

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Towards the end of his life, Yaakov Avinu summons his sons and blesses them “each one according to his *brachah*” (*Bereishis* 49:28). The *brachah* that Yaakov gave Naftali – “*Naftali ayalah shluchah hanosein imrei shefer*” (ibid 21) is explained by Rashi: In the war against Sisera, in the times of Devorah Haneviah, the sons of Naftali quickly went out to war, like a “gazelle that is dispatched” and as a result, Devorah Haneviah and Barak Ben Avinoam gave “*imrei shefer*” praise to Hashem for the great *yeshuah* that they merited to see in that war.

The story of this war is described in Chapter 4 of *sefer Shfotim*. Yavin, the king of Chatzor, cast his fear on Am Yisrael, until they were afraid to walk on the roads and to live in the unwallled cities. When Am Yisrael repented, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sent them Devorah Haneviah. Based on her prophecy, the members of Shevet Naftali and Shevet Zevulun, led by Barak ben Avinoam, set out for war against Sisera, the general of Yavin, a war where Hashem performed miracles and wonders and they defeated Sisera and his army. In praise and gratitude to Hashem, Devorah sang her *shirah*, about which Yaakov said to Naftali that he was destined to be “*nosein imrei shefer*,” the catalyst for this song, as his *shevet* fought for this victory.

It is surprising to discover that right at the beginning of the song, Devorah Haneviah reveals to us in which merit Am Yisrael defeated their enemies in this war and that is – the answering of amen!

Shiras Devorah begins with the *passuk* (*Shoftim* 5:2): “*Bifroa pera’os b’Yisrael behisnadev am barchu Hashem.*” The *Tanna Devei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah* Chapter 11) explains this *passuk* as follows: “With whom does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge on Am Yisrael from the nations of the world? With people who go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* morning and evening and answer amen.”

The merit of the *misnadvim*, the volunteers in the nation, who rise early to go to shul to answer amen, is what advocated for Am Yisrael to see the downfall of Sisera and his army with tremendous miracles! We have to learn from here for generations what a great responsibility we have to be strict to answer amen, especially at this time when we are in a constant war with those who seek to destroy us. Like then, now, if we are wise to rise early to volunteer and answer amen after the *mispallelim* in the shuls, we will undoubtedly merit to continue to see great miracles, until the resounding downfall of our enemies.

This message is so important for generations, that Devorah then repeats in her *shirah* later on (ibid 9): “*Libi lechokekei Yisrael hamisnadvim ba’am barchu Hashem,*” in order to reiterate to us the importance we must attribute to those

who volunteer of their time and rise early to help people recite the *brachos* of Hashem with *shleimus* – meaning that they are answered by amen.

And maybe this is alluded to in the *nevuah* of Yaakov Avinu, as the words of the *passuk* “*Hanosein imrei shefer*” which refers to *Shiras Devorah*, as noted, contain the word amen in the words “הַנּוֹתָן אִמְרֵי” [the last *nun* of *hanosein* and the *aleph* and *mem* that begin the word *imrei*]. Because the knowledge about the great virtue of answering amen and its great power to defeat the enemy, are part of the *imrei shefer* that Devorah Haneviah gave us.

Parashas Vayechi, in which *Shiras Devorah* is alluded to, is read on the day following the second *yahrtzeit* of my mother, Devorah, a”h, the daughter of Reb Dov Hoffman, *Hy”d*, which will take place this Erev Shabbos, 17 Teves. Like Devorah Haneviah who praised and elevated those who rise to go to shul to answer amen, my mother, a”h, accompanied through the years of the Bney Emunim revolution, with strength and encouragement, from the inception of Bney Emunim until her final day, when remarkably, at the time of her passing I was in Eretz Yisrael, and two hours before her peaceful passing, I merited to take leave of her and to receive *brachos* from her.

My mother a”h was a “*na’eh doresh vena’eh mekayem.*” She herself was strict to recite *Birchos Hashachar* each morning with *simchah* and emotion that expressed her deep gratitude to Hashem. She would not make the *brachos* until there was someone to answer amen to them. I have no doubt that the merit of her strictness to thank Hashem for her health, with *shleimus*, is what helped her live a long life, in good health, *nachas* and joy.

Chazal promise (*Tanchuma* 96:7): “Anyone who answers amen in this world – merits to answer amen in Olam Haba. How do we know? As it says (*Tehillim* 41:14): ‘*Baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael mei’ha’olam v’ad ha’olam amen v’amen*’ – amen in this world and amen in Olam Haba.” The song of my mother – “*Shiras Devorah*” – has not ended! She continues to earn *zechusim* and to answer amen in Olam Haba as well!

May we merit to speedily see the *geulah* of Am Yisrael, when all those who have departed should rise up again, and we should merit to see the realization of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 72:19): “*Veyimalei kevodo es kol ha’arets amen v’amen.*”

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

The sun was setting. The holiness of Rosh Hashanah filled the world. Hearts pounded with emotion in every community in Am Yisrael, even in the most remote places.

Rav Yochanan Brizel, a veteran *baal chessed* and *kiruv* activist, usually does not spend Yom Tov in Eretz Yisrael. Each year, he flies to a different place, seeking ways to disseminate light to warm the hearts of Yidden who were not raised with Torah and *mitzvos*, and to give them a bit of true Jewish flavor filled with spiritual pleasure.

There are many locations around the globe where secularity and impurity have become dominant, and they need someone with a heart that is fiery in its *avodas Hashem* to come and touch the souls and ignite that spark that is buried deep in every Yid – his holy *neshamah*.

Rav Brizel usually spends Rosh



The Marina Roscha Shul in Moscow

Hashanah in Ukraine, but this time, he decided to travel to the small city of Vnukovo, near Moscow, the capital of Russia.

Vnukovo is known as the “city of students” because many students choose to live specifically there. The large educational institutions are located in Moscow, but for that reason, rent there is very high. Some choose to rent another apartment with a number of partners and they split the cost of the rent, while others prefer to rent apartments for a lower price in Vnukovo, which is not far away, and thus they save on expenses.

Many of the students in the city are Jews, but not the type that go to *cheder* at age three to learn *aleph*

beis with a *melamed*. No one ever gave them honey to lick, and to feel the sweetness of the holy letters. Their father never carried them wrapped in a *tallis* to the *melamed* when they turned three. These Jews did not merit to put on *tefillin* at age thirteen, and they have no idea what Judaism is and what it means for them.

Each Sunday, the day off for the students, there are *kiruv* activities in Vnukovo to introduce Judaism to these students, usually through Torah *shiurim*. They are taught what every little boy already knows: about shofar and *tzitzis* and sukkah. They start from zero. Some of them visit the Jewish center regularly and others only come from time to time, as they invest most of their time and effort on their studies.

That year, the second day of Rosh Hashanah fell on Sunday, and as such, many students came, as every week, to the shul, to participate in the *kiruv* activities.

When they entered, some of the students were very taken aback at the sight of the packed shul, and wondered who the Jew dressed in white, the *chazzan*, standing at the eastern wall of the shul, was. They also were very surprised why the *shiur* they had come to did not begin, nor end...It was necessary to explain to them the meaning of *tefillah* and its role on the Yom Hadin.

In order to bring the students closer, the sale of the *kibbudim* in the shul took place in a unique format. Most of the honors were not sold for money, but rather for *perakim* of *Mishnayos* that the students pledged to learn. For those who had already made progress and could learn a *daf Gemara*, *kibbudim* were sold to them for pages of *Gemara*.

But as is known “if there is no

kemach there is no Torah” and therefore, some of the *kibbudim* were sold for actual money. One of those was *pesichas ha’aron* on Rosh Hashanah night, before the recital of *LeDovid Mizmor*.

The *pesichah* was purchased by an elderly person who lived in the city. He was a simple man, and no one understood why he insisted on competing with the *mispallelim* to merit this *kibbud*, and kept raising his bid to acquire it. With his wisdom, Rav Brizel understood that there was a story here...

After davening, Rav Brizel approached the buyer, and asked to hear the story behind the purchase. The Yid answered willingly and this was the story he emotionally told Rav Brizel:

“About two years ago, I decided to establish a small factory. Building such a factory was very expensive, and I’m not a rich man...so I took a big loan from the bank. Based on the reckoning that I made, after a few months, I’d start to earn a profit, and then I’d be able to meet my loan repayments, which were spread over many years. I would even be left with a nice sum each month to earn a good living.

“But then the war began. Russia invaded Ukraine and launched brutal battles. When I heard about the war, my heart sank and I began to fret. War is a hard time, not the type of time when orders flow in and you see profits...I was sure that the merchandise that I was producing would not be in demand during wartime, and I would not be able to profit as much as I had thought. I might even sustain losses. What would be with the loan I took from the bank? How would I return it?!

“There was nothing I could do besides pray,” this man told Rav Brizel. “I pleaded with Hashem to send me salvation and spare me from losing all my assets, even though, by nature, there was no chance of that happening. I believed that He is the Almighty and He can do anything, even when the situation seems lost. I davened that He would be at my side, and would open the gates of success for me, despite the difficult times.

Tefillah Acts Like a Sword and a Bow

“ואני נתתי לך שכם אחת על אחיך אשר לקחת מייד האמרי בהרבי ובקשתי” (מזח כב)

Chazal ask about this *passuk* (*Bava Basra* 123a) “And did he take it with his sword and his bow?! Doesn’t it say (*Tehillim* 44:7): ‘*Ki lo bekashti evtach vecharbi lo soshieni?*’” The commentaries explain: “*Charbi*, my sword – is *tefillah*, and *kashti*, my bow – is *bakashah*, a request.”

The reason *tefillah* is compared to a bow and sword is explained in a few ways:

The **Maharsha** explains that the comparison between a sword and bow comes to allude that the *tefillos* of Yaakov helped him overcome the *brachos* of Eisav and Yishmael. Because Yishmael was blessed with the *brachah* of the bow, as it says (*Bereishis* 21:20): “*Vayehi raveh kashas,*” and he was an archer, while Eisav was blessed with the sword, as it says (*ibid* 27:40): “*V’al charbecha sichyeh,*” by your sword you shall live.”

Rav Azariah Figu, author of *Gidulei Terumah* explains that the *passuk* compared *tefillah* to a sword and bow, to instruct that the power of *tefillah* is compared both to a sword that is intended to fight face to face and to a bow that serves to shoot an arrow to distances. With these comparisons we learn that it is within our ability to prevail over the *yetzer* using *tefillah*, both in a war that he wages with us from close up, in his efforts to incite us to transgress the laws of Torah, and with a war that

he wages from a distance – when he prosecutes against us in front of the *Kisei Hakavod*.

The **Sfas Emes** brings in the name of the *Baal Hatanya* that comparing *tefillah* to a sword and a bow describes the two forces that are active in *tefillah* – the power of the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* who instituted the *nusach* of *tefillah*, and the power of the person who davens. The *nusach* of *tefillah* composed by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* is compared to a sword, whose power is contained in its very being – in the sharp blade, while a person who davens is compared to a bow that is made from a thin branch, and only with the right action and with the power of the shooter and his skills can one attain the desired result from it.

Rav Yosef Yisrael Deutsch, author of *Ben Garni*, explains that by comparing his *tefillos* and requests to a sword and bow, Yaakov meant to describe two types of *tefillos* that he was fluent with. The sword serves to kill the enemy that is already at our door, and that corresponds to a *tefillah* said after the arrival of the trouble, which is also effective, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 10a): “Even if a sharp sword is resting on a person’s neck he should not despair of mercy.” But the bow is used to shoot arrows when the enemy is still at a distance, and that corresponds to *tefillah* before the arrival of a trouble, and that is the *tefillah* that *Chazal* praised and said (*Sanhedrin* 44b): “*L’olam yakdim adam tefillah letzarah.*”

The **Meshech Chochmah** explains that *Chazal* clarified: “*Charbi* is *tefillah kashti* is *bakashah*” because there is a difference between a *tefillah* and a request. Indeed, the *tefillah* is compared to a sword and the request to a bow. That is because *tefillah* is the *nusach* established by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, and that is accepted even if there was no *kavanah*, and that is why it is compared to a sword, whose use does not require skill or knowledge. In contrast, a *bakashah* is the personal request that a person adds, and in order for those to be accepted, they need to be said with *kavanah* of the heart, and therefore, they are compared to a bow, whose use requires precision and skill and practice.

Rav Moshe Leib Shachor, one of the *gedolim* of Yerushalayim, explains that based on the words of the **Meshech Chochmah**, we can understand why the Torah preceded the sword to the bow, even though the way of war is that it starts when the enemy is still at a distance and attempts are made to fight it with a bow, and only if it continues to advance, do we fight it with a sword. This is because a person should first employ the sword, which corresponds to fixed *tefillah*, before the bow that alludes to the private requests, and that is the order of *tefillah* – first the fixed *nusach* is said, and then *bakashos* are added.

Maharsha Bava Basra 123a; Binah L’Itim, Eis Hazamir Drush 62; Siddur Harav p. 23b; Sfas Emes Noach 5635; Ben Garni; Meshech Chochmah; Avnei Shoham

“A short time later, the West began to impose economic sanctions on Russia. They ordered a range of limitations to make it harder for Russia to function economically, in an effort to punish Russia and to deter it from continuing its war.

“Until that time, the products that I manufacture were largely imported to Russia from factories in the West. Due to the sanctions, the governments forbade those factories from continuing to export to Russia. So there was a huge shortage all over

Russia for precisely those products that I was producing...Now, orders began to stream in from around the country and my merchandise was snapped up. I doubled my production rate, expanded the factory, raised prices – and still the merchandise was selling fast. My profits swelled! Not only did I meet my loan repayments, I was able to pay back a big chunk of the loan before it came due...

“For this reason,” the man concluded his beautiful story of *emunah*, “it was

very important for me to purchase *pesichah* on Rosh Hashanah night. After *LeDovid Mizmor*, it is customary to say the *tefillah* for *parnassah*, and I wanted to say it in front of the open *Aron Kodosh*, in gratitude and joy for the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepted my *tefillah*, and transformed my grief to elation and opened for me the gates of *parnassah.*”

Likras Shabbos Malkesa Issue 408

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Meah Brachos and Amen in the Parashah

Sefer Bereishis in the Sod of Amen

“הזק הזק ונתחזק”

Harav Avraham Eiger of Lublin wrote:

In *Chumash Bereishis* there are 91 *parshiyos* (*setumos* and *pesuchos*) which is numerically equivalent to amen. This alludes to the connection between the Chumash, amidst whose *parshiyos* is concealed the root of *emunas Yisrael* until the end of generations, to the mitzvah of answering amen, whose entire

essence is *emunah* by virtue of the fact that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is a “K-1 Melech Ne’eman.” (*Shevet M’Yehudah* 5666)

Protection and Shemirah in the Merit of Answering Amen

“המלאך הגאל אתי מכל רע יברך את הנערים ויקרא בהם שמי ושם אבתי אברהם ויצחק וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ” (מח טז)

The *Abir Yaakov* explained:

לדאך is numerically equivalent to אמן because for answering amen

a person merits protection and *shemirah* from all bad things, as Yaakov merited when an angel was sent to save him in his time of trouble, as it says “*Hamalach hago’el osi mikol ra.*” *Yirei Hashem* also merit this, as it says (*Tehillim* 34:8): “*Choneh malach Hahsem saviv le’yereiav vayechealtzem.*” And we can add an allusion to the special *shemirah* that one who answers amen merits from the acronym of the words א-דנ-י סביב ליראיו – which is numerically equivalent to amen. (*Aleph Binah Tehillim* 34:8)

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The ancient cemetery in Brody

The Pnei Moshe

12 Teves 5541

Rav Moshe Margulis was born to his father, Rav Shimon, in Keidan, Lithuania in the 5470s. As a young man, he served as Rav in several communities in Lithuania, but once he began to write his comprehensive commentary on the *Yerushalmi*, he moved from Lithuania and began to wander through the cities of Europe,

in order to find ancient manuscripts that could help him in his writing.

Rav Moshe is considered the eminent commentator on the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, because he is the only one who wrote a comprehensive commentary on all four *sedarim* of the *Yerushalmi*. His commentary includes two parts, the first, *Pnei Moshe*, on the meaning of the *pshat* in the *Yerushalmi*, and the second, *Mareh Hapanim*, in which he expounds in depth on the *Yerushalmi*.

We can gain insight into his greatness in Torah, and the tremendous effort he invested in writing his commentary, from what Rav Moshe himself wrote in his *sefer Mareh Hapanim on Maseches Shevuos* (7 6): “I testify with Heaven and Earth as my witnesses that this commentary on *Shas* that I compiled is after research and delving and diligence with great effort...in all areas of this *Shas* and in all the *Tosefta* and in all of *Shas Bavli*, with the *shittos* of the Gaonim and their commentaries to the extent that I was able to attain.”

The *Pnei Moshe* passed away on 12 Teves 5541 in Brody, while he was on his way to Eretz Yisrael. Regarding his burial site, the records of the cemetery in Brody contain a remarkable entry: “On 21 Teves 5531, the *gaon* of Brody Rav Yosef Shatzkes passed away. Before his passing he said that his will was that after he passed away, the one buried next to him should be an expert in *Yerushalmi*, as he was, so that he could discuss it with him. Ten years later, the *Pnei Moshe* came with his *sefer* to sell, and he passed away and was buried next to Rav Shatzkes.” (*Shenos Dor Vador*, Vol. II, p 122)

The Kavanah of the Mevarech to Be Yotzei the Obligation of Answering Amen

The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 7 3) brings that when Rav Ze’ira honored his student Rav Abba bar Zeminah to make a *brachah* on the wine and to have in mind to be *motzi* from the obligation of the *brachah*, Rav Abba replied to his *rebbe*: The same way I have in mind to be *motzi* you with my *brachah*, you should have in mind to be *motzi* me in my obligation by answering amen to my *brachah*.

Why did Rav Abba bar Zemina want to be *yotzei* with an amen to his *brachah*?! Isn’t he the *mevarech*? Why does he need the amen?

The *Rema* (*Darchei Moshe Orach Chaim* 167) explains that the reason Rav Abba asked to be *yotzei* with answering amen is because the obligation of answering amen is also for the *mevarech*, as answering amen is part of the *brachah* (*Rashi Brachos* 47a ad loc. *Ad*). It is forbidden for a person to answer amen to his own *brachah*, and therefore, it is an obligation for the *mevarech* to complete his *brachah* by hearing amen from the *oneh*, through the *din* of “*shomea k’oneh*.”

However, the *Pnei Moshe* explained (*Yerushalmi* *ibid* ad loc. *Amar*) that the obligation of answering amen is always incumbent only on the listener, and Rav Abba did not ask to be *yotzei* with answering amen only because of its virtue. Because after *Chazal* said (*Brachos* 57a) that the *oneh* amen is greater than the *mevarech*, Rav Abba also wanted to have the merit of answering amen, so he asked Rav Ze’ira that when he answered amen he should have in mind to be *motzi* him through “*shome’a k’oneh*.”