

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

Tefillah with Kavanah Elevates Other Tefillos

“קחו מאתכם תרומה לה' כל נדיב לבו יביאה את תרומת
ה' זהב וכסף ונחשת” (לה ה')

Why did the Torah repeat the words
“Terumah l'Hashem...terumas Hashem”?

Rav Shlomo Kluger explained:

Sefer Hazohar (Pekudei 285b, and see Mikdash Melech ibid) brings that no tefillah goes to waste. Even a tefillah said without kavanah is delayed until the person merits to daven a tefillah k'halachah, and then this tefillah rises up with it.

We can say that this is the case with mitzvos as well. When a person does a mitzvah l'Shem Shamayim, all the mitzvos he performed not l'Shem Shamayim rise up with that mitzvah. The same is with tzedakah – a person should give tzedakah to fulfill the mitzvah that Hashem commanded, and therefore, someone who is filled with compassion for a poor person, and that is why he gave him charity, does not fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah. But even such a donation is not lost, chalilah, because when the person does merit to give tzedakah l'Shem Shamayim, he then elevates all the tzedakos that he gave for other reasons, and it is considered that he did the mitzvah retroactively.

This is what Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael: When you give a donation to build the Mishkan “kechu m'itchem terumah l'Hashem” – have in mind to give it solely l'Shem Shamayim, but even if “kol nediv libo” – those donations given out of generosity and not l'Shem Shamayim, “yevieha es terumas Hashem” – should come and be accepted leratzon together with the terumas Hashem.

Chochmas HaTorah p.
107; Mi Nadah, 70 2

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

At the Height of the World

This world is one of *heset*, hiddenness. We do not understand the real value of things. Simple things appear to be significant and important, while conversely - and unfortunately - things that are lofty and valuable are perceived as unimportant.

Chazal teach us this very keenly in explaining (Brachos 6b) of the *passuk* in Tehillim (12:9): “כרם זלות לבני אדם” – as follows: “כרם” – these are “things that are *berumo shel olam*” – at the height of the world, and yet, they are *זלות לבני אדם* - people are lax and negligent about them. Rashi there brings an example for this, “such as tefillah.”

Tefillah is the direct connection between a person and his Creator, it is what effects and brings about endless things, and everything in a person's life is contingent upon it. Despite all this, as Chazal say, people do not recognize its value and they have a tendency to be lax about it.

I will add that the definition of “*devarim [dibburim]* that are at the height of the world” is especially apt for the mitzvah of answering amen, which is a central part of tefillah, because, as we know, each amen creates an angel that stands among the ministering angels On High, about whom we say in the tefillah of Yotzer Ohr: “V'asher mesharsav...omdim berum olam.” And yet, sometimes, people are lax about it!

As we are in the week when we read the parashah about the

melachah of the Mishkan, the words of the early mekubal Rav Aharon Hazaken of Kardina become so clear to me. In his *sefer Iggeres Hata'amim*, he expounded on the virtue of answering amen, but above all, there is a special sentence that stands out in his words that reflects the virtue of answering amen: “What is the place of amen? *Kodesh kodashim!!*”

Because indeed, when describing the virtue of answering amen, Rav Aharon Hazaken placed it at the highest level – “*kodesh kodashim*.” In light of this, I had a thought, that the *passuk* (Tehillim 68:36): נורא אלוקים – whose acronym is “amen” alludes that the *kedushah* of answering amen is like the *kedushah* of the Mikdash.

Today, when we do not have the Mikdash, we should remember that we have answering amen, which is “*kodesh kodashim*.” It is clear as the sun that if people would delve into and recognize the virtue of answering amen, they would not forfeit a single amen!

Let us get up each morning to answer amen after the *Birchos Hashachar* of other *mispallelim*, and thus we will prove, *halachah lema'aseh* that we respect this mitzvah and hold it dear, and we recognize the lofty value that it has and know that its place is in the highest echelons.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov
Marmurstein

Birchos Hashachar k'halachah

Aloud

With kavanah

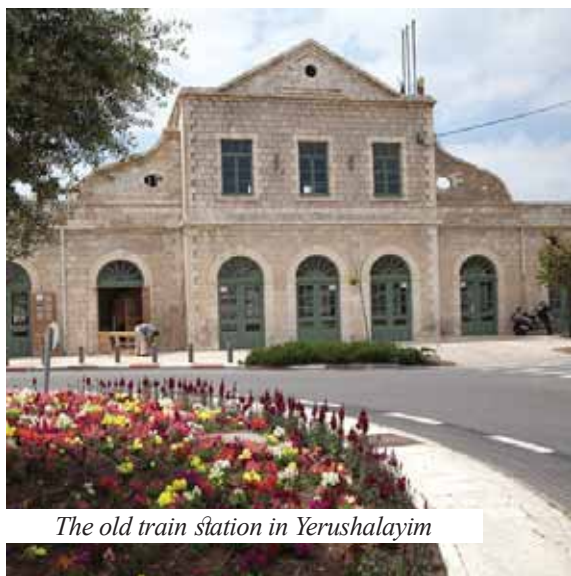
Bechavrusa

Mafla La'asos

Have you ever seen a group of policemen standing and listening to the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar* said by a renowned *tzaddik*? Undoubtedly, it sounds detached from reality, but as this story will illustrate, it's not impossible...

The sound of the train's horn was heard loudly as it pulled into the station in Yerushalayim. The people waiting for its arrival, including a group of policemen, hurried to board before it departed for its long trip to Haifa. The policemen who boarded the train scattered through one of the cars, and did not notice an elderly Yid who boarded at the same time as them and took a seat in the same car. They also didn't know that this was a great privilege, as they were traveling in the presence of Rav Eliyahu Lopian, the *menahel ruchani* of Yeshivas Kfar Chassidim, located near Haifa.

After the passengers settled in their



The old train station in Yerushalayim

seats, the train began to move. Breathtaking scenery surrounded them on all sides. The route of the train in those days wound through the Jerusalem Hills, and the passengers had beautiful scenery throughout the journey.

Suddenly, one of the officers felt a gentle hand on his shoulder. He turned his head and saw a venerable looking Jew – it was Rav Elya. The policeman realized right away that this was an important and special

person, and he waited patiently to hear what the older man had to say.

"I have a request," Rav Elya appealed to the policeman. "I have to recite the *brachah* of *Asher Yatzar*, and I would like to request that you gather all the policemen in the car so that they can answer amen to my *brachah*."

The policeman was surprised by the strange request, and he could not hold himself back from asking: "What? I should gather all the policemen from this whole railcar for one word?!"

But despite not understanding the importance of answering amen, the policeman was impressed by Rav Elya's venerable appearance and did not refuse the strange request. He stood up, went from seat to seat, and asked the policemen to all come answer amen to the *brachah* of this elderly Jew.

"What?" his friends were also very surprised, "what are you talking about? *Birchas Asher Yatzar*? Uh, what do we say? Amen?!"

The policeman doing the gathering did not know what to answer to their questions, because he also didn't know what the *brachah* was, and what it meant. He also didn't know to tell them that one who answers amen receives an even greater reward than the *mevarech*.

And yet, slowly, the policemen gathered around Rav Elya, some of them smiling, others looking surprised, while some were simply curious

to see what would happen.

After they all gathered, Rav Elya stood up, and surrounded by the uniformed men, began to make the *brachah*. There was silence in the railcar, and only Rav Elya's voice was heard, very slowly and clearly: "*Baruch Atah Hashem...*" with great *dveikus* and pure *kavanah*.

The policemen were very moved. Some of them were hearing a *brachah* for the first time in their lives, and even those who had heard

brachos – had never heard a *brachah* like this in their lives.

"*Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam*," Rav Elya continued slowly, word for word, with deep *kavanah*.

The train sped ahead, but Rav Elya was in no hurry. He continued to concentrate on the *brachah*, saying it word for word, as though he was counting precious coins.

"*Asher yatzar es ha'adam bechochmah...*" – one could almost touch Rav Elya's *kavanah*, and the policemen, who felt like they were partners in this special event, were filled with tremendous respect for this Jew standing and reciting the *brachah* with *yiras Shamayim*. Although they did not know what exactly *yiras Shamayim* was, they certainly sensed that this Jew cleaved to Hashem and loved Him with all his heart.

"*Baruch Atah...Rofei kol basar...*" Rav Elyahu emphasized the words "*kol basar*" – with tremendous *kavanah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the Healer of all people in the world.

"*U-m-a-f-l-i l-a'a-s-o-s*," Rav Elya concluded in a sweet tone.

And then the voice of all the policemen was heard filling the car. In unison, they answered loudly one word: "A-m-e-n," as Rav Elya had asked.

Rav Elya was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* among the policemen. With this action, he taught us what "be strong like a leopard to do the will of your Father in Heaven," because without that *azus*, that strength and courage – how would he have dared to gather people who are so far from anything holy? Even in shuls, which are a *makom kadosh*, and in homes that are *yerei Hashem*, we do not always merit to see a Yid reciting *Asher Yatzar* in front of other people so that they can answer amen afterwards, how much more so on a train speeding from Yerushalayim to Haifa.

After answering amen, as he had asked, everyone returned their seats, moved by what they had experienced. One of them even said candidly: "Just from the *brachah* of the Rav alone, one can do *teshuvah*."

Amen Brings Down Compassion and Chessed

In *Sefer Hamefoar*, Rav Shlomo Molcho Hy"l brings down the reason for the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 53b) that one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*. He writes:

When answering amen, the Name הו"ה which corresponds to *Middas Harachamim* is combined with the Name of אדנות which corresponds to *Middas Hadin*, as the numerical value of amen is equal to the numerical value of these two Names of Hashem. Thus, we draw down compassion from the Source of compassion upon Knesses Yisrael, and the *Middas Hadin* is nullified.

This is alluded by the fact that amen in its full spelling [אֱמֵן] is numerically equivalent to 297, and when we add the three letters of amen, then the total is 300 – which is numerically equivalent to the word בְּרַחֲמִים.

Rav Shlomo adds that the power of answering amen is also derived from the answer that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave to the *brachah* of Rav Yishma'el ben Elisha, as Rav Yishma'el describes (*Brachos* 7a): “*Pa'am ahas, I once entered to bring the Ketoress lifnai velifnim...* and He [HaKadosh Baruch Hu] said to me: Yishma'el My son, bless Me. I said to Him: *Yehi ratzon* that Your compassion should overpower Your anger and ויגורו רחמך על מדותיך and You should act with Your sons with *Middas Harachamim* and You should treat them *lifnim mishuras hadin*, and He nodded His Head to me.” The words ונענע לי בראשו are explained by Rashi “as if acknowledging my *brachah* and **answering amen**.” The agreement of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to the request of Rav Yishmael that the *middah* of *rachamim* should overpower the *Middas Hadin* comes in the form of answering amen, and we learn that answering amen is what causes the increase of *rachamim* on Knesses Yisrael. (*Sefer Hamefoar Sod Aniyas Amen Ubaruch Atah*)

Amen – A Testimony of Hashem's Rule Over Everything

Rav Menachem Rekanati writes that the numerical value of amen is the same as that of the words יהיה והיה

אחד – יהיה that one who answers amen is *meyached* HaKadosh Baruch Hu and declares about his *emunah* that Hashem “*hayah*,” He was prior to Creation, He created the world and sustains it in the present, והיה, and He also יהיה will be after He restores the world to *tohu vavohu*.

In light of this it emerges that one who answers amen “admits that the Creator, *yisaleh veyisbarach*, preceded Brias Ha'olam, and at His Will He sustains the world and will return it to *tohu vavohu*, and His Oneness is endless. And therefore, the power of the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*. Because the *mevarech* draws down *brachah* and the *oneh amen* is *meyached* and admits to the *chiddush* of the world as Hashem wishes, and the world exists with His Word and He will return it to nothingness, He controls it all, He is the First and the Last...amen.” (*Peirush HaRekanati Beshalach* and see *Bais Tefillah* [by the Mateh Ephraim] Chapter 15, where he wrote that this explanation is the correct one).

Amen – A Double Brachah

The *gedolei haposkim* explained: One who heard a *brachah* from another person and answers amen after it possesses both the virtue of the *brachah* and the virtue of amen. This is because the actual hearing of the *brachah* is considered as if he made the *brachah* himself, as Chazal say (*Sukkah* 38b): “*Shome'a k'oneh*” and when he answers amen, then he has the *brachah* and amen as one. The *mevarech*, in contrast, he has only the *brachah*, because he cannot answer amen to his own *brachah*, as Chazal say (*Brachos* 45b): “When one answers amen to his own *brachos* – this is repulsive,” and therefore, the *oneh* is greater than the *mevarech*. (*Shu"t Mabi"t* Vol. I, 117; *Prishah Orach Chaim* 124 7)

This concept that answering amen is an addition to the actual hearing of the *brachah* appears already in the words of the Rishonim. Rav Dovid Avudraham (*Tikkun Hatefillos V'inyaneihem*) brings in the name of Rav Avraham ben Shushan, that one who davens *Shemoneh Esreh* and then hears the *chazarah* of the *tefillah* from the *shaliach tzibbur* and answers amen is considered as if he davened three *tefillos*: the whispered *tefillah*, hearing *chazaras hashas*”tz and answering amen after the *sha"tz*.

But the story didn't end there.

The train continued on its route – which seemed rather endless. But suddenly they heard the screeching of brakes and the train lurched to a stop. The passengers were surprised – not knowing why the train had stopped, and they went from car to car, trying to figure out the reason. They soon learned what had happened:

A bomb had been planted on the rail ties, and the train nearly drove

onto it. Just the thought of what could have happened made them all shudder. *Bechasdei Hashem*, the driver of the train saw the bomb and stopped the train just in time; the passengers were saved from a catastrophe.

The *tzaddik* Rav Elya Lopian, who merited *giluy Eliyahu* in his life, surely saw with his *Ruach Hakodesh* the impending danger to the passengers on the train and sought a *zechus* that would protect them from punishment.

“Anyone who answers amen has the decree torn up” – in the merit of answering one amen, one can nullify every bad decree, even while speeding headlong towards the danger, and despite the evil designs of the terrorists. The *tzaddik* sought to be *me'orer* the passengers, especially those who were distant from *emunah* in Hashem, to say amen, so that they should merit to be saved from death.

Sefer Lev Eliyahu, Vol. I p. 51

Shabbos and Amen - For Emunah in the Geulah

“אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתם” (לה א)

The *Bas Ayin* explained:

In *Maseches Brachos* (53b), Chazal say: “*Gadol ha'oneh yoser min hamevarech*,” and this should be explained as follows: Because אמן is an acronym for נאמן מלך נאמן, (Shabbos 119b), we find that while the *mevarech* mentions only “Kel Melech,” in the *nusach* of the *brachah*, the *oneh amen* adds the “*ne'eman*” which means – Hashem is faithful to us to redeem us quickly as He promised, and that is why its virtue is greater than the *mevarech*.

When Am Yisrael were commanded about Shabbos in this *passuk*,

the commandment included the obligation to believe in the *Geulah* – the *Yom Shekulo Shabbos*. And this is why this *passuk* also alludes to answering amen, which, as noted, symbolizes the *emunah* in the *Geulah*, with the words אלה הדברים – which is numerically equivalent to 297, which is the same as the full spelling of amen – אלף מ"ם נ"ן.

700 Brachos a Week

“ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת” (לה ב)

Sefer Matamim Hachadash (*Inyanei Shabbos* 21) explains: One who is strict to recite *meah brachos* every day merits to accrue over the course of the week 700 *brachos*.

The name of Shabbos alludes to this as the acronym of שבת is [700] ת"ש which are completed on this day.

Rav Yitzchak Avraham Shlomo Majaled, one of the sages of Baghdad, explained according to this the *passuk* here: “ימים” is numerically equivalent to 100. If you are engaged in the work of saying 100 *brachos* “for six days” and you are also strict about this “on the seventh day,” when you have to make a greater effort to reach 100 *brachos* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 290 1), then “יהיה לכם שב"ח” – on Shabbos, which seals the week, you will have in hand ת"ש *brachos*.

Tzelach Rechav

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Aruch Hashulchan 22 Adar 5668

Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein was born in Babruysk, Russia, today Belarus, in Shevat 5589, to his father, Rav Aharon Yitzchak Halevi. The Rav of the city, Rav Eliyahu Goldberg, who was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, took note of his many talents and traits, and dedicated himself to teaching him Torah and guiding him on its paths.

He spent his younger years in Yeshivas Volozhin, headed at the time by Rav Yitzchak the son of Rav Chaim of Volozhin.

His first rabbinical position, which he began to serve at in 5625, was in the city of Novozybkov, Ukraine, where most of the residents were Lubavitch chassidim. While serving there, he traveled to the Tzemach Tzedek and spent about a month with him. He mentions this trip in *Aruch Hashulchan* with great yearning. In 5643, he was asked to serve as Rav in Novhardok, a role in which he served for twenty-four years, until his passing.

Already from a young age, he trained himself to learn in a very methodical way, with summarizing, and this way, he authored his comprehensive and famous halachic *sefer* entitled *Aruch Hashulchan*. This *sefer* was written according to the order of the *Shulchan Aruch*, and with the same division into *simanim*, but with more expansion, and with the addition of various opinions that were *nischadesh* until his times. In addition to this *sefer*, he also authored *Aruch Hashulchan He'asid*, which addresses *halachos* that are not practiced in our times.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* passed away on 22 Adar II 5668, and was laid to rest in the cemetery in Novhardok.

A Collection of Rulings by the Aruch Hashulchan Regarding Answering Amen

In the Merit of Amen, the Tefillah Is Accepted

“Answering amen is very beneficial to have his *tefillah* accepted, as Chazal say (*Brachos* 53b): ‘*Gadol ha'oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*,’” (*Orach Chaim* 130 1).

The Sin of Not Answering Amen

“One should answer amen after every *brachah* and it is an obligation for every person who hears the *brachah* to answer amen, whether they are those that they are *yotzei yedei tefillah* and those that are not and someone who does not answer amen has a great *aveirah*” (ibid 124 11). There is a story of one of the *gedolim* who learned at his *rebbe's* home, and one of the small children ate a fruit and made a *brachah* out loud, and this person did not answer amen, and his *rebbe* chided him extensively...And then he appeased him and forgave him on condition that he speak out in the world about the great punishment of one who hears a *brachah* and does not answer amen, and he told him a chilling story on this subject.” (ibid 215 1)