

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim



Pearls of Emunim

Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

Dedicate the 'Reishis' to Hashem

"ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה אשר תביא מארצך" (כו ב)

Aside for the mitzvah of *bikkurim*, there are other *mitzvos* in which the Torah instructs us to give the *reishis*, the first of something, to HaKadosh Baruch Hu: With the mitzvah of *challah*, we are commanded (*Bamidbar* 15:20): "*Reishis arisoseichem*." Likewise, with *terumah* (18:4): "*Reishis degancha tiroshcha veyitzharecha*." Regarding *reishis hageiz*, we are commanded (*ibid*): "*Vereishis geiz tzoncha titen lo*," and the firstborn son to his mother is sanctified to Hashem. (See *Binah L'Itim, Ein Mishpat, Drush 4*)

The Raavad, **Harav Moshe Sternbuch**, *shlita*, points out that we can learn from this that the beginning of the year as well, the days of Rosh Hashanah, should be dedicated to Hashem, and *chalilah*, we should not waste a single moment of those days idling. He related that he noticed that the Brisker Rav would recite *Tehillim* with *kavanah* and pleading throughout the two days of Rosh Hashanah. When people asked why he did not engage in his regular learning, he replied: While I'm learning, I have to stop from time to time to look into *sefarim* in order to understand the *sugyah*. I do not want to lose even one minute on Rosh Hashanah, and therefore, I engage in reciting *Tehillim* continuously.

Biurim Vehanagos

'We Cannot Sufficiently Praise...'

"ובאת אל הכהן אשר יהיה בימים ההם ואמרת אליו הגדתי היום לה' אלקיך כי באתי אל הארץ אשר נשבע ה' לאבותינו לתת לנו" (כו ג)
"V'amarta eilav" – tell him that you are not ungrateful" (*Rashi*, according

Amen – From Lower to Upper

"והיית רק למעלה ולא תהיה למטה כי תשמע אל מצות ה' אלקיך אשר אנכי מצוך היום לשמור ולעשות" (כח ג)

The *Ben Ish Chai* explained:

The difference between the numerical value of [מעלה] and the value of [מטה] is 91, which is the numerical value of the combination of the Names of Hashem, Hav-ayah and And-us, which come together when answering amen – which is also equivalent to 91. That is why it is so important (*Baal Haturim Devarim* 24 2). The *passuk* alludes that one who fulfills the "*mitzvos Hashem Elokecha*" with the *kavanah* of being *meyached* the two Names of Hashem merits that his level will rise from *matah* – below to *ma'alah* – higher.

Ben Ish Chai – Halachos, Introduction Ki Savo

to *Sifri* 299).

From the words of *Rashi* it emerges that one who brings *bikkurim* and reads the *parashah* of *Mikra Bikkurim* is no longer considered a *kafuy tov*, ungrateful. On the other hand, we do not see that he is considered a *makir tovah*, one who is grateful. Why is this? When he reads *Parashas Bikkurim*, does it not include gratitude for all the good that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has done for him?

We can learn from this that even someone who merits to recognize the good that a friend has done with him will never be able to fully grasp the scope of the *chesed* and goodness that HaKadosh Baruch Hu showers him with. Therefore, someone

who brings *bikkurim*, and while doing so, thanks Hashem for being benevolent with him, may no longer be considered ungrateful, but he is far from being called a *makir tovah*.

Pi Kohein, Vol. I, p. 63

The Second Tenufah – After the Brachah

"ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה אשר נתתה לי ה' והנחתו לפני ה' אלקיך" (כו י')

Rashi explains (according to *Sifri, Ki Savo*, 301) that they would wave the *bikkurim* twice, once at the beginning of the *Mikra Bikkurim* and once at the end. The reason for this repeated waving is explained by the *Chasam Sofer*:

With regard to the waving that was done up and down and to the four directions, *Chazal* gave two explanations (*Sukkah* 37b): "*L'Hashem ha'aretz umeloah*," and only after the *brachah* is the item upon which the person makes the *brachah* permitted, as it says (*ibid* 115:16): "*Veha'aretz nasan livnei adam*."

Based on this we can understand it clearly: When the *bikkurim* are brought, the fruits still belong to Hashem. At that point, they are waved to the One Who is Master of the Heavens and the earth and all the four direction of the world. But after the one who brings the *bikkurim* recites *Mikra Bikkurim*, in which he thanks HaKadosh Baruch Hu for the land and the fruits that He has granted the person, he then merits to receive the fruits because of the *brachah*. Now he must wave them again with a *tefillah* that Hashem should preserve these gifts that He has given him, by protecting his crops from bad dew and bad winds.

Chasam Sofer, ad. loc. Vehanicho

"שִׁחַר אֲבִינוּ מִלְכָּנוּ וּמִשְׁנֵבִי"



"אבינו מלכנו סתם פיות משטיננו ומקטרדגנו"

With the power of answering amen, a person wins over the prosecuting forces that blaspheme him. (*Maharsha Nazir* 63b)



"אבינו מלכנו כתבנו בספר חיים טובים"

"One who answers a long amen [slowly] then his days and years are lengthened with good." (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 8 8)

Fellow Yid! Do you want to increase your merits ahead of the Day of Judgment?

Come early to shul each morning to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and you can accumulate more and more amens, which are so valuable and will serve as a merit for you on the Yom Hadin.



**‘Gadol Ha’oneh Amen Yoser Min Hamevarech’
Insights and Explanations**

In previous issues, we presented a series of 25 explanations for the words of Chazal that one who answers amen is greater than the one making the brachah. In this segment, we will present insights and additional explanations relating to this statement.

Whoever Doesn’t Add, Detracts

The Maharal of Prague explained: Out of respect for Hashem, one should be careful that whenever he hears another person making a brachah, he should answer to it and add to the praises that his friend listed. Anyone who does not do so is making light of *Kavod Shamayim*. For this reason, when the words “*Barchu es Hashem hamevorach*” are recited, we answer with an addition: “*Baruch Hashem hamevorach Polam va’ed*.” Based on this we extrapolate that the word amen that we answer to brachos contains an additional praise to the brachah, as Chazal says “the one who answers amen is greater than the mevarech,” because it is inconceivable that the one responding should belittle *Kavod Shamayim* by not adding to the words of the mevarech.

Drashos Maharal, Drush L’Shabbos Teshuvah

Editor’s note: According to the Maharal, we can reconcile the words of Chazal when they say “*Gadol ha’oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*.” It has already been noted that it would have been enough to write “*gadol ha’oneh min hamevarech*.” Why did they add “*yoser*”? It is possible that they intend to say as follows: It is necessary to say that the one who answers is greater than the mevarech because *halachah* stipulates that he has to be “*yoser min hamevarech*.” That means he needs to add to the praises of the mevarech. We can add that this is what Rabi Nehora’i meant when he said about this statement: “*Hashamayim kein hu*.” Simply, Rabi Nehora’i meant to vow in the Name of the One Who sits On High that this statement is true (*Rashi Nazir 66b, ad. loc. Hashamayim*). But according to this, we can say that Rabi Nehora’i came also to explain that the reason the one who answers amen has to praise more than the mevarech is because “*l’Shamayim kein hu*” – *Kavod Shamayim* behooves him to do so.

**Gadol Ha’oneh –
From the Torah**

Harav Yissachar Ber Eilenberg, author of *Be’er Sheva*, explained: The obligation to answer amen is explained by Chazal (*Yalkut Shimoni, Ha’azinu, 942*) from what Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael in *Parashas Ha’azinu (Devarim 32:3)*: “*Ki Shem Hashem ekrav havu godel l’Elokeinu*” – while I mention the Name of Hashem in a brachah, you should “*havu godel*”

by answering amen.” The fact that the *passuk* mentioned “*godel*” with regard to answering amen on the brachah proves that the one who answers amen increases the praise of HaKadosh Baruch Hu more than the mevarech. As Chazal say “*gadol ha’oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*.”

Tzeidah Laderech Devarim 32:3

**An ‘Ish Emunos’ Is ‘Rav’ Than
the One Who says ‘Brachos’**

The *Ben Ish Chai* explained that the *passuk* (*Mishlei 28:20*) “*Ish emunos rav brachos*” is an allusion to the words of Chazal “*gadol ha’oneh amen yoser min hamevarech*.” He writes that “*rav*” means big, such as “*verav ya’avod tza’ir*” (*Bereishis 25:23*), which means that the bigger one will be subservient to the smaller one. That is alluded to in this *passuk*, “*Ish emunos*” – the one who answers amen, “*rav brachos*” – is greater than the one who makes the brachah.

Ben Yehoyada Nazir 66b

**The Path to the Goal
Precedes the Goal**

The Maharsham of Brezhan writes: Despite the fact that the amen is not said until after the brachah, Chazal still say that it is greater than the brachah because that is the way of the world. The path to achieve the goal precedes in time the achievement of the goal. But the virtue of the goal is clear. One who builds himself a house endures a long, expensive construction process, which comes before the use of the house, although it is certain that the construction is not the goal, the use of the house is.

This idea is what Rabi Nehora’i meant when he said of this statement “*Hashamayim kein hu*.” Chazal say (*Chagigah 12a*) that at the time of Creation, the creation of the land preceded the creation of the Heavens. That is because the Heavens are the ultimate purpose and the land is only there to be able to reach the Heavens. As it says in the *Mishnah (Avos 4:15)*: “This world is similar to a corridor before Olam Haba, prepare yourself in the corridor so that you can enter the ballroom.” From here we learn that during *Brias Ha’olam*, the Heavens were created at the end even though it is greater than the land that was created first, because the Heavens are the objective. Here, too, the reason the amen is said after the brachah is because of its virtue, as through answering amen, the brachah can fulfill its purpose.

Techeiles Mordechai, Bereishis

Forty Gold Coins – Taken Literally

The community of Pressburg during the years when the Chasam Sofer served as Av Bais Din and Rosh Yeshivah, was the most important Jewish community in Hungary. It was a time of much confusion in the *chareidi* world in Hungary, and these issues had significant ramifications on the community’s spiritual future. This was especially salient with regard to the *haskalah* and reform influences that wreaked havoc in frum communities.

While many of the best people were unsure of how to conduct themselves in the face of the scourge of *haskalah* that was spreading throughout the communities, there was a clear directive and firm leadership from Pressburg to all the Jewish communities in Hungary. The Chasam Sofer girded for battle to save the future of *chareidi* Jewry, which hung in the balance in the war with those who sought to uproot it. He instructed absolute separation from the renegade elements, in the fulfillment of the words ‘if you go left, I will go right, if you go right I will go left.’ In time, it emerged that this directive spared Hungarian Jewry for generations to come.

Another issue that was always at the forefront of the Chasam Sofer’s priorities was encouraging the mitzvah of settling in Eretz Yisrael. At the time, the Jewish *yishuv* in Eretz Yisrael was seeing a revival, and the Chasam Sofer was a very strong supporter of those Jews who were *moser nefesh* to fulfill the mitzvah of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, whether physically or by supporting it financially.

His encouragement was very refreshing for those heroes of spirit who, even after making the long and arduous journey from their homelands to Eretz Yisrael, still did not find peace. Eretz Yisrael at that time was neglected and desolate, riven by strife and wars, hunger and plagues, and was pervaded by abject poverty. But despite their difficult straits, they learned Torah and settled the land amidst all the suffering, with genuine *mesirus nefesh*. This was all in the merit of the extensive support that they received from their brethren in the Diaspora.

As such, those who were close to the Chasam Sofer were not surprised to see to what extent he held dear the *meshulachim* from Eretz Yisrael. From time to time, they would visit his home en route to cities where they would collect money to support the poor of Eretz Yisrael and its institutions. The Chasam Sofer welcomed them especially warmly, and gave of his precious time to guide them on questions that they presented him with. He also gave them generous donations, and respectfully escorted them on their way as they set out for their lofty mission.

One day, a dignified *meshulach* from Eretz Yisrael came to the home of the Chasam Sofer. It was not his first visit to the holy home in Pressburg. As always, the Chasam Sofer welcomed him warmly and invited him to dine with him.

Towards the end of the meal, which, as was characteristic of Torah scholars, was enhanced by *divrei Torah*, the *meshulach* hinted to his host about the purpose of his visit – to raise funds for the poor of Eretz Yisrael. In response, the Chasam Sofer honored his guest with *Birchas Hazimun*, as he remarked, ‘Here, you’ve already received forty gold coins...’

The Chasam Sofer was referring to the

words of the *Gemara (Bava Kama 91a)* that the value of each *brachah* is ten gold coins, and because *Birchas Hamazon* contains four *brachos*, then one who recites it is worthy of a reward of forty gold coins.

But the Yerushalmi *meshulach*, who had a sharp tongue, and who was driven to succeed on his mission, did not accept the words as they were. Instead, he retorted to the Chasam Sofer: “*In chutz l’aretz*, perhaps it is possible to support the poor with *brachos*, but the poor of Eretz Yisrael, and its *kollelim* and *yeshivos*, can only be supported with money...I would prefer instead to receive forty gold coins from the Rav...”

As soon as the words emerged from the *meshulach’s* mouth, the Chasam Sofer’s face clouded. He turned his face away from his guest, and from his severe expression, it was evident that he was very upset with the *meshulach’s* response.

The *meshulach* did not know how far the Chasam Sofer was from any form of joking or mockery. He thought that the Chasam Sofer was joking with him, but in reality, the sage had been serious about every word. If the *Gemara* says that the merit of a brachah is ten gold coins, then in *Birchas Hamazon* a person really does merit forty gold coins. How can one make light of this and turn it into a joking matter?!

The *meshulach* belatedly realized his mistake, and tried to apologize and appease the Chasam Sofer. He knew how severe the punishment of one who mocks the words of *chachamim* is, and in order to reconcile with his host, he sought to explain what he had said with a parable that he had thought of, in the spirit of those times:

There was a Jew who came to the bank where his account was managed, long after closing. The doors were locked, but the manager was still seated at his desk. The Jew was holding a bank check for a huge sum of money, which one of the Rothschild magnates had given him. He wanted to deposit it in the bank.

In an attempt to the attract the attention of the manager, he banged hard on the door, and waved his check at the glass window. But the manager paid him no attention. The bank was closed, and as far as the manager was concerned, it was just a simple passerby waving a piece of paper that had no value. He was trying to use the paper to get into the bank after hours, which the manager had no intention of allowing...

“When the bank is locked, even the check for the highest amount is not worth a penny,” the *meshulach* concluded. Then he explained, and said to the Chasam Sofer: “I did not *chalilah*, mean to make light of *Birchas Hamazon*. I meant to say that even though the value of the *brachos* is certainly very high, the poor of Yerushalayim will not be able to purchase what they need to sustain themselves with that currency. In order for my mission to succeed, I need to raise actual money for them...”

The Chasam Sofer’s descendants related that these words somewhat placated the Chasam Sofer. He no longer had a *hakpadah* on the *meshulach*, but from that day on, he no longer wanted to speak with him at all.

Tuvcha Yabi’u