

# VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

### 'Viduy Shechiv Meira' Before Going to Sleep

‘ויקרבו ימי ישראל למות ויקרא לבנו ליוסף ויאמר לו אם נא מצאתי הן בעיניך שם נא ירך תחת ירכי ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת אל נא תקברני במצרים’ (מז כט)

Chazal explain (*Bereishis Rabbah* 96 2) “They all knew and said with their mouths that they are dying; Avraham said (*Bereishis* 15:2): ‘*V’Anochi holech ari*, I continue to be childless’; Yitzchak said (*ibid* 27:7): ‘And I will bless you in the presence of Hashem before I die.’ And Yaakov said: ‘And I will rest with my forebears,’ when? When he was preparing to die.”

Harav Aryeh Yehuda Leib Te’umim, the Rav of Brod, explained the emphasis of the *Midrash* that Yaakov did not mention his death until “the hour that he was going to die”: There was a custom in a number of communities to say each night before going to sleep the *nusach* of *Viduy* that a deathly ill person says [*Viduy Shechiv Meira*]. But the *Magen Avraham* (239 7) wrote that one should not say this *nusach* because it includes the words: “*V'im amus*, and if I die, my death should be a *kapparah*, an atonement...” (see *Yoreh Deah* 338 2). Chazal say (*Brachos* 20b) that one should not say this because doing so gives an opening for the Satan to be *mekatreg* on a person that he should be punished for his sins.

Avraham and Yitzchak were not afraid of mentioning their day of death in their lifetime, because at the time that they did so, they were considered to be dead. Avraham because he didn't have children, and Yitzchak because he was blind, and as Chazal say (*Nedarim* 64b) that a blind person and one who does not have children

are considered to be dead. Yaakov, in contrast, was not allowed to give an opening to the Satan, and therefore, Chazal emphasized that he mentioned his passing only very close to when it actually happened.

Ye'elas Chen

### HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself Examines Hearts

‘ויאמר השבעה לי וישבע לו וישתחו ישראל על ראש המטה’ (מז לא)

Rashi explains (based on *Shabbos* 12b) that Yaakov turned and bowed to the Shechinah, and it is from here that Chazal derived that the Shechinah is found above the headrest of a sick person.

Harav Yehonasan Eibeshitz explained the reason that Hashem dwells above the head of a sick person:

When a person is healthy, and he has the strength to carry out his will, turning potential into reality. Once he does that, the angels of mercy mention his deeds and elevate his *tefillos* to the Baal Harachamim. But when a person is sick, and cannot pray and do *mitzvos* as he would want to, Hashem dwells the Shechinah at his head to be able to hear his *tefillos* and to see the desires in his heart. That is because the angels do not know the thoughts of a person, and only Hashem Himself can examine what is in a person's heart. (See *Tsafos Shabbos* 12b ad loc. *She'ein*; *Sfas Emes* *ibid*) The **Bais Yisrael** of Ger would add:

Today, when the souls of all of us are ill, we are ill in our Torah learning, we are ill in our *tefillah*, and in all our practices in *Yiddishkeit* – we do not have an opening to be rescued, other than the fact that the Shechinah should dwell at our heads...

Tiferes Yehonasan;  
Pe'er Yisrael Vol. II, p. 297

## Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### The Source of the Words 'Kel Melech Ne'eman'

*Lashon kodesh* has many acronyms that are pronounced as they are written, like Chazal, or Rashi, and it is not necessary to explain the meaning behind them. It is enough for us to just state the acronym and everyone will understand what we are referring to.

An early example of this is We say it אמן the holy word so often, but we don't always realize, that it is an acronym. In *Maseches Shabbos* (119b), the *Gemara* teaches us that amen is an acronym Rashi (*ibid* מלך נאמן for ad loc. *Kel*) explains that the intention of the *Gemara* is not to just give us an allusion, but that is how it really is – answering amen is a testimony that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the 'Kel Melech Ne'eman.' Instead of saying these three words after each *brachah*, Chazal instituted to encapsulate it all אמן in the single word.

I once asked a *talmid chacham* what is the source of the declaration of 'K-l Melech Ne'eman.' Although it is mentioned in the *Gemara*, if amen is the acronym of this declaration, then it must have an earlier source, because the word amen is mentioned in the Torah, *Nevi'im* and *Kesuvim*. That Yid showed me a beautiful *chiddush* that was written by Rabi Yehuda ben Rabi Yakar, the Rav of the Ramban, in his commentary on the *sefer tefillah* (Vol. I, :p. 9). He wrote

Before his passing, when Yaakov wanted to bless his children, he said to them (*Bereishis* 49:1): “Gather and I will tell you what

will happen to you in the end of days.” The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 56a) describes that when Yaakov wanted to reveal to them the end of the *galus*, the Shechinah left him. When Yaakov saw this, he worried that perhaps there was something disqualifying in his children, and he asked his children about it. They answered him: “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad.*” When Yaakov heard this, he began by acknowledging “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso* “*l'olam va'ed*

Regarding this *Gemara*, Rabbeinu Yehuda bar Rabi Yakar added a beautiful revelation: As the sons of Yaakov realized that their father would not reveal the end to them, then before declaring “*Shema Yisrael*” they first declared “*Kel Melech Ne'eman!*” In other words, although the end was not revealed to us, we believe with all our faith that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is faithful to His promise and will redeem us whenever He desires to.

The powerful declaration of *emunah* by Yaakov's children is in essence the secret of the word amen. When answering amen, we join the twelve *Shivtei Kah* who stood around their father Yaakov's bed and declared that even if they don't know when and do not understand, they believe! And we are also believers, *ma'aminim bnei ma'aminim*, who continue their path and are strict to answer amen !with *emunah*

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

## The Deposit Was Paid Out at the Right Time

This remarkable story about the power of *tefillah* in general and amen in particular, was related by the brother of the person it happened to, Rabbi Yoel Martin, of Lakewood, and by the renowned maggid, Rabbi Paysach Krohn, *shlita*, who both witnessed it firsthand.

A few months earlier, Reb Yoel's younger sister, Mrs. R. had traveled with her family to Miami, Florida, for vacation. In the middle of the vacation, she suddenly felt unwell and was taken to the hospital. When she arrived, her organs started failing and she went into cardiac arrest. After extensive resuscitations, her systems began to function again, but her brain, which had been deprived of oxygen for many crucial moments, was critically damaged.

Mrs. R. was in a coma. For a number

and after the decree was cast, they decided to continue accruing *zechusim* as an *aliyah* for her *neshamah*. They even called the *chaburah* in her name: Chaburas Amen Ohel Sarah. Upon learning about the serious condition of Sarah's sister, despite the doctors' prognoses, the women decided not to give up, and to dedicate the group's many merits to her sister's recovery.

The woman of that *chaburah* had become almost like family, and they decided to take their efforts a step further. They organized a trip to daven at the *kever* of New York's chief rabbi, Harav Yaakov Joseph, *zt"l*, whose *mesirus nefesh* to establish Yiddishkeit in America serves its Jews to this day. They even asked an acquaintance of the family, Rabbi Paysach Krohn, to join them to provide words of *chizuk*. On their way to the cemetery in Queens, where the *tzaddik* is buried, their thoughts were with the mother of the sick woman, who had already lost one child, and was on the verge of losing another. Despite the desperate situation, they were determined to pour their hearts out to the Almighty, with the pure *emunah* that just like He has the ability to revive the dead, He could also extricate Mrs. R. from a situation the doctors considered to be death, and bring her back to life.

the answer that he received stunned him: "The patient herself called..." the women replied, looking confused and shocked.

"Hello Mommy, it's R..." That's all the mother heard before she dropped the phone. Someone offered to driver her to the hospital. The women, who saw this open miracle, decided to continue to daven for her with redoubled efforts.

The family hurried to the hospital, where they were met by an uproar from the doctors. They also did not believe what was happening. The patient had come back to life.

Over the next few days, R. continued to improve; she could not yet see, but she was able to speak to her family and even to remember a lot of details from the past.

The women of the amen *chaburah* remembered a question that they sent one of the *gedolei hador* after the passing of R.'s sister: "Where did all the tens of thousands of *zechusim* that were accrued since the *chaburah* was established go?" And they received a firm response: "These merits are kept in a 'bank' and they will accomplish what they are meant to at the right moment." Now that right moment they had been yearning for had come.

Reb Paysach Krohn then continued:

"The next morning, I went to the hospital to visit the patient. I had to see this miracle with my own two eyes. When I entered, she was lying in bed, motionless and with no strength. I wanted to lift her spirits, so I told her, jokingly, 'I am a *mohel*. You now have twin girls. *B'ezras Hashem*, when you have a boy, I pledge to come and perform him a *bris* for free...' I even put my business card on her nightstand. At that moment, to everyone's surprise, the sick woman moved her hand for the first time and took the card."

When relating the story, the brother added: "R. still has a long way to go to complete recovery, but after we saw that the *tefillos* were so effective, beyond anything natural, we are continuing to daven with all our hearts. We are also pleading with the public to continue davening for Chaya Raizel bas Dina, for a *refuah sheleimah*, and that she should return to her previous state of good health."

*Vavei Ha'amudim Vechishukeihem 38 p. 120*



The kever of Rav Yaakov Yosef, the Chief Rabbi of New York, in the cemetery in Queens.

of weeks, she lay unconscious, and after the local doctors more or less despaired, she was transferred to a hospital in New York. There, after comprehensive testing, the doctors had no choice but to give the family their diagnosis: "She is brain dead," they said. "There's no chance of recovery. No one in this condition has ever recovered."

There is no need to describe the anguish of the family upon hearing that this young and active mother to baby twin girls was now in a state that doctors had given up on her.

Eight years prior, Mrs. R.'s sister had succumbed to a severe illness, also at a young age. During her illness, a few of her friends and relatives had gathered and decided to establish an Amen Chaburah for her recovery. They would gather each morning to recite *Birchos Hashachar* together for a *refuah* for her. Tens of thousands of 'amens' were answered in her merit,

On the way, they visited the *kevarim* of some of the other *tzaddikim* of America, such as Harav Avraham Pam, Harav Yaakov Kaminetzky, and Harav Henschel Leibowitz, a *talmid* of the Chofetz Chaim. The grandfather of the sick woman, Reb Tzvi Hirsch, was very close to and a primary supporter of Rav Leibowitz. At each of the *kevarim*, they davened fervently for the sick woman.

Towards the end of their trip came the pinnacle. After heartfelt words of *chizuk* that elicited many tears, Rabbi Paysach Krohn stood up and began to recite Chapter 23 in *Tehillim*, "*Mizmor leDovid Hashem Ro'i lo echsar.*" Everyone repeated the *pesukim* after him, weeping copiously.

When they reached the *passuk* "*Gam ki elech begei tzalmaves lo ira ra...*" they suddenly heard a ring of a phone, and then a dreadful cry. Reb Paysach stopped in alarm. "What happened?" he asked, as his face went pale. And

## Answering Amen After a *Mevarech* Who Eats Something Forbidden

**1. One who intentionally eats something forbidden should not make a *brachah* *rishonah* or *acharonah*, because his *brachah* is considered a *ni'utz*, a curse. And if he does make a *brachah*, amen should not be answered.**

### Sources and Explanations

We learn in the *Breisa* (*Bava Kama* 94a): “If one steals a *sa'ah* of wheat, grinds it, kneads it and bakes it and separates *challah* from it, how should he make a *brachah*? This is not a *mevarech*, but rather a *mena'etz*, one who curses, and of this it is said (*Tehillim* 10:3): “*Ubotzea* [a thief] *beirech* *ni'etz Hashem*.” In essence, the *Rishonim* differ regarding the *halachah* of one who transgresses by eating something forbidden intentionally, and whether he has to recite *Birchas Hanehenin* on it: According to the *Rambam* (*Brachos* 1 19), one does not make a *brachah* for eating a forbidden food – not a *brachah rishonah* and not a *brachah acharonah*. In his view, the *Breisa's* intention of saying “How does he make a *brachah*? This is not a *brachah* but rather a curse,” means: How is it possible that he is obligated to make a *brachah* from the *Birchos Hanehenin*? Isn't his *brachah* actually a curse (*Kesef Mishneh* *ibid*)? But the *Raavad* (*ibid*) differs from the *Rambam* and thinks that one who transgresses and eats something forbidden must make a *brachah* on it, before eating and after. In his view, the intention of the *Breisa* is to say that indeed, when one eats something forbidden, his *brachah* is a curse, but still, he is not permitted to eat without a *brachah* (*Rosh Brachos* 7b). According to the *Taz* (*Orach Chaim* 196 1) the *Raavad* differs on the *Rambam* only regarding one who eats something forbidden unintentionally, but regarding intentional eating of this kind, he concedes to the *Rambam* that one should not make a *brachah*. (See the next *halachah*.) But the sources cited in the *Rambam* Frankel Edition there note that from the words of the *Me'iri* (*Bava Kama* 94a), it seems that according to the *Raavad*, he makes a *brachah* before and after eating even when eating a forbidden food intentionally. See there, where there are references to other *poskim* who are of the same opinion.

The *Kesef Mishneh* there wrote that it is not the intention of the *Rambam* to say that it is forbidden to recite a *brachah* on eating something forbidden but rather “to say that he does not have to

make a *brachah*.” The *Pri Migadim* (*Orach Chaim*, *Eshel Avraham* beginning of 196) understood from his words that the *Rambam's* intention was only to exempt one who eats forbidden food from a *brachah*, but if he wants to make a *brachah*, he may.

Practically, the *Shulchan Aruch* ruled (196 1) like the *Rambam* that one does not make a *brachah* on eating forbidden food – not a *brachah rishonah* or *acharonah*. This *halachah* is practiced whether it is the actual food that is forbidden, *d'Oraisa* or *d'Rabbanan*, or if the food itself is permitted but the person forbade it upon himself with a *neder* or a *shevuah*, a vow (*Mishnah Berurah* *ibid* 1, from the *Tosefta Demai* 2 14). Based on this, the *Mishnah Berurah* ruled (*ibid* 2, from the *Tosefta* *ibid*) that one should not answer amen after one who makes a *brachah* on a forbidden food.

The *Pri Migadim* (*ibid Mishbetzos Zahav* 1) wrote that regarding a permitted food that is not allowed to be eaten at a specific time – such as one who eats on *Yom Kippur* not in accordance with *halachah* - it should be said that even the *Rambam* conceded that he needs to make a *brachah*. Based on this, he wrote in *sefer Leket Hakemach Hachadash* (124 23) that one who hears this *brachah* must answer amen, especially as one can judge the *mevarech lekaf zechus*, favorably, that he was given permission to eat due to a danger. But the *Mateh Ephraim* (602 24) hold that even one who eats a permitted food at a forbidden time should not make a *brachah*.

**2. One who eats a forbidden food unintentionally must recite a *brachah* *acharonah* after it, even when he knows that he ate something forbidden, and it is simple that amen is answered after his *brachah*.**

### Sources and Explanations

Although according to the *Rambam* (*ibid*) one does not recite *Birchas Hamazon* even when eating something forbidden unintentionally, the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (*ibid* 1) and the *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 4) rule like the *Taz*, that one who eats something forbidden unintentionally should recite a *brachah acharonah*. This is because the *brachah* on eating something forbidden unintentionally is not *ni'utz*.

Harav Moshe  
Hillel Hirsch, *shlita*  
Rosh Yeshivas  
Slabodka



## Gadol Ha'oneh

Words of Chizuk in the Name  
of Those Who Said Them

### Amen – The Connector of Two People

Everyone is already familiar with the tremendous virtue of answering amen. *Chazal* praise it at length, to the extent that they say (*Brachos* 53b) that “one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.” Why is the amen greater than the *brachah*, and what is the secret of its greatness?

It seems that we can explain that when a person answers amen with *kavanah* after the *brachah* of a friend, he declares that he is also joining the *brachah*, and it is as though two people made that *brachah* together.

The unity of two people for one *brachah*, which is done through answering amen, is not found anywhere else. That is why amen has this wonderful power that the *brachah* itself does not have. The *brachah* is very important, but here, it is the unity of the two people for that same *brachah*, and that is amen.

But in order for the *mevarech* and the one

who answers amen to connect, we have to be strict to answer amen with *kavanah*. For example, when the *chazzan* says: “*Baruch Atah Hashem Magen Avraham*,” one needs to have in mind, “Amen that the Name of Hashem, Who is the Magen Avraham, should be blessed.” That is regarding the *brachos* of *shevach*, praise. But when we get to the *brachos* that are requests, such as “*Atah chonen l'adam da'as...*” then we need to have in mind, “It is true that He is the One Who grants wisdom, and may it be His Will that He grant us also wisdom” (*Mishnah Berurah* 124 6). The same is true for each and every *brachah*; the concentration has to be relevant to the meaning of the *brachah*.

In addition, when answering amen, we declare and believe that everything is only from Hashem. The whole subject of the *avodah* of *tefillah* is that we say and understand that there is nothing we can do ourselves, and that we

are completely dependent on Hashem, and without Him we are nothing. That is also the *avodah* of amen - that we say to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that we are nothing, and everything depends on Him.

When we answer amen to the *brachos* of *tefillah*, the whole congregation joins together and declares and testifies that Hashem is everything and “*ein od milvado*.”

That is the greatness of amen, and *baruch Hashem* that amen has this wonderful organization that gives us so much *chizuk*, and surely brings *kavod* to HaKadosh Baruch Hu and brings the *Geulah* closer.

From his words at a Bney  
Emunim gathering in Av 5775

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

## Otzros Emunim

Answering Amen –  
The Foundation of Emunah

### In Every Single Middah

The sages of the *Mishnah* (*Brachos* 54a) learned from the *passuk* (*Devarim* 6 5) “*uvechol me’odecha*” that with every single *middah* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu measures out to a person, whether a good *middah* or one of punishment, he must thank Hashem.

Harav Moshe Aryeh Leib Litch Rosenbaum, author of *Imros Hashem*, wrote in his will, printed at the end of *sefer Eileh Divrei Shmuel*, under the name *Kuntress Bnei Yehuda* (40) that the *passuk* alludes to this concept (*Tehillim* 89:53): “*Baruch Hashem l’olam amen v’amen.*” Amen is an acronym for אמ מודד נעים and also of אמ מודד נוראים. Meaning, whether Hashem metes out good or not good, still “*Baruch Hashem l’olam.*” At the end of his will the author repeats this concept, and puts it into a rhyme:

בטחו ב' בכל עת ובישועתו תתאמרו  
ברוך ה' לעולם אמ"ן האמ"ן תאמרו  
אם מודד נעים ואם מודד נוראים זמרו  
כי הכל לטובה, לבניו לאמר להם תמהרו

## Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

To the editors of *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

In pamphlet number 458, *Parashas Chayei Sarah*, in the *Pischu She'arim* segment, the Nasi and founder of Bney Emunim, Rav Yaakov Dov Marmurstein, *shlita*, related a story about a *bochur* who found his match in the merit of undertaking to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each morning. I am sure that many people were touched by this story about finding a *zivug*, and by the beautiful *remazim* that you added about it.

That Shabbos, I met some friends, and we spoke about this subject. To my surprise, one friend spoke about himself. He had also been older; his friends got engaged one after the other and he remained alone in the yeshivah from his whole group. After reading words of *chizuk* in your pamphlet, he decided to take upon himself to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*, and indeed, a short time later, he got engaged. He even merited to learn with certainty that he had merited a *yeshuah* because of the *kabbalah*, when one of the brothers of the *kallah* told him that when he saw him on Shabbos going over to another person to say *Birchos Hashachar*, he liked that and spoke to his father about this *bochur*.

That same friend asked me to write this letter to you, in order to strengthen matters that need *chizuk*, and he added a *remez* to this: The author of *Bnei Yissaschar* wrote in his *sefer Agra D'pirka* (63): “Anyone who says the *mizmor* ‘*Shir lama'alos esa einai el heharim,*’ at the end of *hi tefillos*, before moving his feet, will have *is zivug hagun* sent to him.” Indeed, anyone who studies the words of this *mizmor* realizes that it contains a request for an “*ezer kenegdo.*” One who delves into it will notice that the acronym of the final letters of the words *יהוה אמין יבוא* is *amen*, to teach us that on who is strict about answering *amen* will soon merit an *ezer kenegdo*.

Moreover, regarding *brachos* and *amen*, we find in *Chazal* explanation in the form of “do not read it as” [don't read it *מה* rather *מאה*; don't read it ‘*shomer emunim*’ but rather *שאומרים אמין*.”] Perhaps we can apply this here also: don't read it “*me'ayin yavo ezri*” but rather “*מאמן יבוא עזרי*.”

May you receive much *brachah* and strength,

N.R.K. - Gelilot Yerushalayim

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## Tzaddik B'Emunaso

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of One Who Has Yahtzeit



The ohel over the burial site of the Bnei Yissaschar, in Dinov.

### The Bney Yissaschar

18 Teves 5601

Harav Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro was born in the village of Javornik, Galicia, to his father Rav Pesach, who was a *melamed*. His mother was the niece of Harav Elimelech of Lizhensk, and as per his directive, she named her son for him while he was still alive, as

a *segulah* for a long life, as her previous children had passed away at young ages.

He was close to the Chozeh of Lublin and Harav Menachem Mendel of Riminov; he later traveled to the Kozhnutzer Maggid and the Ohev Yisrael. He served as Rav in many cities. In 5589, he was appointed Rav in the city of Dinov, where he served until his passing on 18 Teves 5601; he was laid to rest in the city.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech authored dozens of *seforim* on all parts of Torah. But the most central of them is the *Bnei Yissaschar*, which is how he became known. Since its first printing in 5606, dozens of editions have been published. This *sefer* has organized sections according to the twelve months of the year, with a special focus on Yamim Tovim.

In his *sefer Regel Yesharah* (*Maareches 1, Amen*) the Bnei Yissaschar wrote a long segment, filled with *remazim* and deep concepts about the great virtue of answering amen. The piece begins with the following words:

“Regarding the tremendous value and reward for one who answers amen, and the magnitude of the punishment for one who avoids answering amen, I will expound a bit on the words of the *Zohar*. And come my brothers, toil over the gateways of wisdom, and it is the merit for me and for you that I have come, and it should be remembered by me and you.”

The segment is a very deep one, and we have selected a few points that indicate the great virtue of answering amen.

### Answering Amen – A Big Neder

The word ‘amen’ in the full spelling [אלמן מן גון] is numerically equivalent to 297, which is the value of the words גדול נדר, and

as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 51b): “*Gadol ha'oneh amen yoser min hamevarech.*”

### Answering Amen Is Beneficial for All

*Chazal* say (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Zuta* 20) that *l'asid lavo* the sinners in Yisrael who were already sent to Gehinnom will apologize, and the gates of Gan Eden will be opened to them in the merit of answering amen. An allusion to this is brought by the *Bnei Yissaschar* from the fact that the word *אמן* in its full spelling is numerically equivalent to the words *אמן* and *רע*. In other words, answering amen does not only benefit the pure *tzaddikim*, it also is good for the wicked people.

### Answering Amen Draws the Geulah Closer

“Answering amen draws the *Geulah* closer, as it says (*Amos* 9 11-12): “*Bayom hahu akim es sukkas Dovid hanofaless...ne'um Hashem.*” The word *נאם* is the same letters as *amen*.