

Vechele Maaminim

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

The Purpose of Teshuvah Is 'Ad Hashem Elokecha'

"ושבת עד ה' אלקיך ושמעת בקלו ככל אשר אנכי מצוך היום אתה ובניך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך" (ל ב)

The Chida explained:

The Rambam (*Teshuvah* 2:2) wrote that the mitzvah of *teshuvah* obligates the repentant one to take upon himself that he will not transgress this sin that he is not regretting and repenting for again. This *kabbalah* needs to be so genuine and strong to the point that it "the One Who knows all secrets testifies that he will never return to this sin."

This *passuk* alludes to these words: "ושבת עד ה' אלקיך" - do not read it "ad" but rather "eid"; "you should repent" until it will be "eid Hashem Elokecha," Hashem should bear witness that from now on, "you will listen to His Voice" and that you will not return to this sin.

Nachal Kedumim

Essence of Anticipating Mashiach

"ושב ה' אלקיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך מכל העמים אשר הפיצך ה' אלקיך שמה" (ל ג)

The Rambam (*Melachim* 11:1) wrote that this *passuk* informs of the *geulah* of Am Yisrael *l'asid lavo*, as the promise of the Nevi'im that the Melech Hamashiach is destined to be revealed, to gather in the exiles of Am Yisrael and to redeem them. Therefore, "Anyone who does not believe in him, or someone who does not anticipate his arrival, is not

only being *kofer* in the other Nevi'im, but also in the Torah and in Moshe Rabbeinu," because the *geulah* was promised to us from the Torah, in this *passuk*.

From the words of the Rambam: "Anyone who does not believe him, or someone who does not anticipate his arrival," we explain that the *emunah* in the arrival of Mashiach includes the obligation to believe that he can come any moment, and therefore, one must wait for his arrival always. Because someone who truly believes that Mashiach can come at any moment, will, necessarily, await his arrival at all times. That is what we say in *tefillah* "Ki l'yeshuascha kivinu kol hayom."

Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveichik of Brisk explained that this concept was the *kavanah* of one who compiled the *nusach* of "Ani Ma'amin" at the end of davening. In contrast to the wording of the other *ikrim*, the *ikar* that expresses the *emunah* in the arrival of Mashiach is longer and arranged in a question-answer form: "I believe with complete faith in the arrival of Mashiach, and even though he may take long, still, I will wait for him every day to come." The second part of the *ikar* teaches us that it is not enough to just have *emunah* in the arrival of Mashiach. Rather, one must anticipate his arrival, and the fact that he is taking so long is not meant to detract one iota from this anticipation.

Peninei Rabbeinu Hagri"z p. 85

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A Good Year – Bechavrusa

On Rosh Hashanah night, Am Yisrael has the custom of wishing one another the *birchas hashanim*, a blessing for the year. People linger in shul in order to convey to each other and to receive a *brachah* to be signed and sealed into the Book of Life. Many even go to the homes of close relatives or friends to do the same.

I have always wondered: If these *brachos* and good wishes said on this holy night are so important, why is the *tzibbur* not careful to answer amen after them? Such wonderful *brachos*, said on such a holy day, with solemnity and heartfelt emotion – why should we not add just a bit of effort and give them fulfillment by answering amen?!

No one doubts the fact that this hour, as the Yom Hadin begins, after so much preparation with *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*, is a time for compassion and is a special *eis ratzon*. It is not for naught that all of Am Yisrael, from the *gedolei hador* to the simplest people, dedicates its precious time to conveying these good wishes to anyone they encounter; why then should we not utilize it fully to make sure to answer amen for these *brachos*?!

Just like we fervently shout amen when the *chazzan* sings the beautiful *piyut* of "Hayom Te'amtzeinu, Hayom Tevarcheinu," we must answer amen to each and every *brachah* that we merit to receive from every Yid.

Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Brachos* 8:8): "Rabi Tanchum said: If a non-Jew gives you a *brachah*, answer amen, as it says (*Devarim* 7:14): 'Baruch tihyeh mikol ha'amim, you should be blessed from all the nations.'" How much more so must we answer amen when we merit to hear *brachos* from Jews.

It is true that this amen is not the same as answering amen after *brachos* in which we bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu, or to *Kaddish*, which are an obligation. Answering amen to this *brachah* or best wishes from a friend is not obligatory, but it is a *zechus* that the those in the know will not want to forego.

And as we said, especially on this night when we want to multiply our merits – just like answering amen to a *brachah* in which we bless Hashem fulfills the *brachah*, likewise answering amen on wishes that we hear from a friend fulfills his *brachah*.

Let us take care to answer amen to the wishes of a *brachah* from our friends on Rosh Hashanah night, and throughout the year, and we should all merit to be blessed with a happy, sweet, good year *amen v'amen*.

With wishes for *l'shanah tovah tikaseivu*

Good Shabbos

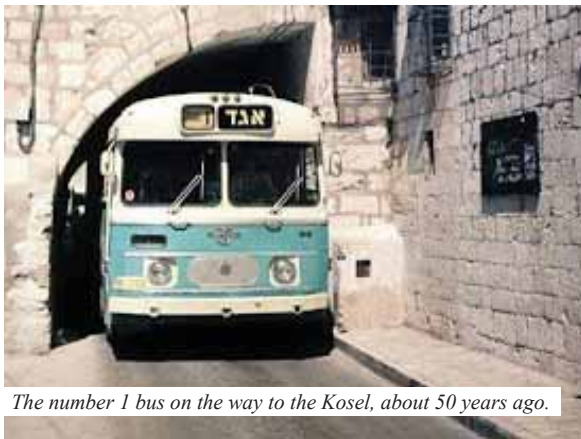
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

A Surprise Encounter at the Last Minute

‘Where is Moshe?’ As the moments passed, so did the puzzlement and surprise. Moshe was known to be super-punctual; he had never been late by even half a minute, but now, half an hour had passed since the appointment, and he had not yet arrived. Surely, there was a suitable explanation.

A few days before Rosh Hashanah, Shraga had called Moshe the barber to make up a time for him to come to his home and give him a haircut before Rosh Hashanah, in keeping with the custom brought down in *Shulchan Aruch*. Moshe gave him a time, but that time came and went and Moshe was not there.

After half an hour of waiting, Shraga called Moshe and asked what was going on. He was taken aback when, in response, Moshe apologized profusely and said he had completely forgotten about their appointment.



The number 1 bus on the way to the Kosel, about 50 years ago.

‘Well, it happens,’ Shraga thought to himself, and asked to set up a new appointment for a haircut. Moshe told him he’d come tomorrow evening. Shraga wrote it down in his calendar, but the next morning, he was surprised again when Moshe called him and apologized that an important meeting had been set for that evening for him, and he would not be able to come.

Having no choice, Shraga made up that he’d come in two days hence, but to his surprise and disappointment, he had to wait again. ‘Something is happening to Moshe...these shenanigans are not like him at all,’ Shraga thought to himself, before agreeing to give Moshe another chance. Needless to say, Moshe did not turn up then either, and thus, Rosh Hashanah passed, and for the first time in many years, Shraga had not prepared

himself with a haircut.

During Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, after some more repeated delays and evasions, Shraga had no choice but to go, for the first time in his life, to one of the barbershops in the city, and to wait patiently for his turn. The long lines and crowding made it clear to Shraga how good he had had it until then by choosing to have a barber come to his house. But now he had no choice and waited patiently for his turn.

As he waited, an unfamiliar person entered the shop. When he noticed Shraga he gasped and asked Shraga to step outside with him for a few minutes. Shraga, who was waiting anyway, agreed, even though he had no idea who the man was and what he wanted.

When the two stood facing one another in the street, Shraga noticed that the man was very agitated, although Shraga had no idea why. The man did not let him wonder for long. “You have no idea how much I davened this week to Hashem to send you to see me. I didn’t know your name or address and I had no other way of locating you, and now, when it’s almost Yom Kippur, Hashem listened to my *tefillos* and sent you to me in this most remarkable way.”

‘Indeed, remarkable,’ Shraga thought to himself, as his puzzlement grew.

The man continued: “Do you remember about half a year ago, we were together at the Kosel?”

“No,” Shraga replied. In the last half a year, he’d been to visit the Kosel numerous times.

“You don’t remember?” the man exclaimed, and then reminded him: “At the end of davening, we both stood at the bus stop outside the Kosel and waiting for the number 1 bus, that did not come...The bus was late, and the line was very long. You were ahead of me in line, and I was in a huge hurry. As soon as the bus came, and dozens of people began to push, I pushed you violently so that I could get on before you and I wouldn’t have to wait for the next bus.

“The minute I got on the bus and the

pressure eased a bit, I felt very bad about what I had done, but you can’t turn back the clock. The bus drove off and you remained at the bus stop, stunned and embarrassed. That image has been etched in my mind ever since, and to this day, I davened to Hashem very day, with a broken heart, to make me meet you again so that I could ask you for forgiveness.

“The year came to an end, and I did not despair of meeting you. I had no idea who you are, and all I could do was daven and plead to Hashem that I should be able to ask your forgiveness before Yom Kippur.

“After most of the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah passed and my *tefillah* had not yet been answered, I was very worried. I knew that I must ask you forgiveness before Yom Kippur, and that’s why I did not give up, and kept davening to Hashem to present me with an opportunity to ask *mechilah*.

“Meanwhile, I decided to visit the home of the one of the leading *morei hora’ah* to give me a *psak* about what I should do to have my *teshuvah* accepted, if I would not merit to meet you. When I reached his house, I was disappointed to find out that the receiving hours in his home would only begin in an hour. Usually, I take a haircut in the barbershop near my house, but now, because I need to wait in this area, I decided to come into this barbershop for a haircut. And to my utter shock, I discovered you sitting there and waiting...”

This time it was Shraga’s turn to be overwhelmed with emotion. He was astonished at the *Hashgachah pratis* that was being so clearly revealed to him. He then told his half of the story, and shared with the man how the barber that he usually used kept on not coming time after time, which was very unlike him. Having no choice, Shraga explained that he ‘happened’ to choose to go to this barber shop.

Upon hearing this, the other man became even more excited. With tears in his eyes, he pleaded for Shraga to forgive him; Shraga agreed readily, and assured the man that he forgave him completely. The two parted with wishes for a good year, accompanied by the wonderful feeling that can only be felt by someone who merited to see with his own eyes how “*Karov Hashem lechol kor’av lechol asher yikre’uhu b’emes.*”

A Brachah for Hearing the Shofar

The Mitzvah and the Brachah

The Torah commands the mitzvah of shofar in the *passuk* (*Bamidbar* 29:1): “And in the seventh month, on the first of the month, it should be a *mikra kodesh* [a sacred holiday] for you...a Yom Teruah.” The Rishonim differ as to whether the mitzvah is to hear the sound of the shofar, or if the mitzvah is to blow it. Some hold that the mitzvah is to hear the sound of the shofar, and for that reason *Chazal* instructed to mention hearing in the *brachah*, and to recite: “*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu lishmoa kol shofar.*” Another *shitah* holds that the *brachah* is “*lishmoa bekol shofar*” (*Shu”t HaRamba”m* 142; *Ro”sh, Rosh Hashanah* 4 10). But some differ and hold that the mitzvah is to blow the shofar, and according to their view, they mention the *tekiah* in the *brachah*: “*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al tekias shofar,*” or “*liskoa bashofar*” (*She’iltos DeRav Achai, She’ilta* 171; *Sma”g Aseh* 42; *Birchei Yosef, Orach Chaim* 585 5).

But the *Pri Chadash* holds (ibid 2) that the *nusach* of the *brachah* does not express the essence of the mitzvah, and even according to those who believe that the *brachah* should be “*al tekias shofar,*” still, the mitzvah is hearing the sound of the shofar and not actually blowing it. But because in actuality, the *tekiah* is the act that one has to do to hear the sound of the shofar, that is why we mention *tekiah* in the *brachah*.

The *Mahara”m Chaviv* wrote a *chiddush* in the essence of this mitzvah: According to him, the mitzvah of shofar includes two parts: *tekiah* – blowing, and hearing, and the main part – the hearing – must be performed by each and every person himself, while the *tekiah* can be fulfilled also by another person, with the *din* of *shlichus* (by proxy) (*Yom Teruah Rosh Hashanah* 29 1).

L’halachah, the *brachah* on this mitzvah is “*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu lishmoa kol shofar*” (*Rambam Shofar* 3 10; *Tur Shulchan Aruch* 585 2). If one recited “*Al tekias shofar*” or “*Liskoa bashofar*” – he is *yotzei* (*Shulchan Aruch Harav* ibid 4; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 4).

The Brachah in the Times of the Talmud

The *Baal Hama’or* (*Rosh Hashanah* 10b in *Dapei HaRif*) holds that the *brachah* on this mitzvah was instituted only after the Talmud was completed. Because, he says, before that, they would blow the shofar only after the middle *brachos* in *Mussaf*, and as such, they were *yotzei* the obligation of a *birchas hamitzvah* with these *brachos*, and they did not have to institute a special *brachah* for *Tekias Shofar*. Only later, when it was instituted to blow *tekios d’meyushav* before *Mussaf*, did they establish that a special *brachah* would be said, like with the rest of the *mitzvos*.

But the *Ramban* (*Milchamos Hashem* ibid) differs; he holds that already in the times of the *Gemara Chazal* instituted to add the *tekios d’meyushav* before *Mussaf*, and therefore, they also instituted a *brachah* before doing so. He added that even during the time when they only blew at the *sefer habrachos* in the *tefillah*, they would recite the *birchas hamitzvah* before blowing, just like the *Kohanim* recite *birchas hamitzvos* before being *nosei kapayim* in *tefillah*.

A Hefsek between the Brachah and the Tekios

The shofar is blown before *Tefillas Mussaf* [*tekios d’meyushav*] (*Tur Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 585 1) and in *Tefillas Mussaf*, after each of the three middle *brachos* – *Malchuyos, Zichronos* and *Shofros* [*tekios deme’umad*] (ibid 692 1). In essence, we have a practice of adding to these *tekios*, and blowing a total of 100 *kolos* (*Rema* 596 1; *Magen Avraham* ibid 2).

The *brachah* on the mitzvah is recited before the *tekios d’meyushav*. Both the *tokea* and the listeners need to make sure not to cause a *hefsek* with talking until the end of *tekios deme’umad*, which are blown in *Mussaf*, because the *brachah* applies to these *tekios* as well (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 592 3; *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 8). Some wrote that even after the end of *tekios deme’umad*, one should not speak until the end of the *tekios* that are customarily added to complete 100 *kolos* (*Chayei Adam* 141 9; *Kaf Hachaim Orach Chaim* 592 17. And see *Ketzeh Hamateh* on *Mateh Ephraim* ibid 6).

The *tokea* recites the *brachos* aloud, the *tzibbur* listens to the *brachah* and answers amen. After the *brachah*, the *mevarech* takes the shofar and blows (*Mateh Ephraim* 585 3). Some hold that the *mevarech* should hold the shofar already while making the *brachah* (*Eleph Hamagen* ibid 7).

Women and This Brachah

Women are exempt from the mitzvah of shofar, just like they are exempt from the other *mitzvos* that are contingent on time. But a woman who wants to fulfill this mitzvah may do so (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 589 6).

The Rishonim differ as to whether a woman who fulfills a *mitzvas aseh* that is contingent on time makes the *brachah* on the mitzvah. The *Rambam* (*Tzitzis* 3 9) holds that she does not, and the *Shulchan Aruch* rules likewise (ibid). But the *Baalei Hatosafos* (*Kiddushin* 31a ad loc. *delo*) hold that she does, and the *Rema* rules this way (ibid).

The *Shu”t Min Hashamayim* (1) says that even according to those who hold that women do not recite a *brachah* on fulfilling *mitzvos aseh* with a time contingency, the women can recite a *brachah* on this mitzvah. That is because *Chazal* say (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a) that blowing the shofar arouses the merit of Am Yisrael and evokes a good memory to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Because women also need this good memory to advocate for them, they are permitted to recite the *brachah* for this mitzvah.

The Kavanah of Amen

Amen – it is true that HaKadosh Baruch Hu sanctified us with His *mitzvos* and commanded us to hear the *kol shofar*, and I believe this.

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

In the Book of *Tzaddikim*

The *Chareidim* (Ch. 66:176) brings in the name of the *Tikkunei Zohar* that the quota of holy things said each day are alluded to in the word 90 :ק"ד – amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*. The Mahara"m Papirash (*Ohr Hayashar Amud Ha'avodah* 6:22) wrote: "A person is not called a *tzaddik* until he completes 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*."

Based on this, the *Pele Yoetz* wrote that a person who wants to be inscribed on Rosh Hashanah in the *sefer* of *Tzaddikim Gemurim*, for a good, long, life, should take upon himself to be strict from this day on to meet the quota of holy things alluded to in the word ק"ד. (*Elef Hamagen, Drush l'Rosh Hashanah*)

In the Merit of Amen, We Are Acquitted in Judgement

One year, when the Rav of Ramat Elchanan, Harav Yitzchak Silberstein, consulted with the Ayeles Hashachar – Harav Steinman – about what he should give *chizuk* to the *tzibbur* for before Rosh Hashanah, the Rosh Yeshivah surprised him with a very original, but well-founded, idea:

The last *mishnah* in *Maseches Makkos* cites the words of Rabi Chananya ben Akashyah: "HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give *zechusim* to Yisrael, therefore He gave them Torah and many *mitzvos*." The *Rambam* (*Peirush Hamishnayos*, *ibid*) explains this *mishnah* as follows: "One of the fundamentals of *emunah* in the Torah is that if a person fulfills one of the 613 *mitzvos* properly, and did not have

any material interests in it at all, and did it *li'Shmah* with love, as explained, then he merits a life in Olam Haba. Therefore, Rabi Chananya said that because there are so many *mitzvos*, it is impossible that a person should not do one *mitzvah* each day of his life with *shleimus*, completion, and he should merit that his soul is everlasting, because of that deed." From the words of the *Rambam* it is evident that the great merit that grants a person Olam Haba is doing a *mitzvah l'Shem Shamayim* only, without any other motivation.

"In my opinion," the Rosh Yeshivah concluded, "the *mitzvah* of answering amen is one that can easily be performed *l'Shem Shamayim*, because by answering amen with *kavanah*, a person does not attain any material goal. It is so simple and easy, that there is no chance of pride in this *mitzvah*. So we find that answering amen according to *halachah* is the appropriate way through which a person can merit to be acquitted in judgment." (*K'ayal Ta'arog, Moadim* p. 361)

It should be noted that the Rosh Yeshivah shared a similar thought when he spoke at a gathering to strengthen the answering of amen, organized by Bnei Emunim on 13 Elul 5770. He said: "Answering amen according to *halachah* has a tremendous virtue, because it is so simple and easy that there is seemingly nothing to be proud of!"

He continued: "We have another virtue in answering amen; it is such a lofty *mizvah* that a person can attain through it all the virtues and the *brachos*, and at the same time, fulfilling it does not involve a shred of pride. That is the biggest virtue of all – doing a good thing that has no trace of *ga'avah*!"

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

Thank you very much for your wonderful pamphlet, filled with the Torah of amen, which provides so much illumination for people each Shabbos.

I heard from a wise Yid in Bnei Brak, who is known for his breadth of knowledge and conveying teachings from the past generation, a beautiful thought on answering amen. I told him that I would write it down so that it could be shared in your pamphlet:

There are two sides to answering amen. On the one hand, one can bring upon an abundance of compassion and great *chesed* with amen, and on the other hand, being lax about it causes even the Ba'al HaRachamim to sit on the Kisei Din, *chalilah*. We can find an allusion to this in the words of the *zemer, Kol Mekadesh Shevi'i*: "משוך חסדך ליודעך" ... ק-ל קנא ונוקם the acronym of the final letters of each of these words is numerically equivalent to amen, to teach us that answering amen transforms the *Middas Hadin* to *Rachamim*. And we know "*miklal hein atah shomea lav*," – that K-l is a Name of compassion, and yet, the laxity about amen transforms the *middah* of "K-l" to "קנא ונוקם" *chalilah*.

With best wishes,
Yosef Tzvi Neilander, Bnei Brak

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the *Vechol Ma'aminim* email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



A portrait of the Magen Avraham, zy" data-bbox="57 741 173 761"/>

The Magen Avraham, zy" data-bbox="187 657 444 692"/>

3 Tishrei 5443

Harav Avraham Halevi Abele Gombiner, *zt"l*, was born in 5397 in the city of Gombin, Poland, to his father, Rav Chaim Halevi, *Hy"d*, one of the *dayanim* of the city who was murdered by the Cossacks, *ym"l*. He studied under the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Harav Yitzchak of Posen, *zt"l*, and was a giant in *Toras Hanigleh* and *Toras HaniStar*. When his greatness emerged, he was appointed by the people of Kalish to be their Rav, and a *maggid shiur* for the *charifim* (the

brilliant minds) in their yeshivah.

Because the Rav declined to serve as Rav in the full capacity of the position, his salary was smaller, and he suffered from poverty all his life. Sometimes, he did not even have enough money to purchase sheets on which to write his *chiddushim*. The tenants who lived in his home after his passing related that when the plaster would peel in the house, they would see older layers of plaster on which were written *chiddushei Torah* in his handwriting.

The Rav began to write his magnum opus on the *Shulchan Aruch* in 5420, when he was twenty-eight years old. He was so humble that he did not want his name mentioned in the compilation, and he called it *Ner Yisrael*. But his son, Rav Chaim, who published it and wanted to commemorate his father's name, called it *Magen Avraham*, and this is the name that remained for generations.

The Rav passed away on Tzom Gedaliah, 3 Tishrei 5443, at the age of forty-six; he was laid to rest in Kalish. In his will, he instructed that only the following be inscribed on his *matzeivah*: "Here lies Rav Avraham Halevi Abele, author of the *seforim Ner Yisrael* and *Zayis Ra'anan*."

Amen to the Brachah of Magen Avraham

According to *halachah*, there are three *kavanos* in answering amen: On the *brachah* that is only praise, we have in mind, "This *brachah* is true." On a *brachah* that is a *tefillah* and a request, we have in mind, "May it be Hashem's Will that the words of the *mevarech* are fulfilled." And on a *brachah* that includes praise and a request, then we have in mind both: "It is true...and *yehi ratzon*..." In light of this, the *Ba"ch* (*Orach Chaim* 124) ruled that on the *brachah* of Magen Avraham, one should only have in mind that it is true, because it is all praise.

But the *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 25) wrote that from the words of the *Magen Avraham* (*ibid* 10) it is evident that one should have in mind in the *brachah* of Magen Avraham also *yehi ratzon*. He explained that this is because this *brachah* also contains a request to hasten the redemption, with the words "*vezocher chasdei avos umeivi go'el livnei beneihem*," therefore, the *Magen Avraham* holds that one should have in mind when answering amen both "it is true" and "*yehi ratzon* that it should be fulfilled."