

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder
and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Tefillah with Ambiguous Words

”ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרו לַאֲדֹנָי
לַעֲשׂוֹ כֹּה אָמַר עַבְדְּךָ יַעֲקֹב עִם לְבֹן
גִרְתִּי וְאַחֵר עַד עֵתָהּ” (לב ה)

Harav Elimelech of Lizensk explained Yaakov's instructions to the angels as follows:

When a *tzaddik* wants to prevent the *mekatregim*, the hostile elements from stopping his *tefillah* from being accepted, he davens in a way that his *tefillah* can be interpreted as being said to the one who he is speaking to. We find that Nechemiah said (*Nechemiah* 2:4-5, see *Maharsha Rosh Hashanah* 3b): “*V’espallel el Elokei HaShamayim; v’omar lamelech.*” This is what Yaakov instructed the angels: “This is what you should say to my master” – and when you say this, have in mind to advocate for me to the Master of the World, but in order to prevent the *mekatregim* from withholding my *tefillah*, word your statements in a way that they should sound directed to “Eisav.”

Noam Elimelech

Tefillah With Chessed, Tefillah With Din

”וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּצַר לוֹ וַיִּחַן
אֶת הָעַם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְאֵת הַצֹּאן וְאֵת
הַבְּקָר וְהַגְּמִלִים לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת” (לב ה)

The Gra explains that there are two ways to daven:

There is one who davens and makes requests, asking that they be a reward and recompense for his deeds and

his merits. When he does that, the *mekatregim* stand opposite him to prevent his *tefillah* from being accepted. They do this by mentioning all his drawbacks and demerits. This is the way Yaakov davened, and therefore it says: “And Yaakov was very afraid” – “שִׂמְאָ יִגְרוֹם הַחֲטָא” that perhaps his sins would prevent his *tefillos* from ascending. (*Brachos* 4a)

On the other hand, there is the *mispallel* who will benefit from Hashem due the *Middas Hechessed*, and not in reward for his actions and good deeds. As such, he does not have to be afraid that perhaps his sins will be mentioned by the *mekatregim*, because from the start, he asks that his requests be granted with *chessed* and not with *din*. This is how Avraham Avinu davened, and as the Torah testifies (*ibid* 15:6): “*Vehe’emin b’Hashem.*” He was confident in the *yeshuah* of Hashem. Why was he not worried about what his sins might do? Because “*Vayachsveha lo tzedakah*” – that his request was granted as a *chessed* and as charitable giving, not in reward for his actions.

This is what we say in *Nishmas*: “*Ad heinah azarunu rachamecha velo azavunu chasadecha*” – Hashem, because until now You only helped us because of “Your compassion”, and You have not abandoned us because of “Your *chessed*” therefore, we are guaranteed that You will continue to have mercy on us and help us, “and do not abandon us, Hashem Elokeinu, for eternity.”

Peirush HaGra, Mishlei 25:15

Shalom Aleichem Malachei Amen

Rashi explains on the *passuk* that begins this week's *parashah* “And Yaakov sent *malachim* ahead of him to Eisav his brother” that these angels were not human beings, but rather “*malachim mamash,*” actual angels.

Harav Meir of Premishlan, זצ”א, said that these angels are the angels generated by the *mitzvos* that Yaakov Avinu performed. We know that the *Mishnah* says (*Avos* 4:11) that “one who does one *mitzvah* acquires for himself one advocate, and one who does an *aveirah* acquires for himself one prosecutor.” He added that these words are alluded to in the words of Rashi: “מלאכים ממש” – as the word *ממש* is an acronym for *מלאכים ממצוות שעשה* – angels from *mitzvos* that he did.

This is a good time to point out that although an angel is created from each *mitzvah*, the *mitzvah* of *amen* is still special in this sense. For the wider Bney Emunim family, the tens of thousands of people who are partners to the tremendous awakening regarding *amen*, it is not news that the word *amen* is numerically equivalent to the word *מאלך*, and if so, it is clear that there is a reason for this. I would like to share with you an understanding that I had, which may underscore this. About a month ago, on Hoshana Rabbah, I had the privilege of taking part in the *pidyon haben* of my great grandson, whose first name is Gavriel. In remarks that I delivered at the *simchah*, I told the guests that in our family, which is so strict about answering *amen*, it is fitting that the baby was given the name of a *malach*, Gavriel.

I then added that looking deeper into the words of *Chazal*, one can extrapolate that the angels that are generated by the *mitzvah* of *amen* are different than those created by other *mitzvos*. At the end of *Maseches Nazir* (66b), *Chazal* compared one who answers *amen* to the “heroes that descend and win the war,” meaning that as a result of answering *amen*, the angels that are created by this *mitzvah* are stronger, and they win over the hostile elements seeking to do bad to a person (see *Maharsha* *ibid*).

I thought to explain that the angels that Yaakov sent to Eisav were the kind that were created from answering *amen*, and because they were the “victorious heroes”, Yaakov trusted that they would surely carry out their mission faithfully.

Proof of this can be brought from the words of the *Megaleh Amukos* in this *parashah*, who explained on the *passuk* (32:12): “*Hatzileini na miyad achi miyad Eisav*” – the words *אחי מידי* are an acronym for *אמן* as Yaakov asked that in the merit of answering *amen*, he should be saved from Eisav.

Let us be strict to answer *amen* properly as much as possible, in quantity and with *kavanah*, and this way we will surely merit to have tens of thousands of angels of *amen* – the victorious heroes – protect us in everything that we do.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

The Tefillah That Breached Prison Walls

‘Walls, walls, walls and more walls... how much time can we spend looking...’ Tuvia hummed a bitter ditty to himself as he lay on his hard, narrow cot. The years that he had spent in the confines of a New York prison, within its grey, cement walls, had silenced his voice and dried up his well of tears.

Tuvia had never meant to do anything that would get him locked up. A childish desire to become wealthy, quickly and easily, led him to be tempted into a dubious partnership, in the hope of earning quick and easy money. For a short time, things flowed along smoothly, but the deceit of it all quickly came to light. His partner turned out to be a heartless swindler, and aside from leaving Tuvia with nothing, he even managed to get him into trouble with the authorities. The American authorities are notorious for being very strict about financial crimes.

He was sentenced to fourteen years in



Riker's Island prison in New York.

prison, with no option to appeal.

In America, there is a stark difference between a prison and a hotel... The prisons there do their jobs well – and hence ensure that the inmates will do anything possible after their release to avoid ever having to go back...

The years Tuvia spent in prison were the hardest of his life. Each and every moment of each and every day were a challenge that is difficult to describe, both spiritually and physically. One of the things that gave him some strength was the Thursday night *hisva'adus*. Each Thursday night, all the Jews in the prison would gather and sing Shabbos *zemiros*. The words of the *zemiros* would infuse them with some strength. They especially draw encouragement from the words of *Kah Echsof Noam Shabbos*, composed by Harav Aharon Hagadol of Karlin.

At the beginning of Nissan 2017, the non-Jewish prisoners in the facility began to riot. They raged and broke and destroyed everything in their path. Naturally, Tuvia's Jewish appearance evinced an

outburst of hatred, and they harassed him brutally. Frightened, Tuvia hurried to the warden in charge and asked for protection. Having no choice, they transferred him to a narrow, solitary cell, for his personal safety.

Now, he was worse off than before. In this cell, his only friends were the grey cement walls that closed in on him from every direction. The solitude was too hard to bear. Tuvia pleaded over and over that they find him a different solution, and the prison management promised to consider his request.

On Erev Pesach, the door to his cell opened, and the warden told him to take his possessions and accompany him. When Tuvia asked, the warden explained that it was decided to move him to a different prison in Philadelphia, where he would be safe. Tuvia's heart filled with joy; he was sure that the conditions in the new prison would be an improvement, and that he would be able to celebrate Seder night with a certain measure of freedom.

But his hopes were quickly dashed. The chief warden of the Philadelphia prison, who saw in the prison listings that Tuvia had been in a solitary confinement cell in the previous facility, didn't bother to find out why, and immediately instructed that he be placed in an identical cell in the new place. Tuvia cried and pleaded, and tried to explain the real reason he had been in solitary, and that

this whole transfer was so that he should be able to live in regular cell conditions. But no one listened to him; the door to his cell was slammed shut.

Tuvia spent the Seder nights feeling terrible; the words 'Festival of Freedom' seemed light years away from him. He didn't have a *Haggadah* and he said whatever he remembered by heart.

Two days later, on the Friday night of Shabbos Chol Hamoed, after making *Kiddush*, and making a *brachah* on the *matzos*, Tuvia suddenly felt overwhelmed by an avalanche of yearning. He decided to channel his feelings into singing the Shabbos *zemiros*.

He began with *Kah Echsof Noam Shabbos*, and as he said the words, his voice grew choked. When he reached the third stanza, with the longing request of "*Veyihyu Rachamecha misgollelim...*" his dam of tears broke. The pain, frustration, loneliness, distress, all flowed out in his sobbing. With the bit of strength he had left, he sang these words over and over again, until exhausted, he fell asleep.

In his sleep, he saw an image that he will never forget. It was an old man with a shining countenance and a long white beard. He gazed at Tuvia with compassionate eyes and said, "My dear one, your voice has been heard, and your cries have been accepted, and you will be released soon." Then he added, "Today is my *yahrtzeit*, and I will daven for you that you should be released quickly."

Tuvia awoke bathed in sweat, with his heart pounding; he discovered that he was still in the middle of his '*seudah*'. Infused with a fresh rush of emotion, he continued to hum the moving words: "*Veyihyu Rachamecha misgollelim al am kodshecha*" and then fell asleep again. Once again, the same figure appeared to him, and urged him, "Stop crying, I have been sent from Above to inform you that you will be released soon."

Tuvia remembered the words of *Chazal* (*Brachos* 55b) that a "dream that repeats itself" is considered a meaningful dream, and he calmed down somewhat. He then fell asleep until morning.

The *yeshuah* was not long in coming. The next day, Tuvia was summoned to the chief warden's office, where he was informed that it had been decided to return him to the prison in New York. This time, Tuvia was placed in a regular, humane cell with full rights given to prisoners.

At the first opportunity, Tuvia hurried to call the *askan* who was involved with his case, and with bated breath asked which one of the *tzaddikim's yahrtzeit* was on 19 Nissan, which that year fell on Shabbos Chol Hamoed. The *askan*, who was stunned by the question, checked and replied that it was Rav Aharon Hagadol of Karlin, composer of *Kah Echsof*. Tuvia nearly fainted when he heard this; he could not help himself and began to sob on the phone.

Like Yosef, who was hurried out of the pit, so, too it was with Tuvia. The day after Acharon Shel Pesach, the door to his cell opened, and he was asked by the warden to take his possessions and accompany him to the office. There, he was told that he was being released. The work over years of various *askanim* that had not borne fruit suddenly led to a surprising legal development that translated into his immediate release.

There was no logical explanation other than the *zemer* of *tefillah* that he had offered from the depths of his heart on that unforgettable Friday night, a *zemer* that breached the walls of the prison.

This story was related by Rabbi Chaim Hersh Mendlowitz of Kiryas Joel in New York, who heard it from the person it happened to. It was publicized in the Az Nidberu kuntress – Shevat
 :.(5778, p. 103

Answering Amen after the Brachah of a Gentile

1. One should not answer amen on a brachah heard from an oved kochavim or from a Kuti, unless he heard the entire brachah, from beginning to end. But some say that one should not answer amen at all, even if he heard the entire brachah.

Sources and Explanations

In *Maseches Brachos* (51b) we learn: “One does not answer a brachah that a Kuti makes, until he hears the entire brachah.” This is because there were Kutim served *avodah zarah* in the form of a dove that was on Har Gerizim (see *Chulin* 6a), and therefore, every Kuti was suspected of perhaps having in mind to make the brachah to the *avodah zarah*. However, when one hears the entire brachah from the Kuti, we answer amen, because the fact that he says the entire nusach proves that his kavanah is to Hashem and not to *avodah zarah* (*Rashi* ibid ad loc. *onin*; *Rabbeinu Yona*, *Brachos* 40a *Midapei HaRif*). Regarding answering amen after a non-Jew, the *Breisa* in the *Yerushalmi* (*Brachos* 8 8) says: “Tanna, when a non-Jew blesses Hashem, we answer amen after him.” Simply, the *Breisa* comes to teach us that the halachah of a non-Jew is more lenient than that of a Kuti, and one should answer amen after the brachah of a non-Jew even if he does not hear the entire brachah from his mouth, because there is no way for a non-Jew to have kavanah to *avodah zarah* while he is mentioning the Name of Hashem.

As such, the *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 215) rules that after the brachah of a Kuti we answer amen only upon hearing the entire brachah, but after the brachah of a non-Jew we answer amen even if we did not hear the entire brachah (based on *Bais Yosef* ibid. And see there other opinions regarding the explanation on the *Yerushalmi*.) But the *Rambam* (*Brachos* 1 13) does not differ between a gentile and a Kuti, and rules that one does not answer amen after either one. The *Kesef Mishneh* (ibid) brings two ways to explain the view of the *Rambam*: First, he explained that according to the *Rambam*, the law of the gentile is the same as of the Kuti, and one should not answer amen after their brachah unless one hears the entire brachah, in which case he may answer amen. But in the end he concludes that because the *Rambam* did not allow to answer amen even when hearing the entire brachah, one can derive that the *Rambam* holds that even when hearing the entire brachah, one should not answer amen after the brachah of both a gentile and a Kuti. The *Shulchan Aruch* (215 2) rules according to this conclusion in the *Kesef Mishneh* that one should not answer amen at all, whether from a gentile or a Kuti, and even when hearing the whole brachah (ibid). However, the *Rema* (ibid) holds that after the brachah of either, one should answer amen if he heard the entire brachah, because he follows the first *mehalech* of the *Kesef Mishneh* on the words of the *Rambam* (*Magen Avraham* ibid 3; *Pri Migadim Eshel Avraham* ibid; *Shulchan Aruch Harav* ibid 2). According to the *Taz* (ibid 3) the *Rema* differed with the *Shulchan Aruch* only with regard to the brachah of the gentile, but with regard to the brachah of the Kuti he also concedes that one should not answer amen at all, even when hearing the entire brachah (and see *Mishnah Berurah* ibid, 10 and 12).

The *Taz* further wrote (ibid, cited by the *Mishnah Berurah* ibid 12) that answering amen after the brachah of a gentile is not an obligation, it is optional.

2. When an idol worshipper wishes a blessing upon a Jew, one should say amen to his blessing. But if he blesses with the Name of G-d, one should not answer amen, unless he explicitly states that he is referring to Hashem, the G-d of Israel.

Sources and Explanations

In the *Yerushalmi Brachos* (8 8) it states: “Rabi Tanchum says: If a non Jew blesses you – answer amen to him, as it says (*Devarim* 7:14): ‘Baruch tihyeh mikol ha’amim, you should be blessed by all the nations.’” But the *sefer Chessed L’Alafim* (by the Pele Yoetz 215 4)

wrote that only when the gentile blesses without mentioning the Name should he answer amen. But if he mentions the Name of G-d in his blessing, one should not answer amen, lest his intention is the god of *avodah zarah*. The *Sefer Chassidim* (427) wrote: “If the non-Jew says *elokeinu* or *adoneinu* [our god or our master] should help you, or save you, or be with you, the Jew should not answer amen, because the reference is to his god. But if he says ‘Your G-d, or Your Master should save you, then answer amen to him.’”

3. When an Ishmaelite makes a brachah, one can answer amen if he heard the entire brachah.

Sources and Explanations

This was written by MohaRika”sh in his comments on the *Shulchan Aruch* in *sefer Erech Lechem* (*Orach Chaim* 215 2, cited in *Kaf Hachaim* ibid 15) on the words of the *Rambam* (*Ma’achalos Asuros* 11 7) that the Ishmaelites are not idol worshippers.

Answering Amen After the Brachos of an Apikoros

1. One who hears a brachah from a Jew who is heretic to Hashem and Torah, should not answer amen even if he hears the entire brachah.

Sources and Explanations

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 215 2) rules that one should not answer amen after the brachah of an *apikoros*, and the reason is explained by the *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 10) that the *apikoros* does not have in mind *Shamayim*, and rather is referring to *avodah zarah*. The words of the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (ibid 2) also imply that the *apikoros* referring to here is “the type who cleaves to *avodah zarah* – as when he mentions god’s name he is referring to *avodah zarah*” [and see *Biur HaGra* ibid that an *apikoros* is like a Kuti, and that one should answer amen after him, if he hears the entire brachah from him].

But the *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. II, 50, and see also *Orach Chaim* Vol. III 21) wrote that one should not answer amen even after the brachah of an *apikoros* who has rebelled against Hashem even if he does not believe in *avodah zarah* [like those who are called ‘Reform’ or ‘Conservative’]. He based this ruling on the words of the *Rambam* (*Yesodei HaTorah* 6 8) that “an *apikoros* who is a Jew who writes a *sefer Torah*, that *sefer* is burned with the mentions of the Name in it, because he does not believe in the holiness of Hashem, and did not write it for the sake of His Name. Rather, he thinks that it is like all other things. And because of this view, the Name has not been sanctified.” From his words we learn that when the heretic does not believe in the holiness of Hashem, there is no significance to him mentioning the Name of Hashem in his brachah, and it is like a brachah without *Shem* and *Malchus*, which does not have the *din* of a brachah and to which we do not answer amen.

2. One should answer amen to a brachah made by a Jew who does not observe Torah and mitzvos.

Sources and Explanations

The *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. III 21) explained that because a Jew who does not observe Torah and *mitzvos* believes in Hashem, and the reason he transgresses *mitzvos* is because of his personal desires [unlike an *apikoros* who transgresses Torah to anger Hashem], therefore, one should answer amen to his brachos. Regarding answering the brachah of a sinner who does not believe in the words of *Chazal*, the *Biur Halachah* wrote (ibid) that one should answer amen to their brachah only upon hearing it in its entirety.

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

Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen – The Foundation of Emunah

The Three Letters Correspond to the Three Principles

Harav Moshe Tereschansky, the Rav of Kremenchug, Ukraine, explained:

The *Sefer Ha'ikrim* (*Ma'amar Rishon* Ch. 4) brings the three principles of religion that serve as the basis for the obligation of a person to fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Torah: 1. *Metzius Hashem* 2. *Torah Min Hashamayim* 3. *Sechar v'onesh*, reward and punishment.

The word amen is the declaration of *emunah* in these three principles. *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 119b) that the three letters refer to the three words **א-מ-ן** – 'Kel' is the declaration of *emunah* in the *Metzius* of Hashem; *Melech* is the declaration of the leadership of His Kingship with giving His Nation the laws; and *Ne'eman* is the declaration that He is faithful to pay a reward to those who uphold His *mitzvos*, and to punish those who transgress them.

Upon a closer look, we see that the *brachos* that are answered by amen can also be categorized into three groups of *brachos* that refer to each of these three principles: 1. *Birchos Hanehenin*, in which we thank and praise Hashem for the physical pleasures that we have. These *brachos* manifest the *emunah* in the *Metzius Hashem*, and our recognition that He runs the world with *Hashgachah pratis*. 2. *Birchos Hamitzvos*, which we make before performing *mitzvos* (including *Birchos HaTorah*), which indicate our *emunah* in *Torah Min Hashamayim*. 3. *Birchos Hoda'ah*, which include the *brachos* in which we thank for all the good and the bad, such as *Hatov Vehameitiv* and *Dayan Ha'emes*, which indicate our faith in reward and punishment (*Zichron Moshe* p. 77).[\]

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*, founded by the distinguished Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein,

I would like to comment regarding something that was discussed in your pamphlet of *Parashas Noach* 5783, in the *Derech Emunim* section. In the *halachah* relating to answering amen on *Birchas Hagomel*, you conveyed the pronunciation of the words that the listeners reply to this *brachah* as "*Mi Shegemalcha kol tov Hu yigmalcha kol tov selah.*" But the *sefer Kedushas Tzion* (Vol. II, *Inyanei Tefillah*, p. 80) wrote that at the end of this wish, one should say "*Kol tuv selah.*" This is because "*tov*" is an overt good, while "*tuv*" means a hidden benefit, as the *Shelah HaKadosh* wrote in *Parashas V'eschanan*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu performs hidden miracles for us at every minute, and they are disguised as nature, as *Chazal* say (*Niddah* 31a): "Even the one who benefits from the miracle does not recognize his miracle." When does he recognize the miracle? When a person encounters a trouble, *chalilah*, and Hashem saves him. That is why we say to a person who recites *Hagomel*, and clearly saw the miracles of Hashem: "*Mi shegemalcha kol tov,*" – with an open miracle "*Hu yigmalcha kol tuv selah.*" From here on in you should not have any distress, and all the miracles that Hashem should do with this person should be hidden ones.

Based on this we can explain what we say at the end of *Birchas Hamazon*, "*Verachamim vechaim veshalom vechol tov umikol tuv l'olam al yechasreinu.*" When we encounter a trouble, we ask Hashem to treat us with "*rachamim vechaim veshalom vechol tov*" – and that we should see an open miracle, but from now on, our request is that we should not encounter troubles and the miracles that Hashem performs for us should be hidden ones – *umikol tuv l'olam al yechasreinu.*"

With great respect,

Meir Yitzchak Horowitz

Rav D'Khal Meishiv K'Halachah Linsk
Ra'm Yeshivas Beis Meir, Brooklyn, New York

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



Yerushalmi Maggid Rav
Shalom Schwadron, zt"l.

The Maggid Harav Shalom Schwadron, zt"l

22 Kislev 5758

The Yerushalmi Maggid Harav Shalom Hakohen Schwadron was born in Yerushalayim in 5672 to his father Rav Yitzchak Schwadron, the son of the Maharsham of Brezhan.

As a *bochur* he learned in Yeshivas Chevron, where he became very close to the Mashgiach Harav Leib Chasman, and as he later said: "I never missed a *shmuess* by Rav Leib" (*Kol Chotzev* p.

203). Rav Shalom even wrote down the *shmuessen* of the Mashgiach and published them under the title *Ohr Yahel*. He also enhanced the *sefer* so his grandfather the Maharsham of Brezhan.

He married the daughter of the *mekubal*, Rav Chaim Yehudah Leib Auerbach, Rosh Yeshivas Shaar Hashamayim, and settled in Shaarei Chessed neighborhood, next to his renowned brother-in-law Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, with whom he shared a very close bond.

Rav Shalom was known for his many *drashos* that he delivered in shuls and *yeshivos*, and especially in the *Zichron Moshe* shul in Yerushalayim. He was gifted with oratorical skills, and his heartfelt words penetrated the hearts of his listeners. Many flocked to hear him speak. Rav Shalom passed away on 22 Kislev 5758 and was laid to rest on Har Hazeisim.

Surprising Behavior

Rav Shalom related: My *rebbe* Harav Yehuda Leib Chasman once marveled at the level of *Yiras Shamayim* that one of his *talmidim* in Chevron had reached, and emphasized especially his conduct during *Birchos Hashachar*. He would stand each morning before davening next to the *bimah*, and would recite *Birchos Hashachar* with deep emotion, and the *talmidim* of the yeshivah stood around him and answered amen to his *brachos* (*Kol Chotzev*, p. 542)

Hineni Muchan Umezuman Lehallel...

Each morning, Rav Shalom would say *Birchos Hashachar* slowly and with *kavanah*. He had a unique practice when saying these *brachos*: Before each and every *brachah*, Rav Shalom took care to pause for a moment and said a special *nusach*. For example, before saying *Hanosein Lasechvi Binah*, he said, "*Hineni muchan umezuman lehallel Yotzri uBor'i bevirchas Hanosein Lasechvi Binah.*" Then he made the *brachah*. Then he would repeat the same words before the next *brachah*, followed by the *brachah*. He did this with each *brachah* (ibid p. 525).