

# Vechol Maaminim

Parashas EMOR | 5784 | Issue No. 529

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"



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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

### A Tamei Meis Who Touched a Dead Body

“ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אלהם  
לנפש לא יטמא בעמיו” (כא א)

In the *piyut* of *Eileh Ezkerah*, said in *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur, which describes the killing of the ten *harugei malchus*, it says that when the head of the holy Tanna Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel Hanassi was cut, “Rav Yishmael took him and screamed about him in a bitter voice that sounded like a shofar: *ay halashon hamemaheres lehoros b'imrei shefer; v'eich atah locheches es ha'afar*, where is the tongue that hastened to give instructions...and how is it now licking the dust of the earth.”

This heartrending scene is also mentioned in the lamentation of *Arzei Halevanon* said on Tisha B'Av: “He took his head and put it his knees... He put his eyes on his eyes and his mouth on his mouth in absolute love. He answered and said, a mouth that was overpowering in Torah has suddenly been sentenced to death from its severe sin.”

And the question is asked: Wasn't Rav Yishmael a Kohein Gadol? How did he make himself *tamei* with *tumas meis* when it was not necessary?

**Harav Pinchas Horowitz**, the Baal Hafla'ah, answered: The Rema rules (*Yoreh Deah* 373 7) that when the Kohein Gadol becomes *tamei lemeis* for a first degree relative he is allowed to also become impure for other dead people as well, because it does not add any further *tumah* to his existing impurity. In light of this we can say that when Rabbi Shimon was killed, Rabbi Yishmael was with him under the same roof. And because he was already rendered impure in the tent of the dead, no additional impurity was added when he took Rabbi Shimon's head, and therefore, there was no *issur* involved. (*Panim Yafos Parashas Chukas*)

The *Minchas Elazar* further added: *Chazal* say (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 3 1) that when a Nasi passes away, it is permissible for Kohanim to become impure for him, because it showed respect to the Nasi that everyone should be involved in him. Because Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel was the Nasi, it was permissible for Rabbi Yishmael to become impure for him. (*Divrei Torah* 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 70)

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Answering Amen K'Halachah Is a Kiddush Hashem

In this *parashah*, the Torah instructs us to be *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* in the world, as it says (*Vayikra* 22:32): “*Veniskadashti besoch Bnei Yisrael*,” and on the other hand, to refrain from deeds that involve *chillul Shem Shamayim*, as it says (*ibid*): “*Velo sechallelu es Shem Kodshi*.”

There are many details of the *halachos* of these *mitzvos*, and this is not the place to expound on them, but rather to focus our attention that being strict about answering amen, and in conversely, being lax about it, *chalilah*, are included in these *mitzvos*.

Rabbeinu Bechayei expounds on this in his famous *ma'amar* about answering amen, in his commentary on the Torah in *Parashas Beshalach* (*Shemos* 31:24), and writes: “One who is strict to answer amen properly is one who truly honors Hashem, as it says of him (*Shmuel* I 2:30): ‘*Ki mechabdai achabed*, those who honor Me I shall honor.’ And anyone who is not careful about the word of amen, to have *kavanah* with all his strength, is shaming Hashem, and of him the *passuk* says (*ibidi*) ‘*Ubozai yekalu*, those who despise Me will be disgraced.’”

If you think about it, this is remarkable! According to Rabbeinu Bechayei, one who is strict to answer amen according to *halachah*, honors Hashem and sanctifies His Name. But in contrast, someone who does not pay attention and concentrate to answer amen properly is a “*mevazeh es Hashem*.” Someone who is lax about amen is considered to have transgressed the worst sin for which there is no atonement in this world – *chillul Hashem*!

In his rebuke after the sin of the *Meraglim*, Hashem said to Moshe (*Bamidbar* 14:11): “*Ad anah yena'atzeni ha'am hazeh*, how long will this nation provoke Me?” I thought of a *remez* here to our subject. The acronym of these words is numerically equivalent to 91 – which is amen. And this fits in with what Rabbeinu Bechayei says, that being lax about amen causes a *chillul Hashem, chalilah*. This also fits in with the rest of the *passuk*: “*Ve'ad anah lo ya'aminu Bi*,” because they do not have amen, which is the fundamental of *emunah*.

Perhaps that is why the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 124 7) uses a very severe term, not used anywhere else, to describe one who engages in idle chatter during *Chazaras Hasha"tz*. It says: “And if he speaks he sins, *vegadol avono minso*, and his sin is too great to bear, because speaking during *Chazaras Hasha"tz* causes a laxity in answering amen, and by doing so, there is a *chillul Shem Shamayim*, and there is nothing worse. Likewise, he also referred to those who speak during *Kaddish*, as the *Mishnah Berurah* cites (56:1) the *Midrash*, that Rabbi Chama met Eliyahu Hanavi along with thousands of camels loaded with “*aph v'cheimah*,” terms of fury and anger, which were designated for those who speak during *Kaddish*. It's frightening to read!

Let us take upon ourselves to honor *Shem Hashem* by answering amen according to *halachah*, and we will merit all the *brachos* promised to those who are *mekadesh Hashem*.

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

This story took place at the beginning of the tenure of Harav Shaul Brach, in the town of Krali, Hungary. Rav Shaul was known to be strict about anything relating to *kavod Shamayim*, and especially about the sanctity of the shul. To his regret, he noticed that many of the *mispallelim* in the shul in Krali spoke during davening and *leining*.

This distressed him greatly. He tried to speak to the *mispallelim* and also addressed the issue in his speeches, but it was not effective. Therefore, he decided to take action; he moved from the eastern wall of the shul to the middle of the shul. There, next to the *bimah*, he was able to closely follow what was happening in all corners of the *beis medrash*. This caused the *mispallelim* to be careful to be quiet during davening and *leining*, so they would not get caught doing something wrong.

The following story illustrates how seriously the Krali Rav took this issue of talking during davening.

In early days, it was self-understood that the Rav was the ultimate authority



The shul in Kaschau, Slovakia

in the town; no one dared defy him. But at the time, the influence of the *maskilim* began to penetrate many hearts, and as a result, the *kavod haTorah* diminished in their eyes, and they dared defy the Rav.

In the town of Krali as well, there were residents who had a hard time accepting that the opinion of the Rav was the one that set the tone in the town, and that is what was obeyed. Those residents were used to receiving instructions from the *rosh hakahal*, and as the one with the money, his view was accepted without question.

One day, the position of *chazzan* became available, and one after another, well-known *chazzanim* visited the home of the *rosh hakahal* seeking to

be appointed to the desirable position. The voice of one of these *chazzanim* captivated the *rosh hakahal*, and he decided that this was the best candidate to be *chazzan* in their community.

The *rosh hakahal* invited the members of the committee for a meeting, and they determined with the *chazzan* the salary and other necessary details. Only then did they go to the home of the *mara d'asra* to get his consent.

Rav Shaul tried to find out more about the *chazzan*, and after a short conversation he realized that his spiritual state was not appropriate for him to serve as a *chazzan* in the community. He unhesitatingly told the community leaders of his decision.

The *rosh hakahal* was none too pleased by this; he was a wealthy and arrogant man. He knew that he could not change the Rav's opinion, so he decided to come out against him publicly. He decided to organize a large *melaveh malka*, where the *chazzan* would show off his talents to all the participants, and they, he hoped, would help him override the Rav's decision.

The lavish banquet was held in a hall that was not owned by the community and therefore, was not subject to the Rav's authority. It drew many participants. Hundreds of people, mostly the simpler folk, arrived for the evening. The guests, who were not aware of the *rosh hakahal's* plans, didn't seek to come out against the Rav *chalilah*, but rather, to enjoy a lavish meal with pieces of *chazzanus* for entertainment.

The large turnout strengthened the status of the *rosh hakahal*, and in words that he delivered that evening, after praising the *chazzan* and extolling his talents, he informed in an ominous voice that regretfully, they would not be able to continue enjoying the *chazzan's* singing in the shul. "You all surely understand why..." he added with feigned innocence.

He concluded that he hoped that the situation would not last for long, and very quickly everyone understand that it would not be dignified for the community to send away such special *chazzanim* in shame, as had just happened.

Most of those present were, as noted,

simple people, and they nodded in agreement. But there were some who were horrified by the chutzpah of the *rosh hakahal*. The very next morning they hurried to tell Rav Shaul what had transpired, and they also apprised some of his *talmidim* in his yeshivah, who they met on the way.

The Rav heard their words and immediately ran to the shul where the *rosh hakahal* was davening. There, as he had feared, he found a fuming group of young *talmidim* from his yeshivah, who were already waiting for the *rosh hakahal* to emerge from the shul to deal him justice for what he had done. In a firm tone, the Rav instructed them all to leave and return to their studies. He added a firm warning that they dare not harm the *rosh hakahal* – not even his pinky finger.

Meanwhile, the *rosh hakahal* returned home, unaware of what had taken place out the shul. When he arrived, he found his wife standing in the kitchen. In one hand she was stirring a pot of milk on the stove, and in the other hand she was rocking the cradle of their one-year-old baby. When the woman noticed that the milk was about to boil over, she asked her husband to quickly take it off the fire. But then, a terrible thing happened. He tripped with the pot of milk in his hands, and its boiling contents spilled over their young child, who perished on the spot, *R"l*.

A few hours later, a heart-wrenching *levayah* took place, and the whole city was in an uproar...

On the Shabbos at the end of the *shivah*, the *rosh hakahal* came to shul, a shattered man. He had an *aliyah* and after reciting *Birchas HaTorah*, he banged on the *bimah*, and with tears choking his voice, he made the following announcement: "I wish to ask *mechilah* from the Rav, because I impudently came out against him, and I was immediately punished very harshly..."

The Rav, who had stood throughout *Krias HaTorah* near the *bimah*, did not let him finish his words, and hushed him right away while asking: "What *heter* did you find to speak about this at a time when it is not permitted to speak?!"

The Rav completely forgave the *rosh hakahal*; the tragedy that had struck him broke his heart. But no matter what happened, his pure soul could not remain silent in the face of speaking during davening and *Krias HaTorah*!

Shaul Bechir Hashem, p. 128

“ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני ה' מקדש שנים” (בבבב)

Chazal learn (*Sanhedrin 74a*) from the *passuk* “*Venikdashi besoch Bnei Yisrael*” that a person has to be *moser nefesh* and not transgress a sin, in cases where the *din* is “*yehareg v'al ya'avur*,” he should be killed but not transgress.” Like many of the *mitzvos*, before doing this *mitzvah*, Chazal instituted that a *brachah* be recited, as Harav Menachem Rekanati wrote (*Pesachim 70*): “Those who are *mekadesh Hashem* must make a *brachah* on the awesome and dignified *Kiddush Hashem*, because it is a *mitzvas aseh d'Oraisa*, as it says “*Venikdashiti besoch Bnei Yisrael.*”

Regarding the obligation to make the *brachah* before fulfilling this *mitzvah*, the *Shelah Hakadosh* asks (*Sha'ar Ha'osiyos Ma'areches 1, 57-59*): Didn't the Rishonim determine (*Shu"t HaRashba 1 18; Avudraham Sha'ar Gimmel – Birchash Hamitzvos Umishpeteihem*) that one does not make a *brachah* on a *mitzvah* that is not dependent entirely on the one performing it? Likewise, doesn't the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* also depend on the one who is carrying out the execution?

He explained: The moment a person expresses willingness to be *moser nefesh* to die *al Kiddush Hashem*, he has already fulfilled this *mitzvah*, even if ultimately there is a miracle and he is spared, such as happened with Daniel and his friends. In *Sefer Chassidim* (222) it says that Rav Shabsi, a person

who was killed, appeared in a dream and said that those who resolve to be killed *al Kiddush Hashem*, “their share is with us in Gan Eden,” even if they are ultimately spared.

In *Shu"t Ma'aneh Eliyahu* (30), the Aderes writes that he was asked about this subject after it is mentioned in the Rishonim on the subject of *Birchas Hamitzvos* (*ibid*). The question was that it is known that one does not make a *brachah* on a *mitzvah* that also has a punitive angle, such as a *mitzvah* that is imposed on the *Beis Din* to kill someone who is deserving of death by *Beis Din*. So it would seem that with the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* there is a punitive side as well, does it not?

The Aderes responded to the person who posed this query as follows: “One is mistaken for calling *Kiddush Hashem* a *puranus*, a punishment, *chas veshalom*...one should not say this. The *tzaddikim* and *chassidim* who were *moser nefesh* for Hashem's Name had no greater pleasure in this world than the moments of their death, so how can we call that punitive, *chas veshalom*?!”

Regarding the *nusach* of the *brachah*, the *Shelah* writes that it should be: “*Baruch Atah...Melech Ha'olam Asher Kidshanu...Lekadesh Shemo Berabbim.*” But the *Korban Nesanel* (*Pesachim Ch. 1, 10:20*) wrote that one should recite “*Al Kiddush Hashem.*”

In *sefer Yosef Ometz* (*Dinei Hamekadash Hashem 483*), there is a

long *nusach* for this *brachah*: “*Baruch Atah...Asher Kidshanu...Le'ehov Shem Hanechbad Vehanora, HeHayah Vehahoveh Veba'asid Lihiyos Bechol Levaveinu uvechol nafsheinu ulekadesh Shemo berabbim, Baruch Atah Hashem Mekadesh Shimcha Berabbim.*”

Harav Ephraim Oshri testified in the name of the *kadosh Harav Eliyahu of Warsaw, Hy"d*, that before the *kedoshim Harav Elchanan Wasserman* and his son Harav Naftali, *Hy"d*, were killed, Rav Elchanan conveyed to his son that he heard from the Chofetz Chaim during World War I, that when a person is *zocheh* to sacrifice his life *al Kiddush Hashem*, he should make the *brachah* as brought by the *Shelah* (*Shu"t Mima'amakim Vol. II, 4*).

It is known that the Yesod Veshoreh Ha'avodah was *moser nefesh* to push himself into a bloodthirsty crowd in order to answer amen to the *brachah* of *Kiddush Hashem* of the *kadosh Rav Eliezer ben Rav Moshe of Werblow, Hy"d*, who was sentenced to death in a terrible blood libel. Even though he was offered to redeem his soul if he converted his religion, Rav Eliezer refused and was *moser nefesh al Kiddush Hashem* on the second day of Shavuot in the year 5650.

*Introduction to the Will of the Yesod Veshoreh Ha'avodah, Vilna Edition 5689*

# Taaneh Emunim

Pearls in the Seder HaTefillah

— Hodu —

## At Any Time, At Any Hour

שירו לה' כל הארץ בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו

Harav Saadya Gaon explained:

Those who believe that the world is run by constellations and *mazalos* believe that there is no way to work today for the salvation of tomorrow, because the star that reigns that day has no control on the day that follows. Therefore, when wanting to describe the Kingship of Hashem in His world, Dovid Hamelech said: “*Shiru L'Hashem,*” Who rules everything and is the Master of time, and His salvation is not limited to this day or that day, but rather “from day to day is His salvation.”

For this reason, after the plague of frogs, Pharaoh asked Moshe to pray that day that the frogs should be removed the next day (*Rashi Shemos 8:5*). Why did Pharaoh

delay the removal of the plague to the next day instead of asking that it should be removed immediately?

Pharaoh, who did not believe in Hashem's Reign, and attributed the ways of the world to the power of the stars and the constellations, was sure that there was no way to pray today for a salvation to happen tomorrow. So he said to Moshe: If you want to prove to me that you are not operating by the power of the stars and the constellations, and you are coming with the Word of Hashem, Who rules everything, then pray today that the frogs should be taken away tomorrow. And to that Moshe replied (*Shemos ibid 6*): “As you say, in order that you should know that there is no other like Hashem, our G-d,” Who rules over everything, and His kingship is not limited to one day or another.

*Ohr Olam [Rav Y.L. Margulies] p. 23b*

## Shaarei Yeshuah

The Segulah of Answering Amen

## Amen that Tipped the Scale

A few years ago, a festive Shabbos of appreciation was held for the donors of one of the well-known Torah centers in Eretz Yisrael.

That Shabbos – which took place in Poland – was attended by hundreds of people from around the world. As is accepted at such events, the *tefillos* were held together, with a special program that integrated pieces of *chazzanus* and *tefillah* in a very special atmosphere.

On Shabbos morning, when *Shacharis* ended, before they took the *Sefer Torah* out of the *aron kodesh*, the *gabbai* banged on the *bimah* and announced that he would be selling the *aliyos* and the other honors to the highest bidder. The proceed would go towards expanding the *mosdos*.

“One thousand dollars – *Kohein*,” the *gabbai* announced, and the bidding began. This *aliyah* was ultimately sold for six thousand dollars. From one *aliyah* to the next, the prices went higher and higher, and the most prestigious of the donors competed amongst each other to procure the most coveted *aliyos*.

Slowly, all the *kibbudim* were sold, and just the final *aliyah* was left. The competition for this honor was especially vigorous. The patrons of the *mosdos* wanted to sell it for the highest possible price to benefit the institutions,

and the participants were also vying to merit the *aliyah*, as it was the final opportunity to get an *aliyah* on this Shabbos.

The price quickly climbed. As it did, the number of people competing for the *aliyah* declined, and finally, just two remained. The first one declared: “Twenty-four thousand dollars.” The people all waited with bated breath to see what would happen – would he win the *aliyah*? But after a few seconds, which felt like much longer, the competitor announced: “Twenty-five thousand.”

Silence hung in the room. It seemed that the other person was considering dropping his bid, but then, a surprising turnabout occurred: From the corner of the shul, one of the philanthropists, who had not participated in any of the bidding at all until then, announced loudly: “I’m ready to double the price to fifty thousand dollars!”

A buzz rippled through the crowd, but then the man added, with tears in his eyes:

“I have on condition for this sale: My precious son, a young man who married more than seven years ago, does not yet have children. I am ready to pay fifty thousand dollars for this coveted *aliyah*, with a condition: After I have the *aliyah*, when I stand near the *Sefer Torah*, the

*gabbai* should say *Mi Shebeirach* and should mention his name for *zera shel kayama*, and the whole assemblage here should join his *brachah* by answering amen.”

The crowd nodded in agreement, and the *gabbai* announced: “Sold!” and the final bidding closed.

One after another, all the prominent philanthropists came up for their *aliyos*. When it came to the final one, the *gabbai* announced loudly, in a singsong tone: “*Ya’amod*, Reb Ploni ben Reb Ploni,” and the man came up to the Torah.

When the reading was finished, and the *oleh* concluded the *brachah* of “*Asher Nasan*,” there was silence in the shul, as the *gabbai* recited the *Mi Shebeirach* for the *yeshuah* of this young man, the son of the *oleh*. At the end of the *Mi Shebeirach*, he sang out “*venomar amen*,” and a thunderous amen echoed from the crowd.

There was a special sensation in the air. The *mispallelim* felt the intensity of the answering of amen that they said dozens of times a day, and they were all sure that this *tefillah* was destined to be answered.

Needless to say, less than a year later, the *gvir*’s son was blessed with a child after long years of waiting.

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The matzeivah of the Me'ir Nesivim in the cemetery in Ostroh.

### The Me'ir Nesivim 10 Iyar 5550

lies was born in 5465 in the town of Yazlowitz to his father, Rav Tzvi Hirsh, who served as Rav of the town. In his father’s home, he absorbed Torah and holiness, and already by the age of five, he was learning *Mishnah* and *Gemara*.

During his childhood, he became close to the Baal Shem Tov, and when he was twelve, he traveled to him with his older brother, Rav Yitzchak Ber. As he wrote in his will (*Sod Yachin UBoaz* Ch. 2): “And from my childhood, from the day that I was introduced to the *dveikus* and love of my master Moreinu HaRav Yisrael, ה' תנצב"ה, I knew with faith that his practices were with holiness

and purity, with *chassidus* and *prishus*...and *kevod Hashem haster davar*.”

Rav Meir served as Rav in many towns. When he was twenty-nine, he was appointed to serve under his father in Yazlowitz, and later he served in the towns of Breslov, Komarna, Lvov, Horodonka and Ostroh. Questions in *halachah* were directed to him from communities far and wide, and everything that he uttered was accepted with awe throughout the Jewish Diaspora.

He wrote many *seforim*, but only a few of them were actually published, among them *Me'ir Nesivim*, *shu"t* and *Al HaTorah*; *Kesonos Ohr*, on the 613 *mitzvos*; *Mikveh Hamayim* on the *halachos* of *mikvaos* and the *sefer* of his will and testament that he left for his children entitled *Sod Yachin UBoaz*.

On Shabbos *Parashas Achrei Mos*, 10 Iyar 5550, his pure soul ascended On High. He was laid to rest in the ancient cemetery in Ostroh.

### Rav Meir

### Margu Answering Amen After Birchos Hashachar

The Me'ir Nesivim authored *sefer Derech HaTov Vehayashar*, in which he briefly rhymes, in song and parables, all the *halachos* in the four parts of *Shulchan Aruch*. Despite the extreme brevity that the writer uses, as he rhymes the *halachos* of *Birchos Hashachar* and the *sefer hakorbanos* said before *tefillah*, he mentioned the custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*:

“משכימים ומברכים ברכות השחר, אמן  
עונה כל תאחר

מאד זכור לברך בתורה, יום אחר יום בתדירא  
מוספי חדש ושבת מעומד, רבון העולמים  
ופרשת התמיד

מהאי טעמא דשגור כפה, מתירים לקרות  
בעל פה

נכון ללמוד משנה בתדירא. איזהו מקומן  
עד גמירא”