

Vechele Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Saying 'Le'Shem Yichud' Before the Mitzvah

"ועניית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך ארמי אבד אבי וירד מצרימך ויגר שם במתי מעט ויהי שם לגוי גדול עצום ורב" (כו ה)

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained the virtue of saying "l'Shem Yichud" before doing a mitzvah with an apt parable: There was a man who had to transport valuable merchandise through a thick forest filled with looters and thieves. The man stood at the entrance to the forest at a loss, trying to figure out a way to transport the merchandise safely. Suddenly, a wise man passed, and when he heard the predicament, he advised: "Hang on your carriage a large sign saying that the merchandise in your cart belongs to the king. This way you can be sure that the marauders won't dare touch it, because someone who starts up with the king..."

Likewise, a person who comes to do a mitzvah is afraid of the harmful forces and the mazikim who want to grab it from him. Therefore, it was instituted to first say the tefillah of "l'Shem Yichud," through which the person declares that he is setting aside the gift of his mitzvah for the King of kings. This way he can be sure that the harmful forces will avoid approaching.

Thus Harav Kluger explained the passuk (Tehillim 45:2): "Rachash libi davar tov - omer ani ma'asai laMelech." When the person comes to do a "good thing," he should first announce "My action is for the king!" and by doing so he is guaranteed that the harmful elements should not approach him.

The Maharsha^m of Berezhan said that this is alluded to in this passuk as well: Usually, when a person is afraid of the harmful elements, he says his words in a whisper [see Tur Orach Chaim 419 regarding the recital of 'Baruch Shem...'], but here, the passuk states "V'anisa v'amarta"

- out loud (Rashi) and do not be afraid of the mazikim, because you are declaring that you are presenting a minchah "lifnei Hashem Elokecha."

Sichas Chulin shel Talmidei Chachamim Hachadash, Chapter 1, 1; Techeiles Mordechai

A Glorious Crown for Being Careful About Mundane Speech

"ולתתך עליון על כל הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולהיתך עם קדש לה' אלקיך כאשר דבר" (כו יט)

Harav Yaakov, the Baal Haturim, explained:

"Lesehillah uleShem" - The words of the praise that Am Yisrael say to Hashem, "ulesiferes" - become for Him like a glory and a crown, and as we say in Kedushah "Kesser yitnu Lecha Hashem... amcha Yisrael kevutzei matah." HaKadosh Baruch Hu will once again crown Am Yisrael with this atarah l'Asid Lavo, as Chazal say (Megillah 15b): "HaKadosh Baruch Hu will in the future be an Atarah on the head of each and every tzaddik." We find that ultimately, the praise to Hashem becomes a glory for Am Yisrael. The Baal Haturim added that this rule is only said regarding someone who is careful not to speak of mundane matters in shul. But if someone is not careful about this - instead of the tefillah being a glory to him "it surrounds his entire body with thorns."

The Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Aharon Kotler, learned from the words of the Baal Haturim, that if anything relating to Kavod Shamayim is not done properly, then it is better that it should not be done at all. And as we see here, even when someone davens properly, if he speaks in shul, instead of his tefillah being a crown for him, it envelops his body with thorns.

Baal Haturim (Sukkas Dovid 44); Mishnas Rabi Aharon, Ma'amarim Vol. II p. 144

Pischu Shearim Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

V'Amar Kol Ha'am Amen

In this parashah we read about the special ceremony that Am Yisrael was instructed to conduct as they entered the land: "You shall place those blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and those cursing upon Mount Eival. (Devarim 11:29)."

At this time, when the whole nation that was entering the Land gathered to forge a covenant to keep the mitzvos of the Torah, the Levi'im stood in the valley between Har Grizim and Har Eival and announced the brachos for those who fulfill the mitzvos of the Torah and the curses for those who transgress the commandments.

The twelve brachos correspond to the twelve curses that were said there, and there was one call that resounded twenty-four times from the whole nation - and that was "Amen!!" - "V'amar kol ha'am amen." With this call, all twelve tribes declared their faith in Hashem and His Torah, and through it they committed to fulfill the words of the Torah to the letter.

If until now, we knew about the tremendous holiness and virtue of answering amen, if until now we heard about its powerful segulah and the many secrets that it contains, in this parashah, we discover that this is the word through which Klal Yisrael committed, upon arriving to the Land, to remain faithful to Hashem and His Torah. It was with its power that the gates to the Holy Land opened for them and they merited to benefit from all its good and abundance.

I thought that from the words of the passuk "V'amar kol ha'am amen" we can learn about the special emphasis in this mitzvah: the whole nation was commanded to answer amen - from the youngest to the oldest - without exceptions. The fact that amen belongs to the whole nation is really one of the most prominent characteristics of answering amen. From the time we became a nation until now, the cry of emunah and Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim has been fluent in the mouths of all - men, women and children, Torah scholars and simple people, those who observe mitzvos, and even those who, unfortunately, do not merit to do so.

Hundreds of years after the ceremony of the brachos and klalos, Dovid Hamelech repeated this call (Tehillim 106:48) and this time, as a clear directive for every brachah that is heard: "Baruch Hashem Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam v'ad ha'olam - v'amar kol ha'am amen."

Let us all strengthen ourselves - from old to young - in answering amen. Let us say it throughout the day, and surely this merit will help us be blessed with a good and sweet year.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

A Son Decreed by the Av Bais Din

Harav Pinchas Epstein, *zt"l*, Raavad Eida Hachareidis in Yerushalayim, was known for the intensity of his *tefillah*, and the power of the *tefillos* to effect *yeshuos*. Those close to him marveled at his extreme *dveikus* to *tefillah*, and the immediate and wondrous results of his supplications.

There were many stories about the power of his *tefillah*. For example, when he was once visiting a hospital, a mentally imbalanced man assailed him and began to beat him and pull his beard and *peyos*. The two young men accompanying the Rav who tried to ward off the assailant were also attacked.

But instead of panicking, the Rav closed his eyes, and with deep emotion, repeated over and over again the *passuk* "*Hashem Elokai shivati Eilecha vatir'paeini*," Hashem, I have pleaded to You and You healed me.

A few moments later, there was a

With his exceptional responsibility, the Rav would occasionally conduct surprise inspections on factories and businesses under the Badatz hechsher, to ensure that the kashrus regulations were being fully implemented. From time to time, he would surprise his colleagues by asking them to join him on such inspections. Usually, the inspection passed to his satisfaction, but it did happen that the Rav would find things that caused him to withdraw the *hechsher* on an establishment.

One morning, the Rav approached his colleague, Harav Avraham Aharon Sheinberger, the head of the Badatz kashrus organization, and asked if he would join him on a surprise inspection of a well-known candy factory that bore the Badatz *hechsher*.

When they entered the factory, they were welcomed with awe and respect by the surprised owner. The Raavad and his companion began their inspection, and the owner walked behind them in trepidation, concerned about what they might find.

The Raavad and Rav Sheinberger spent a long time walking through the factory, inspecting every machine, looking through the storage rooms and on the production floors, and listening to explanations from the *mashgiach* at the site.

After a long time, the inspection ended, to the satisfaction of the *rabbanim*. The factory met all the kashrus requirements, and the

Rabbanim noted how impressed they were by the exemplary kashrus standards.

Before leaving, the Raavad stopped at the office of the factory owner in order to take leave of him, and to praise him for the level of kashrus he maintained in his factory. To his surprise, the man pointed to a couple who were seated in the office, and said to the Raavad: "This is my daughter and my son-in-law, who work with me. They have been married for a number of years, and have not yet been blessed with children. I would like to ask the Rav to issue a *gezeiras Rav*, a decree of a Rav that they should merit to be blessed soon."

Rav Epstein was very taken aback to hear the request; he stood for a few moments deep in thought, and finally

turned to the couple and asked: "Do you keep the *mitzvos* of the Torah?"

"Yes," they answered, with tears in their eyes.

The Rav looked at them with his compassionate eyes, and with a smile on his lips, asked, "When you merit to have a son, will you call me to serve as the *sandak*?"

"Yes!" they exclaimed without hesitation.

"If so," the Rav replied, still smiling, "I bless you that you should merit a son very soon."

All those present answered amen fervently, and the Rav left.

Indeed, the Rav's blessing soon came true. Less than a year after this story, this couple was blessed with a son. Right after the birth, the excited father hurried to the Raavad's home to inform him of the news, and that his *brachah* had been fulfilled, and to keep his promise and invite him to serve as *sandak* for the new baby. The Rav happily acceded, and on the appointed day, he arrived to serve as the *sandak* at the bris, which took place in the *simchah* hall of Bikur Cholim Hospital. This time, as well, he was accompanied by Rav Avraham Aharon Sheinberger.

At the end of the bris, after warmly blessing the baby and his parents, he turned to leave the hall, and then he whispered to Rav Avraham Aharon, walking beside him:

"Everyone is surely talking about this '*mofess*' that happened, but you should know that there was no *mofess* here at all."

The Raavad, in his humility, continued: "When I returned from the visit that we made to the factory, I thought to myself: How did I take upon myself such a heavy responsibility? This simple Yid thinks I'm a great person. He is sure that the Raavad of Yerushalayim has the power to decree in *Beis Din shel Ma'alah*. What will be if, *chalilah*, my words are not fulfilled? It can cause such a *chillul Hashem*..."

"Thinking this, I took a *Sefer Tehillim* and spent the next few hours tearfully davening to HaKadosh Baruch Hu to please send a *yeshuah* to this couple. And *baruch Hashem* my *tefillah* was accepted and they saw a *yeshuah*."

Vaya'amod Pinchas Vayepalel, Vol. II, p. 773 and 774; Koach Beya"d Yafeh, Introduction



The Raavad Harav Pinchas Epstein, *zt"l*, visiting a factory, accompanied by Rav Sheinberger and the Tschakava Rebbe, *zt"l*.

thump; the attacker crumpled to the ground helplessly, and remained lying there, motionless, until the Rav left the scene.

As part of his role as the Raavad, he was responsible for issuing the kashrus certificate from the Badatz to the businesses and factories that had met the criteria for the mehadrin certification.

It was not easy to get the Rav to issue such a kashrus certificate. He was very strict and firm about every single detail of the *Beis Din's* instructions, and did not approve a single store or factory before they complied with all the Badatz's directives, both with regards to kashrus and with regards to the Jewish character; there were no leniencies or compromises.

Birchas Kohanim When There Is No One to Answer Amen

16. If all the *mispallelim* of the *minyán* are Kohanim and there is no one to answer amen after their *brachos*, some believe that all of them should go up to the *duchan* to make the blessing, because the answering of amen does not preclude them from doing so. But some differ and say that answering amen does preclude, therefore if there isn't even a woman or child to answer amen after *Birchas Kohanim*, some of the Kohanim should answer amen to the *brachah* of their friends, and should not go up to the *duchan* to be *nosei kapayim*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Pri Migadim* (*Orach Chaim* 128 *Eshel Avraham* 38) holds that answering amen after *Birchas Kohanim* does not preclude it from being said, and the *Mishnah Berurah* rules the same way (ibid 91. See *Shaar Hatzion* ibid 79 that that is the opinion of the *Olas Tamid* and *Derech Hachaim*). But Rav Akiva Eiger (*Hagahos Rabi Akiva Eiger* ibid, in *Shulchan Aruch Machon Yerushalayim* edition) holds that answering amen to *Birchas Kohanim* is a preclusion, and if there is no one to answer amen – then the Kohanim should not go up to the *duchan* to make the *brachah*.

The *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 5 4) says: "A city that is comprised entirely of Kohanim who are *nosei kapayim*...who should answer amen after them? The women and children." This *halachah* is also ruled in the *Rambam* (*Tefillah* 15 9) and in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 128 25.) From the very discussion about answering amen to *Birchas Kohanim* in a city that is entirely Kohanim, the *Igros Moshe* proves (*Orach Chaim* Vol. II 31) that not only is answering amen to *Birchas Kohanim* from the Torah, but it is also a preclusion, because just like answering amen at the event of the *brachah* and *klalah* at Har Grizim and Har Eival it was *l'ikuvei*. Therefore, if there is no one to answer amen to *Birchas Kohanim*, the Kohanim do not *duchan*. The *Igros Moshe* further adds (ibid) that someone who is in shul during *Birchas Kohanim* and does not answer amen even though he can "is not included in the *brachah*."

After Tefillos and Requests

17. When requests are made, even without Hashem's name, one should answer amen. Therefore, there is a widespread custom of answering amen to the *HaRachaman* requests recited at the end of *Birchas Hamazon*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Magen Avraham* (215 3) wrote: "The *Midrash* says that when one hears someone praying for something, or giving a *brachah* to another Jew, even without mentioning Hashem's Name, he is obligated to answer amen, and therefore, we answer amen after *HaRachaman* in *Birchas Hamazon*." From these words it appears that answering amen after a *tefillah* where Hashem's Name is not mentioned is obligatory. But the *Ha'amek She'eilah* (53 2) explained that his intention is not to say that answering amen after a *tefillah* without Hashem's Name is an obligation, but rather it is a *middas chassidus*, a righteous practice. That is also what it seems from the *Mishnah Berurah* (215 9) who wrote: "The *Midrash* says that when one hears someone praying for something, or giving a *brachah* to another Jew, even without mentioning Hashem's Name, he is obligated to answer amen, and that is why the custom has spread that we answer amen after *HaRachaman* in *Birchas Hamazon*." This means that this is a *minhag* (and likewise in *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 44 7). See also *Mishnah Berurah* (189 5) that says: "After *HaRachaman*

amen should be answered, as it should be after every request and *tefillah*, even if it does not have Hashem's Name."

The *Derech Moshe* (Day 11) wrote that someone who was unable to daven with a *tzibbur* can make up the amens of *Chazaras Hashatz* by answering amen after *HaRachaman* "because 18 requests of *HaRachaman* were instituted instead of the 18 *brachos* in *tefillah*."

After Requests in the Seder Habrachos

18. On Rosh Chodesh and Yamim Tovim, when the *shaliach tzibbur* says *Yaaleh Veyavo* in *Birchas Ha'avodah*, the *tzibbur* answers amen after each one of the three requests: 1. "Zachreinu Hashem Elokeinu bo letovah" 2. "Ufakdeinu bo livrachah" 3. "Vehoshienu bo lechaim tovim." This is despite the fact that we answer amen at the end of *Birchas Ha'avodah*. Likewise, there are other requests in the *Seder Habrachos* after which it is customary to answer amen, even though amen is answered at the end of that *brachah*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Shibbolei Haleket* (*Tefillah* 23) wrote: "Zachreinu Hashem Elokeinu bo letovah" – some answer amen to each and every *brachah* and some answer amen at the end." See the *Pri Megadim* (*Orach Chaim Mishbetzos Zahav* 422 4) who wrote that it is customary to answer these amens. *Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah* (*Miluim Vetikunim* Ch. 57) wrote that according to the *Drishah*, *Orach Chaim* 127 1, answering these amens is an obligation and not just a *minhag*. See *Ma'amar Mordechai* (127 6), who holds that one should not answer amen after these *brachos*, and rather one should say after them *Kein Yehi Ratzon* as we say after the *pesukim* of *Birchas Kohanim* said by the *shaliach tzibbur* when there are no Kohanim to come to the *duchan*.

The *Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah* further states (ibid) in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, that this *din* is only regarding answering amen after the requests said in *Yaaleh Veyavo* in *Chazaras Hashatz*, but in *Yaaleh Veyavo* in *Birchas Hamazon* there is no obligation at all to answer. Therefore, one who is in the middle of *Birchas Hamazon* should not answer amen to these requests, even if he is between *brachos*. And see *Iyunei Halachos* Vol. II, *Inyan* 13, about what is written on this subject.

After a Mi Shebeirach

20. It is a mitzvah to answer amen to the *brachos* of *Mi Shebeirach* said in shul, and one who answers amen fulfills the mitzvah of *v'ahavta lerei'acha kamocho*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Aruch Hashulchan* wrote this (215 1). See *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (189 6) who wrote: "When someone blesses a Jew it is a mitzvah to answer amen after him..." See also *Biurim Upsakim LeRabbeinu Avigdor Tzarfati* (*Parashas V'Eschanan*) that it is better to pledge *tzedakah* in public [by saying *Mi Shebeirach*] for a sick person, so that many should answer amen, than to pledge before an individual." In *Halichos Shlomo* (*Tefillah* 8:61) it is brought that Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would point out that after reciting *Tehillim* for a sick person, one should take care to recite *Mi Shebeirach* out loud, and the *tzibbur* should wait and answer amen after it.

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

Otzros Emunim

Answering Ninety Amens a Day

A Person Vows to Be a *Tzaddik*

Chazal say (*Niddah* 30b) that before one comes to the world, he is made to vow: "Be a *tzaddik* and do not be a *rasha*." The Tzemach Tzeddek asked: Can everyone be a *tzaddik gamur*? Haven't *Chazal* told us (*Yoma* 38b): "HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw that there are few *tzaddikim*, and He then planted them in every generation." If so, what is the meaning of this vow?

He explained: The intention of this vow is not that a person should be a *tzaddik* in all his deeds, but rather, that he should be careful to answer ninety amens, and the other holy matters, alluded to in the word 90 – צדיק amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. That is the vow that every Jew makes before arriving in this world: be strict about these quotas alluded to in the word *tzaddik* and by doing so you will be a *tzaddik* and not a *rasha*. (*Kitzurim Vehe'aros l'Sefer Likutei Amarim* p. 67)

Selling צדיק for Money

Harav Naftali Hertz Kretchmer of Ponevezh explained:

It happens that because of the burden of *parnassah* and the pursuit of money, a person is tempted to daven alone, and by doing so, he misses the opportunity to meet the quota of amens, *Kaddish* and *Kedushos* that *Chazal* set. It is about him and those like him that the Navi laments (*Amos* 2:6): "Al machram bekessef *tzaddik*" – those who 'sold' for money the quotas of holy thing that are alluded to in the word *tzaddik*: 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. And it is about these things that *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 6b): "Things that are *berumo shel olam*, are of the loftiest nature, and people tend to be lax about them." (*Noam Hamitzvos* 433)

ש"י Worlds for the Angels of Amen

Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 100a) that "HaKadosh Baruch Hu is destined to give each and every *tzaddik* three hundred and ten worlds, as it says (*Mishlei* 5:21): "להנחילי והוצאתיהם אמלא [310] יוש אוהבי יש." The Chofetz Chaim asked, what is the purpose for *tzaddikim* to have so many worlds? He explained: The *tzaddik* takes care each day to recite one hundred *brachos* and to answer ninety amens. Each day he creates many angels, because an angel is created from every amen that is said. So we find that over the years, he accumulates a huge camp of hundreds of thousands of angels. For this reason, he is promised that in the future he will inherit 310 worlds, so that he can dwell there and bask in *Olam Haba* with the tens of thousands of angels that were created from the *mitzvos* that he performed. (*Chessed L'Araham* [Harav Aharon Cohen, son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim] *Devarim Ne'imim* 7)

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the distinguished patron, Rabbi Yaakov Dov Marmurstein,

I would like to express my appreciation for the wonderful initiative *Derech Emunah*, through which I have the merit of rising early – and hope to continue to do so – to be able to answer hundreds of amens throughout the day, and to give others the opportunity to answer amen.

Because I know that there are hundreds who have merited this as well, because of your initiative, I cannot help but envy the many *zechusim* that you accumulate each day as the one who spearheaded this great project. I have no doubt that all of Am Yisrael owes you a debt of gratitude for the powerful defensive wall that is being built by the tens of thousands of amens that protect those who say them each and every day.

Maseches Avos concludes with the well-known Breisa: "Rabi Chananya ben Akashya says: HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give Yisrael merits, therefore He gave them Torah and *mitzvos*, as it says 'Hashem chofetz lema'an tzidko yagdil Torah vey'adir.'" This can be specifically applied to answering amen, both because of the fact that one can [and is even obligated] to engage in it with ease and no extra effort, and because the acronym of the last letters of the *passuk* cited by the *Mishnah* is numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as amen.

May Hashem grant you success to fulfill His Will and to increase *mitzvos* among Am Yisrael, and to increase the glory of Torah.

Y.C., Rechasim

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Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The Chofetz Chaim's levayah in Radin

The Chofetz Chaim 24 Elul 5693

Rav Yisrael Meir Hakohen of Radin, the Chofetz Chaim, was born on 11 Shevat 5599 to his father, Rav Aryeh Zev, in the town of Zhetyl (Dzyatlava), Belarus. As a

child, he learned in Vilna, and after his marriage, he moved to Radin, where he lived for the rest of his life.

In 5629 he established Radin Yeshiva, which was known over the years as one of the most prominent in Europe. In 5633 he published his renowned compilation *Chofetz Chaim* on the *halachos* of *lashon hara* and *rechilus*. A few years later, he authored is *sefer Shemiras Halashon*.

For about thirty years, the Rav toiled on the tremendous work, the *Mishnah Berurah*, on *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim*. He also authored numerous other *seforim* in *halachah* and *mussar*, in addition to his extensive efforts for the Torah and yeshiva world that spanned continents. He passed away on 24 Elul 5693, and was laid to rest in Radin.

The Brachah Is More Important

The Chofetz Chaim ruled in *Mishnah Berurah* (167 20): "Answering amen is part of the *brachah*...by answering amen to it – the *brachah* becomes more important."

Sixty Amens in Shacharis

In his *sefer Nidechi Yisrael* (Ch. 5) he explained that aside for the actual virtue of *tefillah betzibbur*, the *mispallel betzibbur* merits to accumulate many amens: "If he davens with a *tzibbur* he will gain a few dozen more *mitzvos* each day from amens that he answers to every *brachah* that he hears, which are: 16 *Birchos Hashachar*, four more until *Shemoneh Esreh* and 19 amens in *Chazaras Hashatz*, and then a number of amens in *Kaddish* that are said in every *tefillah betzibbur*...

which amount to nearly 60 amens in *Shacharis* alone. The merit of one who is careful to answer amen to each *brachah* is very great, as *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b) that for this, the Gates of Gan Eden are opened to him..."

Being Mechanech Children to Answer Amen

Regarding the obligation to teach children to answer amen, the Chofetz Chaim wrote in *Chomas Hadas* (end of the *sefer*, *Ma'amar Sheini*): "He should follow the well-known *melamdin* who are experts in their craft and known to be *Yirei Hashem*... that they should make sure to habituate the children about keeping the *mitzvos* and *minhagim* according to their way, such as the *Birchas Hanahenin* and answering amen... that the habituation in their childhood should become a second nature, so that when they get older, they will not forget it."