

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah in an Ambiguous Language

"ויצו אותם לאמר כה תאמרון לאדני לעשו כה אמר עבדך יעקב עם לבן גרתי ואחר עד עתה" (לב ה)

Harav Elimelech of Lizhensk explained:

When a tzaddik wants to prevent the hostile forces from preventing his *tefillah* from being accepted, he davens in a way that his *tefillah* should sound like he is speaking to someone else, as Nechemiah Hanavi said (2:4-5 see *Maharsha Rosh Hashanah* 3b): "*V'espallel el Elokei Hashamayim; v'omar lamelech.*"

Yaakov did this as well and therefore he instructed the angels: "Thus you should say to my master" – when you say it have in mind to advocate for me before the Master of the World, but in order to prevent the hostile forces from blocking your *tefillah*, say it in a way that it sounds that you are addressing "Eisav."

The rest of Yaakov's words can also be explained with a double meaning – as a *tefillah* to Shamayim and as speaking to Eisav. Rashi explains the term: "עם לבן גרתי" in two ways: 1. "*garti*" is from the term "*ger*" to say that when he was at Lavan, Yaakov remained a *ger*, a stranger, and the *brachah* of his father was not fulfilled, and 2. גרתי is numerically equivalent to 613. We can say that the first way, the words are explained to be speaking to Eisav, in order to assuage his anger at having the *brachos* taken from him. But in the second way, it is directed to Hashem, to advocate for Yaakov, that despite the twenty years of living with Lavan, he did not learn from his deeds and kept the 613 *mitzvos*.

Noam Elimelech

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Lo Yachol Lo' – In the Merit of Answering Amen!

The battle of Yaakov Avinu with the minister of Eisav, during which the angel of Eisav struck Yaakov's thigh even if he could not defeat him, was eternalized by the Torah for generations with the prohibition against eating the *gid hanasheh*, as it says in this *parashah* (*Bereishis* 32:33): "Therefore, Bnei Yisrael may not eat the displaced tendon, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day."

The *Sefer Hachinuch* (Mitzvah 3) expounds with an interesting point: The prohibition against eating the *gid hanasheh* is not only to remind us of a deed that was, but also to shower us with consolation: We, the descendants of Yaakov, who suffer from the persecution of the nations of the world, who rise up against us to destroy us in each generation – and we are promised that just like the angel of Eisav was not able to defeat Yaakov, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu even healed him from his blow, likewise, the nations will not be able to defeat his descendants, and Hashem will yet return and redeem us from our troubles.

But we must also remember: Yaakov Avinu did not overpower the angel with his physical strength, but rather with his spiritual strength, which is the "*kol Yaakov*." And the lesson learned for generations is that we, his descendants, can prevail over our enemies with our spiritual strength.

What does this refer to?

At the beginning of the *parashah*, the *passuk* describes that before his encounter with Eisav, Yaakov stood and prayed (ibid 12) "Save

me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav, because I am afraid of him lest him come and strike me [and strike] a mother and her children." Upon perusal of the wording of Yaakov's *tefillah*, the Megaleh Amukos noted that the acronym of "נא מיד אחי" is amen, as Yaakov had in mind the *zechus* of answering amen, and it was in this power that Yaakov sought to be saved from his brother Eisav.

I thought to add that indeed, we find an allusion in the *passuk* that the merit of answering amen is what advocated for Yaakov to stand strong in the face of the minister of Eisav. Because the failure of the angel's battle is described by the *passuk* (ibid 26) with the words "וירא כי לא יכל" – and the words "לא יכל" are numerically equivalent to amen.

As such, it is fitting to once again mention the words of the *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* 11) that teaches us that indeed, as alluded here, answering amen is what advocates for us to be spared from our enemies. He writes: "In the merit of who does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge on the nations of the world for Am Yisrael? In the merit of the people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* in the morning and the evening to answer amen."

Let us strengthen our answering of amen. We will get up each morning to answer amen to those in shul who make *brachos*, and in this merit, HaKadosh Baruch Hu should elevate us and our enemies should fall before us, *amen v'amen!*

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Erev Shabbos in the home of the A. Family. The clock indicated that Shabbos was fast approaching. The food was already placed on the hotplate, filling the house with the aromas of Shabbos *kodesh*.

In the dining room, the father of the family sat at the table, which had already been set the day before, singing the *pesukim* of *Shir Hashirim*, joined by his older sons. In the kitchen, the mother of house was busy with last minute preparations for Shabbos.

The little ones were running about, dressed in their best. The candles were ready. Although there were still two hours until the siren would sound for candle-lighting, the A. family long had a custom of being ready early for Shabbos.

Everything looked so tranquil, until suddenly, a shriek was heard from the dining room. The mother ran towards the sound. The sight that met her eyes shocked

as if not understanding what the ruckus was about.

"It seems to be dehydration," the paramedic decided. He did some quick tests that confirmed his diagnosis. The father was placed on the couch in the living room, and he nodded weakly. Indeed, he'd returned home from a long shopping trip earlier in the day, under the burning sun, and for some reason, he'd forgotten to drink enough.

"The situation requires you to be taken to the hospital," the paramedic declared as he inserted an intravenous line. "We have to check him out and make sure no internal damage was caused, *chalilah*." The A. family's home was just a few minutes from Shaare Zedek Hospital in Yerushalayim, and within moments, the father and one of his sons were at the entrance to the emergency room.

And hour and a half passed. The worried family members could not reach them to get an update about his condition. Shabbos had already begun. The mother lit candles, and then davened tearfully for her husband's welfare. Right after that, she planned to go to the hospital to see how her husband was doing.

She packed up a package

of Shabbos food – salads, fish, challah, wine and more – to take to the hospital. One of the neighbors volunteered to watch the younger children and the mother was about to leave the house. But then, her young daughter came over with a cup in her hand. She asked her mother, "Ima, please answer amen to my *brachah*!"

Before we continue let us note that the A. family is very strict to answer amen with *kavanah*, not only after *Birchos Hashachar*, but to every *brachah* that is said by one

of the family members. The little children at home know that every amen creates an angel, and now, when their young hearts were so afraid for their father, this was even more important to them.

The girl made a *Shehakol*, and her mother answered amen with *kavanah*. Then the little girl decided that her mother also had to say amen after her *Borei Nefashos*... Then her brother also decided that his mother should answer amen to his *brachos* as well. Although she was pressed for time, and she had a long walk ahead, the mother decided to wait patiently and answer amen to her children's *brachos*.

"A few more 'amen' angels will surely add merits for my husband's recovery," she thought to herself. "And in general, it's an opportunity to show my children the value of every single amen," she thought to herself.

Precious minutes passed before she left the house, holding the bag of food and accompanied by the angels created by amen.

Even before leaving the building, she was met with another surprise: She saw her husband and her son walking in, on their way back from the hospital!

"When I came into the emergency room, I had lots of tests done," Rabbi A. told his wife. "The results were satisfactory *baruch Hashem*, and the doctors decided to release me. I'm weak, but *baruch Hashem*, I feel better than before."

"When we were on the way home," he continued, "we decided to take a more roundabout route, to spare us the steep hill on the regular route."

"Another *siyata diShmaya* of amen!" his wife exclaimed with a smile.

Rabbi A. was not surprised. In the time that had passed since they had begun to strengthen the answering of amen in their home, they had gotten used to seeing miracles.

"What's this time?" he asked. "Did you say amen for my *refuah*?"

"This time, I saw immediate results ➤



The old Shaare Zedek Hospital

her: Laying on the gleaming floor was the father of the family, deep in a faint. The children stood around him with mounting alarm.

She recovered first and called emergency services. In moments, Hatzolah paramedics entered the house to start administering resuscitation.

Meanwhile, the children gathered in one of the rooms to say *Tehillim*. As they offered pleas for their fathers' wellbeing, the father woke from his faint, looking around him

Detail of the Request During Tefillah

"הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו כי ירא אנכי אתו פן יבוא והכני אם על בני" (ל"ב)

Why, after asking "please save me from the hand of my brother," did Yaakov continue to detail "from the hand of Eisav"? Wasn't Eisav his only brother?

The holy *Zohar* in this *parashah* (169a) explains that indeed, Yaakov did not have other brothers, but because the word "*ach*", brother, is sometimes used in the context of "a relative," as Avraham said to Lot (*Bereishis* 13:8): "*Ki anashim achim anachnu*," therefore, Yaakov explained in his *tefillah* that he meant is literal brother – Eisav. This is because when a person davens, he has to detail his request clearly.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (119b) cites this *Zohar* regarding the *halachah* that a person is allowed to ask and detail personal requests in each one of the middle *brachos* in *Shemoneh Esreh*, and one is not instructed to suffice only with the general request in the body of the *brachah*.

But the question is asked: Why is it so important for a person to detail his request? Doesn't Hashem know our thoughts, and all one's intentions are clear and known to Him?

The Shelah HaKadosh explains that a person needs to explain his *tefillah* and not rely on the *kavanos* of the heart, because the words that a person utters have power, "as the words of *tefillah* are comprised from the holy letters, and they rise On High and breach the firmaments," and therefore a person should orally express his request, in a complete way.

Rav Shimshon Pincus explained this as follows: *Tefillah* does not work from the power of *segulah*, but rather from a natural power, as Hashem imbued it in the nature of the creations that the Jew has the power to pray and see salvation. Therefore, just like the natural *hishtadlus* is done in a clear and detailed fashion, likewise the *tefillah*, which, as noted, is part of natural *hishtadlus* should be said in a clear and detailed fashion.

Shelah Derech Chaim 33; She'arim B'Tefillah p. 93

The *Megaleh Amukos* expounds on this concept to explain the loftiness of answering amen:

The Rokeach explains (*Hilchos Seudah* 330) that "one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*," as per the words of Rabi Yosi (*Brachos* 53b), because while the *mevarech* only mentions in his *brachah* the Name of Adnus, the one who answers amen unifies in his answer the Names of Havayah and Adnus together, because amen is numerically equivalent to 91, which is equal to the two Names combined.

It would seem, however, that there is a ruling in *halachah* (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 5 1) that when mentioning the Name of Adnus in the *brachah*, the *mevarech* has to also have in mind the Shem Hava-yah, and if so, why is the *oneh* greater than the *mevarech* if the *mevarech* also unites the two Names?

But while the *mevarech* utters only the Name of Adnus, and has in mind the Shem Hava-yah, it is only in his thoughts, while the one who answers amen is considered to have uttered the two Names, because together, they are included in the answering of amen that he utters, and because uttering the Names verbally is more important than thinking them, therefore "the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*."

Megaleh Amukos V'eschanan

Based on this, **Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson** explained the view of his grandfather, the *Bach* (*Orach Chaim* 47), that one should detail in *Birchas HaTorah*: "And we, and our children, and our children's children." It would seem that the description of "*tze'etza'einu*" already includes our sons and grandsons as one, as proven from the *brachah* after *milah*: "*Asher kidesh yedidi mibeten vechok bishe'ero sam vetze'etza'av chasam b'os bris kodesh*," and the *Tosafos* explains (*Shabbos* 137b, ad loc. *Yedid*): "ידיד" is Avraham Avinu, "שאר" – is Yitzchak, his son, and "וצאצאיו" – are Yaakov and his sons, who are the descendants of Yitzchak as well.

However, according to the *Zohar*, that when making a request a person has to detail his request very clearly, this becomes clear: The *tefillah* of "*veha'arev na*" is considered a request, and therefore, one must detail "*vetze'etza'ei tze'etza'einu*" but the *brachah* of the *milah* is considered gratitude, and with gratitude it is enough to mention briefly "*vetze'etza'av*."

Yad Shaul, Yoreh Deah 265

from the answering of amen," she replied. "When you told me that you came on an indirect route, I thought to myself that if I would not have been delayed to answer amen after the children who asked me to, I would have found myself

making the long walk to the hospital, with this heavy bag, only to hear that *baruch Hashem* you had been released and that I had to walk right back where I came from, in the dark, alone, to my family that would be waiting impatiently

to start the *seudah*. I was spared so much aggravation in the merit of staying back to answer amen properly."

Tiv Hakehillah Tetzaveh 5776

The Merit of Amen Saves from Enemies

"הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו כי ירא אנכי אתו" (לב יב)

Harav Nosson Nuta Shapiro, the Megaleh Amukos, explained:

"נא מיד אחי" – is an acronym for amen, and Yaakov had in mind in his *tefillah* that the merit of answering amen should advocate for him that his *tefillah* should be accepted and he should be spared from his brother Eisav. "Indeed, this merit of amen was effective for him, as he saw face to face the angel of Eisav and was saved."

Megaleh Amukos

The *segulah* of answering amen as a salvation and to have the *tefillah* accepted is brought in the holy *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285b), and he writes, based on the commentary of the *Sulam* there: "When Am Yisrael on this world are careful to answer amen and to concentrate the way they have to...then when they are harassed,

they pray their *tefillah* to their Master, and the Voice declares in all the worlds: '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*' (*Yeshayahu* 26:2). Do not read it '*emunim*' but rather '*amenim*,' meaning that they are careful to answer amen. Just like Yisrael opened for them the gates of *brachos*, now as well open the gates, and their *tefillos* against those who harass them will be accepted."

The *Tana Devei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* 11) similarly explains the *passuk* in *Shiras Devorah* (*Shoftim* 5:2): "בפרע פרעות: "בישראל בהתנדב עם ברכו ה –

"What did Devorah prophesize to Am Yisrael? She told them: With whom does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge for Am Yisrael on the nations of the world? With the people who go to shul morning and evening and answer amen and bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu with amen...Of them the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 55:19): 'פדה: בשלום נפשי מקרב לי כי ברבים היו עמדי'."

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The sign at the front of the Bas Ayin shul in Tzefas

The Bas Ayin

12 Kislev 5601

Rav Avraham Dov of Avritsch was born around the year 5520 in the city of Chmielnik, Ukraine, to his father, Rav Dovid, who served as a *maggid* in the city. At a young age, he was already learning diligently with his father, and adopted many holy practices.

When he became of age, Rav Nosson Nuta, the rav of Avritsch and a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, took him as a son-in-law. After

his marriage, he joined his father-in-law on his trips to the *maggid* of Chernobyl. After the passing of the *maggid*, the Bas Ayin traveled to the *maggid's* son, Rav Mordechai, and also became close to Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

With the passing of his father – before the Bas Ayin turned twenty - he was asked to fill his place in the city of Chmielnik. But a short time later, his father-in-law passed away and he was asked to serve as the Rav of Avritsch in his place – a position he kept for forty years.

At the end of 5585, the Bas Ayin was asked to serve as Rav of Zhitomir, a center of Torah and *chassidus*. Over the years, many *talmidim* basked in his presence, learning from him and seeking to absorb his *tefillos* and *avodah*, and to receive *brachos* from him.

In 5591, he made Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael, which he had yearned to do all his life. He established a *beis medrash* in Tzefas and served as the *rav* of the Chassidic community in the city. On 24 Teves 5597, while he was davening in his *beis medrash*, an earthquake struck Tzefas and its surroundings. The Bas Ayin urged all the *mispallemim* to gather around him, and although the *beis medrash* collapsed, the place where he was standing with his congregants remained intact.

On 12 Kislev 5601 he passed away and was laid to rest in a burial cave in the ancient cemetery of Tzefas. Rav Avraham Dov did not have children, but he did leave his *sefer Bas Ayin*, which has become very famous and widely studied.

Amen – Declaration of Emunah in the Coming of Mashiach

In *Maseches Brachos* (53b), Chazal say: "The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*." The reason is explained by the Bas Ayin: Because amen is an acronym for א-ל מלך נאמן (*Shabbos* 119b) we find that while the *mevarech* mentions only "*K-l Melech*," in the words of the *brachah*, the one who answers amen also adds the description "*ne'eman*" – which means Hashem is faithful that He will redeem us quickly as He promised, and by doing so the virtue of amen is greater than that of the *mevarech*.

Bas Ayin Parashas Vayakhel

The Great Avodah of Answering Amen

The Bas Ayin further explained:

"הלויים" is numerically equivalent to אמן to teach us that just like the term "*haLevi'im*" indicates connection and joining, as it says (*Bereishis* 29:34): "הפעם ילדה אישי" – likewise, the concept of amen is connection and joining the holy Names, because the numerical value of amen is the same as the Names of הוי"ה and אדנות together. Based on this we can explain the *passuk* (*Shemos* 38:21): "אשר פקד על" – as a warning that the great *avodah* contained in answering amen should be done with the *kavanah* to connect to the two Holy Names.

Bas Ayin Parashas Pekudei