

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

Don't Mention the Sick Person's Name

“וירא אליו ה' באלני מומרא והוא ישב פתח האהל כחם היום” (יה א)

Why did the Torah write “Vayeira Eilav Hashem” without mentioning Avraham's name?

Harav Shmarya Zalman of Leipnik explained:

Rashi writes (based on Sotah 14a) that Hashem revealed Himself to Avraham on the third day after his *bris*, the time when the pain is the most intense, in order to visit him when he was the sickest. Based on this we can explain that Avraham's name was not explicitly mentioned, because one who enters to visit a sick person should not mention him by name (see *Brachos* 34a, and in *Gilyonei HaShas* *ibid*) lest it has been decreed that the patient die, and the change in his name will save him. As *Chazal* say (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) that one of the things that tear up a person's decree is “changing the name.”

Nachalas Yaakov - Avnei Shoham [Amsterdam 5484] 10

Being Worthy of Seeing the Geulah

“ויהי כהוציאם אתם החוצה ויאמר המלט על נפשך אל תביט אחריו ואל תעמד בכל הככר ההרה המלט פן תספדה” (יט ז)

Rashi explains that Lot was warned not to look behind him when he fled from Sodom because it is not fitting to look how others are being punished when he was being saved from

punishment only in the merit of Avraham Avinu.

Based on this, Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz explained our request at the end of *Birchas Ha'avodah* – “*Vesechezenah eineinu beshuycha leTzion berachamim*” – we ask that we should merit the *Geulah avos*, but rather because we ourselves of worthy of it - with the power of our *emunah* in Hashem and our anticipation for the *yeshuah galus* - because only like that will we be allowed to view it with our eyes.

Ye'aros Dvash, Vol. I, Drush 1

The Proper Kavanah in Parashas Ha'Akeidah

“ויהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלקים נסה את אברהם ויאמר אליו אברהם ויאמר הנני” (כב א)

The Mashpia, Harav Eliyahu Rota, related:

I was once in the Chabad shul in Meah Shearim, and I saw the renowned Chabad *chassid* Reb Baruch Paris, davening with tremendous *dveikus*. For a long time, he did not even turn a page in his Siddur. I was curious to know which part of davening was taking him so long, so I drew close to his place, and was surprised to see that he was reciting *Parashas Ha'Akeidah*. After the davening, I asked him why he spent so long on this *parashah*, and his reply amazed me: “When I say *Parashas Ha'Akeidah*, I do not continue until I feel as if I myself was bound to the *Mizbe'ach*.”

Ish Chassid Hayah, p. 212

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Akeidas Yitzchak and Answering Amen

The *parashah* of the *Akeidah*, which we read this week, contains the basic fundamental of Am Yisrael's *emunah* – and we are commanded to read it each day in order to imbue us with this *emunah*.

Many have wondered about the intensity of the *emunah* of the Jewish people. There is no nation in the world that has endured such difficult crises; for thousands of years, in every generation, to this day, there are so many who rise up to destroy us, *chalilah*. Throughout the generations, the *emunah* of the Jew has withstood countless tests, and has remained strong.

Amidst all the persecutions and the terrible troubles, Am Yisrael has not moved one iota from their firm and strong *emunah*. On the contrary, when the haters try to force the Jews to renege on their *emunah* in Hashem, that is when even those who are the most distant feel their spark kindled, to the point of *mesirus nefesh* to be *mekadesh Shem Shamayim*.

As explained in the holy *seforim*, this trait was embedded in us at the time of the *Akeidah*. Since then, all of us, the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, are ‘naturally’ ready to sanctify ourselves *al Kiddush Hashem*.

I think that this *mesirus nefesh* is symbolized by the answering of amen, which arouses in each one of us absolute *emunah* in the Creator all the time. Moreover, it is known that the acronym of amen is *אני מוטר נפשי*.

So it is no wonder that in the *Akeidah*, we find various details that are similar to answering amen. The *Akeidah* was done with two – Avraham was commanded to perform the

Akeidah, and Yitzchak de facto “answered amen” after his words and followed him with complete *emunah* to fulfill the Will of Hashem. As a *brachah* and amen said with two people, so too, father and son walked – “*Vayelchu shneihem yachdav*” (*Bereishis* 22:6). It is possible that this is why the *parashah* of the *Akeidah* is said next to *Birchos Hashachar*, which is said with two people, in the ancient *minhag*, because saying the *brachos* together is an expression of the strong *emunah* that we acquired from our forebears through the power of the *Akeidah*.

And if I may add, reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* also requires a certain amount of *mesirus nefesh*. Like Avraham and Yitzchak, we also need to rise early and answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar*, and not to be cowed by the discomfort or embarrassment involved. A person who rises regularly for the sake of amen, and overcomes the unpleasantness and approaches another to ask that they answer amen, or offers to others to make the *brachos* for him, has showed a sense of “*ani moser nafshi*” for *emunah* – for amen!

In conclusion, let us not forget the special emphasis and the special *brachah* that *Chazal* put on answering amen “*bechol kocho*”, with all his strength, meaning “with *mesirus nefesh*.” There is no wonder, because as noted, amen is the symbol of *mesirus nefesh* for *emunah*, and as such, it needs to be answered with all one's strength. Don't look right or left, focus only on *emunah* and on being *moser nefesh*!

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

You Don't Lose Out from Tefillah Betzibbur!

Even decades after his passing, the wondrous figure of Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman, one of the builders of *chareidi* Jewry in America, is still a shining example for so many. His unbelievable dedication and his agreement to forfeit everything that was dear to him in order to keep a mitzvah, withstood the test many times, with great success.

In the story of his life, *All for the Boss*, authored by his daughter, there are many stories about him, all of which share the common thread of *mesirus nefesh* to uphold every detail of Torah and *mitzvos*. A special chapter in this book is dedicated to his *tefillah* and his *mesirus nefesh* for the *halachos* of *tefillah*.



A passenger plane at the beginning of the civilian aviation era.

Rav Yaakov Yosef was very scrupulous about davening with *minyan*, which was no minor feat at the time. For a large part of his life, he was in the fur business, and he needed to travel great distances by train and ship. This should have meant that he often davened alone. However, the number of times he ultimately davened on his own could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

One year, when he returned from a long trip to Europe, he entered the house in great spirits. “Ah, there is nothing that can withstand a person’s willpower!” – he declared with satisfaction to his family. And lest someone think that his joy was due to his success in business, he continued with a glow in his eyes: “I was in transit for many days, and I only missed davening with a *minyan* twice!”

Do not think that this came easily. Not at all! Before every trip, he sat in his office with a map of his projected route on his desk. He invested a lot of time planning his route so that he would not find himself without a *minyan*. Even

while on the route, he was always tense, lest the worst case situation would occur – he would find himself davening alone.

During his trip to Europe, Reb Yaakov Yosef caused a revolution on the passenger ships that he traveled on. He made sure that there was a *minyan* three times a day, until he became known as Mister Minyan. Early in the morning, he would go from cabin to cabin where there were Jewish passengers, knocking on their doors and urging them to gather for *minyan* for *Shacharis*.

But on his way back to America, while still in Europe, a serious problem arose. He needed to spend a few days in the German city of Leipzig, and from there, he needed to travel to his destination, London, where he needed to be the following night. But then he realized that if he would travel according to his original plans, he would have to pay the steep price of missing *Maariv* with a *minyan*.

Although the trip to London was very important to him, it didn’t enter his mind to pay this price of losing out on *minyan*. He worked to find out what options he had, and when someone told him, half seriously half-jokingly, that there was another option, he chose it without hesitation.

The other option was flying by plane. It was 1931. At the time, civil aviation was in its infancy, and only very adventurous people allowed themselves to take the risk of flying. Aside for the risk involved, plane trips were very expensive. Reb Yaakov Yosef was neither adventurous nor rich, but in his view, this situation presented him with no choice. Missing a *minyan* was not an option he was ready to consider.

He boarded the plane, and landed in London late in the evening. From the airport, he hurried to the home of his friend, Harav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, later known as the Michtav M’Eliyahu. Rav Dessler had previously stayed in the Herman home for a long time, and he felt tremendous *hakaras hatov* to Reb Yaakov Yosef. Now, when Rabbi Herman asked him to obtain a *minyan* for him, Rav Dessler was happy to comply.

It was already very late, but Rav Dessler

did not give up. He got dressed and left the house, and began to knock at the doors of his neighbors. After going from door to door, he finally was able to gather a *minyan*, and only then, did Reb Yaakov Yosef allow himself to breathe a sigh of relief.

“This was real *hachnassas orchim!*” Reb Yaakov Yosef thanked his host before going to bed, expressing his gratitude as if the Rav had saved his life.

In a letter that Rav Dessler sent to his father, he marveled at Reb Yaakov Yosef’s scrupulous adherence to davening with *minyan*, even while traveling. He described not only how he had not lost anything from this expensive flight – and had even profited from it!

When Reb Yaakov Yosef arrived in London, he learned two things.

The first was that if he would have traveled according to his original plan, he would have gotten to London many hours later, and he would have missed a rare business opportunity that was waiting for him just as he arrived.

The second: At the time, it was only possible to enter London with a valid entry visa, and it emerged that the visa that he had was not valid. Arriving by plane required the same procedure, but remarkably, the unusual sight of a Jew traveling on the plane, which was, as noted, largely reserved for the adventurers, captured the attention of the immigration official in the airport. He asked how this had happened and the explanation that was given shocked him so much that he agreed to grant Reb Yaakov Yosef entry without the requisite visa.

Had he traveled the normal way, he would have been held up until a new visa would have been issued, and aside for that, the cost of the new visa would have made the trip as expensive as it had been for him to fly.

Reb Yaakov Yosef was ready to lose it all in order to daven with *minyan*, but from Above, he was guided not only that he did not lose out, but he also gained. He avoided all kinds of delays and extra expenses, and also took advantage of a special opportunity for his business.

Brachos That Are Not Answered by Amen

Answering Amen After a Brachah Without Washing

When one eats bread without washing his hands, there are those who think that amen should be answered to the *Hamotzi* that he makes, but others question this.

Sources and Explanations

The *Minchas Pitim* (*Orach Chaim* 196) wrote that eating bread without washing hands is not classified as an ‘*achilas issur*,’ forbidden eating, because the food itself is not forbidden, eating bread without washing is forbidden. Therefore, one should make a *brachah* on this food. He brought proof for his words from the ruling of the *Magen Avraham* (172 2) that someone who did not make a *brachah rishonah* on his food is obligated to make a *brachah acharonah*. Because although one who eats without a *brachah* has transgressed by eating, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 35a): “Anyone who benefits from this world without a *brachah* – has stolen,” because the actual food is not forbidden, then eating it is not considered ‘*achilas issur*.’ But the *Shu”t Lev Yam* (2) rejected this opinion, and holds that even though the food itself is not forbidden, eating food without washing is an *issur*, and therefore it is an ‘*achilas issur*’ and no *brachah* should be made. And if he makes a *brachah* then one should not answer amen after him. In his view, this is similar to us not making a *brachah* on stolen food, even though the food itself is not forbidden (see *Magen Avraham* beginning of 196).

The Acharonim further wrote that a person can make a *brachah* on eating bread without washing, and even answer amen after it, because when one eats less than a *kezayis* of bread he is exempt from washing his hands (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 158 3). If so, we can say that the *brachah* applies to the ‘less than a *kezayis*’ that he eats right after the *brachah*, and that is not forbidden to eat without washing (*Minchas Pitim* and *Lev Yam* *ibid*). But *sefer Halichos Shlomo* (Chapter 2, 85) brings the opinion of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who questioned this ruling, and wrote that it should be rejected, because the eater intends to eat more than a *kezayis*, and therefore he is obligated to wash his hands from the start. If so, all his eating is forbidden, and it can be said that he is not a ‘*mevarech*’ but rather a ‘*mena’etz*,’ and therefore, amen should not be answered to his *brachah*.

Answering Amen After a Controversial Brachah

When the *poskim* are divided as to whether a *brachah* should be made, such as the *brachah* of *Hallel* on Rosh Chodesh, even one who conducts

himself like the *poskim* who rule not to make the *brachah* can answer amen after the *brachah* of one who acts in accordance with the *poskim* who rule that the *brachah* should be made.

Sources and Explanations

The *Mishnah Berurah* wrote (*Biur Halachah* 215 4) that “if one has a custom [to make any *brachah*] in a certain opinion, and that opinion was not entirely rejected by the *poskim*, even though *min hadin* he is not obligated to answer amen to it, because *safek amen lekula*, when there is a doubt about amen the ruling is to be lenient, in any case, there is no *issur* if he answers.” The *Minchas Shlomo* (Vol. II, 3:1) wrote that a Sephardic person should answer amen to the *brachah* of *Hallel* on Rosh Chodesh, even though his custom is not to make the *brachah* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 422 2), and likewise in *Teshuvos Ohr Letzion* (Vol. III, Chapter 3, *Teshuvah* 2) and in *Shu”t Bayis Ne’eman* (Vol. I Orach Chaim 1), and this is what Harav Yehuda Tzadkiah instructed should be done (the approbation of Harav Y.C. Sofer to *sefer Banim Chavivim*).

The *Shu”t Yechaveh Daas* (Vol. IV, 31) disagrees with this *din* and believes that when a *brachah* is disputed in the *poskim*, one who has a custom not to make the *brachah* should not answer amen after it, and should think the amen in his heart (see *Kaf Hachaim Orach Chaim* 25 40). But Harav Y.C. Sofer (*ibid*) qualified his words and brought proof that even someone who does not make a certain *brachah* should answer amen to one who does make it from the *Seder Hayom* (*Seder Birchos Hashachar*), who wrote that although one should consider the opinion of those who do not make the *brachah* of “*Hanosein Laya’ef Koach*” (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 46 6) in any case, one should answer amen after one makes the *brachah*.

Answering Amen After a Brachah That Is a Safek

When one makes a *brachah* and there is a doubt if they are obligated or not, because according to the *din* of *safek brachos lehakel* he must not make the *brachah*, then amen should not be answered after it.

Sources and Explanations

This is written in *Teshuvos HaRambam* (Blau Edition 124): “And anyone who answers amen to a *brachah levatalah* or a *brachah* where there is a doubt if it is obligatory, and he permits it without *shikul da’as*, discretion, then he will give a reckoning for this.” See also *Avnei Yashfeh* Vol. VI, 42, 3.

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the Distinguished Nasi of Bney Emunim, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*

As a resident of the Torah town of Rechasim, I am very moved each morning to see many *avreichim* who begin their day by answering amen after *Birchos Hashachar* of another person.

Answering amen to every *brachah* is very important, as indicated by the

wonderful material that you disseminate in your pamphlet. But answering amen after *Birchos Hashachar* has special importance, because it is said at the beginning of the day, and thus it is a wonderful preparation to opening the heart for *tefillah*.

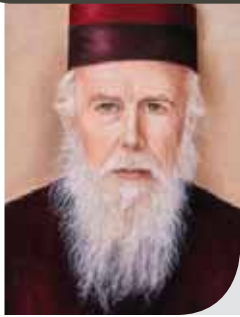
I thought of a beautiful allusion for this. The *Navi* says (*Amos* 4:12): “*Hikon likras Elokecha Yisrael*.” The word “*hikon*”

with the full spelling היכון is numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as amen, to teach you that by answering amen a person prepares himself properly for *tefillah*.

May you receive much strength to work to elevate the value of answering amen in Klal Yisrael.

With appreciation and admiration,
S.P., Rechasim

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



Harav Raphael Baruch Toledano, zt"l

Harav Raphael Baruch Toledano, zt"l

18 Cheshvan 5731

Harav Raphael Baruch Toledano

was born in Meknes, Morocco, to his father, Rav Yaakov. The Toledano family, which originated in Toledo, Spain, was a very distinguished family that produced generations of *rabbanim* who served throughout Morocco.

In 5682, when his father was appointed Raavad of Meknes, Rav Raphael Baruch assisted him in writing and organizing the *piskei din*, and after the passing of his father in 5693, he was appointed *dayan* on the Beis Din. Later, he was appointed *av beis din* and chief rabbi of the city.

Rav Raphael Baruch was known for his exceptional love of Torah, as indicated by his renowned *piyut* "*Ashorer shirah lichvod haTorah...*", and anyone who hears it will recognize that its words come from a pure heart saturated in *ahavas Torah*.

Rav Raphael Baruch invested much energy in publishing a *sefer* of practical *halachah* – the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Hashalem*, based on the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Kaf Hachaim*, with the traditions of Northern Africa. Likewise, some of his rulings in *halachah* were published in *sefer Shu"t Rabi Baruch*.

In 5723, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Bnei Brak. Although he declined to accept any official position, he worked among the *olim* from Morocco to strengthen their religious observance and to urge them to send their youth to a Torah education. He passed away on 18 Cheshvan and was buried in the Ponevezh Cemetery in Bnei Brak.

Raising Awareness of the Virtue of Answering Amen

In his *sefer Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Hashalem* (111, 30) Rav Toledano brings the well known story (brought in *Kaf Hachaim Orach Chaim* 124 30 in the name of the *Siddur Nehora Hashalem*) of Rav Mordechai Yaffeh, Baal Halevushim. When he was learning under his *rebbe*, Rabi Yitzhak Abuhav, Rav Yitzchak's young son said a *brachah*. Inadvertently, Rav Mordechai did not answer amen, and in response Rav Abuhav excommunicated him and rebuked him for this severe sin of refraining from answering amen to a *brachah*. He even added that there was a story in previous generations about a *chassid* who was punished by death because he refrained from answering amen to his child's *brachah*. After bringing this story at length, Rav Toledano wrote the following piercing words:

"A wise person will hear and learn a lesson about the great virtue of answering amen. And who knows, perhaps it is due to this sin that so many troubles have arisen? And Chazal say, (*Brachos* 5a): 'If a person sees suffering – he should introspect into his deeds.' Therefore, I ask the *roshei yeshivah* to speak to their *talmidim* about this, and Chazal say (*Shabbos* 10a) that there is a separate time for Torah and a separate time for *tefillah*."

Rav Toledano Asked for Payment

His grandson, Harav Y. Toledano, *shlita*, of Yerushalayim, related:

When I was a *bochur*, I learned in Ponevezh, but because there was no room in the dormitory, I had the privilege of sleeping in the home of my grandfather.

When I arrived the first time, I was warmly welcomed by my grandparents, *a"v*, and then my grandfather's face grew serious and he said, 'Know, my dear grandson, that in this house there is no 'free food.'

You will have to pay dearly for it!'

I was very surprised at his words, and he continued to explain: 'Hospitality in this house is conditioned on the guests being very strict not to make a *brachah* if there is no one to answer amen, and they will also have to try to answer amen to our *brachos*.'

Of course I happily agreed, and from that day on, I merited to answer dozens of amens after *brachos* that my grandparents made, and I also merited to have my *brachos* answered by them.

Rav Toledano's Birchos Hashachar

In his *sefer Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (7 23, in the *shinuyim kalim*) Rav Toledano describes how a person must recite *Birchos Hashachar* each day: "When the person recites *Birchos Hashachar*, he should not be doing anything else, even the most minor of things. He should stand in his place and recite them with *kavanah*. He should not say them quickly, hastily, and should recite them slowly and pleasantly. When he mentions Hashem's Name he should do so with the emotion of G-dliness, that Hashem gives a person life and takes away life, and is the Master of all that exists."

His grandson described how it looked when his grandfather recited *Birchos Hashachar* each morning:

Birchos Hashachar was an *avodah* in and of itself for my grandfather, and reciting them took several long moments. He would arise at an hour when most people were just going to bed, and washed his hands right away. Then he stood to recite *Birchos Hashachar*, as I listened from my room and answered amen. Each *brachah* was very important to him, and between each *brachah*, he would offer heartfelt requests relating to the *brachah* that he said, for his family and for Klal Yisrael."

Otzros Habrachah

Meah Brachos in the Parashah

Answering Amen Specifically in the Galus

Chazal say (*Taanis* 16b) that in the Bais Hamikdash, they did not answer amen to *brachos*, rather they said "*Baruch Shem kevod Malchuso l'olam va'ed*." Harav Chaim Friedburg, brother of the Maharal of Prague, explained the reason:

When the Bais Hamikdash was standing, and the *Kavod* of Hashem was revealed to all through the miracles that were performed, the one who answered joined the *mevarech* by saying "*Baruch Shem kevod Malchuso...*" because he also clearly saw the "*Kevod Malchuso*." But in the time of the *galus*, when the *Kavod* of Hashem is hidden, the *mevarech* coronates his Creator, and the one who answers amen agrees with him and reiterates his words with *emunah peshutah* (*Sefer Hachaim Sefer Geulah V'Yeshuah* Ch. 3; *Iggeres Hatiyul, Chelek Hadrash* 2).

Harav Chaim Chaika of Amdur, a *talmid* of the Maggid of Mezeritch, brought an allusion to the fact that answering amen

was not practiced in the Mikdash from the word amen itself. אמן is numerically equivalent to כ"צ alluding to the fact that when the Shechinah left (צ"צ) the Bais Hamikdash after the Churban, we answer amen (*Chaim Vechessed* p. 21).

'Emunas' in the Name of Answering Amen

In *Maseches Shabbos* (31a), Reish Lakish explains that the *passuk* (*Yeshayah* 33:6): "*Emunas itecha chossen yeshuos chochmas veda'as*" is referring to the *Shishah Sidrei Mishnah*: "*Emunas is seder Zeraim, Itecha is Moed, Chossen is Nashim, Yeshuos is Nezikin, Chochmas is Kodshim and Da'as is Taharos*."

The *Maharsha* (Vol. I *ibid*) noted that Reish Lakish explained that the word "אמונת" alludes to the *Seder Zera'im* by answering amen, because the first *masechta* in this *sefer* is *Brachos*, in which the *brachos* that the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah instituted are explained, along with the virtue of answering amen to them.