

Vechele Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

At an *Eis Ratzon*, Daven for the Future

ה' אלקי אבותכם יסף עליכם כנחם אלה פעמים
(ויברך אתכם כאשר דבר לכם) (א יא)

Rashi explains (based on *Sifri* 1 11) that after Moshe blessed Bnei Yisrael with “*Yosef aleichem kachem elef pe’amim*, Hashem should add to you one thousandfold,” they said to him, “You are limiting our blessing. Hashem has already assured Avraham (*Bereishis* 13:16) “And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth.” Moshe said to him, “This is my personal blessing, but He [HaKadosh Baruch Hu] will bless you ‘as He spoke about you.’”

Bnei Yisrael’s claim and Moshe Rabbeinu’s response was explained by **Rav Nesanel Fried**, author of *Pnei Meivin*, with a parable:

In honor of his birthday, a king announced that he was willing to fulfill any request that was presented to him. Upon hearing the king’s announcement, many subjects came from far and wide, and presented their requests. The king did not disappoint, and any request that was made was filled to the petitioner’s satisfaction.

Towards the end of the day, the king’s closest friend came into the room. The king was happy to see him and asked to hear what his request was. In his wisdom, the friend wanted to use this opportunity to the maximum, and asked that from that point on, any request that he would make of the king, at any time, would be fulfilled.

The **Chida** brings this parable to explain the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 69:14): “*V’ani tefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b’emes yishecha*.” A time when a person davens with the *tzibbur* is an “*eis ratzon*” for the *tefillah* to be accepted (*Brachos* 8a), and a person should ask “*berov chasdecha aneini b’emes yishechah*” – answer me at all

times, even when it happens that I am compelled to daven *b’yechidus*, alone.

Before his passing, when Moshe saw that it was an *eis ratzon*, an auspicious time, he blessed Bnei Yisrael, each one with the matters that he needed at that time. But Bnei Yisrael, who wanted to take advantage of this auspicious time, claimed, “How can you put a limit to our *brachos*” – our needs are so great, and they will only grow bigger in time? Therefore, Moshe immediately blessed them that the *brachah* of Hashem, which includes everything and lasts for eternity, would accompany them at all times.

Chomas Anach, Tehillim 69:14; Pnei Meivin

Tefillah Accomplishes Half

ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים כימים אשר
(ישבתם) (א מז)

Rashi explained that Bnei Yisrael sat in Kadesh for nineteen years, “*kayamim asher yashavtem*” – the same number of years that they wandered on all the other travels in the desert. What is the reason that those thirty-eight years that were decreed for Bnei Yisrael to wander in the desert because of the sin of the Meraglim were divided into rest in Kadesh and wandering from place to place, in equal parts?

Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the Baal Hafla’ah, explained:

After the sin of the Meraglim, when Am Yisrael were decreed to remain in the desert and not to enter the Land, Moshe and Bnei Yisrael prayed that at least they should be spared the difficulty and the weariness caused by constant traveling. Because “*tefillah accomplishes half*” (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7 1), their years in the desert were divided – nineteen years of wandering and nineteen years of rest and tranquility.

Panim Yafos

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Amen' To *Birchas Hageulah*

This year, we will not be fasting on the ninth day of Av. This year, the ninth of Av is Shabbos, and the *halachah* instructs us to postpone the fast to Sunday. We all hope and pray that we will not have to fast at all, that the endless *tefillos* that Am Yisrael have been offering for nearly two thousand years of exile, will rise on High and be accepted, and Mashiaich will come and redeem us speedily.

Perhaps there are those who don’t know, but our *tziyiyah*, the anticipation for the Geulah is also tied to the *mitzvah* of answering amen. This is because many of the *brachos* that *Chazal* instituted contain a request for the arrival of the Redeemer, and by answering amen to those *brachos* we express our faith and our anticipation for the Geulah; it is also because the actual Geulah depends in the answering of amen.

The ancient *Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe* (Day 11) relates that there was a *chassid* who wanted to understand how it is possible that tens of thousands of *tefillos* and requests that Klal Yisrael have offered and continue to offer over the generations for the arrival of the Geulah, have yet to be accepted and that the Galus is taking so long. After he fasted about this, it was revealed to him from Above in a dream: “How can the Geulah come if the world is not careful to answer amen to the *brachos* in which they ask for the Geulah – the *brachah* of *Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion* [because they are hurrying to say *Modim D’Rabbanan*] and the *brachah* of *Hapores Sukkas Shalom* [because they are hurrying to say *Veshomru*]?”

From Above it was revealed to us that aside for the request for the Geulah and mentioning it in *brachos* and *tefillos*, we also need to make an additional effort – to answer amen properly to these *brachos*. If we only take this to heart and are strict about it, we will merit to be redeemed.

Moreover, this is alluded to in the words of *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 31a): “At the time when a person is brought to the judgment, he is told: ‘Did you negotiate faithfully – *נשאת ונתת באמונה*?... Did you anticipate the *yeshuah*?’” There is a direct connection between *נשאת ונתת באמונה* and *נשאת ונתת באמונה* – because one who negotiates with ‘amen,’ meaning he is strict to answer amen properly, is the one who can answer the question, “Did you anticipate the *yeshuah*?”

In fact, just like the many *brachos* and *tefillos* that we say for the Geulah are missing the clincher – the amen answered after them, that is the way it is with every *brachah* and *tefillah*: in order for it to be accepted, it should be completed by an amen.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Tefillas Minchah That Saved from Death

It was the time of the Iran-Iraq War, a bloody conflict that was one of the most brutal in recent decades. Over its duration, more than one million people lost their lives. The war began a short time after the fall of the Shah in Iran and the establishment of the Muslim ayatollah regime, and lasted eight hard years. It concluded with the retreat of both nations from land that they had captured during the war, and the border returned to its previous state as it had been before the war broke out.

At the height of the war, after many months in which the Iranians lost thousands of fighters each day, the army's ranks became very thin and the authorities had to order a massive callup of thousands of soldiers. Daniel Bardi, a young man of about thirty, who belonged to a Jewish family living in Shiraz, was called up to fight. Distraught, he had to leave his work in the family business, and go



The city of Shiraz in Iran

out to the distant, bloody battlefield. Over the next few months, he would experience some very difficult events, and see brutal sights, and fight under extreme conditions. Before he left the house, he put his hand on the *mezuzah* and offered up a heartfelt *tefillah* that Hashem should watch over him always.

At least with regard to keeping *mitzvos* Daniel could be calm. The Iranian Muslim regime, despite being radical, respected those who kept the Jewish religion. As such, Daniel was allowed to receive kosher food packages from home. His loving parents sent him a generous package each week with filling, delicious food. As such, compared to his Muslim compatriots, who often suffered from malnutrition, Daniel enjoyed relative comfort.

His proud observance of *mitzvos*, even during the harshest war period, led

many Iranian soldiers to respect him. Thus, Daniel's stature rose among his fellow soldiers and commanders, which sometimes exempted him from jobs that involved Shabbos desecration.

On the day that this story happened, Daniel had ended his shift as gatekeeper at the entrance to the military camp in which he served. After seven hours of guard duty, he was very tired, and waited impatiently for his replacement to arrive. When he did, Daniel began to walk to the sleeping tent, but just then, an officer in charge approached and demanded that he go down to the nearby spring and draw a few buckets of water, to fill the camp's water container.

The camp was located in an isolated, mountainous area in Iranian Kurdistan, and it did not have running water. It was routine for soldiers to be asked to go down to one of the many springs in the area to draw a few buckets of water to fill the camp's drinking receptacles.

Despite his exhaustion, Daniel didn't dare argue. Every soldier in the army knows that an order is an order! Any argument, minor as it might be, could lead to a punishment. So Daniel began to descend to the spring, but then he stopped in his tracks. "I haven't davened *Minchah* yet!" he remembered.

There were just a few minutes to *shkiyah* and Daniel deliberated what to do. As a Torah observant Jew, no matter the circumstances, he was scrupulous not to miss a *tefillah* – would he have to do so now?

One of his good friends, an Iran soldier, noticed him deliberating and asked, "What happened?" Daniel explained that according to his religion, he had to pray right then, but he could not because he was under order. In a burst of good will, the other soldier volunteered, "You go pray, I'll draw the water instead of you. Another time, you'll draw water instead of me."

Baruch Hashem! Daniel breathed a big sigh of relief. He hurried to his tent to daven *Minchah*.

A short time before he finished davening, he heard a siren rise and fall; within a moment, there was a

torrent of mortars raining down on the camp. The Iraqis had launched a weaponized assault on the Iranian camp.

Shrieks of fear and pain rent the air in every direction. It took the Iranian artillery many long moments to launch retaliatory fire. Meanwhile, Daniel lay down on the floor of the tent and shielded his head with his hands, praying with all his heart to emerge alive. The Iraqi mortars and the thunder of the Iranian cannons returning fire echoed all around him; only after many long and tense moments was quiet restored.

When the storm settled, the Iranians began to count the casualties and help the wounded. The information began to stream in from the field to the command center. Only after the clouds cleared did Daniel grasp the huge miracle that he had experienced. The soldier that volunteered to go to the spring in his place was found lifeless near the spring; he had suffered a direct hit from a mortar.

Daniel, who had been saved by an open miracle because of his strict adherence to davening *Minchah* on time, raised his eyes Heavenwards and offered heartfelt gratitude to Hashem for watching over him and saving him from a certain death.

Some time later, after serving for a year in the battlefields, Daniel decided that he'd done enough. He asked his commanders for a furlough, and they approved it. He went to his room and took his things, with no intention of returning.

Daniel traveled home, packed a small valise with food and clothing, and told his parents of his intention to make Aliyah. To his happiness, his parents encouraged and supported him and even gave him a generous sum of money to help him make the journey.

With the money that he received from his parents, Daniel hired a smuggler who secretly took him to the Iran-Pakistan border, where a car was waiting to take him deep into Pakistan. From there he traveled via Turkey to Eretz Yisrael, and began to learn in Yeshivas Ohr Sameach. In time, he established a home and family, following the path of Torah and *mesorah*.

Heard Firsthand

Birchas Hamitzvah on Birchas Hakohanim

Birchas Kohanim in Chazaras Hashatz

The Torah commanded the Kohanim to ascend to the *duchen* to bless Am Yisrael each day with the *brachah* written in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 6:23-26): “*Yevarechecha Hashem veyishmerecha; ya’er Hashem Panav eilecha veyechuneka; yisa Hashem Panav eilecha veyasem lecha shalom.*”

Chazal instituted that the Kohanim perform this mitzvah in *Chazaras Hashatz*, after the *brachos* of *Avodah* and *Hoda’ah*. They based this *takanah* on the *passuk* (*Vayikra* 9:22): “And Aharon raised his hands toward the people and he blessed them. He descended from the alter where he had offered the *chatas*, the *olah* and the *shelamim.*” From these words it is apparent that Aharon did not end the *avodah* until after he blessed the nation. Therefore, according to the *din*, the *brachah* should have been instituted after *Birchas Ha’avodah*, but in actuality, it was instituted to say it only after *Birchas Hoda’ah*, because “*Avodah* and *Hoda’ah* are one” – meaning that “the gratitude is *avodas Hashem* and they should not be separated” (*Megillah* 18a; *Rashi* *ibid*, ad loc. *chada*). Harav Zev Wolf of Strikov added that *hoda’ah* is the outcome of the *avodah*, because after a person sacrifices a *korban* to Hashem, his heart breaks within him, as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 51:19): “*Zivchei Elokim ruach nishbarah,*” and through that, he bows and thanks his Creator with submission (*Zer Zahav, Parashas Tzav*).

Source of the Brachah

The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 27b) says that Rabi Elazar ben Shamua said to his *talmidim* that one of the reasons for which he merited to live a long life was: ‘In all my life I never raised my hands without a *brachah.*’ The commentaries ask: Is it possible that Rabi Elazar attributed his long life to being strict about something as mandatory as the *Birchas Hamitzvos*?

The *Turei Even* (*ibid*) explained that until the days of Rabi Elazar ben Shamua, they did not recite *Birchas Hamitzvah* on *Birchas Kohanim*, and because he instituted that the *brachah* should be made, therefore, he attributed his long life to this merit.

The *Netziv* (*Ha’amek She’elah Behalaosecha She’ilta* 125 11) explained that the sages of the previous generation thought that just like the *brachah* of *Ahavas Olam* is considered a *brachah* on *mitzvos* for *Krias Shema* said after it (see *Ramban Brachos* 11b), so, too, the *brachah* of ‘*Hatov Shimcha uLecha na’eh lehodos*’, that the *shaliach tzibbur* makes is like a *Birchas Hamitzvos* to *Birchas Kohanim* said after it. That is why *Chazal* did not institute a special *brachah* for it. But Rabi Elazar ben Shamua held that because the *shaliach tzibbur* is not *motzi* one who is proficient in *tefillah* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 124 1), the Kohanim cannot fulfill the obligation of a *brachah* on the mitzvah by hearing this *brachah*. Therefore, he instituted a special *brachah* for them.

There is another opinion that explained this according to the *poskim* (see *Bais Dovid Orach Chaim* 83) that one does not make a *brachah* on the fulfillment of the *mitzvos* whose essence is making a *brachah*, and therefore, there is no *brachah* on the mitzvah of *Birchas Hamazon*. Hence, it can be said that that is why *Chazal* did not institute a *brachah* on *Birchas Kohanim*, whose essence is a *brachah*. But Rabi Elazar thought that only a *brachah* that is directed towards Hashem [like *Birchas Hamazon*] has no *brachah* added before it. But *Birchas Kohanim*, despite being a *brachah*, is directed to Am Yisrael, and therefore, a *brachah* should be made on it, like one is made on the rest of the *mitzvos*. (*Tikkun Tefillah, Siddur Otzar Hatefillos, Seder Birchas Kohanim in Tefillas Shalosh Regalim*).

Nusach of the Brachah

Before fulfilling this mitzvah, the Kohanim recite *Birchas Hamitzvah*, keeping the *takanah* of *Chazal* regarding the *mitzvos* in general.

But, in contrast to the other *Birchos Hamitzvos*, *Chazal* made a special *nusach* for this *brachah*, similar to the special *nusach* that they instituted for all the *mitzvos* commanded to the Kohanim: “*Asher kidshanu bikedushaso shel Aharon vetzivanu levarech es Amo Yisrael b’ahavah*” (*Sotah* 31a).

The reason it was established for the Kohanim to make the *brachah* with this different *nusach* is because the general *nusach* of “*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu*” contains gratitude for fulfilling the *mitzvos* that anyone who is included in the *kedushah* of Am Yisrael was commanded. Therefore, before the fulfillment of each one of the *mitzvos* of *Kehunah*, *Chazal* instituted that the Kohanim in their *brachos* thank for the merit of the mitzvah that only they, who are sanctified with the holiness of Aharon, were commanded to do (*Nachal Eisan* 15, 5).

Brachah on Nesias Kapayim

Chazal (*Sotah* 38a) explain from the *passuk* that the Kohen needs to raise his hands [*nesias kapayim*] when saying *Birchas Kohanim*. The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (*Orach Chaim* 128 17) ruled that the Kohanim should not raise their hands before reciting the *Birchas Hamitzvah*, and should do so only afterwards, when saying the *pesukim* of the *brachah* [*Yevarechecha...*]. This is because *nesias kapayim* is part of the *ikkar* of the mitzvah, and the *Birchas Hamitzvah* needs to be said before doing the mitzvah.

However, the *Kaf Hachaim* (*ibid* 76) cites the *Pa’aneach Raza* (*Bamidbar* 6:27) that the *ikkar* of the mitzvah is only saying the *pesukim* of the *brachah*, while *nesias kapayim* is not part of the *ikkar* of the mitzvah. Therefore, he wrote that on the contrary, it should be done before the *brachah*, so it should not cause a *hefsek*, a pause, between the *brachah* and the mitzvah. The *Pa’aneach Raza* even brought proof of this *shittah* from the words of the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 134:2): “*Se’u yedeichem kodesh ubarchu es Hashem*” – raise your hands, before you ‘bless Hashem.’”

Harav Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam also ruled that raising hands is part of the mitzvah and therefore the Kohen does not raise his hands until after the *brachah*. Thus he explained that the words of Rabi Elazar ben Shamua (*ibid* 39a) that “in all my days... I never did *nesias kapayim* without a *brachah*” was said in the simplest explanation – that he was careful not to raise his hands before he recited the *brachah* on the mitzvah, because he was *mechadesh* that raising one’s hands is part of the mitzvah (*Binyan Ariel* Vol. II, *Maseches Sotah*).

Kavanah of Amen

It is true that HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded the Kohanim to bless His nation Yisrael with love.

”וכאשר תקום מן הספר, תחפש באשר למדת אם יש בו דבר אשר תוכל לקיימו.”

Otzros Emunim

Answering Ninety Amens a Day

He Will Be Asked *L'Asid Lavo*

The *mochiach*, Harav Moshe Kahana of Gibitsch wrote that *l'asid lavo*, each person will be asked if he was strict to answer ninety amens each day and if he met the rest of the quotas that *Chazal* instituted for holy matters. He said: "The...sages wrote that *l'asid lavo*, each person will be asked if he was a 'tzaddik', meaning if he fulfilled each day the quota of holy things alluded to with the letters 90: ק"צ amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish*, 100 *brachos*..." (*Derech Moshe* for Day 11)

The Building of a *Tzaddik*

Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus would say that meeting the quotas of holy things has special significance with regard to the stature of a person. The early sages determined that a person is only called ק"צ if he completes 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. So we find that if a person lacks one of the quotas that *Chazal* placed for reciting holy things – he is already not a *tzaddik*!

It is not a matter of one amen more or less; the whole building called *tzaddik* is lacking! Just like a person who is missing one finger is not a complete *adam* minus a finger, but he is classified as a *baal mum*, someone who has a blemish, likewise, one who did not meet this quota lacks the *shleimus* of the status of *tzaddik*. (*Nefesh Shimshon* on *Siddur Tefillah* p. 138)

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

Many thanks for your beautiful pamphlet, which for me is like a beacon that lights up the whole subject of '*avodas halev*'.

Your work brings to mind the words of Rabi Akiva (*Avos D'Rabi Nosson* Ch. 6) when he saw the engraved stone resting on the mouth of the well "Avanim shechaku mayim, stones that have been shaped by the water." Like water that smooths the stones, likewise, your original, clear and elucidated ideas that you present each week, with so much variety, and aptly timed, are doing the same thing. Slowly, they are reaching their goal, the awareness is seeping into the hearts of the masses, and through that, the scrupulous observance of *kavod Shamayim* in the world grows.

Like a *tofe'ach al menas lehatfiach* – something that is wet enough to make another thing wet – many of your loyal readers are slowly going from being on the receiving end of *chizuk*, to giving *chizuk*. They do not suffice with their own personal growth, and rather, they want to give merits to others, and therefore, they go early to shul to hear *Birchos Hashachar* from *mispaellim*.

May Hashem grant you much success, and may you continue to do great work until we merit to see all of עדת ישראל יעשו אותו - whose acronym is numerically equivalent to amen – as we hope to see them fulfilling this mitzvah.

With best wishes for success,
Shalom Weiss, Yerushalayim

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Mahara"m Banet

The Mahara"m Banet, zy" a 13 Av 5589

Rav Mordechai Banet of Nikolsburg was born in Csurgo, Hungary in 5513 to his father Reb Avraham. By the time he was eleven, he was already sent to learn in the yeshiva in the city of Oettingen, led by Harav Yaakov Katzenellbogen.

At the age of eighteen, he moved to Prague, where he learned under the city's Rav, the Noda B'Yehudah.

When he became of age, one of the distinguished residents of Nikolsburg took him as a *chassan* for his daughter. After his marriage, he became close to the Rav of the city, Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg, one of the giants of *chassidus*; in time he considered Rav Shmelke to be his *Rebbe muvhak*.

As a young man he was appointed *dayan* in Nikolsburg, but later he moved to serve as Rav in a number of European cities. After Rav Shmelke's passing, he acceded to take his place as Rav of Nikolsburg. In the city, Rav Mordechai headed a *yeshiva gedolah* where some four hundred students learned, among them Harav Yehudah Assad, *zt"l*, and other *gedolim*. As he was widely admired by the Emperor Franz I of Austria, the latter appointed him Rav of all of Moravia. He utilized his status to protect religious observance.

In his later years, Rav Mordechai traveled to the Carlsbad spa city, and on 13 Av 5589, he was summoned to the *Yeshiva Shel Ma'alah*. He was buried in Lichtenstadt, near Carlsbad, on condition that he would later be moved to his city of Nikolsburg. About half a year later, his *aron* was moved from Lichtenstadt to his home city.

Birchos Hashachar From Every One

Rav Yaakov, the son of the Mahara"m Banet, described in a booklet that he wrote about his father's life, what he did each morning. He wrote: "He was always one of the first ten people, and he heard *Birchas Hashachar* from everyone in his home so that he could answer amen after them. Then he said the *brachos* himself, in order, in a pleasant voice and with *kavanah*, before the *shaliach tzibbur* got up to begin davening." (*Toldos Reb Mordechai Banet*, p. 16)

Kaddish From a Great Person

A grandson, Harav Avraham Yitzchak Glick of Tolcsva, related that the Rav's wife, Rebbetzin Sarah Finkel, *a"h*, would daven that her husband should live longer than her, so that she should merit to have such a *tzaddik* say *Kaddish* for her and learn as a merit for her soul. Her request was granted, and she passed away a short time before him on 27 Adar 5588, and Rav Mordechai said *Kaddish* for her the entire year. (*Tzaddik Katamar Yifrach*, p. 28)