

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 Haggadah

Bread Which Is Answered For in Heaven

"הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח. השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל"

From the fact that the Torah calls the *matzos* "*lechem oni*" (*Devarim* 16:3), *Chazal* explain (*Pesachim* 115b) that they are "bread that we answer many things with," meaning that we have to say the *Haggadah* while the *matzah* is resting in front of us. **Harav Yehoshua of Belz** said that these words of *Chazal* contain an additional *kavanah*, that on this night, HaKadosh Baruch Hu answered our *tefillos* and requests about "*devarim harbeh*," many things, as the power of miracles and wonders that were done to our ancestors at *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is awakened within us.

This concept is alluded to in the words: "*Ha lachma anya*" – on this bread we are answered from Above, and our requests are fulfilled, because it awakens the miracles that were performed for "our fathers in the land of Mitzrayim." Therefore, it is fitting to ask over it: "*Kol dichfin yesei veyechol*" – that Hashem should bestow us with abundant *parnassah*, "*kol ditzrich yeisei veyifsach*" – and that there should be compassion for us from Above, as *Onkelos* translated (*Shemos* 12:27): "*Pesach – chamal*," a term of compassion. But the best thing is to ask on this night that we merit: "*leshanah haba'ah b'ara d'Yisrael*."

Haggadah Shel Pesach Kol Yehudah p. 37

A Person Must See His Own Flaws

"בכל דור ודור חיב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים"

It would seem to have been enough to say "*chayav adam liros k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim*"; why were the words "*es atzmo*" added?

Harav Tzvi Hirsh Horowitz, the Rav of Frankfurt, explained: The *Baal Haggadah* wants to teach us that it is not enough for a person to experience the feeling of liberation that Am Yisrael felt when they left Egypt. Rather, he needs to elevate himself to the spiritual level that they reached on their departure. Therefore, it says that while saying the *Haggadah*, with *kavanah* and *hisorerus*, "a person must see himself," meaning, he should introspect into his deeds and do complete *teshuvah*, and then it will be "*k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim*," he will reach the spiritual level to which our ancestors reached when they departed from Mitzrayim.

Lachmei Todah 68 2

Pis chu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

"Veshe'eino Yodea Lishol - At Psach Lo"

In the *Haggadah* we read about the four sons, and how we can relate the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* to each one of them. Each of the three first sons are given an answer in accordance with their questions, but when it comes to the last one, the "*she'eino yodea lishol*" the *Haggadah* instructs: "*At psach lo*" – don't wait for him to ask, rather, on your own initiative, tell him the story of the *emunah* of the Jewish people through the generations – the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Just like the story of how we were taken out of Egypt is comprised of two parts – the teller and the listener, likewise, the praise of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is also completed from the recital of the *brachah* and the answering of amen together, as it says (*Tehillim* 34:4): "*Uneromemah Shemo yachdav*."

Here as well, there are those who ask others to complete their *brachos* with amen, but there is also the "*she'eino yodea lishol*" – whether because they don't understand the importance of it, or because they feel uncomfortable. It behooves you, the one who does understand the importance of amen, to be the "*at psach lo*!" Stand and offer, "Reb Yid! I'll be happy to answer amen to your *brachos*!" And then tell him: "*Tzei ulemad*," go and learn the words of *Chazal* and the *seforim* about the great virtue of answering amen, which as we know is numerically equivalent to – צא 91.

This concept is also alluded to in our declaration at the beginning of the Seder: "All who are hungry can come and eat!" in which we follow the path of Avraham Avinu, who disseminated *emunah* in the world via the mitzvah of *hachnassas orchim*. He would turn to his guests and teach them: "Bless the One Whose food you ate; do you think that you ate my food? It is the food of the One Who by His word brought the world into being!" (*Rashi Bereishis* 21:33)

May the festival of *emunah* be a time when we merit to draw many treasures in *emunah* for ourselves and our offspring, that the amen should not move from our mouths and those of our offspring, for eternity.

**Chag Kasher Vesame'ach
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**



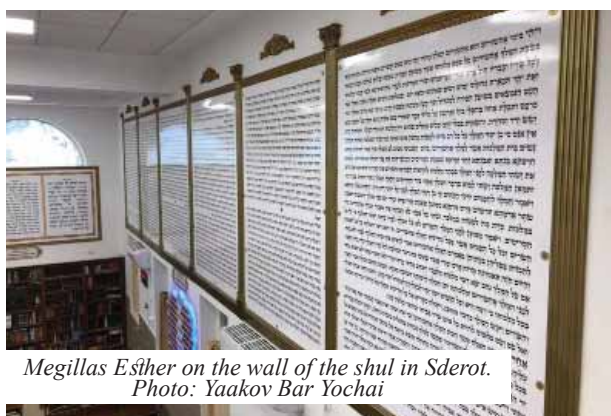
In memory of my esteemed mother, Devorah bas Reb Dov Marmurstein



The city of Sderot, despite its distance from the center of the country, is one of the most well-known cities in Israel. Regrettably, due to its close proximity to the Gaza Strip, it is an easy target for the Gazan terror organizations, and they have been firing rockets at Sderot for more than fifteen years. That's even before the tragedy that struck the city on Simchas Torah of this year, when, as part of the surprise attack that Hamas launched on the southern cities, dozens of terrorists swarmed into the city and killed more than fifty of its residents, *Hy"*d.

The nature of things in this city obligate the authorities to reinforce all the buildings, especially public ones, like shuls. This fact means that building a shul in this city is much costlier than building a regular shul.

So when Harav Shimon Bar Yochai, the head of Midreshiat Sderot, which organizes expansive *kiruv* activities, as well as *tzedakah* and *chessed* initiatives, wanted to build a permanent structure for the shul, which was housed until then in a



*Megillas Esther on the wall of the shul in Sderot.
Photo: Yaakov Bar Yochai*

rickety temporary structure, he was stunned at the huge sum he would have to raise. The minimal cost of building such a shul was more than three million shekels.

That year, in the period leading up to Pesach, Rav Bar Yochai suddenly came across an interesting custom cited in one of the many *Haggados* that he has: to read *Megillas Esther* on Pesach. This was because the feast that Esther held, and the hanging of Haman took place on Pesach (see *Mishnah Berurah* 490 2). The *Haggadah* that brings this *minhag* states that fulfilling this custom is a great *segulah* to see a *yeshuah* and *rachamim*. Coming across this unfamiliar *minhag* got the Rav thinking, and he decided that it was not for naught that it was

ordained that he find out about this practice specifically at a time when he was trying to build a new shul. He decided to share it with the *tzibbur* at the *Shabbos Hagadol drashah*.

The residents of Sderot who love Torah and learn it faithfully, took on this *minhag* that the Rav had noted, without any questions. But one of the members of the community mocked it, noting he had never heard such a thing. The Rav, who wanted to convey to his listeners the great importance of fulfilling a *minhag Yisrael*, decided in response that towards the end of the first day of Pesach, before *Maariv*, they would read the *megillah* together in the shul. The Rav and his community hoped that this would be a *zechus* for them to be able to build their shul.

The miracles were not long in coming. The next morning, while the Rav was sitting and learning, one of his listeners knocked at the door and related that he had won the first prize in the lottery, and he had decided that he would give the *maaser* towards building the shell of the shul.

This was a shot in the arm of encouragement for Rav Bar Yochai, and he decided to devote himself to the cause. That Chol Hamoed, he traveled to Tel Aviv, where he wanted to meet a wealthy friend, to try and open his heart and pocket towards the cause of the shul. He was not able to meet his friend, but he happened to meet a different

person, who heard his request and expressed willingness to help. A few days later, this person came to visit Sderot, and left a donation of one hundred thousand dollars towards the shul.

Now the Rav had a significant sum that would make it possible to commence the construction. But he still did not have enough to complete it. His next step was to speak to people who had contributed to him in the past. He went through his lists, and happened to discover an old business card of one of the donors. The Rav called him and told him about the recent developments; the man decided right away to visit the city.

During his visit, he was impressed

by the need for the shul, and pledged on the spot a sum of eight hundred thousand shekels to complete the building. He deposited the money with the mayor of the town, which whom he was friendly, and made a condition with him that he would transfer the money only after he confirmed that the construction had reached the point when they would need the eight hundred thousand shekel to complete it.

The Rav was still short some two million shekels. He davened fervently, and as he was davening, he noticed a *siddur* that was on the table in front of him. In the flyleaf was the name of the donor of the *siddur*, and Rav Bar Yochai tensed; it was a person who in the past had given large sums to the shul, and the Rav decided to try and call him.

Bechasdei Hashem, the man donated a large sum on the spot, and over the time that passed until the construction was complete, he transferred more money that finally amounted to more than one million shekels.

The shul, called Tiferes Ariel, was being built, and the Rav had to raise another one million shekels to reach the sum he needed. That money was also raised in a miraculous way.

An elderly philanthropic couple from America visited Sderot. They were very impressed at the city and wanted to build a Torah center there, whose merits would provide protection to the place. As they were touring the city, they saw the shell of the shul and inquired how much money was needed to finish it. At the time, they didn't respond. But when they returned to their hotel, the husband suffered a severe heart attack and passed away. His wife decided on the spot to donate the whole shortfall to complete the building and to dedicate it to her husband's memory.

So less than three months from the day they read the *megillah* of miracles – *Megillas Esther* – in shul, the private miracle of this shul was complete, and they had raised the entire sum needed to build the building in all its glory.

In order to commemorate this miracle, the Rav decided to hang a *Megillas Esther* on the northern and southern walls of the shul. Each wall features the *Megillah* in its entirety, and the two walls are like two witnesses to the tremendous power of reading *Megillas Esther* on Pesach.

There is a widespread custom in Am Yisrael to recite *Megillas Shir Hashirim* on Pesach night, after the Seder, as most of its *pesukim* allude to *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (*Shelah Pesachim* 407; *Kisei Rachamim* [Chida] *Maseches Sofrim* 12 2. And see *Rashi Shir Hashirim* 2:9, *V'eilech*). The Chayei Adam wrote (*Klal Kal, Haseder Biketzarah* 16): “A person is obligated to recount the miracles of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* until he is overcome by sleep, and therefore, some recite *Shir Hashirim* after the Seder” (and see *Rema Orach Chaim* 490 9). It is told that after the Chasam Sofer (*Minhagei Chasam Sofer* Ch. 10:23) finished the Seder, he learned *Shir Hashirim* with *Rashi* with his *talmidim*, and when the students saw that he began to doze off, they departed, and he would sleep until daybreak on the bed of the Seder.

Ahead of Pesach, we present some beautiful *remazim* from the *pesukim* of *Shir Hashirim* about the great virtue of answering amen:

Answering Amen Purifies

“משכני אהריך נרוצה הביאני המלך הדריו נגילה
ונשמחה בך נוכיחה דדיך מין מישרים אהבוך”
(שה”ש א ד)

The *Minchas Elazar* explained:

“משכני אהריך נרוצה” – the first letter of each word forms the acronym. This alludes that one who answers amen draws upon himself a spirit of purity to make advances in his *avodas Hashem*, and from this power he merits to reach the level of “*havieni haMelech chadarav*” – the “*chadrei meshichaso*”, and he cleaves to the service of his Creator with joy and happiness, as it states later in the *passuk* “*Nagilah venismechah Bach*” (*Divrei Torah* Vol. IX, 18).

And because only one who answers amen merits this *madreigah*, while the one who makes the *brachah* does not merit it, *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): “The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.”

Harav Chaim Cohen, Av Bais Din of Tripoli, further explained:

The fact that the amen is alluded to in the acronym of the *passuk* “*mashcheini acharecha narutzah*” teaches us that we have to hurry and run to the shul so as not to miss answering amen, as the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 56 1, and see *Chessed L’Alafim* ibid 1). The rest of the *passuk*: “*havieni haMelech chadarav*” alludes to the promise of *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 119b): “Anyone who answers amen with all his might has the gates of Gan Eden open to him,” and there “*nagilah venismechah Bach*.”

Divrei Torah [by the *Minchas Elazar*] 9th Edition, 18; *Toras Chaim* on *Rabbeinu Bechaye* 14:31)

We can further add that the fact that the second letter of the words שחר see

Einei Ha’eidah, Shir Hashirim ibid) alludes to the special virtue of answering amen at the beginning of the day, following *Birchos Hashachar* in the custom of the *kadmonim*.

Answering Amen Brings the Geulah Closer

“אתי מלבנון כלי אתי מלבנון תבואי תשורי
מראש אמנה מראש שניר וחרמון ממענות אריות
מהררי נמרים” (שה”ש ד ח)

The *Arizal Hakadosh* explained:

“אריות מהררי נמרים” – the acronym of these words is amen, that in the merit of answering amen we will merit to see the fulfillment of the words at the beginning of the *passuk* – אתי מלבנון תבואי – that the *Shechinah* will return to dwell in Israel with the arrival of the Redeemer, may it be speedily in our day.

Eitz Chaim, Sha’ar Haposkim, Shir Hashirim 4:8, based on *Nachal Eshkol* [Chida] ibid

The *dorshei reshumos* added that it is not for naught that amen is alluded to in the words ממענות אריות מהררי נמרים, because there are those who are ashamed to make *brachos* aloud or to answer amen aloud, and from this *passuk* we can learn that a person should be strong like a lion and courageous as a leopard, to answer amen and to give another person the *zechus* of answering amen.

One Hundred Brachos on Shabbos Like During the Week

“כרמי שלי לפני האלף לך שלמה ומאתים לנטרים
את פרוי. היושבת בגנים חברים מקשיבים לקולך
השמיעיני” (ה יב-יג)

In *Maseches Chulin* (87a), *Chazal* say that the reward for every

brachah is ten gold coins. Based on this, it emerges that the value of one hundred *brachos* that we are obligated to recite each day is one thousand gold coins. The *Chida* brings that the *Rishonim* explained that this is what this *passuk* is alluding to: “*Ha’elef lecha Shlomo*,” *Shlomo* is a term used for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, as *Chazal* say (*Shavuos* 35b) that the meaning of this Name is “*Shehashalom Shelo*.” The *passuk* teaches us that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gives one thousand gold coins to whoever recites one hundred *brachos* a day. However, while we can easily accrue one hundred *brachos* on a weekday, what should a person do on Shabbos, when he is short twenty *brachos* (see *Bais Yosef Orach Chaim* 46)? He should make up those “מאתים” cold coins that are missing by “לנטרים את פרוי” – as *Chazal* say (*Menachos* 43b) that on Shabbos one can complete the missing *brachos* by reciting *brachos* when eating fruits and other special treats.

In *Shu”t Teshuvah Mei’ahavah* (Vol. II 299), he brings this explanation in the name of **Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg** and adds that in his own name that there is an additional idea in *halachah* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 284 3) to complete one hundred *brachos* on Shabbos. That is hearing the *brachos* of the olim to the Torah and answering amen after them, as alluded to in the *passuk*: “*Hayosheves baganim chaverim makshivim lekolech hashmi’ini*” – meaning those who sit in the shul will complete their *brachos* by hearing the *brachos* of those who are *oleh* to the Torah.

Nachal Eshkol, Shir Hashirim 8:12; *Shu”t Teshuvah Mei’ahavah* (Vol. II, 299)

Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

The Amen That Stopped the Baby

This story was sent to us by a resident of Ramot, Yerushalayim. He and his family have been strict for several years to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and they have merited to see many yeshuos in the merit of this practice. But this story supersedes them all, and they wish to share it with our readers.

The regular passengers on the bus that travels each morning from Ramot to the city center could not ignore the group of young *bochurim* that took up places in the front of the bus, and used the time to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

The *bochurim* were not among the bus's regular passengers, and they apparently landed up on the bus after their regular transportation to yeshivah did not arrive that day. Many of the passengers gazed at them with admiration, watching how each *bochur*, at his turn, stood up to say the *brachos* to a friend, with *kavanah* and *emphasis*, and then another friend switched places with him, and recited the *brachos* so the first one could answer amen.

Just before the bus stopped at the Har Chotzvim stop, the last of the group stood up to say the *brachos* for his friend. The bus stopped and the passengers began

to board. The *bochur* who was standing somewhat blocked the aisle, and several of the passengers grumbled about this. One of them, an elderly Jew, even went so far as to berate the *bochur* in a strident and somewhat mocking tone: "Sit, kid, aren't you ashamed to be blocking the aisle?!"

It looked like the *bochur* cringed somewhat where he was standing. This comment was not pleasant to hear. But because he was in the middle of a *brachah*, he continued to stand, and motioned with his finger that he was finishing in another minute.

The bus began to move again, and it picked up speed; suddenly, it screeched to a halt...A private car that had strayed into the bus's lane made the driver hit the brakes. The result wasn't pleasant at all: Several passengers lost their balance, and hit the seats in front of them.

And then, a tremendous miracle occurred: A toddler, sitting on his mother's lap, flew straight towards the front of the bus, as his mother watched, aghast...

The mother's cry tore through the bus, and the passengers held their breaths in alarm. They were tremendously relieved when the toddler was stopped by the body of the young *bochur* standing at the front, just as

he finished saying the words: "*Hagomel Chassadim Tovim L'Amo Yisrael.*"

It was a real miracle. The passengers who watched the frightening scene could have only imagined what the result would have been if the boy had not been blocked by the body – or rather by the *brachah* – of the young *bochur*.

The elderly Jew who had rebuked the boy before now felt very uncomfortable, and wanted to apologize for having derided him earlier. But the *bochur* and his friends got off the bus at that very moment.

On the way to yeshivah, he remarked thoughtfully to his friends that there was a good reason why one who is strict to answer amen is called by the *passuk* "*shomer emunim*," – not "*oneh emunim*" or "*omer emunim*." With their eyes they saw the tremendous *shemirah* that is generated in the merit of answering amen.

One of his friends felt that it was important to add that even when the eye does not see this clearly, the heart certainly knows and believes that many tragedies are prevented each day as the result of being strict to answer amen. Indeed, the *chachmei Yisrael* throughout the generations have taught this to us!

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit

'Gadol Ha'oneh'

The Rishonim ask about the words of the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*." Isn't the *mevarech* the one who offers praise and gratitude, while the *oneh amen* just agrees with his words? Why, if so, did *Chazal* say that the virtue of the *oneh amen* is greater than that of the *mevarech*?

The Sem"ā explained this in two ways (*Prishah* 124 7):

1. One who hears a *brachah* from another, and answers amen after it, has both the virtue of the *brachah* and the virtue of the amen. Because the actual hearing of the *brachah* is considered as though he made the *brachah* himself, as *Chazal* say (*Sukkah* 38b): "*Shome'a k'oneh*." And when he answers amen, he has the *brachah* and amen together. In contrast, the *mevarech* has only the *brachah*, because he cannot answer amen to his own *brachah*, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 45b): "When one answers amen after his own *brachos* – this is repulsive." And thus, the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*.

2. He further explained: *Chazal* say (*Shvuos* 36a) that amen can be explained in three ways: a. "*shevuah*," an oath, that the one who answers amen to an oath that the other one says in his ears is like someone who issues an oath from his mouth. b. "*kabbalah*" – one who makes a condition of some kind with a friend, and the friend answers amen to his words, has accepted the condition and is obligated to fulfill it. c. "*ha'amanah*" – answering amen after a *dvar tefillah* or a plea that someone else issued means that he believes and expresses hopes that the words will be fulfilled.

Based on this we find that when answering amen on the *brachah*, "he accepts the *brachah* upon himself with *emunah* and a *shevuah*," and therefore, the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech* (*Prishah*, *ibid*)



A commemoration sign that hangs in the place where the Jewish cemetery used to be in Lvov.

The Sem"ā 19 Nissan 5374

Harav Yehoshua Wolk [Falk] Katz was born to his father, Rav Alexander, around the year 5315. As a youth he learned under the Rema and the Maharshal.

At first, the Sem"ā served as a *rav* in several communities, but when he saw that the burden of the Rabbinate was heavy and robbing him of his time, he

gave it up.

The Sem"ā established a *yeshivah gedolah* in the city of Lvov. His father-in-law, Rav Yisrael Eideless was one of the wealthy people in the city and he supported the yeshivah. The Sem"ā dedicated his time to learning and teaching his students. Among his students were the Shelah Hakadosh, the Maginei Shlomo and the Tzeidah Laderech.

The Sem"ā was one of the pillars of *hora'ah* in Klal Yisrael. His compilations *Drishah* and *Prishah* on the *Tur*, and *Sefer Me'iras Einayim* [Sem"ā] on *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat*, became fundamentals in the halachic library. The *Chavas Yair* (46) wrote: "And the custom has already spread all over Jewish communities to rule like the Rema and his *talmid* the Sem"ā."

He passed away on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach 19 Nissan 5374, and he was laid to rest in Lvov.