

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"



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Parashas VAYIKRA | 5785 | Issue No. 576

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Amen and Meah Brachos in the Parashah

Answering Amen as Avodas Hakorbanos

"דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם" (א ב)

Rav Elazar Rokeach, Av Beis Din of Amsterdam, wrote:

In *Seder Kodshim* in the Mishnah, which includes the *halachos* of *korbanos* and the *avodas hamikdash*, there are 91 *perakim*. This number alludes that through the *korbanos*, the *yichud* of the Holy Names of Hava-yah and Adnus are made, and together they amount to 91. The name קרבן also indicates that, because it is *mekarev*, it brings closer and unifies the two Names together.

This is similar to the *yichud* that is done by answering amen, which is also numerically equivalent to 91, which is equal to ה"י and אדנו together. Indeed, Rav Moshe Dovid Vali, a *talmid* of the Ramchal, wrote in his *peirush* on the Torah that the word amen is an acronym for the various types of *korbanos*: in the Torah, the *korban* is often referred to as אשה because it is brought on the *aish*, the fire of the *mizbe'ach*. Many of the *korbanos* were brought together with a *minchah* and *nesachim*. The acronym of אשה מנחה נסך and this alludes that the *yichud* that is done through the *korbanos* is like the *yichud* done by answering amen.

Ma'aseh Rokeach, Pesichah LeSheisa
Sidrei Mishnah 7; Shivtei
K-h [Rav M.D. Vali]
Bamidbar 28 11

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Mishenichnas Nissan Marbim B'aniyas Amen

Amidst the tremendous miracles that occurred during Yetzias Mitzrayim, everyone was able to see the Malchus of Hashem in His World, and the Hashgachah Elyonah that operates all natural systems. These miracles that our ancestors witnessed are the basis for the *emunah* of the Jewish people from then to this day. On the first night of Pesach, we are commanded to tell our children about these miracles and through them to instill in their hearts *emunah* in Hashem.

If the joy of the days of Purim obligates us to increase our levels of joy from the beginning of the month of Adar, then likewise, the *avodah* of *emunah* on Pesach obligates us to increase our *emunah* from the onset of Chodesh Nissan.

If we want to convey on Seder night the legacy of *emunah* in the hearts of our children, we have to first charge ourselves with pure *emunah*. The rate of our success in imbuing *emunah* in the heart of our children depends on our ability to speak to them with words that emerge from the heart, which we are promised will enter the heart.

How do we increase *emunah*? There are many ways to do this, but the most direct, basic and easy way is to answer amen with *kavanah*, as Rabbeinu Bechaye wrote (*Shemos* 14:33) that the whole *ikkar* of answering amen is to imbue *emunah* in our hearts. And the *Megaleh Amukos* determined (*Parashas V'eschanan*): "The

ikkar of *emunah* depends on answering amen."

And if this is true throughout the year, how much more so in this auspicious month. This is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Shemos* 2:12) regarding this month: ראשון הוא לכם—the acronym of the last letters of these words is amen, meaning: In the month of Nissan, the first month of the year, one should be especially strict to answer amen.

Answering amen builds the Mishkan of *emunah* in the heart of a person, and if we want to enjoy its fruits, it behooves us to answer with *kavanah*, not by rote, a murmur, just by the way, but rather with renewal and fresh enthusiasm each day.

We can say further that with the words "*Rishon hu lachem*" the Torah alludes that answering amen has to be at the forefront of our minds – *rishon* to all. As such, the amen is the fundamental of *emunah*, and the *emunah* is the basis of the whole Torah.

Now is the time to be stronger! Each and every one is commanded to put the mitzvah of answering amen at the forefront of his mind. Let us rise each morning to shul and recite *Birchos Hashachar* in the ears of someone who can answer amen, and we should also dedicate time to answer amen after the *brachos* of others. Thus we will merit to see the fulfillment of the words of the poet: "*hachodesh asher yeshuos bo makifos.*" Amen!

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov
Marmurstein

Birchos Hashachar k'halachah

Aloud

With kavanah

Bechavrusa

This story was related by the Rav of Migdal Ha'emek and head of the Migdal Ohr Institutions, Harav Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, *shlita*. The story described is most unusual and fascinating, but it has one clear message – shared by so many other stories: Amen – a small word with tremendous power.

Much was spoken about it in Yerushalayim of long ago, whose peddlers and merchants were Torah scholars, whose water carriers were lofty and holy people and whose shoemakers were pious and erudite. Reb Mordechai Shimon Teperberg, the owner of the famous winery located on Rechov Chayei Adam, was also one of those lofty residents of Yerushalayim who wanted only to bring *nachas* to their Creator. Each morning, Reb Mordechai Shimon would rise early, and before going to the *shtieblach* in Meah She'arim, he would spend a long time in a quiet

the Rebbetzin would quietly walk towards the winery, listened to the lofty *brachos* said by Rav Teperberg, and answered amen fervently after each *brachah*. When he finished the *brachos*, she would trudge– with her legs that were tired and heavy from her endless running among the homes of Yerushalayim to collect money for the poor – and towards the *shtieblach* in Meah She'arim. There, she spent hours standing on her swollen legs, making the effort to hear the *brachos* and answering as many amens as she could.

She remained in the women's section until the last of the *mispallelim* left the shul. Only then, would she smile her famous smile, thank Hashem for giving her another day in which to bring Him pleasure, and she would start her regular schedule. This included spending hours running around for her holy work. Her *tzedakah* enterprise was an integral part of Rebbetzin Gutfarb's identity,

and she was known for years as "Liba di Gabbita" – Liba the *gabba'is tzedakah*.

This wondrous scene played out each morning under the window of the Teperberg Winery, and Reb Mordechai Shimon knew nothing about it. Only the One on High knew about it, and there is no doubt that in this merit, He opened the gates of salvation and consolation for the city of Yerushalayim and for the world at

tichel and slippers, the wooden clogs that she wore at home.

Despite her advanced age and aching legs, she walked quickly on the regular path that she took each morning. She approached the winery, which appeared quiet and calm as always. She was about to turn around and go back home to change her shoes and walk calmly as she did each day, but then that inner voice whispered again that before she turned away, she should approach the window, where she regularly stood, and listen inside. If she heard nothing was out of the ordinary, then she could return home with a calm heart.

She quickly neared the window, and when she just glanced inside, she gasped and paled at once. A terrible scene met her eyes: Reb Mordechai Shimon was sprawled on the floor, spent, and standing over him was a brutal intruder threatening to take his life. Reb Mordechai Shimon was emitting heartrending groans, and Rebbetzin Gutfarb was horrified.

She almost screamed in panic, but then her breath caught. She noticed the intruder waving a large axe towards Reb Mordechai Shimon's head, and he already closed his eyes and with tremendous *kavanah* emitted the holy words that every Jew facing death utters: "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*"

The Rebbetzin's teeth were chattering in fright. But then, a practical decision cut off her raging thoughts and she decided to take action: Within seconds she stood behind the intruder, looking for something that she could throw at him to stop his heinous act. The only thing should found were her heavy wooden clogs, and without hesitating she took one of them and banged mightily on the large man's neck.

A loud thump was heard. Apparently, her brave act had done the deed, and the intruder slumped down to the ground, dizzy and in pain, as the heavy axe clattered to the floor.

"Mr. Teperberg, *antloif!* [Run!]" the Rebbetzin shouted to Reb Mordechai Shimon, whose eyes were still

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Reb Mordechai Shimon Teperberg, z"l

corner of the winery singing *Birchos Hashachar*, and communing with his Creator, basking in each and every word.

In the Batei Wittenberg neighborhood located across from the winery lived a pious woman, a famed *gabba'is tzedakah* – Rebbetzin Gutfarb, *a"h*, the grandmother of Rav Grossman, *shlita*. Each morning, before *neitz*,

large.

One morning, Rebbetzin Liba rose earlier than usual; there was a bad feeling in her heart. "Something is happening at the winery," an inner voice whispered to her. With a panic that was uncharacteristic of her generally measured actions and calm demeanor, the Rebbetzin left the house, still wearing her sleeping

Something Stolen That Is Not Worthy of the *Mizbe'ach* or the *Brachah*

”דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבחמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם” (א ב)

Rashi explains that the *passuk* says “*adam ki yakriv*” and not “*ish ki yakriv*” to allude to Adam Harishon and to teach us that just like Adam Harishon did not sacrifice from the *gezel*, because he was the only one in the world and everything belonged to him, “you should also not sacrifice from something stolen” (based on *Vayikra Rabbah* 2 7).

The Chofetz Chaim asked: Why do we need to learn an *issur* of bringing something stolen from Adam Harishon? Isn't it a clear *passuk* in *Yeshayah* (61:8): “*Ki Ani Hashem ohev mishpat sonei gezel b'olah*, for I am Hashem Who loves justice and hates robbery in the *olah* offering”?

He explained: From Adam Harishon we learn that a person should refrain from using not only money that he acquired against *halachah*, but also money that his friend gave him willingly, but it was done because he mistakenly thought he was a person of stature, for whom it is a *mitzvah* to share of his assets. Just like Adam Harishon surely did not use money that he accrued through mistaken admiration, because his needs were provided from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who sees all that is hidden, likewise, we are commanded not to benefit from money that is given to us erroneously.

Thus the Chofetz Chaim explained what we ask in *Birchas Hamazon*: “*Vena al tatzricheinu...lo l'yedei matnas basar vadam...shelo neivosh velo nikalem l'olam va'ed*.” We can ask, what is the context here for “*velo neivosh l'olam va'ed*” – why should we be ashamed in the Next World from a gift we received from a human being?

But as noted, when a person needs the “*matnas basar vadam*,” he might be taken to task for it in the World of Truth, if he made a mistake, and in such a case, surely he will feel shame in *Olam Haba*. Therefore, we ask that we should not need the *matnas basar vadam* at all, and thus we will not reach a state of shame in this world or in the World to Come.

Rav Moshe Yechiel Eptstein of Ozherov further explained:

The Midrash that disqualifies theft from “an *adam*” comes to forbid a *korban* that is considered to be stolen because the owner of the *korban* does not recognize that the entire world and everything in it belong to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. As Chazal say (*Brachos* 35b): “Anyone who benefits from *Olam Haze* without a *brachah* is considered to have stolen,” and because something that is obligated in

a *brachah* is considered stolen in the hands of a person if he did not make a *brachah* before he benefitted from it, likewise, the *korban* is not considered to be owned by its owners until he recognizes the fact that everything he has is from Hashem. An allusion to the fact that the *passuk* speaks about a *korban* that is considered theft because the person does not recognize that it comes from Hashem and not from him, is evident in the words “יקריב קרבן” – *מאה ברכות* which are numerically equivalent to *מאה ברכות*.

Based on this we can understand the word of the *tefillah* in *Ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur: “*Vatiten lanu Hashem Elokeinu b'ahavah es Yom Hakippurim hazeh...lema'an nechdal me'oshek yadeinu venashuv la'asos chukei retzonecha beleivav shalem*.” There is a question: Is the whole purpose of the *mitzvah* of *teshuvah* only so that “*lema'an nechdal me'oshek yadeinu*”? Rather, we mean to ask that we should not stumble with actual theft, and that we should reach that same absolute *shleimus* in the recognition that Hashem controls everything, and without that, we are considered to have benefitted from “*oshek yadeinu*.”

Lev Eliyahu – Bereishis, p. 211; Be'er Moshe

The *meforshim* then query that in *Maseches Sukkah* (30a), Chazal explain the word *מכם* in the *passuk* of *adam ki yakriv mikem* with the meaning of “*shelachem*,” yours, and learned from this that one should not sacrifice a stolen *korban*. But hasn't this *din* already been explained from the fact that it says “*adam*” – as noted, and why did they once again explain it from the word “*mikem*”?

Rav Hillel Lichtenstein of Kolomaya explained:

The explanation of “*mikem*” did not come to disqualify a stolen *korban*, but rather to teach us that just like one must not serve Hashem by sacrificing a stolen *korban*, likewise one should not serve Him by saying a *brachah* on something stolen. This is according to the words of the *Midrash Talpiyos* (*Anaf Brachos*) that the word “*mikem*” is numerically equivalent to “*מאה*” alluding to the *meah brachos* “that are in place of a *korban* – at a time when there are no *korbanos*.” As such, we can say that Chazal intended to explain from the word “*mikem*” that saying *meah brachos* has the *din* of a *korban*, and just like one should not bring a *korban* from something stolen, likewise, one should not make a *brachah* on something stolen. And as Chazal say (*Bava Kama* 94a), one who makes a *brachah* on something stolen “*eino mevarech ela mena'eitz*, he is not blessing, he is cursing” and of him it says (*Tehillim* 10:3): “*ubotze'a [a thief] beirech ni'etz Hashem*.”

Mikrei Dardaki 13

closed in fervent prayer. Stunned at the miracle, Reb Mordechai stood up and fled for his life - not to rest at home, or to calm down, but to the *shtieblach* to thank the Creator for saving him from certain death.

And the Rebbetzin? She also ran away from there, and hurried to her regular place in the women's section. During *Krias HaTorah*, she heard Reb Mordechai Shimon have an *aliyah* and recite *Birchas*

Hagomel with Hashem's Name, and in her place, she stood with tear-filled eyes and answered the short, three letter word, the elixir of life, that effects *yeshuos*: *אמן*!



The Bais Yosef shul on Rechov Bais Yosef in Tzefas

The Bais Yosef

13 Nissan 5335

Rav Yosef Karo, author of *Bais Yosef* and *Shulchan Aruch*, was born in Spain in 5248 to his father, Reb Ephraim, and it is

accepted that he marks the beginning of the era of the Acharonim. When he was four years old, his family had to move due to the expulsion of Spanish Jews. After the passing of his father, he moved in with his uncle, Rav Yitzchak Karo, author of *Toldos Yitzchak*, in Constantinople – today Istanbul.

After his marriage, he moved to the Turkish city of Adrianople (today Edirne) and there he began writing his major work, *Bais Yosef*, on the *Arba'ah Turim*. After becoming widowed, he married again, and after living for about thirteen years in the city of Nikopol in Bulgaria, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Tzefas, where he learned under Rav Yaakov Beirav. When his *rebbe* once again began issuing *semichah*, the Bais Yosef was the first one to be *nismach* by him.

He toiled over the *Bais Yosef* for twenty years. This *sefer*, written as an explanation for *sefer Arba'ah Turim*, by Rav Yaakov ben HaRosh, contains deep halachic discussions on all the *halachos* that are practiced in our time, with the extrapolation of the *halachah lema'aseh*. The *piskei halachos* discussed in *Bais Yosef* were then summarized in his work *Shulchan Aruch*, and from then until our time, it is the most basic *halachah sefer* in the entire Jewish world.

In addition to *Bais Yosef* and *Shulchan Aruch*, Rav Yosef Karo also wrote *Kesef Mishneh* on the *Mishnah Torah LeRambam*. After his passing, his *sefer Maggid Meisharim* was published, with *ma'amarim* and revelations that he heard from a "Maggid" – a *malach* that would reveal himself to him regularly, parts of his *teshuvos* in *halachah* and commentary on Torah.

The Bais Yosef passed away in Tzefas on 13 Nissan and was buried in the ancient cemetery in the city. He was 87 upon his passing.

Following are some of the *Shulchan Aruch's* rulings regarding amen:

Saying *Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa*

"It is customary that after one recites *Birchos Hashachar* and others answer amen to him, one of the *onim amen* then makes the *brachos* and the others answer amen after him, and in this order, all those who first answered amen then follow. And one should not undermine them and say that they were already *yotzei* with the amen that they answered first, because the *mevarech* does not have in mind to be *motzi* others, and even if he did have in mind to do so, they are careful not to be *yotzei* with his *brachos*." (*Orach Chaim* 64)

Run to Hear *Kaddish*

"One should have in mind when answering *Kaddish*, to answer it aloud and to try and run to hear *Kaddish*." (ibid 56 1)

The Obligation to Answer Amen

"One who hears someone in Am Yisrael making any one of all the *brachos*, even though he did not hear it entirely from beginning to end, and even though he is not obligated in that *brachah*, has to answer amen after it." (ibid 215 2)

The *Kavanah* of Answering Amen

"And they should answer amen after every *brachah* [in *Chazaras Hasha"tz*] whether those which they were *yotzei* in *tefillah* and whether they were not *yotzei*, and with the *kavanah* in his heart that: the *brachah* that the *mevarech* made is true and I believe it." (ibid 124 6).

Answering Amen Benefits the Living and the Dead

The following story took place in the Bais Yosef's yeshivah in Tzefas, and indicates the great virtue of answering amen. It is described by Chacham Menachem Menashe in his *sefer Ahavas Chaim (Parashas*

Chayei Sarah):

The Bais Yosef headed a large yeshivah in Tzefas, where some 200 *rabbanim* and *gedolei Torah* studied. Once, there was a *siyum masechta* in the yeshivah, with the participation of the Arizal. The Arizal saw that the Bais Yosef had prepared a variety of foods that required various *brachos*, in order to give the participants of the *siyum* the merit of saying *brachos* and answering amen. He turned to the Bais Yosef and asked if he could be the one to honor the other people with the *brachos*. The Bais Yosef agreed to the unusual request, as he realized that there was something deeper going on, and he closely followed what the Arizal did.

During the honoring of the people with food and *brachos*, the Bais Yosef noticed that the Arizal was purposely refraining from giving two venerable looking guests any of the foods to recite a *brachah* on. The guests were not familiar, but it seemed evident that they were lofty people, and the Bais Yisrael was puzzled at their exclusion from the honors.

After the meal, the Bais Yosef asked the Arizal why he had done this. The Arizal explained: These two guests were *neshamos* that descended from the World of Truth to complete what they were lacking in bringing down *shefa* to the world. Now, upon hearing the *brachos* and answering amen, they brought down a great abundance, and thus completed their *tikkun*, and now they can go back to their place. For this reason, I did not allow them to make a *brachah*, but rather ensured that they heard the *brachos* and answered amen.

The Arizal concluded by saying: The mitzvah of answering amen generates tremendous merit; it is effective to bring down *shefa* and blessing to the living in this world, and to be *mesaken neshamos* of the deceased in the Higher World. (*Ahavas Chaim Chayei Sarah*)