

# Vechor Maaminim

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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

### Avraham Constitutes the Brachah

“ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך  
ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה” (יב ב)

In *Maseches Brachos* (40b), *Chazal* say that “every *brachah* that does not include *Malchus* is not a *brachah*.” In other words, a *brachah* in which the *mevarech* does not mention that Hashem is the “*Melech Ha’olam*” (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 214) does not fulfill the obligation. Based on this we ask: How is it that the *brachah* of *Avos* that beings the *Amidah tefillah* does not include the words “*Melech Ha’olam*”? *Tosafos* answers (ibid ad loc. *Amar*) that the words “*Elokei Avraham*” serve in place of mentioning *Malchus*, because Avraham Avinu publicized the *Malchus* of Hashem to all.

**Harav Yisrael Ze’evi**, the Av Bais Din of Chevron, wrote that the words of the *Tosafos* are alluded to in this *passuk*: *Chazal* (*Pesachim* 117b, cited in *Rashi*) explain the promise of Hashem to Avraham as follows: “*Ve’escha legoy gadol*” – that they will mention you in the first *brachah* of *Shemoneh Esreh*: “*Elokei Avraham*.” “*V’avorachecha*” that they will also mention “*Elokei Yitzchak*” in it. “*V’agadlah Shemecha*” – that they will then also say “*Elokei Yaakov*.” But although the three *Avos* are mentioned in the *brachah*, “*Veheyei brachah*” – “*Becha chosmim*,” with you they will sign off, with the words “*Magen Avraham*.” We can say that the words

“*Veheyei Brachah*” indicate that as the *Tosafos* said, mentioning Avraham’s name is what constitutes the *brachah*, because it transforms it to a *brachah k’halachah* – one that includes *Malchus*.

*Pnei Dovid* [Chida] 12

### Birchas Kohanim with Two

“ואברכה מברכך ומקללך אאר  
ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה”  
(יב ג)

From the words of the *passuk* “and I will bless those who bless you,” *Chazal* learn (*Sotah* 38b) that the Kohanim who bless Am Yisrael – are also blessed. An allusion to this is brought by the *Baal Haturim* from the fact that the words “*v’avorach mevorachecha*” are numerically equivalent to כהנים המברכים בניך. He added that according to those who hold that from the Torah, the obligation of *Birchas Kohanim* is only practiced when there are at least two Kohanim in shul (see *Tur Ohr Hachaim* 128), it is clear why the *passuk* wrote “*mevorachecha*” in the plural, while “*mekalellcha*”, the one who curses you, is in the singular.

**Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky** added:

One who peruses closely will notice that the numerical value of כהנים [המברכים בניך 524] is two less than the value of 526 [ואברכה מברכך]. But if we add the two Kohanim who make the blessing, then the values are equal.

*Emes L’Yaakov*

### ‘From the Students of Avraham Avinu’

As is known, Avraham Avinu is known as the ‘*rosh lema’aminim*,’ the head of the believers. He merited this unique title not only because he was the first to deny the power of the idols, but because he did not suffice with being a believer himself. He worked to promulgate *emunah* in the world. *Chazal* (*Sotah* 10b) relate that Avraham Avinu would host all the passersby in his tent, and in lieu of payment, after the guest would eat his fill, Avraham would ask him to thank and bless the Creator Whose food he had eaten. This way, he added many tens of thousands of believers to the world.

Avraham Avinu, the father of the nation, was the first in the world to dedicate his time to teach people to make *brachos* properly. How wonderful it is to see that in our generation, as well, there are many who follow in his ways. As it says with Avraham (*Bereishis* 19:27): “*Vayashkem Avraham baboker*,” they also rise early and await to answer amen to the *brachos* of many Yidden. This way, they bring about that Jews make *brachos* properly, and they spread *emunah* in the world!

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Brachos* (6b) states that when HaKadosh Baruch Hu comes to the shul and does not find ten people there “He immediately gets angry.” A proof of this is brought from the *passuk* (*Yeshayahu* 50:2): “Why did I come and there is no man?” But if the *Gemara* is looking for a source for the fact that Hashem is angry when there are not ten men, why does it cite the *passuk* that states “*ish*” – in the singular?!

There is a well-known answer to this: “If there is no ‘*ish she’echpat lo*’, no man who cares, then there is certainly not ten...!” We can say that this “*ish she’echpat lo*”, the man who cares, is that same “*ish*” who volunteers to answer amen after the *brachos* of the *tzibbur*.

What is this about? This past summer saw the Derech Emunah initiative, in memory of Harav Chaim Kanievsky, who was strict each day to recite *Birchos Hashachar* in front of someone who would complete the *brachos* with amen; he also listened and answered amen to the *brachos* of another.

In the framework of this initiative, many of the volunteers woke early to answer amen after the *brachos* of others. Indeed, it was very moving to see that in many shuls around the world, *mispallelim* are emitting the light of *emunah* in the world in the ways of Avraham Avinu.

I also merit to dedicate about three hours each morning to answer amen after those who make *brachos* in the shul where I regularly daven, the Brizdovitz Shul in Boro Park. In this shul, there isn’t a single Yid whose *brachos* are not answered by amen. It’s a shul of ‘*brachah sheleimah*.’

The *passuk* in this *parashah* (12:2) says “*Veheyei brachah*,” and *Rashi* cites the *Midrash*: “*Becha chosmim*,” meaning, the *brachah* of the *Avos* is signed off by Avraham – as we say ‘*Magen Avraham*.’ Undoubtedly in the merit of the *brachos* and the amens that seal it we merit protection; complete *brachos* bring complete protection!

Good Shabbos!

**Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**

### 'Mipnei Seiv"ah Takum'

It was Shabbos afternoon in the Slovakian town of Nove-Zamky, known to the Jew as Neuhausel. The typical tranquility of this hour was violated on this Shabbos. Instead of the frolicking of children playing in the streets, the town was bustling with masses of Jews – men and children – marching towards the shul wearing Shabbos clothes.

What was driving them all to the shul was the rumor that had spread through the community that the famous and revered *dayan*, Harav Avraham Stern, the son-in-law of the town's Rav, Rav Yosef Meir Tigerman, was going to give a *drashah* on Shabbos afternoon.

During the years that he had served as a *dayan*, he had not delivered many *drashos* for the public. But because

much. He quoted the words of *Chazal*, Rishonim and Acharonim, about the severity of it, and even quoted the *mekubal*, Rabi Moshe Cordovero, ז"א: The word שיבה [old age] stands for שתיקה יפה בשעת התפילה, it is fitting to be silent during davening, which indicates that being quiet during davening is a *segulah* for a long life.

"One who is strict not to speak of mundane matters during davening, and fulfills his obligation to answer 'amen' and 'amen yehei Shemei rabba' according to *halachah*, merits *arichus yamim*. And the opposite, *chalilah*, for one who is not strict about this..." the *dayan* cried.

His piercing words found their mark on the hearts of the listeners. During the *tefillah* after the *drashah*, the shul was silent. No one dared speak during davening. They all accepted upon themselves no longer to speak during *tefillah*.

All of them, that is, except one young man named Naftali, who for some reason, decided to close his heart to the piercing words.

This Naftali could have continued railing against the words of the venerated *dayan*, and to cool down the commitment of the others, but already that night, when he went to

bed, Naftali dreamed a chilling dream. He saw himself standing in front of the Beis Din Shel Ma'alah, fearful and trembling, while a terrible voice thundered that he was guilty and that his punishment would be to pass away before his time.

Naftali tried to plead for his life: "I am yet young; I have a family with young children to support. I have not yet accomplished even some of what I had planned to do in my life. Why have I been decreed to die at such a young age?!"

"You have been sentenced to die because you spoke in the middle of the *tefillos* and *Kaddish*, and didn't answer *amen, yehei Shemei rabba*," the voice declared sharply.

"I didn't know how serious it was," Naftali tried to defend himself. But then, the voice of the prosecutor thundered at him: "Did you forget so quickly how you were present at the *drashah* delivered yesterday by the *dayan*? Did you already manage to forget his words, including what the

Ramak said that answering amen is a *segulah* for *arichus yamim*, and the warning that one who is lax about this severe prohibition might be punished with the opposite of *arichus yamim*?"

Upon hearing this, Naftali fell silent. What could he claim in his defense in the face of such clear words?! Naftali stood himself alone facing the *beis din*, and waited in vain for the voice of the defender, but it did not come...

Suddenly, when it appeared that all hope was lost, a scream suddenly emerged from his throat: "Please, give me one more chance! I take upon myself that from today until the end of my life, I will be exceedingly strict not to utter one word of mundane matters during davening, and I will try with all my might not to miss even one amen. I will also publicize what was said at this hearing."

Naftali awoke, trembling, his shout still on his lips. He remembered the dream so clearly, and the promise he had made at the end was so tangible that he viewed it as a prophecy that had been sent to him from Above.

As he had promised in the dream, Naftali publicized the story among everyone he knew. It quickly spread, and anyone who heard about the dream, and the details, strengthened himself and joined those who were working on this area. The *yeshuos* that stemmed from this also mounted accordingly.

From that day on, the situation was transformed. Naftali became the chief advocate of silence. The shul was absolutely quiet. Naftali, who realized that his life had been saved in the merit of his commitment, made sure to spread the story in all the shuls. Even many years later, the sign that he had posted in the shuls were still found in many of them: "A Segulah for Seivah – שתיקה יפה בשעת התפילה."

The *dayan*, Rav Avraham Stern, *Hy"d*, who perished in the holocaust, merited five sons who became giants in Torah and *halachah*: Among them was the renowned *posek*, Rav Betzalel Stern, of Australia, author of *Betzel Hachochmah*, and his brother, Harav Moshe Stern of Debrecen, author of *Be'er Moshe*, and one of the leading *rabbanim* in America. He was the one who shared this story in his *sefer Be'er Moshe* (Vol. VII, 109), and also testified by way of introduction: "I was witness to this story, and to this day, my knees still tremble when I think about it."



The shul in the town of Nove Zamky [Neuhausel], Slovakia

each one of the speeches he had given had proven him to be a gifted orator, no one in the town wanted to miss this opportunity to hear his words of wisdom.

The shul was packed to capacity. The *dayan* began delivering a fiery speech on relevant subjects, weaving it with topics relating to that week's *parashah*. The listeners were riveted, and when, towards the end, the Rav suddenly began to speak about a totally different subject, he had their full attention.

"*Morai verabbosai!*" the *dayan* began the second part of his speech. "I wanted to speak to you about something that has been weighing on my mind lately: I have been seeing a disturbing trend where many of the *mispallelim* in the shul do not guard their mouths, and do not avoid speaking of mundane matters during davening, and I can no longer remain silent."

Over the next few minutes, the *dayan* somberly rebuked the community for this negative practice that was spreading among them, and which pained him so

## Brachos That Are Not Answered by Amen

### A 'Brachah She'einah Tzrichah'

**One who makes a *brachah* that is not needed, such as a *brachah* during a meal on something that was exempted because he ate bread, should not be answered with amen.**

#### Sources and Explanations

According to the *Rambam* (*Brachos* 1 16), *Tur Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 215 4) and *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 18). The *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 21) cites the *Biur HaGra* (ibid) that the source of the words of the *Rambam* is from the *Gemara* in *Brachos* (53b) that one should not answer amen to a *brachah* made by a child who is being taught, even though the baby is allowed to say it. This is because his *kavanah* is not to make a *brachah*. Hence, if a *brachah* that is permitted is not answered with amen when the laws of a *brachah* do not apply to it, how much more so should one not answer amen to a *brachah* said when it is not permitted to be said.

Rabbeinu Manoach (on the *Rambam* ibid) explained that the reason it is forbidden to answer amen on a '*brachah she'einah tzrichah*' is because by answering amen, the one answering fulfills the *brachah* and gives it validity, and one should not do that for a *brachah* that is not allowed to be said. The Pele Yoetz added in his *sefer Chessed L'Alafim* (215 6): The Rishonim wrote that one who answers amen after a *brachah* is like the one who utters the *brachah*. The *Rambam* writes this (*Brachos* 1 11): "And anyone who answers amen after a *mevarech* – he is like the *mevarech* (see *Maggid Mishnah* ibid), and the *Rashba* (*Shu"t*, Vol. I, 126) wrote: "One who says amen – is like one who utters a *brachah*." So we find that one who answers amen after a *brachah she'einah tzrichah*, is like one who makes the *brachah* himself and therefore it is forbidden.

### One Who Makes a *Brachah* on Something Forbidden

**a. When one makes a *brachah* on something that is not allowed to be eaten must, amen should not be answered after it.**

#### Sources and Explanations

The source of this *halachah* is in the *Tosefta* (*Demai* 2 24. Cited by the *Mishnah Berurah* 196 2.) This *issur* is applicable whether the food item is forbidden for the *mevarech* by a *d'Oraisa* or a *d'Rabbanan*, and whether the *mevarech* forbade it for himself via a *neder* or an oath (*Mishnah Berurah* ibid 1). The prohibition of making a *brachah* on such a food item is derived in the *Breisa* (*Bava Kamma* 94a. See *Rashi Brachos* 47a ad loc. *Ha*) from the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (10:3): "Ubotzea [a thief] bereich ni'etz Hashem"

– and we learn from here that one who makes a *brachah* on something forbidden is considered a *mena'etz* [one who curses].

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach questioned whether someone who heard his friend make a *brachah* with an intention of eating something forbidden, but the listener knows that it is permitted, needs to answer amen after the *brachah*. For example: One who makes a *brachah* on fruits that he thinks are *tevel*, and the listener knows that *terumah* and *maaser* were separated properly. So even though the *brachah* is said on something permitted, the *mevarech* still transgressed an *issur* by eating it, as stated in *Maseches Kiddushin* (81b) that one who does a deed with the *kavanah* of an *issur* needs a *kapparah*, an atonement, even though he did not actually transgress. (*Halichos Shlomo – Tefillah – Chapter 22, Dvar Halachah* 29).

**b. If a person makes a *brachah* on food that some hold is forbidden and some hold is permitted, then the listener must answer amen, even if he considers this food to be forbidden.**

#### Sources and Explanations

The *Birchei Yosef* (196 4) wrote that someone who is careful about eating *pas akum* needs to answer amen to the *brachah* of one who does eat it. Once the *mevarech* holds that this is permitted for him, then his *brachah* is not a *ni'utz* (see *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 112 2 that there are places where they were lenient about *pas akum*). In the *Hagahos Rabi Akiva Eiger* (ibid 1) he wrote that even though *Chazal* forbade eating bread that was kneaded with milk, lest one mistakenly eat it with meat (see *Yoreh Deah* 97 1), in any case, because "it is not called an issue to such an extent," then one who does eat it needs to make a *brachah*. In the *sefer Leket Hakemach Hachadash* (*Orach Chaim* 124 24), he cites the *Shulchan Melachim* that one should learn from this to be lenient about answering amen after the *brachah* of one who eats dairy less than six hours after eating meat. He also discusses what seems evident from the *Kaf Hachaim* (197 7) that in a place where the food itself is permitted, and it is only something else that causes it to be forbidden it is permitted to answer amen to a *brachah* on it. *Sefer Cheker Halachah* (*Inyanei Brachos* 12) and *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim*, Vol. IV, 69) mention this opinion also regarding someone that ate before *Kiddush* or before *Havdalah*, because the food itself is permitted, even if it was in a forbidden time, and therefore, it is likely that it requires a *brachah*.

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

The holy *Zohar* in this *parashah* (*Sisrei Torah* 77 1) notes that the words “לך לך” are numerically equivalent to one hundred, and explains that the first *passuk* in this *parashah* reveals that before the *neshamah* descends to the world, HaKadosh Baruch Hu makes a condition that it will fulfill the mitzvah of one hundred *brachos* a day. Reciting these *brachos* opens the sources of heavenly abundance for a person, and helps him keep the *mitzvos* of the Torah and protects him from being ensnared by outside elements.

The *passuk* is explained as follows: “And Hashem said to Avram” – HaKadosh Baruch Hu makes a condition with every person who is descended from Avraham, before he goes “from your land and from your birthplace and from your father’s home” – from the source of his being, in Gan Eden, “to the land that I will show you” – Olam Hazei, that he will be strict to make “לך לך 100]] *brachos* each day, and through that, he will be guaranteed an abundance of *brachah* and Divine assistance in keeping the Torah and *mitzvos*.

The *mekubal*, Harav Tzvi Hirsh Horowitz said that the words of the *Zohar* are fitting with the *passuk* of which Chazal cite (*Menachos* 43b) in the mitzvah of saying one hundred *brachos* a day (*Devarim* 10:12): “V’ata Yisrael [מה] [מאה] Hashem Elokecha sho’el me’imach” – the *passuk* emphasizes “sho’el me’imach” because keeping the mitzvah of *Meah Brachos* is something that Hashem clearly demanded

“me’imach” – from every soul in Am Yisrael before coming down to this world (*Zohar Lech Lecha Sisrei Torah* 77a; *Aspaklaria Hame’irah* ibid; *Masok Midvash* ibid).

We learn in the *Mishnah* (*Avos* 5:3): “Avraham Avinu was challenged with ten tests and he withstood them all.” The *Mishnah* does not detail what those ten tests were, and there are a few opinions on the subject: Some list Avraham being tossed into the burning furnace as the first test (*Rabbeinu Yona* and *Bartenura* ibid), while the *Rambam* (ibid) holds that the first test was the commandment: “*Lech lecha me’artzecha umimoladetecha*.” The final test, according to the *Rambam* and most commentators, was the *Akeidah*, where Avraham was commanded “*velech lecha el Eretz Hamoriah*” (*Bereishis* 22:2).

Rabi Yehoshua Ibn Shuiv, a *talmid* of the Rashba, brings a beautiful *Midrash* on this subject: “He began [the ten tests] with ‘*Lech Lecha*’ and concluded them with ‘*Lech Lecha*’, and לך לך amounts [in value] to 100 – an allusion to *Meah Brachos*. Therefore, Yitzchak was not born until Avraham was 100 years old.” (*Drashos Rabi Yehoshua Ibn Shuiv*)

The words *lech lecha* are explained by *Rashi*: “*Lech*” – go for your own need – “there I will make you into a big nation, and here, you will not merit sons.” The *Pa’aneach Raza*

added that for this reason Avraham was told לך לך – equivalent to 100, to allude that those children would recite 100 *brachos* a day.

Harav Chaim Yeruchem Lantz, a *talmid* of the Da’as Kedoshim of Butchach, said that this *passuk* also has an allusion to the words of Chazal (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18 21) that Dovid Hamelech instituted that Am Yisrael should recite 100 *brachos*, in order to nullify a decree that was in his days when 100 people died each day: if you recite “*lech lecha*” *brachos* each day, as you committed to do before your soul descended “*el ha’aretz asher ar’eka*” then you are guaranteed “*Ve’escha legoy gadol v’avorachecha v’agadlah shemecha*” – that your sons will not die. But this is on condition that “*veheyey brachah*” – that you recite 100 *brachos* a day. (*Divrei Chaim*)

The *mekubal* Harav Yitzchak Hoberman of Ra’anana added: We know the words of the *Chiddushei HaRi”m* on the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (115:15): “*Hashamayim shamayim l’Hashem voha’aretz nasan livnei adam*.” The land was given to people so that they could purify it to become as pure as the Heavens. This is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded Avraham: “*Lech lecha me’artzecha*” – make “*lech lecha*” *brachos* each day over the worldly pleasures, and that is how you will purify the land to be like the Heavens. (*Ben L’Oshri*)

## Tzaddik B’Emunaso

### Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav Yehuda Tzadka

### Harav Yehuda Tzadka, zt”l

12 Cheshvan 5752

Harav Yehuda Yehoshua Tzadka, zt”l, was born in Yerushalayim on 3 Shevat 5670 to his father, Rav Shaul. He studied in Talmud

Torah Bnei Tzion in the city, and later in Yeshivat Porat Yosef. In 5697 he was appointed by Rabi Ezra Attiya, the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, to deliver *shiurim* in the yeshiva. In 5730 he was appointed to lead the yeshiva.

He spent his whole life engaged in Torah, and was very removed from worldly and mundane affairs. He was exceptional in *gemilus chessed*, exceedingly modest, and very careful about respecting others. His concern for the *klal*, and for individuals, was renowned. His *divrei Torah* were printed in his *sefer Kol Yehuda*.

He passed away on 12 Cheshvan 5752, and a large crowd escorted him to his resting place in the Sanhedriah Cemetery in Yerushalayim.

A special chapter of Rav Yehuda Tzadka’s life was his remarkable caution regarding *brachos* and answering amen after them. In the *sefer Vezos L’Yehuda*, written about his life, an entire chapter is devoted (Chapter 15) to this subject. Following are a number of concepts cited there:

### Chiku Mamtakim – Like Sweet Confections

When Rav Yehuda would speak about a *brachah*, he looked like he was talking about the most delicious and sweet confection that he had ever tasted. If he would offer a guest to eat, and the latter was embarrassed, Rav Yehuda would cajole him with the claim that the guest could not resist: “Don’t you want to bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu?!”

### A Triple Brachah

He would constantly point out

that the recital of the *brachah*, and its *kavanah*, is divided into three parts: The beginning, middle and end. First, at the beginning of the *brachah* – “*Baruch Atah Hashem*” – one must pay attention to the wondrous fact that we, physical beings, merit to bless Hashem in the second person. Two, in the middle “*Elokeinu Melech Ha’olam*” one should have in mind to take upon himself the G-dliness of Hashem, and to coronate Him over the whole world. Finally, the *brachah* should contain a *kavanah* to thank Hashem from the depths of our hearts for the tremendous good that He has granted us.

He would especially emphasize this to children. His words left a deep impression, and whenever he visited a Talmud Torah, the children would rejoice and greet him, “Here comes the Rav, the *Baal Habrachos*...”