

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

Parashas MIKEITZ | 5783 | Issue No. 463



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A *Yeshuah* from Above – In the Blink of an Eye

“וישלה פרעה ויקרא את יוסף וירצהו מן הבור ויגלה ויחלה שמלתיו ויבא אל פרעה” (מא יד)

Harav Ovadiah Seforno

explains that the Torah stresses the rapidity with which Yosef was released from the pit in which he was incarcerated and elevated to greatness, to teach us that this is the way of the “*yeshuah* of Hashem, which is done like in a second.” The *Seforno* continues that this is what the Redemption from Egypt was like as well, as it says (*Shemos* 12:39): “And they baked the dough that they had brought out of Egypt into matzah for it was not leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay.” And that is how the future *Geulah* will be as well, as it says (*Malachi* 3:1): “And suddenly, the Master Whom you seek will come to His Heichal.” This concept has already been mentioned by Rav Nissim Gaon, in his *sefer Chibbur Yafeh Me’hayeshuah* (Chapter 14), and it brings in this context the famous statement that “*Yeshuas Hashem k’heref ayin*,” the salvation of Hashem comes like the blink of an eye.

Harav Dovid Kviat, a *rosh yeshivah* of Mir in America, explained that the reason why the salvation of Hashem comes in the blink of an eye is because when a *yeshuah* happens quickly and by surprise, everyone recognizes that it is from Hashem. This is in contrast to a *yeshuah* that develops naturally, in the way of the world, where one can erroneously attribute it to the forces of nature.

Seforno; Sifsei Renanos Selichos for the second night; Sukkas Dovid 32

The Hand of The *Shevatim* Were Afraid Their *Tefillos* Would Not Be Accepted

“וא-ל-ש-ק-י יתן לכם רחמים לפני האישי ושלה לכם את אחיכם אחר ואת בנימין” (מג יד)

Rashi explains that Yaakov said to his children: Now that the money and the gift are in your hands, and your brother Binyamin is going down to Egypt with you “you lack for nothing except *tefillah*, so I pray for you ‘*VeKel Shakai yiten lachim rachamim...*’ Why did the *Shevatim* not daven for themselves, and even reached a point that they were lacking in *tefillah* and Yaakov had to daven for them?

Harav Avraham Yitzchak Shain, *Maggid Shiur* in Tiferes Yerushalayim, explained:

Previously (42:21) it is explained that the brothers attributed the reason for their troubles to the fact that they did not listen to the pleas of their brother to be spared. Therefore, when they themselves needed mercy, they were afraid that Hashem would treat them measure for measure, and would not hear their *tefillos*. That is why they preferred that their father pray for them.

Each person can learn from this that if he wants his *tefillos* to be heard Above when he needs help, he should to accustom himself to listening to the requests of others whenever they need help from him. If he does this, he will have what to say [to advocate for himself] when he comes to daven to Hashem for something he needs.

Birchas Ish

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

The Connection Between Chanukah and Answering Amen

We all know the lofty and age-old *piyut* of gratitude “*Ein K’Elokeinu*.” This piece is comprised of five stanzas, and each one has four praises. The first three stanzas that begin with “אין...מי...נודה” are an acronym for amen, while the stanzas following them begin with “ברוך...אתה...” (See *Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos* [Rav Y. Ben Yakar] Vol. I, p. 125).

I have always wondered why *Chazal* arranged such a special *piyut* in the order of the letters of amen. A number of years ago, I came across the commentary *Eitz Chaim* on the Siddur, authored by Mahar”i Tzalach, one of the sages of Yemen, which cites an ancient tradition that in the days of the Greek empire, the Greeks forbade the Jews from answering amen. Because *Chazal* did not want the laws of amen to be forgotten, they instituted that it be mentioned in this *tefillah* by way of *remez*.

The fact that the Greeks chose to target specifically the mitzvah of amen indicates how lofty it is. The Greeks wanted to “make them forget Your Torah, and transgress the laws of Your Will.” If so, it is easy to understand, because the Greeks knew that amen is the foundation of *emunah* and the basis of the connection between Am Yisrael and their Father in heaven. Through the power of amen, they are ready to give up their lives for the faith of their forbears, and that’s why the Greeks decreed it should be nullified. Everyone understands that when the root is damaged, when the foundation is not strong, the end result is inevitable, *chalilah*.

I thought to add that the fact that *Chazal* instituted to mention in this *piyut* the series of four praises to correspond to each one of the letters of ‘amen’ teaches us about the lofty significance of answering amen.

In the first letter of amen – the *aleph*, there is a firm declaration of *emunah*: *Ein k’Elokeinu! Ein k’Adoneinu!* And so forth. In the second letter – *mem*, we continue with the result of the *emunah* – the understanding that everything is from Hashem, and it is only to Him that we turn and pray: *Mi k’Elokeinu? Mi k’Adoneinu? Mi k’Malkeinu?* And so forth. The letter *nun* concludes with the obligation of constant gratitude to the One from Whom we receive everything: *Nodeh l’Elokeinu!* and so forth.

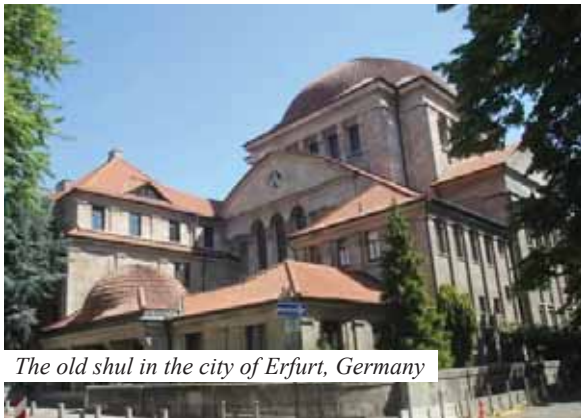
It is possible that this is also the reason that we customarily say this *piyut* at the end of davening, to arouse us to continue through the day looking for opportunities to answer amen – and as a triumph of the holiness of Am Yisrael over the impurity of the Greeks, which brought us to generations of “*lehodos ulehallel leShimcha hagadol*.”

Good Shabbos and Happy Chanukah
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Tefillah With a Sock Led to the Release

Spring 5676. Mordechai Gutman gazed at the wondrous scenery around him, listened to the silence of the nature, and allowed himself to inhale some clear air. After long months of endless combat, through a harsh and snowy winter, finally, the sun was peeking through the grey clouds. It reminded Mordechai and his friends of the existence of a sane world somewhere out there beyond the frontier, which allowed them to think a bit about the past, present and future.

It was at the height of World War One. Millions of people had already been killed in this ongoing, needless war. As a Jewish, observant soldier serving among gentile soldiers in the German Kaiser's army, Mordechai thought constantly about how he was fighting



The old shul in the city of Erfurt, Germany

a war that was really not his own.

During his service on the battlefield, he witnessed horrific scenes, but all these were compounded by the suffering and harassment he was subject to by his 'comrades' and commander, who sometimes treated him worse than the enemy soldiers that fell into their hands.

Just a few days earlier, he had seen Dovid, the other Jew serving in the brigade, with a black eye and a broken, bleeding nose. His crime? He had recited *Birchas Hamazon* and had not made the effort to conceal it from his fellow soldiers. Mordechai yearned for the moment he would be told of his discharge, and was ready to pay nearly any price for it.

Today seemed relatively nice. This morning, they had entered a small, pastoral village that they had captured from the French. The village as empty; its inhabitants had fled in fear

from the occupying forces and there was a heavy silence hanging over the homes. Mordechai was sent with other soldiers to inspect the homes and check if there were any enemy soldiers remaining there.

At the end of their mission, a small military base was established in the area, and that was where they were supposed to regroup until the next offense.

"Half an hour break!" the commander had announced. Many of the soldiers used the time for a short rest, but Mordechai decided to use his break to wander around the homes a bit, to breathe the fresh air, and to mull over his situation.

He sat down in the garden of one of the abandoned homes, and stretched a bit. Images of his loved ones flitted through his mind. He thought about his young wife, who knew nothing about his fate, and whether he was alive or dead, healthy or wounded. He thought about his baby son, who he had seen just once in his life, and about his parents, who were longing for his return. The memories flooded him and filled his heart with yearning.

He looked around and allowed his memories to flood his mind and fill his heart with longing. His gaze rested on the sun, setting over the mountains, and he remembered suddenly – it was almost *shkiah* and he hadn't davened *Minchah!*

Mordechai jumped up and went to the nearest house. He opened the door, allowing the rays of sun to shine in and light up the way for him. He entered the house cautiously, and just to be safe, he kept his hand on the rifle that was hanging over his shoulder. The coast was clear.

Mordechai stood right near one of the walls of the house and was about to start davening. Out of habit, he put his hand to his head, but to his surprise his head was bare; apparently, in a moment of distraction, his hat had fallen off.

Mordechai looked at his watch; he had just three minutes until his break was over, and as is known, the Germans

were very punctual. He looked around feverishly; the house was rather messy. It looked like its inhabitants had fled at the last minute, with no advance warning. Dirty dishes and remnants of lunch were on the table; an open book was tossed on the armchair and a light colored sweater was hanging over the back of a chair.

Mordechai didn't see anything that could have served as a head covering, and in desperation, suddenly had an idea. He bent down, pulled off one of his boots, and removed his sock. With no other alternative, it would serve as a head covering.

He stuck his foot back into his boot, and put the sock on his head, with the edges covering his ears. He smiled at the thought of how he must look. But he had no choice.

He rubbed his hands, turned to the wall and began to daven.

The *tefillah* filled him with strength; he felt himself drawing *chizuk* from the holy words. He davened for the wounded Jewish soldiers, for his parents, his wife and child still in Germany, all fearing for his welfare.

As he davened, Mordechai heard voices outside the house, and he tensed. The door opened; Mordechai nearly froze in his place, but decided to continue davening.

His commander entered the house, and his eyes opened wide in shock. He looked at this strangest of scenes, a soldier standing and talking to the wall, his eyes closed, with a long sock hanging over his head and onto his shoulders. As an experienced commander, he drew the only possible conclusion: shell-shock.

"Vogel!" the commander instructed his loyal aide. "Gutman has gone mad! Send him on furlough right away. They'll take care of him at home the way he needs."

While Mordechai made his way home, the brigade in which he had served until the day before sustained a surprise attack by French forces. Of all the 250 soldiers, not a single one survived, aside for one 'crazy' soldier who talked to the wall with a sock on his head...

Related by the grandchildren of Reb Mordechai Gutman, the Shuster family of Monsey, N.Y

Answering Amen after a *Brachah* Heard Through a Media Device

1. One who hears a *brachah* on a microphone, telephone, or any media outlet, should answer amen, because the voice coming from them is considered to be that of the one speaking. This *din* applies only when the listener identifies the voice of the *mevarech*, and knows that he is allowed to answer amen after his *brachah*. But some think that even though the voice that is heard from these devices is generated by the person who is speaking, it is still not considered the voice of a person, but rather a voice generated by technological means, and the amen that is answered after the *brachah* heard through them is an amen *levatalah*.

Sources and Explanations

Shu"t Minchas Elazar (Vol. II 72) takes the position that a voice heard through a phone has the *din* of the person who is speaking, and therefore, one should answer amen to *brachos* said by phone. Although the *mevarech* is a distance away, that does not preclude answering amen, as ruled in *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 55 20)*: "There were ten in one place and they say *Kaddish* and *Kedushah*, even someone who is not with them can answer." *Shu"t Pnei Meivin (Orach Chaim 103)* rules likewise. However, the *Shu"t Pnei Meivin (ibid)* wrote that for the ones who hold (*Shulchan Aruch ibid*) that when the *mevarech* and the listener are separated by *avodah zarah*, or a place that is not clean, then the listener does not answer amen, and one who hears a *brachah* on the phone should not answer amen, if between him and the *mevarech* there is such a *hefsek*, a separation. But the *Shu"t Minchas Elazar (ibid)* differs and holds that everyone agrees that one needs to answer amen to a *brachah* heard through the phone, even if there is *avodah zarah* or a filthy place separating the *mevarech* and the listener, because the voice passes through the phone wires that are more than ten *tefachim* higher than these impure places. See *Piskei Teshuvos (215 3)* which states that one may answer amen to a *brachah* heard by phone, but it is not obligatory.

However, Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Shu"t Minchas Shlomo 9*) differs, and holds that because when speaking through a microphone, telephone and other forms of media, the sound is not actually a human voice, and rather it is a facsimile of the voice produced through a communications device, it is considered that the voice of the one who is speaking has passed from this world, and it is the device that is emitting the *brachah*. And just like it would not enter one's mind to answer amen after a device that is issuing a *brachah* by pressing a button on it, likewise, one should not answer amen to a *brachah* that is said by a person through any form of media. *Shu"t Be'er Moshe (Vol. III, 167)* and *Shu"t Teshuvos Vehanhagos (Vol. III 79)* rule likewise. But Harav Moshe Feinstein (*Shu"t Igros Moshe, Vol. II 105*) claims in contrast that "it is hard to say that this is a clear *halachah*." Because even if we say that the voice of the person making the *brachah* has passed from this world, ultimately, the sound that is heard through these devices is only when the person actively makes them emit the sound, and the sound that is heard is identical to the voice of the person that is speaking. Rav Moshe further claims that even the way the human hearing system works is not clear enough to us, and it is possible that HaKadosh Baruch Hu placed in creation that the sense of hearing should be activated

according to similar characteristics that these devices work with. As such, he leans towards saying that hearing a sound on these devices is like hearing the voice of the person who makes the sounds. And in any case, Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that because it is not possible to reach a decisive ruling on this subject, because of the *safek* one should answer amen after the *brachah* that is heard through the various media devices. See *Shu"t Minchas Shlomo (ibid)* that the Chazon Ish also had a question on this subject.

2. Even according to those who are of the opinion that the sound heard through the media devices is not considered like a human voice, still, when a *brachah* is said on a microphone, people who hear it should answer amen. This is only when a *brachah* that they are not obligated to be *yotzei* is said. Because in order to answer amen to a *brachah* that they are not obligated in, it is enough for the listener to know which *brachah* he is answering amen to. He does not have to actually hear the *brachah*. As such, even though hearing a *brachah* through a microphone is not considered hearing a *brachah* from a person, the listener still knows which *brachah* he is answering, and that is enough.

Sources and Explanations

This is how the *Minchas Shlomo (ibid)* ruled. See also there where he explained that a person must not answer amen to a *brachah* he does not hear if it is a *brachah* that he is obligated in, even if he knows which *brachah* is being said. This is the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 124 8)*. Therefore, according to those who think the sound heard through a media device is not considered to be a human voice, then when one hears a *brachah* that he is obligated in through a microphone, it is considered as if he did not hear the *brachah*, and he must not answer amen after it. (See *Shu"t Teshuvos Vehanhagos ibid*).

All this is regarding someone who hears a *brachah* on a microphone; however, someone who hears a *brachah* on the telephone, or through any form of media that broadcasts remotely, should not answer amen, according to those who hold that a voice heard by phone is not considered to be a human voice, even though he knows which *brachah* he is answering. This is due to the fact that he is standing far from the *mevarech*, and has no *tziruf*, and cannot be said to have an association with him (*Shu"t Minchas Shlomo ibid*).

3. One who hears a recording of a *brachah* must not answer amen after it, because by the time the person hears it, the *mevarech's* voice has already ended.

Sources and Explanations

This is written by Harav Chaim Berlin in a response printed in *sefer Ohalei Aharon (Vol. II 64)*. But *Shu"t Eretz Tzvi (Vol. I, 23)* expressed doubt about this *din*, and wrote that it is possible to consider the voice heard on a recording as if it is the initial voice that was recorded.

Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen – The Foundation of Emunah

Many statements by *Chazal* teach us about the virtue, loftiness and status of the mitzvah of answering amen, throughout both Talmuds and the various *Midrashim*. But more than all, the *Midrash* in *Parashas Ki Savo* (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1) expresses this when it says: “There is nothing greater to HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Am Yisrael answer!” The words of the *Midrash* are so resounding that the Shomer Emunim clarifies about them (*Ma’amar Pischu She’arim*, Chapter 3): “And see the words of this *Midrash* - they are not an exaggeration, *chas veshalom*, as there is nothing more important to Hashem than answering amens.”

Following are insights and quotes from Gedolim through the generations that shed light on and clarify the tremendous virtue of answering amen, and how much we must hold this mitzvah dear and rejoice in the merit that we have at every opportunity to fulfill it.

One Who Answers Amen Is Called a *Tzaddik*

Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote on the *passuk* (*Yeshayahu* 26:2): “*Pischu she’arim vayavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*’ and *Chazal* explain (*Shabbos* 119b) ‘Do not read it שמר אמנים but rather שאומרים אמנים.’” Based on this explanation, it is as if this *passuk* says ‘*goy tzaddik she’omrim amen*.’ And we need to learn from this that “because of this *middah* of answering amen, Am Yisrael are called *tzaddikim*” (*Kad Hakemach, Emunah*). Likewise, Harav Shmuel Laniado, the *Baal Hakeilim*, learned from this, “One who answers amen, for this alone he is called a *tzaddik*” (*Kli Paz Yeshaya* *ibid*). This concept is also alluded to by Chavakuk Hanavi, when he says (*Chavakuk* 2 4): “*Vetzaddik b’emunaso yichyeh*” – in the merit of “*be’emunaso*” – answering amen gives a person a merit to be called a *tzaddik* and to live long (*Shaarei Zion* p. 66).

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

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

As I have merited to be among those who ascribe to a *dvar mitzvah*, I am extremely careful to answer amen after those who recite *Birchos Hashachar* in shul, whether few or many – usually many.

I offer my thanks and blessings to you for this wonderful idea, and much praise for the way you have implemented this in the *chinuch* institutions. Thank you as well for your weekly pamphlet, and it is now one year since it begins each week with your enlightening introduction. The entire brochure is illuminating, but your segment has a special charm that is reserved for those known as ‘*na’eh doresh vena’eh mekayem*,’ that your actions match that which you speak about.

I have noticed a few times that you have referred to your wonderful activities as a ‘revolution,’ the ‘Bney Emunim revolution.’ It is true, and there is no room to argue on this; you have effected a revolution. But as someone who has closely tracked your work, I know that that every term that you use is precise, and I have always asked myself what the source of the word מהפכה, revolution, is.

Last week, I had an insight: In essence, the Torah itself calls what you are doing a *mahapeichah*:

In *Parashas Ha’azinu* (*Devarim* 32:20) it says “*Ki dor tahpuchos heimah banim lo eimun bam*,” and *Chazal* explain, “do not read it ‘*lo eimun bam*’, but rather ‘*lo amen bam*.’” The Torah calls a generation that does not take care to answer amen a “*dor tahpuchos*.” So from now we can say that the revolution of Bney Emunim has come to rectify and reverse the “*דר תהפכה...בנים לא אמן במ*”.

May Hashem bestow you with much *brachah*, and give you strength, wisdom, and the ability, with *siyata diShmaya*, to continue with your revolution, and to see it to completion with the arrival of *Mashiach tzidkeinu*, speedily in our day, amen!

Rabbi S.H.C.

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Tzaddik B’Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahrtzeit



The matzeivah of the Chavas Yair in the cemetery in Worms.

The Chavas Yair

1 Teves 5462

Harav Shimon Yair Chaim Bachrach was born in 5398 in the town of Leipnik to his father, Rav Moshe Shimon, the Av Bais Din of Worms. He grew up in the presence of his father’s mother, Mrs. Chava Bachrach, who was a

great woman, and a granddaughter of the Maharal of Prague. Some say that his famous responsa *sefer Chavas Ya’ir* is thus named for her (*Shu”t Chasam Sofer* Vol. IV [*Even Ha’ezer* 2] 25).

In his youth, he served as the Rav of Koblenz. Later, he served as the Rav of Mainz and at the end of his life, he succeeded his father’s position in Worms. He wrote many *seforim*, most of which were lost over time. Aside for *Shu”t Chavas Yair*, other *seforim* that were published were *Mar Keshisha* and a commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch-Orach Chaim* entitled *Mekor Chaim*.

He passed away on 1 Teves 5462 at the age of 64; he was buried in the cemetery in Worms.

In the *sefer Mekor Chaim* authored by the Chavas Yair, the writer presents the *halachos* and customs from which we can learn about how strict they were in previous generations to recite the *brachos* in the morning in shul, out loud, in order to give the *tzibbur* the merit of answering many amens:

♦ “During the Selichos and Yamim Noraim, one should be careful not to begin the *brachos* too early...in order to give the merit to the people one at a time to answer amen...” (18 3)

♦ “I saw a custom by the elderly and veteran members, whose place is far from the *shaliach tzibbur*, who move away from their place and draw closer to the *mevarech* when he says *Birchos Hashachar*, in order to listen well and to answer *Baruch Hu uBaruch Shemo* and amen” (46 2).

♦ “The custom in all the diaspora...that a few select people – the veteran ones, wrap themselves in *tzitzis* and make the *brachos* aloud ‘*Lehisatef Betzitis*’ and the whole congregation answers amen, and then a second one and a third one, or more if the *tzibbur* wants. And then afterwards, they don *tefillin* and make the *brachah* out loud, one after the other” (50 1).

♦ When hearing the *brachah*, the listener should be careful to say ‘*Baruch Hu uBaruch Shemo*’ only after the *mevarech* mentions the Name of Hashem, as instructed by *Chazal* (*Brachos* 47a) to be strict to answer amen only after the *brachah* ends, “and especially in *Birchos Hashachar* where many stumble on this.” (124 5).