

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

Parashas VAYEISHEV | 5783 | Issue No. 462



ת.ד. 102 בני ברק
פקס: 03-5055919
9139191@gmail.com

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

Yaakov Wished to Dwell Peacefully, and Was Answered

”וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען” (לז א)

Rashi brings the words of *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 84 3) that the words of the *passuk* “*Vayeishev Yaakov*” express the wish of Yaakov that after all the travails he had endured, he should merit to dwell in peace. “Yaakov sought to dwell in peace, and then the troubles of Yosef assailed him. *Tzaddikim* seek to dwell in peace and HaKadosh Baruch Hu says: ‘It is not enough for the *tzaddikim* what is prepared for them in Olam Haba, that they should also want to live in tranquility in this world?’”

Why indeed is Yaakov’s request not fulfilled - after all the *passuk* says (*Tehillim* 145 19): “*Retzon yerei’av ya’aseh*, He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him”?

Harav Avraham Dov of Avritsch, the **Bas Ayin**, explained that indeed, Yaakov’s request was accepted. Because unlike the simple meaning, Yaakov did not seek to dwell in peace in his place, but rather was referring with his request to the *galus* of Mitzrayim that was decreed for him. He asked that his descent into exile should not be difficult and distressful, the way exiles usually go against their will; rather, he asked that it should be calm and peaceful (see *Shabbos* 89b). Indeed, HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepted this request by “*kafatz alav rogzo shel Yosef*,” that things transpired until Yosef reached the status of viceroy in Egypt, and that’s how his father descended to that place with great honor.

The **Bas Ayin** then explained that in light of this explanation, the words of *Rashi* should be

read as follows: “HaKadosh Baruch Hu said: it is not enough for the *tzaddikim* [to have] what is prepared for them in Olam Haba!”, “but” I have to continue to accept their *tefillos* “that they seek to dwell in peace [also] in this world.”

Bas Ayin

Yaakov and Yosef Davened in the Bais Hamikdash

”וימצאנו איש והנה תעה בשדה וישאלהו האיש לאמר מה תבקש” (לז טו)

For what purpose did Hashem orchestrate matters that Yosef should lose his way when trying to find his brothers?

Harav Yehonosan Eibshitz explained:

Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 95b) that when Yaakov departed from Eretz Yisrael to Charan, the way was shortened for him so that he could daven at the Makom HaMikdash. With regard to Yosef, his son, we can also explain that when Yosef was about to leave Eretz Yisrael to descend to Egypt, HaKadosh Baruch Hu made him err on the way, so that he should pass “*basadeh*,” in the field – in the place of the Mikdash, and should daven there. As *Chazal* say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 22 7): “*Ein sadeh ela Bais Hamikdash*.”

Likewise, similar to Yaakov, who saw angels at the Makom HaMikdash, as it says (ibid 28:12): “And he dreamed and there was a ladder placed on the ground, and its head reached the sky, and the Malachei Elokim were ascending and descending on it,” so, too Yosef – when he came to the site of the Mikdash he met an angel, and as *Rashi* explains here: “And a man found him – this is the Angel Gavriel.”

Tiferes Yehonasan

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

At the Highest Levels

This world is one of *hester*, of hiddenness and concealment. We do not know the real value of things; small things seem significant and important, while unfortunately, very lofty matters are usually perceived as trivial.

Chazal teach this to us in a piercing manner, with the explanation (*Brachos* 6b) of the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (12:9): “*Kerum zulus livnei adam*,” as follows: כרם – are the “things that are at the highest levels in the world,” and nevertheless they are לזות אדם – “people are lax about them.” *Rashi* there brings an example of this: “Like *tefillah*.”

Tefillah is the direct connection between a person and his Creator. It is inestimably effective, and yet, people do not recognize the value, and have a natural tendency to be lax about it.

I will add that the definition of “דברים” [*dibburim*] “that are at the highest level of the world” is especially applicable to the mitzvah of answering amen, which is one of the central components of *tefillah*. As we know, every amen creates an Angel that joins the ranks of the Angels On High, of which it says in the *tefillah* of *Yotzer Ohr*: “*V’asher mesharsav omdim berum olam*,” and yet, “people are lax about it!”

It is clear to me that if people would recognize the value of answering amen, and would understand the virtues, and were aware of the tremendous reward guaranteed to those who answer amen with *kavanah*, they would not forego even one amen!

Through amen, a person can build a tremendous army of angels that will advocate for him “*berum olam*” for eternity. All that he needs to do is take advantage of the opportunity that is given to him each morning in shul to answer amen after the *brachos* of the *mispallelim*.

I was happy to learn that I merited with my words to convey the same message as the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Aharon Leib Steinman, *zt”l*, whose fifth *yahrtzeit* falls this Sunday, 24 Kislev. He is the one who encouraged and supported the Bney Emunim revolution from the day it was founded. He wrote (in his approbation to *sefer Kesser Meluchah*): “It is a great thing to strengthen this lofty matter of answering amen **which is also one of the things that are at the highest levels of the world and people are lax about them due to a lack of knowledge of the prohibition and the tremendous reward** for those who are strong about it.”

How fitting is it that these words perfectly describe the one who said them, because the Rosh Yeshivah was known for being very scrupulous about answering amen in general, and in particular after *Birchos Hashachar*.

Let us follow his ways, and internalize how lofty amen is, and if we do so, we will certainly pursue every amen that we can, the way one pursues a valuable treasure.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

A Lofty Tefillah at the Chanukah Candles

In Nissan 5773, the young *avreich* Rav Uriah Stein, *zt"l*, son of *ybl"c* Harav Menachem Stein, the *mezakeh harabbim*, passed away. Reb Uriah had suffered the worst of illnesses for six long years.

Rav Uriah was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* in his lifetime. Throughout the years of his illness, despite his suffering, his smile never left his face. Even after he became blind, his *joie-de-vivre* did not leave him. He used every drop of energy that he had to disseminate *emunah* in the world, to strengthen those who were down, and to be *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* in public.

Rav Uriah left behind four young orphans, three sons and a daughter. At the beginning of the winter *zeman* of 5778, the rebbi of one of his sons called the boy's mother. He said he was sorry to have to report, but the son learning

Shlomo sat up in bed, and slowly began to replay the dream in his mind. The message that Uriah sought to convey was brief and clear: "Shlomo, my friend, know that I am suffering here. One of my children has been struggling to learn lately and this gives me no peace. Chanukah is coming. I would like to ask you to contact my mother, and tell her that during the eight days of Chanukah, the gates of Heaven are open for *tefillah*, especially for the *chinuch* of the children. I am asking that during *hadlakas neiros*, which is a special time for *tefillah*, she should stand in front of the lights and daven for this son of mine to regain his interest in learning and to be able to succeed in learning."

"What a strange dream," the friend thought after he recovered somewhat. But then he reassured himself: "It's just a dream. Four and a half years have passed since Uriah departed this world... It also doesn't make sense that he would choose me to convey this message; why could he not give it directly to his parents?!"

The friend chose to ignore the dream, but the father of the child did not desist... Two days later, he appeared again in a dream to the same friend.

This time, as well, the friend waved the dream off: "I must have been thinking a lot about the last dream,

and that's why I keep thinking about it..." he told himself

It was the night of 24 Kislev. Less than twenty-four hours remained to the first light of Chanukah. Shlomo awoke again suddenly; Uriah had appeared in his dream a third time.

His words were similar to the previous times, but this time, he expressed them with more firmness, noting how hard it was for him to descend from Gan Eden to this world for the third time to convey his message. He also explained to Shlomo the reason why he had not gone directly to his parents. He did not want to alarm them or cause them any angst.

Shlomo looked at his friend who appeared to him in a dream with both eyes looking whole. He remembered how, towards the beginning of his illness, the doctors had extracted one of Uriah's eyes because of the disease that had struck them. He could not contain his wonder: "Where is the patch that

covered your damaged eye?" he asked.

"Don't you realize that the body in this world is only a cover for the real body?" Uriah asked back, no less surprised. "In Olam Haba, a person is in his spiritual body, and his physical body, which suffered so much, is completely healthy," he explained.

Now Shlomo had no doubt that indeed, this was a real dream.

Feeling driven now to convey the message as Uriah had asked, he could not fall asleep again, and used the hours that remained until dawn to recite *Tehillim* on behalf of his friend's soul. At five thirty in the morning, he could no longer contain himself, and he began to call Rav Menachem Stein's phone over and over, until Reb Menachem answered.

Shlomo introduced himself, and asked, "Rav Stein, do you have a grandson who has been struggling with his learning lately?" Rav Stein, who was still disoriented after being awakened, answered in the affirmative. He didn't understand where Shlomo was going with this conversation... Then Shlomo related all that had happened in the last few days, how Uriah kept appearing in a dream, and explained the *segulah* of davening on Chanukah, especially at the lighting of the lights, and especially for the *chinuch* of children. He related that Uriah had asked him to ask his mother to daven during the kindling of the Chanukah lights for the success of this child.

Rav Stein listened, and accepted the words. He was aware of what the *seforim* write about the great virtue of *tefillah* on Chanukah, and now he had received an 'affirmation' from Above.

On the first night of Chanukah, during *hadlakas neiros*, a Yiddishe mother offered up a heartfelt *tefillah* for her orphaned grandson. In the days after, she kept davening for this precious child to once again be drawn to Torah. And indeed, the *yeshuah* was not long in coming.

At the beginning of Teves, the child went back to *cheder* with renewed interest and energy, and from that point on, he began to make great progress in his learning, to the joy of his mother and grandparents, and certainly to the joy of his distinguished father, resting in Gan Eden.

Heard from Harav Menachem Stein, shlita



Rav Uriah Stein, *zt"l*

in his class had recently experienced a drastic decline in his learning. He wanted to work together with the mother to try and restore the boy's drive to learn.

In the coming days, the boy's grandparents were brought into the picture. They tried this way and that, but regretfully – nothing was effective. The boy continued to decline, and things reached a point where he wasn't even interested in going to *cheder*. It was clear that he was struggling, but there didn't seem to be anything for them to do to help him.

Some time later, on night in Kislev 5778, Reb Shlomo, a close friend of Reb Uriah who had been very dedicated to him during his illness, suddenly awoke from his sleep. He got up and rubbed his eyes in disbelief, because the dream had been so real. Four and a half years after the tragic passing, he had seen his good friend Uriah in a dream, and he had spoken to Reb Shlomo.

Answering Amen to the Brachah of a Fool

We do not answer amen to a *brachah* made by a *shoteh*, a fool, or someone who is deaf-mute, because they are not obligated in *mitzvos*. But someone who is only deaf and not mute is obligated in *mitzvos* and we are obligated to answer amen to his *brachos*. Likewise, if a deaf-mute from birth was taught to speak – we do answer amen to his *brachah*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Pri Migadim* wrote (124 *Eshel Avraham* 14): “It seems is certain that we do not answer amen to the *brachah* of a deaf person and a fool, because they are not obligated in *mitzvos* at all, even not *d’Rabbanan*.” The *Mishnah Berurah* wrote regarding this (ibid 47): “...that a deaf person who speaks and does not hear is certainly obligated in *mitzvos*.” It appears that the *Mishnah Berurah* understood that the *Pri Migadim* is talking about a deaf person who speaks, because if he does not speak – he does not make *brachos*, and therefore, there is no reason to discuss answering amen after him. And because a deaf person who speaks is a thinking person and is obligated in *mitzvos*, then we answer amen after him. But *Shu”t Shevet Halevi* (Vol. X, 45) wrote that it is possible to explain that the intention of the *Pri Migadim* is the deaf person who does not hear or speak, “who murmurs with his lips a *brachah* of sorts,” and notes that we should not answer amen to this *brachah*. See *Kuntress Hilchos Kibbud Av V’eim* by Harav Yitzchak Silberstein (p. 324, printed at the end of *sefer Avnei Zikaron*, Bnei Brak 5760) that a if fool understands what he is saying, then one may answer amen after his *brachah*.

The *Shu”t Shevet Halevi* (ibid) also wrote that because there are Acharonim who think that a deaf-mute from birth who was taught to speak does not have the same *halachah* as a *shoteh*, then out of the *safek*, one may answer amen to his *brachos*. See also *Leket Hakemach Hachadash* (124 26) who wrote that if a deaf-mute was taught in a special institution and he puts on *tefillin* and davens, then it seems that we answer amen to his *brachos*.

Answering Amento a Brachah said in One’s Sleep

One who hears his friend making a *brachah* while sleeping should not answer amen.

Sources and Explanations

In *Shu”t Lev Chaim*, Harav Chaim Palagi (Vol. III, 126) wrote that someone who recites the *brachah* of *Sefiras Ha’omer* in his sleep, and counts properly, is not *yotzei* his obligation. As soon as he wakes up he must make the *brachah* and count again, because someone who is sleeping is exempt from *mitzvos*. In light of this, the *Shu”t Pri Hasadeh* wrote (Vol. III, 91) that one who hears the *brachah* of a sleeping person should not answer amen, because the *brachah* of a sleeping person doesn’t have the *din* of a *brachah* at all.

The Halachah of Someone Who Is in a Hurry

One who sees a person making a *brachah*

that he is not obligated to listen, and he is in a hurry to be on his way, may leave, and does not have to wait until the person finishes the *brachah* so that he can answer amen after him.

Sources and Explanations

The *Leket Hakemach Hachadash* (124 19) brings this in the name of *Eshel Avraham*. On this subject it should be noted that the *Shu”t Chasam Sofer* wrote (Vol. I, *Orach Chaim* 159) that there are those who are of the opinion that the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 53b) “*Gadol ha’oneh yoser min hamevarech*,” were said only for one who answers amen after the *brachah* that he is not obligated to hear.”

Answering Amen After the Brachos in Tefillah

The *tzibbur* should hasten to finish the *brachah* said in *tefillah* before the *chazzan* does, so that they can answer amen after him. This needs to be done with *Birchas Hamazon* said with a *zimun* as well, in order to be able to answer amen to the *brachah* of the *mezamen*. But some hold that there is no obligation to do this.

Sources and Explanations

The *Shu”t HaRosh* (*Klal* 4, 19, cited in *Tur Orach Chaim* 59) wrote regarding the *Brachos* of *Krias Shema*: “And when I reach the end of the *brachah*, I hurry to finish my *brachah* before the *chazzan* finishes his, and I have in mind to answer amen after the *brachah* of the *chazzan*.” The *Rema* brought this *halachah* both regarding the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* (59 7) and regarding *Birchas Hamazon* (183 7). The *Mishnah Berurah* (619 3) wrote to be strict about this *halachah* regarding the *brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* said at the beginning of *Yom Kippur*.

But the *Bais Yosef* (ibid) proved from the words of the *Rama”h* that there is no obligation to hurry to finish the *brachah* before the *shaliach tzibbur* in order to answer amen after him. The *Biur Halachah* (ibid) wrote that it is possible that the words of the *Rosh* were said only at their time, when the *minhag* was to be *yotzei* with *brachah* of *Krias Shema* by hearing it from the *shaliach tzibbur*. From his words it seems that his is of the opinion that today, when we are not *yotzei* from the *brachos* of the *chazzan*, there is no obligation to hurry and finish the *brachah* before the *chazzan*.

Rav Shaul Brach of Kaschau used to warn that only the *sha”tz* should finish the *brachos* in the *tefillah* out loud, and not the rest of the *mispallelim*, because it happens that there are *mispallelim* that are up to a place where they are not allowed to stop to answer amen, and they may make a mistake and answer amen not according to *halachah* (*Shaul Bechir Hashem*, p. 189).

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

Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen – The Foundation of Emunah

Emunah Out of Understanding

The **Maharal** (*Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Ha'avodah* Chapter 11) explains that because the *ikar* of answering amen is the declaration of *emunah* in the words of the *mevarech*, therefore, it needs to be said with *kavanah* and understanding. He writes:

“You need to understand the meaning of the word amen, and the difference between one who makes a *brachah* and one who answers amen. The one who answers amen has to understand that he is declaring that he believes [in the words that the *mevarech* said]. And something that lacks understanding is not called *emunah*, because *emunah* is in the heart. That is in contrast to the *mevarech*, who, ideally should have *kavanah* of the heart, but if he makes a *brachah* without *kavanah* he was *yotzei*. But if one answers amen without *kavanah*, it is not an amen at all.”

A Test of the Nature of the Emunah

In his introduction to *sefer Shomer Amenim* [authored by Rav Ephraim Zalman Heilperin, later the founder of the National Center for Family Purity], the Mashgiach **Harav Eliyahu Lopian** writes: Answering amen is a test of the *emunah* of a person. Answering amen does not require sacrifice or special effort; a person must just listen to the *brachah* or *Kaddish* and answer amen according to *halachah*. Therefore, every person who has *emunah* in his heart should be strict about answering amen.

The *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:20): “*Banim lo eimun bam*” is explained in the *Sifri* (*Piska* 320) in two ways: 1. “*Banim atem*, you are children that do not have *emunah*.” 2. “Do not read it ‘*lo eimun bam*,’ but rather ‘*lo amen bam*’ – that they didn’t want to answer amen after the *Nevi'im* when the *Nevi'im* blessed them.” Based on this we can explain that these two explanations are connected one to the other; refraining from answering amen despite the fact that it is a *mitzvah* that requires little effort, indicates a person that does not have *emunah*. (*Shomer Amenim* [New York 5713] p. 42).

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

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

Baruch Hashem, we have merited to be strict about reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and about answering amen in general. Of course, I became stronger in this, as many others did, fueled by the enthusiasm for this that you have kindled in the world. I remember that right at the beginning, I was abashed to go over to others and ask them even if it was someone I knew, or a friend, to answer amen to my *brachos*. Today, I do this naturally. Apparently, because of the greatness of the *mitzvah*, the *yetzer hara* makes it harder to fulfill it properly.

In *Krias HaTorah* of *Parashas Vayeitzei*, I had an idea that alludes to the power of answering amen. The *passuk* says about Yaakov Avinu (*Bereishis* 30:43): “The man became tremendously prosperous. He had many flocks, female slaves and male slaves, camels and donkeys.” “ויפרץ האיש מאוד מאוד מאוד” – the acronym of these words is numerically equivalent to that of אמן. Furthermore, we can add that this *passuk* even alludes to your tremendous work, as, *baruch Hashem*, you have been able to *poretz* with your idea *me'od me'od*, very very much!

May you merit to continue this unbelievable revolution among all the *bney emunim* in Eretz Yisrael and around the world, and may you be blessed with all the *brachos* of amen.

Y. F., Yerushalayim

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



Harav Chaim Moshe Yehuda Schneider, zt"l

Harav Chaim Moshe Yehuda Schneider
Rosh Yeshivas Toras Emes
25 Kislev 5715

Harav Chaim Moshe Yehuda Schneider was born in 5645 in the town of Devenishki, near Lida, to his father, Rav Eliyahu. In his youth, he traveled to Vilna to learn in the yeshivah of the Cheshek Shlomo. Later, he became close to the Chofetz Chaim, and considered

himself a *talmid* of the sage.

After his marriage, he established a yeshivah in Memel, Germany, which remained open until the outbreak of World War One. When the war ended, he settled in Frankfurt, and opened Yeshivas Toras Emes, which was active until World War II. In 1939, he emigrated to London, where he reestablished his yeshivah and headed it.

He was known for his *tefillas* with great emotion and fervor. His *talmidim* related that when he answered amen, it thundered to the Heavens. Alongside his uncompromising investment in Torah, he also made a great effort to inculcate his *talmidim* with *avodas halev* - davening.

In his final years, he suffered greatly, but continued to carry the spiritual and financial burden of the yeshivah. He passed away on 25 Kislev 5715.

Make a Brachah Aloud

He used to often repeat to the students of the yeshivah the words of the *Sefer Chassidim* (254) that one should recite each *brachah* aloud, because one who makes a *brachah* quietly robs others of the *mitzvah* of answering amen. As a result, he even instituted that when they came to eat, the *talmidim* of the yeshivah should recite *Al Netilas Yadayim* and *Hamotzi* out loud. He oversaw that this *takanah* was upheld, until it became deeply rooted in the *talmidim* (*Sefer Zikaron* in honor of Rav Schneider [Bnei Brak 5725] p. 127)

Mashgiach During Tefillah

He would sit in the middle of the *beis medrash* of the yeshivah and not on the *Mizrach*, as most *roshei yeshivah* sat. He attributed this practice to his desire to oversee the *talmidim* even during davening, and he expounded: Those who are lax, I make sure that they do not come late to davening; those who are quick, that they shouldn't open a *Gemara* during *Chazaras Hasha"tz*, and I also make sure that all the *talmidim* answer amen aloud... (ibid p. 136)

Answering Amen Brings Brachah

He would say: When a person loses out on answering amen, he prevents the *brachah* from being bestowed on his home (*Aish Kodesh* p. 34).