

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Moshe Davened 'Leimor'

"ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר"
(ג כג)

Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the Rav of Frankfurt, explained:

Maseches Brachos (4b) states that Rabi Yochanan instituted that before the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esreh* the *mispallel* should ask: "*Hashem sefasai tiftach ufi yagid tehillasecha*" (*Tehillim* 51:17). This *tefillah* is needed even for someone whose *tefillah* is fluent in his mouth, because if he takes stock before davening at the reality of his low stature compared to the greatness of Hashem then immediately, he will be gripped by such tremendous fear that he will not be able to speak. Therefore, before he begins davening he has to ask Hashem to help him open his mouth in *tefillah*.

This is what Moshe testifies to Am Yisrael in this *passuk*: "*V'eschanan el Hashem ba'eis hahi*" – before I stand to daven, "*leimor*" – that I should be able to open my mouth and daven to Him.

Panim Yafos

The Piyut Explained in the Dream

"וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו
לטטפת בין עיניך" (ו ה)

In the *piyut* of Rav Shlomo Ibn Gvirol [said in the *Yotzros* of Shabbos Nachamu] – "*Shtei Pe'amim Mekuyamim*" – there is a phrase that needs explanation: "*Din nishma Toras shema, bechol lashon lehismalel, halo noda'ah bearba'ah asher pershu zikneinu.*" The *mekubal* Harav Tzvi Hirsh

Horowitz explained that the interpretation of this phrase was revealed in a dream to two of the sages of the generations:

The Maharal of Prague explained it according to the words of Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 4b) that from the fact that the Torah calls the *tefillin shel rosh* "*totafos*," we learn that one should put the four *parshiyos* in four separate *batim* in the *tefillin shel rosh*. This is because: "*Tat*" in the language Katfi means 'two' and '*pat*' in the language Afriki is two." Therefore, this explanation is based on the fact that the word "*totafos*" is made of words in foreign language, and it is conditional on a *halachah* that Chazal explain (*Brachos* 13a) from the word "*Shema*" that Krias Shema can be recited "in every language that you hear" and not specifically in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

That is what the poet means: "*Din nishma Toras shema, bechol lashon lehismalel*" – that because Chazal explain that "*shema*" can be said in any language that you hear, then "*Halo noda'ah bearba'ah, asher peirshu zikneinu*" – our elders could explain that the *parshiyos* of *tefillin shel rosh* are divided among four *batim*.

Harav Shimshon of Ostropolie related that the *Megaleh Amukos* came to him in a dream and explained that the intention of the poet was to say that this *din*, that Krias Shema can be said in any language, is explained in four *Masechtos* in the Talmud: *Maseches Brachos* 13a; *Maseches Megillah* 17b; *Maseches Sotah* 32b and *Maseches Shavuot* 39a.

Aspaklaria Hame'irah al Hazohar
[Furth 5536] *V'eschanan* 101 1

Shleimus Leads to Shleimus

I heard a story from a Yid who was present at a witty conversation that took place next to the coffee corner in shul:

One man came over to his friend who was about to recite *Borei Nefashos*, and made an innocent request: "Can you be *motzi* me with your *brachah*?" The friend nodded in agreement, as it is found that if a person is unsure of if he is obligated to make the *brachah*, he can ask a friend to be *motzi* him, on the doubt. The first one ceremoniously cleared his throat and began to recite, clearly and slowly, "*Borei nefashos...ve'chesronan...*" When he finished, the other man answer "amen!" with *kavanah*.

To their shock, as they stood there, the second man also began to recite *Borei Nefashos*, aloud and slowly. After answering amen, the friend turned to the second man, looking offended: "Are you fooling me? Why did you ask me to be *motzi* you if you planned to make the *brachah* yourself?"

"Of course not," his friend replied, "I just felt bad to see you standing and hastily muttering a *brachah*, and I wanted to give you the merit that at least this time, the *brachah* should be said properly..."

Yes! This is the reality. When we make *brachos* for others, for any reason, we make a totally different *brachah*!

We all have seen *Birchos Hashachar* said by one who is being *motzi* others on the morning of Shavuot, and the enthusiasm with which they are said! What kind of amen is answered after them! But the truth is that such an occasion takes place each and every day in many shuls all over the world, by those *mispallelim* who regularly recite *Birchos Hashachar* with *hiddur* for

anyone who will answer to them. Anyone who stands on the side and observes will see how they make the *brachah* in a totally different way from those who make the *brachos* to themselves. They recite the *brachos* carefully, enunciating each word and syllable, while those who say them to themselves recite them quietly and often swallow words...

When you are about to make a *brachah*, remember: When saying a *brachah* in front of others – you merit two benefits. Aside for meriting to complete the *brachah* with amen, you also merit that the *brachah* should be said with *shleimus*. Likewise, to the one answering: you answered amen to your friend's *brachah*, and aside for the reward of amen that you received – you gave your friend the merit of a worthy *brachah*!

It is distressing to see that *mispallelim* stand after davening and are not sure if they recited *Birchos Hashachar* that morning or not...I am sure that such a thing does not happen to someone who is strict to make *brachos* in front of others, because amen, aside for being an 'affirmation' of the actual *brachah*, also serves as a 'confirmation,' that indeed there was a *brachah*...

Either way, we learned another lesson here about the power of answering amen, both to benefit the *mevarech* and to benefit the one who answers. At the same time, we see over and over, that aside for the tremendous value that amen has in its own right, when we assess the benefits that come along with it, its power becomes infinitely more intense.

Good Shabbos,
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

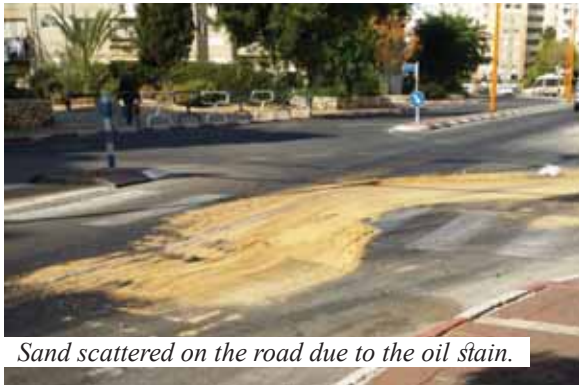
A Trip for Tefillah Turns Into Gratitude and Salvation

The excitement and anticipation in the comfortable car were tangible. Weeks and months of planning and coordinating were finally coming to fruition, and the long-awaited trip was about to begin. The car made its way along the roads in northern Israel, towards the *kivrei tzaddikim* in the Galilee.

Inside the car were three young married men from one family, and who had all been married for some time but were not yet blessed with children. They had planned this trip some time before, but it had taken a long time for it to be able to actually happen.

They had come from America to Eretz Yisrael to pour out their hearts in prayer at the *kivrei tzaddikim*, pleading to finally merit a *yeshuah*.

The late model car speedily swallowed up the miles, but



Sand scattered on the road due to the oil stain.

suddenly, the driver noticed a black, gleaming oil stain on the road ahead. “An oil stain!” he gasped, and quickly pressed on the brake. But he must have done it a second too late... The car skidded on the oil stain, spun around and flipped over onto the shoulder. From there, he slid down into the deep ravine on the side of the road.

The traffic on the road came to a stop. Rescue forces hurried to the scene, and hastily descended into the dangerous ravine to check the condition of the victims. They steeled themselves for the worst, but as they descended further, they began to see the unbelievable miracle. On the rocky ground in the bed of the *wadi*, next to the overturned, smoking car, they could see three figures, bruised and battered, but safe and alright.

The rescue forces had little to do but revive them with cold cups of water, and help them to get back up to the road. There, ambulances awaited to take them to the hospital for more comprehensive checkups.

The exams at the hospital affirmed the tremendous miracle – none of the passengers had been seriously hurt, save for a few minor fractures and cuts. They were kept overnight for observation, but released the next morning.

A few days later, after they had recovered a bit, they set out on the trip a second time. “How did we merit such a miracle?” they asked one another as they drove, unable to digest the reality. “How did we all emerge alive, and healthy, from such a terrible accident, when much more minor accidents have led to terrible tragedies? We have so

much to be grateful for, to praise HaKadosh Baruch Hu for guarding us like a compassionate Father and carrying us all the way down into the depths, thus saving our lives!”

The traveled the same route they had taken a few days earlier, and when they reached the bend in the road where the accident had happened, they stopped the car and got out on the side of the road. They gazed down into the deep ravine; the car they had ridden in was still there, on the floor of the *wadi*, serving as testimony to their miracle. They all shed tears of emotion.

One of the three young men suddenly began to speak, sharing his thoughts with his relatives:

“We all know why we came here to Eretz Yisrael, and what we were going to the *mekomos hakedoshim* for. Over the past few years, we have all been praying and pleading to merit children, so that we can raise them and educate them in the path of Torah, that they should know the Creator, and thank Him for His miracles. Throughout these years, we were focused only on praying and pleading and meanwhile, Hashem has showered us with so

much good – do we ever remember to thank him for those things?!

“Now we clearly see how we were saved from death, so it is easy for us to thank Him for it. But on normal days, we do not remember to do it. That is not acceptable. According to the *din* we should be thanking Him for every single breath we take, but at the very least, we should be thanking Him for all the good that He has granted us as a ‘bonus’ in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*, and especially for giving us the strength to cope with this difficult test, which is surely for our benefit.

“I suggest that we take upon ourselves to introspect each and every day about the amazing miracles and wonders that the Creator performs for us, and to thank him from the depths of our heart,” he concluded. The other two nodded in agreement.

At that moment, the three brothers-in-law and their wives took upon themselves to have a lot of *kavanah* when saying *Aleinu Leshabei’ach*, and to add at the end of this precious *tefillah* a few words of personal gratitude, based on the *chassadim* of Hashem that they experienced.

That crucial day was Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Before Pesach, when they returned home to America, they scrupulously kept to their *kabbalah* – to recite *Aleinu* with *kavanah* and to add personal gratitude for something they had experienced that day.

By the following Pesach all three of the young men had their *tefillos* answered: the first had a son, the second a daughter and the third a son. The chain of miracles came full circle on, of all days, Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The three children of gratitude, and their siblings who later joined them, were already born into a new way of thinking: The difficult challenges that we sometimes experience, and which we pray all the time to emerge from, are meant to cause us to thank for and appreciate the *chassadim* of Hashem that have been done for us until now, and to open to us gates for future *chessed* and good *hashpa’os* from Above. Let us take heart to understand the message.

Birchas Hashalom

Source of the Brachah

In the *brachah* of Sim Shalom that concludes the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esreh*, and said after *Birchas Kohanim*, we ask Hashem – the Master of all *brachos* – that He should accede to bless us with the *brachah* that the Kohanim blessed us with. As it says in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 6:26): “*Vesamu es Shemi al Bnei Yisrael v’Ani avarchem*” (*Megillah* 18a).

Although *Birchas Kohanim* includes three *pesukim* of *brachah*, the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom* begins and ends with the *brachah* of *shalom* because this is the main *brachah*, as it is the one with which *Birchas Kohanim* ends. The rule is that “everything goes after the *chasimah*, the conclusion.” Because *Birchas Hashalom* is the main *brachah*, then HaKadosh Baruch Hu as well – in keeping with the promise of ‘*V’Ani avarchem*’ – blesses Am Yisrael with this *brachah*, as it says (*Tehillim* 29:11): “*Hashem yevarech es Amo bashalom*” (*Maharsha* Vol. I, *ibid*).

The *Mateh Moshe* (176) added that aside for *Birchas Hashalom*, this *brachah* also addresses the two other *brachos* in *Birchas Kohanim*: “*Barcheinu Avinu*” – corresponds to “*Yevarechecha Hashem...*” and “*be’or Panecha*” – corresponds to “*ya’er Hashem...*”

The *Midrash* (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 21 1) says that because the *Birchas Kohanim* concludes with *shalom*, and after it, the last *brachah* in *Shemoneh Esreh* also concludes with *shalom*, we can learn about the greatness of *shalom*.

Structure of the Brachah

Later in the *brachah* we make a special request: “*Barcheinu Avinu kulanu k’echad [yachad] be’or Panecha*.” Rav Saadya Gaon explained that we are asking that Hashem should bless us like Avraham Avinu, who was called ‘*echad*’ as it says (*Yeshayahu* 51:2): “Look at Avraham your father and at Sarah who bore you, *ki echad karasiv*, for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many.” (*Shibbolei Haleket, Inyan Tefillah* 24)

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained this request as follows: In His love for Am Yisrael, HaKadosh Baruch Hu always wants their good. When, *chalilah*, they are struck with troubles, it is a result of Him concealing His face from them. That is why we ask “*Barcheinu Avinu kulanu k’echad*” – with one *brachah* that includes everything, and that is that we should always be “*be’or Panecha*” and not with *hester panim*. “*Ki be’or Panecha*” – because at the time that You watch over us, then in any case, “*Nasata lanu Hashem Elokeinu Toras Chaim...utzedakah uberachah*” – and all the *brachos*, because “it is good in Your Eyes to bless Your Nation Yisrael all the time and at every hour.” That is why we ask you not to conceal Your Face from us. (*Yerios Shlomo on Siddur Hatefillah, Sim Shalom*)

Essence of the Brachah

In this *brachah*, a person should have in mind to ask that there should be no discord in Am Yisrael, and that all of Bnei Yisrael should dwell in unity and peace. We must know that although the bodies are separate, the souls of Am Yisrael are connected and united at their root. Therefore, Am Yisrael were commanded to live in harmony “*achuzim v’achudim betachlis hayichud v’ahavah v’achvah vere’us*.” Likewise, a person should ask for himself in this *brachah*, to nullify the bad *middos* in him, so that he can live in love and peace with any other Jew, and to properly fulfill the commandment of the Torah (*Vayikra* 19:18): “*Ve’ahavata lere’iacha kamocho*” (*Ye’aros Devash*, Vol. I, *Drush* 1. See also *Tomer Devorah* 1, 4th *Peulah*)

The *brachah* begins with the term “*sim shalom*,” putting *shalom*, and as the *passuk* says that the Kohanim say before this *brachah*: “*Veyasem Lecha shalom*.” The *Chasam Sofer* explained that there is a special *inyan* in this: *Chazal* (*Pesachim* 27b) explain that the language of ‘*simah*’ means placing something calmly in one place, and not tossing or scattering it. Here, too, we ask that there should be genuine unity among us, not that our troubles will require us to ‘unite forces’ in order to face them, and not that because of us being scattered in so many places we should be precluded from fighting. Rather, we ask Hashem that although He places us calmly in one place, still, peace and unity should reign amongst us. (*Drashos Chasam Sofer*, Vol. II, p. 240a)

Shalom Rav

According to the Rambam (*Seder Hatefillos*, end of *Seder Ahavah*) this *brachah* is said in a uniform *nusach* in all the *tefillah*, and that is the *nusach* that begins with “*Sim Shalom*.”

But the *gedolim* of Ashkenaz have another, shorter, *nusach* for this *brachah*, that begins with the words “*Shalom Rav*.” In their view, because the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom* was instituted to be a continuation of *Birchas Kohanim*, it is said only in *tefillah* when there is *nesias kapayim*. But in a *tefillah* that the Kohanim do not say their *brachah*, then *Shalom Rav* is recited (*Peirushei Seder Hatefillah L’Rokeach* 63; *Hagahos Mimuniyos Seder Hatefillos* 7). Some of the *gedolim* of Ashkenaz hold that in *Minchah* of Shabbos, *Sim Shalom* is recited, even though there is no *nesias kapayim*, because we read from the Torah, and in the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom* we mentioned the Torah, saying “*Ki be’or Panecha nasata lanu Hashem Elokeinu Toras Chaim...*” (*Hagahos Mimuniyos ibid; Mateh Moshe* 176)

The Kavanah of Amen

It is true that Your way is to bless Am Yisrael with peace [as it says (*Tehillim* 29:11): *Hashem yevarech es amo bashalom*] and may it be that You bless us all the time with Your peace.

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

Otzros Emunim

Answering Ninety Amens a Day

Life in This World and in the Next World

Harav Nosson Nota of Shineva, a disciple of Rav Chaim Vital, wrote that one who is strict to answer 90 amens a day receives a tremendous reward in this world and in the World to Come. "He merits life in this world, that he lives out his years, and life in the World to Come, and merits to understand the Written Torah and the Oral Torah." This reward is also alluded to in the *passuk* (*Chavakuk* 2:4): "Vetzaddik be'emunaso yichyeh." In the merit of "vetzaddik be'emunaso" – answering 90 amens, "yichyeh" – he will merit life in this world and in the Next World. (*Hanhagos Tzaddikim*, Vol. I, p. 271; *V'imru Amen*, Vol. II, 28)

Ninety Amens Save a Person

The Chida wrote that he saw in an ancient manuscript from the *mekubal*, Rabi Eliezer Nachman Puah, a *talmid* of the Rema MiPano, that one who is careful to answer 90 amens a day is not harmed from magic or witchcraft. This was known from the testimony of a woman who heard from a *mazik*, a harmful force sent to harm her son, that he could not fulfill his mission to harm her son because she – the mother of the baby – was strict to answer 90 amens that day. (*Midbar Kedmos* 1 33)

Rabi Rachamim Nissim Yitzchak Palagi, author of *Yafeh Lalev*, brought an allusion to this: אמן is an acronym for אין ממכשפות ניוזק, he is not harmed by witchcraft. (*Avos Harosh* Vol. II, 20:10). There are also some who explained the *passuk* in *Mishlei* (12:18) based on this: "Yesh boteh kemadkeros cherev ulashon chachamim marpei, there is one who speaks like the jabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." The remedy for harm from witchcraft, which is "boteh kemadkeros cherev" – ולשון מרפא חכמים – as the acronym for the last letter of each word is אמן (*Orchos Chaim Mishlei* *ibid*).

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim* and its director Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*,

As I merit each week to read and study your publication, and to enjoy every word, I feel obligated to share some of my feelings, and perhaps by that I will fulfill my obligation to express the *hakaras hatov* that I feel towards you.

What can I bless you with, this pamphlet (in Hebrew – עלון – which is pronounced similarly to the word ilan- a tree) that contributes so much to my life?

"*Peiroshecha mesukim*" – sweet *peirushim*, written and presented in a beautiful format, one section after another, coming together to create a weekly tapestry of *chizuk* on the subject of *avodas halev*.

"*Tzilcha na'eh*" – The graphics are also highly invested, and generate a clear, easy-to read product. It is a case of beautiful Torah presented in a beautiful vessel.

"*Amas hamayim overess tachtecha*" – like a spring of מים [numerically equivalent to amen] which is constantly bubbling and giving forth more water, your publication is varied and fresh each week with new content. Although it is focused on one subject – still "each day it should be in your eyes like it is new."

"*Ela yehi ratzon shekol netios shenotim mimcha yihyu kemoscha*" – Hashem wants you to succeed, and that the readers of your publication should be strengthened in answering amen according to *halachah*, as the Ramban says in his famous letter that you often quote: "And when you rise from the *sefer*, when you finish studying, seek out what you have learned, if there is something that you can fulfill from it."

In appreciation,
Shemaya Berman, Yerushalayim

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email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The ancient Jewish cemetery in Furth, Germany.

Harav Yosef Steinhart of Furth, zt"l

22 Av 5536

Harav Yosef Steinhart, author of *Zichron Yosef*, was born to his father, Rav Menachem Mendel, in the small village of Steinhart, in the Bavarian region of Southern

Germany. In his youth, he learned in the famous yeshivah in Furth, and later traveled to Frankfurt Am Main, to learn under Harav Yaakov Poppers Katz, author of *Shav Yaakov*.

Rav Yosef was considered one of the eminent Torah scholars of his generation. He served as Rav in a number of cities in Germany, and from the year 5524, began to serve as Rav and Av Beis Din in Furth. He even served as the *rosh yeshivah* of the famous yeshivah where he had learned in his youth. Among his students was Harav Mordechai Banet and Harav Wolf Heidenheim.

His *sefer Shu"t Zichron Yosef*, which is frequently mentioned in the *poskim*, was printed in his lifetime. After his passing, his other *seforim*, *Mashbir Bar* and *Koach Shor*, were printed. Rav Yosef passed away on 22 Av 5536 and was buried in the old cemetery in Furth.

Middah Kenegged Middah

In his *drashah* for Shabbos Shuvah 5534, the Rav said: From every mitzvah a person does, a good angel is created, which advocates good for him. On the other hand, every sin creates a bad angel that accuses him. When we recite a *brachah*, a good angel is created, but *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b) that the angel does not have the power to face the accusing angels. However, the angel that is created from answering amen is "strong and powerful and has the strength to prevail over the accusers."

For that reason, *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b) that "anyone who answers amen with all his might the gates of Gan Eden are opened to him." Outside Gan Eden there are damaging angels that prevent those who come from entering, as it says (*Bereishis* 3:24) and see *Rashi* *ibid* "And He drove the man out, and He stationed from the east of the Garden of Eden the *keruvim* – [Rashi calls these the angels of destruction] and the blade of the revolving sword, to guard the way to the Eitz Hachaim." One who is strict to answer amen causes the accusers to be defeated, and therefore, his reward is *middah kenegged middah*, that when he needs to prevail over these damaging angels at the gates to Gan Eden, they will capitulate to him and will not be able to stand in his way. (*Shu"t Zichron Yosef* [Furth 5533] p. 102)