

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

A Favorable Judgement On High

“לא תעשו עול במשפט ולא תשא פני דל ולא תהדר פני גדול
בצדק תשפט עמיתך” (יש טו)

Chazal say (*Shavuos* 30a) that the *passuk* “*betzedek tishpot amisecha*” does not only apply to the judgement of *dayanim* or *baalei din*, but also to the way each person needs to judge the action of another. Therefore, one who sees a friend doing something which is ambiguous – it is not clear if it is a sin or not - has a mitzvah to judge the friend favorably.

Chazal say regarding the person who judges favorably (*Shabbos* 127b): “One who judges his friend favorably – is judged favorably.” The commentaries differ on what Chazal mean “*danim oso l’zechus*.” Rav Eliezer of Metz, one of the Baalei Hatosafos, says that the word “*oso*” is about the one who is being judged favorably, meaning that because a person judges his friend favorably, then he causes that in the Beis Din Shel Ma’alah he will also be judged favorably, because there is a rule On High that when there is an action that can be judged for good or for bad, the *middas hadin* does not allow the person to be judged for good, until it is done in the lower world.

But the *Shelah Hakadosh* explains the word “*oso*” to apply to the “*dan*,” meaning, when someone judges his friend favorably, that someone is judged favorably On High, because “the action that a person does below, arouses a corresponding action On High.” The *Shelah* adds that one who is *dan l’kaf zechus* is also judged favorably for sins that he did “and the *mekatregim* have no power to prosecute against him.”

The *Shelah* further writes that because each *aveirah* that is done reduces the *gilui Kavod Hashem* in the world, then when a person judges his friend favorably, and determines that he did not sin, then *Kavod Shamayim* increases. Therefore, one who judges his friend *l’kaf zechus* has a double reward: “Not only is he judged favorably On High, Hashem shows him much love in this world as well.”

Shitah Mekubetzes Nedarim 40 1; Shnei Luchos Habris Sha’ar Ha’osiyos Kaf Zechus Os Beis

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Answering Amen Out of Ahavas Yisrael

The mitzvah of *v’ahavta lerei’acha kamocho*, which we are commanded in this *parashah*, obligates us to love every Jew, to be benevolent to him, and to seek his welfare. This mitzvah requires us not to focus solely on our own personal good, but to pay attention and think all the time about the good of the other.

Throughout the day, we have many opportunities to do good to others, in many varied ways. In this segment, I will focus on one unique manifestation of the mitzvah of *v’ahavta lerei’acha kamocho*, in the context of fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos*. Toward that end, we need to precede by mentioning that unity and loving the other person are conditions for receiving the Torah, as *Rashi* states (*Shemos* 19:2) on the *passuk* (ibid): “*Vayichan sham Yisrael negged hahar*,” that the *passuk* writes וַיִּחַן in the singular, because when they stood at the foot of Har Sinai, Am Yisrael was like “one man with one heart.”

This unity is manifested in the answering of amen. When a Jew makes a *brachah*, even if it is the loftiest of *brachos*, said aloud and with *kavanah*, his *brachah* cannot be complete without a friend helping him – by listening to the *brachah* and answering amen. This is how he completes the *brachah* and gives it validity.

How much merit does the who answers amen have! Aside for increasing *kavod Shamayim*, he is also fulfilling the mitzvah of *v’ahavta lerei’acha kamocho* in that he benefits another and gives him the merit of saying a complete *brachah*. It is possible that this is what the words in *Birchas Hachodesh* allude to: “*Chaveirim kol Yisrael venomar amen*,” to say that by “saying amen,” Am Yisrael increases love and camaraderie amongst themselves.

This concept is also alluded to in the *passuk* itself: The *passuk* (*Vayikra* 19:18) “*v’ahavta lerei’acha kamocho*” concludes with the words “*Ani Hashem*.” It is possible that the *passuk* is teaching us that it is in our hands to increase *kavod Shem Shamayim* through the mitzvah of *v’ahavta lerei’acha kamocho*, through completing the *brachah* of another person by answering amen.

During these days, when we mourn the passing of the *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva, who did not treat each other with respect, let us take care to respect each person by completing their *brachos* with amen, and may this merit advocate for us that our *tefillos* should be accepting willingly On High – amen!

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

A few months had passed since the winter had set in but the rains were nowhere in sight. People walked around with heavy hearts, although they didn't want to utter the word 'drought' through their parched lips. Young children pleaded with their mothers for water – but there was none. The price of bread spiked sharply and the fields that were normally green were covered with withering yellow grass.

Before the suffering reached the breaking point, the Rabbanim of the city decreed a fast day for rains. They fasted Monday, Thursday, Monday – and were not answered. They repeated the pattern again, but the gates of Heaven remained closed and the *tefillas* were not accepted.

Distraught, the Rav of the city pleaded to Hashem to instruct him what to do,



what steps he should take to pass this terrible decree, that was endangering the lives of the city's residents.

One night, while the Rav was sleeping, he suddenly heard a voice calling to him in his dream and saying: "Know that the rains have not come down and the land will remain arid, until the grocer will davens goes up to the *amud* and davens for the rains." The Rav awoke in alarm; he replayed the dream in his mind, but his heart did not let him believe it. Was it possible that this *am ha'aretz* would succeed in places where such greater people had not?! The Rav concluded that the dream was just idle words and went back to sleep.

But the dream repeated itself. Again, the Rav dreamed that he was being instructed to send the grocer to the

amud, because that was the only way the rains would come. Now there was no room for doubt.

The next morning, at the end of *Shacharis*, the Rav instructed that the community should gather in the shul that afternoon to daven for the rains. This was not the first time in recent months that the Rav had convened a *tefillah*, but those in the know sensed that this time, something was different. "Who knows what was revealed to the Rav from Above?" the knowledgeable ones murmured, without knowing how correct they were.

At the appointed time, the shul was filled to the capacity. Everyone waited, tense with expectation, to see who the Rav would send to the *amud* to daven. The Rav stood in his place and studied his flock, as if looking for someone.

Finally, he eyes rested on the grocer, who sat unassumingly in his corner, and instructed the *shamash* to call him to come.

A tense silence hung in the air. They all followed the *shamash* with their eyes as he strode towards the end of the shul. When they saw the person he was approaching, they all but gasped. A buzz of surprise rippled through the crowd. Was it possible that from the whole community, the Rav was sending such an ignorant, coarse person to the *amud*?

The *shamash* was barely able to persuade the grocer to come to the Rav. A narrow path was forged in the large crowd filling the shul. The embarrassed grocer walked through it. The Rav's request had struck the grocer like thunder on a clear day, and he tried to explain to the Rav that he didn't know how to read, and he wasn't fluent in *Krias Shema*. But the Rav explained that even if what he was saying was true, he had to muster up the strength to daven from the *amud*, for everyone's sake, because this was the Divine instruction he had received, and he could not deviate from it.

For a moment, it appeared that the grocer had thought about it and accepted it, but surprisingly, a moment after that, he picked himself up and fled from the shul. The Rav understood that there was

something deeper here, and he asked the community to please be patient and wait.

A short time passed, the door to the shul opened and the grocer came storming back in, breathing heavily, beads of perspiration dotting his forehead. The grocer was holding a heavy object in his hand, covered in a coarse fabric, and with the object in his hand, he approached the *amud*. There, he reverently removed the covering, and in front of the eyes of all the *mispallelim*, an old scale was revealed. Yes, it was the same scale that the grocer used to faithfully serve his customers.

Everyone looked on, puzzled, but the grocer didn't leave them much time to wonder.

He wrapped himself in a *tallis*, and while the scale was still in his hands, he began to speak, tears rolling down his face:

"Ribbono shel Olam, here is the scale before You, which I use to weigh merchandise for my customers. These two scales symbolize the letters of Your Shem Hameyuchad – Havay-h; the bowls correspond to the letters *hey*, the bar from which they hang corresponds to the letter *vav*, and the ring that holds the scale corresponds to the letter *yud*.

"Father in Heaven, I stand before You, in front of the whole community, and ask: Have I ever done anything wrong with this scale? Have I ever weighed out to a customer less than was coming to him? Have I ever violated the letters of Your Name to which this scale alludes?!"

The grocer finished his *tefillah* and said: If my words are sincere, and I never did anything wrong, I ask of You, that the merit of this mitzvah should advocate for my community of people who seek You out, and bring them down generous rains, quickly."

Before the grocer finished his fervent *tefillah*, everyone was able to see thick clouds gathering in the sky, and strong rains began to fall. The rains were so abundant that at the end of the *tefillah* it was impossible to leave the shul into the street.

The Rav began to speak and said: Look at the great punishment for those who distort their weights and measures, and the great reward of those who are careful about them. So many great people davened here and were not answered, and this grocer came and presented his honesty and with his simple *tefillah*, he brought down the blessed rains.

Yalkut Me'am Loez Vayikra 19 35

Razei Emunim

Pearls of Amen in the Parashah

One Who Answers Amen Is Called a *Kadosh*

“והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני ה' אלקיכם” (כ ז)

In *Maseches Brachos* (53b, see *Maharsha* Vol. I, *ibid*) *Chazal* explain that this *passuk* relates to *Birchas Hamazon*. **Harav Naftali Katz**, author of *Semichas Chachamim*, wrote: “If the *mevarech* is called *kadosh* how much more so is the one who answers amen called *kadosh*, because ‘the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.’” (*Brachos* *ibid*)

The **Pele Yoetz** wrote that the Torah placed the *passuk* (*Bamidbar* 5:10): “*V'ish es kedoshav lo yihiyu*” next to the *parashah* of *Sotah* in which it says (*ibid* 22): “*v'amrah ha'ishah amen amen*,” to allude that “one who is practiced in answering amen acquires for himself *kedushah*.” This is because when he answers amen the *oneh* is *meyached* the two Names of Hashem, *Havay-h* and *Adnus*, which as is known are numerically equivalent to amen.

The **Chashukei Chemed** stated that in *Yerushalayim*, they called a certain *Yid* a “*Kadosh*,” only because even

though he was aged and weak, he made the effort to go to shul to answer amen to *brachos*.

Sefer Hatzava'ah 21; *Semuchim La'ad Naso*;
Notrei Amen Vol. 1 p. 157

Answer Amen After Every *Brachah*

“וציויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים” (כה כא)

Harav Yaakov Chaim, the only son and successor of the Ben Ish Chai, wrote:

The word *לכם* [with the *kollel*] is numerically equivalent to *אמן*. So we can explain the *passuk* as follows: “*Vetzivisi, es birchasi lachem*” – *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* instructs you that whenever you hear a *brachah* answer amen to it. As the *Rambam* rules (*Brachos* 1 73): “Anyone who hears someone in *Am Yisrael* making a *brachah*, any *brachah*, even if he did not hear the entire *brachah* from beginning to end, and even though he is not obligated in that *brachah*, is obligated to answer amen.”

Tzitzim Uprachim

Otzros Emunim

Pearls on the Seder Hatefillah

They Will See “My *Nevi'im*” for the Sake of “*Meshichai*”

“אל תגעו במשיחוי ובנביאי אל תרעו”

Simply, the word “*nevi'ai*” is a term for our *Avos*, *Avraham Yitzchak* and *Yaakov*, who were *Nevi'im*, and the *passuk* comes to tell us that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* guarded over them and did not allow anything bad to happen to them. But *Chazal* explain (*Shabbos* 119b, based on *Rashi* *ibid* ad loc. *Ubenivi'ai*) that this *passuk* warns not to harm the *talmidei chachamim*, and in their words “*nevi'ai*” is a term for *talmidei chachamim*, as it says (*Tehillim* 90:12): “*U'Navi levav chochmah*.”

In light of this, the Ben Ish Chai wrote that the *passuk* “*Ubenivi'ai al tare'iu*” is said as an explanation and expansion of the warning of “*al tig'u bemeshichai*” which was said before that, in which the *passuk* warns not to touch the “*tashbar*” and explains: When a child sees that a *talmid chachaim* is being degraded and offended, the value of the sages diminishes in his eyes, and therefore, he loses the desire to learn diligently and to grow up to be like them. This is what the *passuk* says: In order to fulfill the warning of “*al tig'u bemeshichai*” you have to be strict to fulfill the warning of “*ubenivi'ai al tare'iu*”. That if they see the *talmidim* who honor and elevate *talmidei chachamim*, then they will want to toil in their learning and grow up to be like them. (*Ben Yehoyada*, *Shabbos* *ibid*)

*Don't Consider the *Nevi'im* Friends*



Amen answered after a *brachah* that the *oneh* is obligated in, and wants to be *yotzei* his obligation through, without hearing the *brachah* (*Shulchan Aruch* 124 8).



Amen answered after every *brachah* without the *oneh* knowing which *brachah* he answered to (*Rema* *ibid*).



Amen answered after the time of “*kedei dibbur*” has passed from the end of the *brachah* (*Rema* *ibid*).

Caution
Amen
Yesomah!



Answering Amen After 'Baruch Hashem Hamevorach L'Olam Va'ed'

One who wishes to answer amen after the *chazzan*, when he repeats after the *tzibbur* "Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed," may do so. But some hold that he should not answer this amen¹. In any case, if he began the *brachah* of "Yotzer" all concur that he should not answer this amen².

1. The *Sha'ar Ephraim* (4:6) wrote that when the one saying *Barchu* repeats "Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed," the *tzibbur* should answer amen after him, and his words are brought in *Derech Hachaim* (*Din Barchu V'Aniyaso*, 2), and the *Levushai Serad* (66 6) concurred in the view of the *Magen Avraham* (ibid). But *Siddur Harav* (*Hilchos Tefillin*) wrote: "And one should not answer amen after 'Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed,' that the *shaliach tzibbur* says, because he does not need to answer this amen at all, as the *shaliach tzibbur* is only saying 'Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed,' to include himself with the *tzibbur*. Therefore, the *shaliach tzibbur* should not wait to say 'Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed,' until the *tzibbur* finishes, and he should answer with them together," and this is what the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* rules (192 2). The *Chayei Adam* (18 5) wrote that one does not need to answer this amen. The *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 4) cites the ruling of the *Pri Migadim* (ibid) that there is no obligation to answer this amen, but if the *tzibbur* wishes to answer it they may.

The *Levush* (ibid 1) wrote that when the *shaliach tzibbur* repeats and says "Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed" he should do so in a whisper. *Sefer "V'Imru Amen"* (Vol. I 82) wrote that he heard from Rav Chaim Na'eh that the *Levush* ruled this way so as not to bring the *tzibbur* to a *safek* of answering amen, after the *poskim* were divided as whether one should answer this amen or not.

2. *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid). As opposed to the *Levushai Srad* (66 6), who explained according to the *Magen Avraham* (ibid) that the *din* of answering amen after "Baruch Hashem hamevorach l'olam va'ed" that the *chazzan* says is the same as the *din* of "Barchu," and in every place where we can pause to answer "Barchu" we also pause to answer this amen. See *Shaar Hatziyun* (66:23) who wrote that the *Levushai Srad* "erred with this."

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The matzeivah of the Kli Yakar in the cemetery in Prague.

The Kli Yakar 7 Iyar 5379

Harav Shlomo Ephraim was born in the city of Luntschitz, Poland to his father, Rav Aharon. As a youth, he learned under Harav Shlomo Luria, the Maharshal. At first he served as Rav in several towns, including Yaroslav, and while there, he authored his first *sefer*, *Ir Gibborim*. In addition to his tremendous

brilliance in Torah, he was known for his extraordinary *drashos*. In 5364, he was chosen to serve as the *darshan* in Prague, and after the Maharal left Prague in 5369, he was chosen to serve there as Rosh Yeshivah and *Av Bais Din*, together with the Shelah Hakadosh. Many *talmidim* learned from him, including the author of the *Tosafos Yom Tov* and the author of the *Vavei Ha'amudim*.

He authored many works on *drush* and *mussar*, among them *Rivevos Ephraim*, *Amudei Sheish*, *Sifsei Da'as*, but was famed mostly for his *sefer Kli Yakar al HaTorah*. In his introduction to this *sefer*, he relates that in 5361, he fell terribly ill, and as a result the name Shlomo was added to his name, and he promised that if Hashem would cure him, he would write this *sefer*. To his final day, he was like a wellspring of *chiddushei Torah*, and he continued to be *mechadesh* constantly.

He was summoned to the Yeshivah Shel Ma'alah on 7 Iyar 5379, and he was laid to rest in the old cemetery in Prague.

Answering Amen Is like Signing a Contract

As is known, every contract has two parts, the body of the contract and the signature. The body of the contract details the specifics of the deal, while the signature indicates the final view of the owners and their agreement to what is written in the contract. So a deal cannot be finalized unless it is signed. In his *sefer Olelos Ephraim* (Vol. III, 460) the *Kli Yakar* uses this description to explain the great virtue of answering amen, and explains: The *brachah* is compared to the body of the contract, while answering amen is like the signature on it, and just like this signature fulfills and affirms what is written in the contract and brings it to completion, likewise, answering amen confirms and completes the *brachah*. (*Olelos Ephraim* Vol. III, 460)

The Kavanah When Answering Amen

Chazal prove the obligation to answer amen with the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:3): "Ki Shem Hashem ekra – havu godel l'Elokeinu," and explain that Moshe Rabbeinu said to Am Yisrael: "While I mention the Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the *brachah* – you should bring Him greatness by answering amen" (*Rashi Brachos* 21a, based on *Yoma* 37a). From the fact that *Chazal* attribute the obligation to answer amen to the *passuk* "Havu godel l'Elokeinu," the *Kli Yakar* learns that aside for having to think while answering amen about the Sheimos of Havay-ah and Adnus, which are numerically equivalent to amen, we should also have in mind the Name of Elokim, because that is also equivalent to amen – as follows: The name אלקים is numerically equivalent to 86, and when we add the five letters of the word, then we reach 91, which is the value of amen. (*Sifsei Da'as Ha'azinu* 370)