns out," the Mashgiach said, "that this rule applies in the spiritual world as well. The more vital something is, the more available it is. The availability of the mitzvah of answering amen teaches us about its tremendous necessity for the completion of a Yid's *nefesh*."

Let us take care to gather for ourselves many amens each day, and they will advocate for us, to protect us and all those who are with us in this world and in Olam Haba.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein



The tranquil silence that had settled over the poor, ramshackle homes of the town of Mosh was broken by the sound of a terrified shriek: "Fire!" Crackling noises accompanied by a suspicious odor came from one of the houses, and within a short time, the skies were illuminated by huge flames leaping in the air.

In seconds, the empty streets were filled with people. Men, women and children were darting to and fro, panicked and confused.

This was not the first fire to strike the poor town. Time after time, residents had to rebuild their homes, from the same cheap and easily available materials – wood and straw, which led to a repeating cycle of devastating fires, which sometimes even took lives.

The *tzaddik* Rav Yechiel – known by the villagers as Rav Yechiel Mosher – was the Rav of the town. Rav Yechiel was one of the prime *talmidim* of Rav Mordechai of Lechovitz, and he served as the Rav of the town for about forty years. He taught his flock Torah,

packed with the people, and those who came late had to listen from the windows.

"My dear children," the Rav began. "My heart breaks to see the tragedies that strike you time and again. Aside for the daily grind of *parnassah*, you have to also rebuild houses from time to time, as they have become firetraps. Know, Rabbosai, that every fire, despite appearing to be a natural incident that cannot be stopped, and has the ability to burn down our entire town in very little time, is actually a *gezeirah* and each house that is harmed is because of *Hashgachah pratis*. In the *Pamalya Shel Ma'alah*, there is a discussion about every piece of wood belonging to a Jew, and whether it should be destroyed or spared. Every penny that a Jew loses as the result from a fire is considered and measured based on what is coming to him.

So I want to suggest a *segulah* that has been known for a long time to help open the gates of *parnassah* and bring financial reprieve to all who practice it. I promise you that it will be effective for you also, for your *parnassah* in general and as a protection against fire in particular.

So, from this day on, anyone who takes upon himself to recite *Birchas Hamazon* with *kavanah*, from the written text, will merit to have Hashem open the gates of *parnassah* for him, and his home will be spared from pain and suffering."

The short speech left a deep impression on the listeners. Most of them resolved to fulfill their Rav's advice and took upon themselves to be strict to recite *Birchas Hamazon* from inside. Indeed, in subsequent years, even after the Rav's passing, they clearly saw how this *kabbalah* protected them and prevented fires from affecting their homes.

Among the listeners of that unforgettable *drashah* was Moshe the butcher. The Rav's words made a strong impression on him, and at first, he was very careful to keep to the *kabbalah*. But as the time passed, he became lazier, and he often found himself saying the *brachah* by heart. Sometimes, he missed words and even entire passages, and he certainly did not have the right *kavanah*.

Things could have continued this way if not for one day, when the Rav's *brachah* was put to the test.

Once again, the residents of Mosh arose to the sound of terrified shrieks of "fire!", this time coming from the direction of the non-Jewish homes. Having a lot of experience, they rushed to abandon their homes and raced for the fields. Moshe also hastened to flee from his home, as he gaped in wide-eyed fear at the fire spreading rapidly among the non-Jewish homes, and threatening his own abode, which was on the edge of the Jewish area.

With great heartache, he remembered that awe-inspiring day, when the Rav had promised that anyone who took upon himself to be strict about *Birchas Hamazon* from the written text would have his home protected from fire. "It's too late," Moshe thought to himself dismally, as he fled towards the fields.

And suddenly, a thought crossed his mind: "Maybe it's not too late to fix it?! When I was there, I wanted very much to take upon myself to fulfill the Rav's words, and it is only laziness that overcame me that has prevented me from doing so."

Without thinking twice, Moshe turned and ran towards the cemetery, located on the outskirts of the town. He hurried to the *tzaddik's* gravesite, prostrated himself on the silent headstone, and began to plead for his life: "I take upon myself with all my heart that from this day on, we – my family and I – will be very strict not to recite *Birchas Hamazon* by heart, fleetingly, but rather from the *siddur* and with *kavanah*. Please, holy *rebbe*, plead for me On High that this terrible fire should not affect my home."

Throughout those long moments when Moshe was davening at the grave of the *tzaddik*, the fire raged wildly, consuming everything in its path. But remarkably – wondrously – it skipped over many homes. Yes, those homes whose owners had heeded the Rav's call were spared.

The fate of Moshe's home was in the balance at that time, but in the end, his *tefillah* tipped the scale, and before he even finished davening, the fire began to suddenly die down on the threshold of his door and disappeared as if it never was. It was a tremendous, public *Kiddush Hashem*.

Yehi Ohr [Rav Y. Schwartzman] p. 434



chassidus, and *yiras Shamayim*.

We can imagine how deeply pained he was when he saw his people having to rebuild their homes time and time, after they were destroyed by fire. Their poverty compelled them to build the homes from these highly combustible materials, which meant that the next fire was only a matter of time.

Rav Yechiel thought a lot about a spiritual solution that would prevent the next catastrophe, and after much perusal and study, he had an idea. One day, the news spread through the town that the Rav wanted to deliver a special *drashah*.

In a flash, the people gathered to the shul. No one wanted to miss out on such sublime moments. The shul was

In the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, as long as one has not started *Baruch Atah Hashem*, he answers amen to every *brachah* except for amen to the *brachos* of *Baruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach*.¹ But it is worthy to be careful not to come to point where one is obligated to answer amen while in the middle of saying the praises in the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*², so as not to need to stop in the middle of saying them³. After beginning *Baruch Atah Hashem*, one should not answer amen until the end of the *brachah*, but there is an opinion that differs about this *din*⁴.

1 *Mishnah Berurah* 51 2. The *Biur Halachah* (ibid) explained that this *brachah* begins right from the first word, *Yishtabach*, and not with *Baruch Atah Hashem* later on in the *brachah*. The *brachah* of *Yishtabach* is considered a *brachah* that begins with *Baruch*, because it is a *brachah hasemuchah lechavertah*, a *brachah* that is adjacent to another one, and as the *Tosafos* writes (*Pesachim* 104b, ad loc. *Chutz*) that it is considered adjacent to the *brachah* of *Baruch She'amar*, and that exempts it from beginning with *Baruch* (as ruled by the *Shulchan Aruch* 54 1). Therefore, as soon as one begins *Yishtabach*, one should not answer amen after the *brachos* of *Baruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach*, which are not mentioned in the Talmud, but after the other *brachos*, one may answer amen even in the middle of the *brachah* (See *Ishei Yisrael*, Ch. 16, comment 15).

However, the *Ketzos Hashulchan* wrote (18:2, and ibid in *Badei Hashulchan*, 5) that as long as he did not say *Baruch Atah Hashem* in the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, the *din* is not like someone who is in the middle of a *brachah* and he may answer amen also to *brachos* that do not appear in the Talmud, similar to one who is saying *Pesukei Dezimrah*. He explains that although the *brachah* of *Yishtabach* is considered *semuchah lechavertah* still, as long as one does not start to say *Baruch Atah Hashem*, it is not considered as if he is in the middle of a *brachah* with regard to answering amen after the *brachos*. (And see *Shu"t Shaarei Yosher*, 18:2).

2 The *poskim* wrote (see *Mishnah Berurah* 53 1) that in the first part of the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, there are 15 terms of praise mentioned, from *Shir Ushevachah* until *Brachos Vehoda'os*. But the holy *Zohar* (*Terumah* 132 1) says that this part has only thirteen praises, because the words "*brachos vehoda'os*" belong to the rest of the *brachah* and are not included in the praises (see *Be'er Heitev*, ibid 1). The *Magen Avraham* (beginning of *siman* 53) wrote that one should say these praises in one breath, but the *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid) ruled that it is not necessary, but in any case, they should be said continuously, and there should be no *hefsek* while saying them.

3 The *Ben Ish Chai* (*Vayigash* 15) wrote that one who is up to the first part of the *brachah* of *Yishtabach*, before the praises, and he sees that the *chazzan* is about to say *Kaddish*, he should hold off saying the praises and answer amen. Then he should say the praises without stopping. The *Kaf Hachaim* (53 2) concurs. And see *Ben Ish Chai* (ibid) who wrote that if it happens that while he is saying the praises he heard *Kaddish*, he should stop and answer, and then go back and repeat from "*Ki Lecha na'eh*" so that he should say the praises without a *hefsek*. But *Likutei Mahari"ch* (*Nusach Birchas Yishtabach*) wrote that one must not stop to answer amen in the middle of saying the praises.

4 The *Mishnah Berurah* (54 3) asked whether the part of the *brachah* from "*Baruch Atah Hashem*" until the end of the *brachah* is like a "*brachah ketzarah*" where one must not stop even to say *Yehei Shemei Rabbah* and *Kedushah*, or if it is like a *brachah arukah*, and he left it that it needs further study. But the *Ketzos Hashulchan* (ibid) wrote that it seems that the *halachah* of this part is like a *brachah ketzarah* when one should not answer amen. *Sefer Ishei Yisrael* (Ch. 16:17) cited Harav Chaim Kanievsky, that one who is up to this part of the *brachah* should not stop to hear or answer to *Kaddish* that the *shat"z* says after *Yishtabach*, but rather should continue to recite the *brachah* until the end.

Taaneh Emunim

Pearls on the Mitzvah of Tefillah

The Name Given at the Bris

"אשר כרת את אברהם ושבעתו ליצחק"

This *passuk*, whose source is in *Divrei Hayamim* (I, 16:16), is brought in *Sefer Tehillim* (105:9) with a slight variation: Instead of "*ushvu'aso leYitzchak*," it says "*ushvu'aso leYisachak*."

The *Imrei Emes* explained the meaning of the name "ישחק": Even before Yitzchak's birth, HaKadosh Baruch Hu instructed Avraham (*Bereishis* 17:19): "But Sarah your wife will bear for you a son and you will name him Yitzchak," in the name of the *tzechok*, the laughter that Avraham laughed when he was told about the son that would be born to him (*Rashi* ibid). Right upon the birth of his son, Avraham hastened to fulfill the commandment of Hashem, and called his son Yitzchak. But when he made the *bris*, because he wanted to call him a name in the custom of Am Yisrael, he gave him another name expressing that

same laughter: "Yisachak."

That is the reason that in the order of the *pesukim* said at the *bris milah*, after the *brachos*, we use specifically the *passuk* in *Tehillim*, "*Ushvua'so leYisachak*," because as noted, this was the name given to Yitzchak when he was brought into the covenant of Avraham Avinu.

Imrei Emes, Likutim p. 94

Eretz Yisrael Is Acquired With Suffering

"לאמר לך אתן את ארץ כנען חבל נתתם"

Harav Raphael Emmanuel Chai Riki explained:

Chazal say (*Brachos* 5a) that Eretz Yisrael is acquired with *yissurim*, and that is why it is called in this *passuk* "*chevel nachalaschem*" – because the "*chevel*" is a term for *yissurim*, such as "*chevlei leidah*," birth pangs.

Chazeh Tzion, Tehillim 105:11



the tziyun of the Shevet Mussar in Izmir, Turkey

The Shevet Mussar 8 Adar II 5489

Harav Eliyahu Hakohein Ha'itamari was born in 5419 in Izmir, Turkey, to his father, Rav Avraham Shlomo Hakohein, of whom his son wrote in his introduction to his *sefer Midrash Talpiyos*, that he was "singular in his generation, *Sinai v'oker harim, ir vekadish*, a wakeful and holy one."

From an early age, Rav Eliyahu studied both *Toras Hanigleh* and *Toras HaniStar*, and conducted himself with *kedushah* and *prishus*, as taught by his father. All his life, he kept making greater strides in Torah and *kedushah*, and he became renowned for his extraordinary *drashos* and writings. Rav Chaim Abulafia, who served on the Rabbinate of Izmir some thirty years after Rav Eliyahu's passing, wrote about him

in his approbation to *sefer Midrash Eliyahu*: "*Harav domeh lemalach, halo zeh Adoni Eliyahu...*all his days of that *tzaddik* were [spent] sitting and learning, '*tachas asher kinei l'Elokav*,' as a man of wars, he wakened others to be zealous, and he returned many from sin with his rebuke."

Rav Eliyahu authored more than thirty *seforim*, the most famous of which is *Shevet Mussar*, printed in dozens of editions. He also authored: *Me'il Hatzedakah*, on the mitzvah of *zedakah*; *Midrash Talpiyos* – a compilation of essays in the order of the *aleph beis*; *Midrash Ha'itamari* – *drashos*; *Aggadas Eliyahu* – an explanation of the *Aggados* of the *Yerushalmi*; *Semcuhim La'ad* – *drushim* on the reason why *parshiyos* are placed where they are in the Torah, and others.

Rav Eliyahu merited to live to a ripe old age. He passed away in the city of his birth, Izmir, on 8 Adar II, 5489, and was laid to rest in the city.

Amen Without Kavanah Is Also Wanted

The *Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 7 1)* says: "Rabbi Yuden said anyone who answers amen in Olam Hazeh merits to answer amen *l'asid lavo*." Rav Eliyahu Hakohein Ha'itamari explained that the words of Rabbi Yuden "*Kol ha'oneh amen*" are *mechadesh* that anyone who answers amen in this world, even once in his lifetime, even if he mistakenly did not answer it according to *halachah*, merits to answer amen in Olam Haba. How much more so is this the case for one who answers amen according to *halachah* at every opportunity – and his reward is surely endless. (*Chut Shel Chessed, Ki Savo*)

Someone Whose Purpose Is Answering Amen

Rav Eliyahu further explained the words of the *Midrash*: The Ari Hakadosh revealed (*Eitz Hada'as Tov, Ki Seitzei*) that when a person

feels a bond and a special warmth towards a certain mitzvah, he should conclude that being strict with this mitzvah is his purpose in the world. Therefore, it behooves him to think constantly and be extra careful about fulfilling it. This is what this *Midrash* alludes to: "Anyone who answers amen," meaning, when someone who cleaves to the mitzvah of answering amen, it is a sign that this is his purpose in "Olam Hazeh." As such, when his time comes, he will merit "to answer amen *l'asid lavo*," and he will not have to come down to this world again, because he carried out his mission faithfully, as was expected of him (*ibid*).

Mordechai Taught Esther to Answer Amen

The *Rema* rules (*Orach Chaim 124 7*) that "he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as a baby answers amen he has a share in Olam Haba." His words are based on the words of the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (110b): "From when does

a child earn Olam Haba...It is taught in the name of Rabi Meir: From when he answers amen." Based on this, Rav Eliyahu explained the *passuk* about Mordechai (*Ester 2:7*): "*Vayehi omen es Hadassah he Esther bas dodo ki ein lah av v'eim*." Because Esther did not have a father and mother to teach her to answer amen, therefore, "*Vayehi omen*," Mordechai made sure to be *mechanech* her from an early age to answer amen (*Minchas Eliyahu Ch. 32*).

Answering Amen Sanctifies the Person

When a person answers amen, he acquires a holiness for his soul, and with this, his soul can return to his body during *techiyas hameisim*. For this reason, Rabi Meir says (*Sanhedrin 110b*) that "From when does a child come to Olam Haba?... From the time he says amen" (*Semuchim La'ad, Naso; Aggadas Eliyahu, Shevi'is Ch. 4*).

