

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly Pamphlet From "Bney Emunim"

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

Pischu Shearim

Open the Gates

A Declaration Upon Rising

“וידבר אל קרה ואל כל עדתו לאמר בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו ואת הקדוש והקריב אליו ואת אשר יבחר בו יקריב אליו” (טז ה)

In 5740, in his *parashah shiur*, the **Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe**, the Shefa Chaim, said:

When I was still being supported by my father-in-law, the Atzei Chaim of Sighet, an elderly Yid, Reb Nuta, lived in the town. He was a *tzaddik* and a diligent learner and he was a *chassid* of the Zidichoiver Rebbe. He once told me, in casual conversation, that each morning, he hears in his sleep an announcement, with his name, which makes him wake up to begin his *avodas haBorei*.

In light of this, the Rebbe explained this *passuk*: “*Boker veyoda Hashem*,” HaKadosh Baruch Hu announces and awakens each morning “*es asher Lo*” – the one who merits to have Hashem’s Name called on him. And the Rebbe added: Even someone who does not merit to be awoken from Above, still, “when Hashem Yisbarach, in His great compassion, restores a person’s soul, and he opens his eyes early in the morning, how can he continue to sleep? Is it not of him that the *passuk* says (*Yonah 1:6*) ‘*Mah Lecha nirdam*, why do you sleep? Get up, call out to Hashem, perhaps Hashem will think about us, and we will not perish!’”

Shefa Chaim, Vol. 18, p. 43

Tefillah Is Not Contingent on Place

“ויקרב אתך ואת כל אחיך בני לוי אתך ובקשתם גב” (כהנה) (טז י)

Harav Bunim of Peshischa explained that the reason Korach launched the *machlokes* and demanded to be appointed Kohein Gadol was because he yearned to daven in the *Kodesh Hakodashim*. But this was withheld from him because in order to reach the level of the *tefillah* of the Kohein Gadol in the *Kodesh Hakodshaim*, one does not need to daven specifically there –rather, wherever he is he can reach such a level of *tefillah*.

The **Sifsei Tzaddik** of Piltz added what the **Kozhnitzer Maggid** said that even when the Kohein Gadol was not fitting for his position, his *avodah* in the *Kodesh Hakodashim* was accepted On High because of the power of the *avodah* of the *tzaddikim* of the generation, and from here we learn that the place of the *tefillah* is not a determining factor.

Sifsei Tzaddik 8; Avodas Yisrael Yom Hakippurim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Birchos Hashachar With Shleimus

In previous segments, we cited the words of Chazal explaining that the custom of reciting *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* is sourced in the *takanah* to answer ninety amens to *brachos* every day. Based on that, it emerges that this custom was established in order to benefit those who hear the *brachah* and answer amen, and not necessarily for the benefit of the *mevarech*.

However, it is clear that even if this is the case, that does not detract from the importance of the *mevarech*, because *zikui harabbim* is a very lofty concept, and if answering amen is a great thing, then *zikui harabbim* with answering amen, is also a great thing. The *Pele Yoetz* wrote (*Mezakeh*) a few notable things about this: “One who makes his *brachos* aloud in order to give the listeners the *zechus* of answering amen is considered a *mezakeh harabbim*, of which Chazal say (*Avos 5:18*): ‘Anyone who is *mezakeh* the *rabbim* – no *cheit* comes about through him” and based on the size of the *mitzvah* that is how the size of the reward of the *mezakeh* will grow...”

But aside for this, we have to know that the root of this *minhag* also contains a tremendous benefit for the *mevarech* as well. We know that answering amen completes the *brachah* and makes it more *chashuv*, so we find that when one is *mehader* to make his *brachos* in the ears of someone who will answer amen, aside for giving someone the *zechus* of answering amen, also benefits himself, because this way he merits to recite perfect *brachos*.

This reason is cited in the *sefer Yesod Veshores Ha'avodah*, who wrote (*Sha'ar Ha'ashmores* Chapter 10): “*Birchos Hashachar* should ideally be said in the shul with the rest of the *tefillah*, so that others should answer amen to his *brachos*, because the virtue of the *brachah* is so much greater when it is answered by amen.” The *Yesod Veshores Ha'avodah* then cited the *Zohar* (*Eikev 271 1*) that a *brachah* answered by amen merits in Shamayim to special treatment: the gates of all the firmaments open for it and a voice announces “This is the gift sent by so and so to the King!”

And if this is all true regarding every *brachah*, how much more so is it the case with *Birchos Hashachar*. These are the *brachos* that begin the day, and someone who says them with *shleimus* will certainly merit special *siyata diShmaya* that all the *brachos* that he will say during the course of the day will be said with *shleimus*, because “*mitzvah goreres mitzvah*” (*Avos 4:2*).

So let us resolve to begin our *tefillah betzibbur* in shul from the start – from *Birchos Hashachar*. Let us say our *brachos* in front of someone who will complete them by answering amen, and we will answer amen after the *brachos* of our friends. When we start the day with *brachos* that are perfect, and by keeping the *takanah* of 90 amens as Chazal instruct, then surely the Gates of Heaven will be opened to our *tefillos* and we will merit *brachah* and *hatzlachah* in all that we do.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

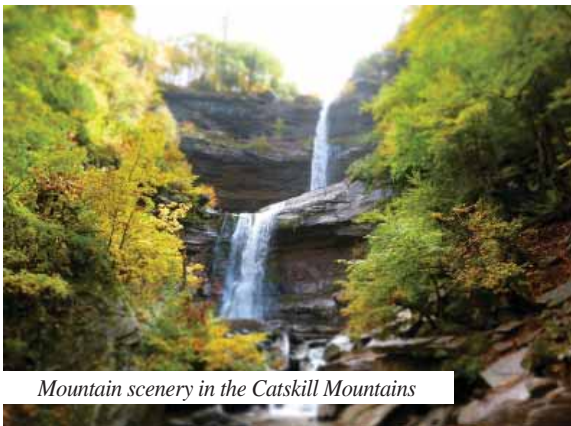
'V'yihyu Yadav Emunah'

This remarkable story took place a few years ago in America. A bus departed from one of the camps in the Catskill Mountains; it was full of young *talmidim* who had excelled in their learning and had earned a trip to a nearby zoo. The children were very excited about the trip. They had already found out which animals were in the zoo, and knew that there were some *brachos* they might be able to make. Excitement was at a fever pitch, as were their expectations.

Not long later, the bus reached the zoo. One of the *rebbeim* who got off to check about the payment and visiting conditions, returned with a glum expression. It turned out that on that day, for an unexpected reason, the zoo was closed to visitors. They would have to go back to camp.

The *rebbeim* tried to think of alternative idea, and meanwhile, the bus turned around and began to head back in the direction from where it had come. As they drove, one of the *rebbeim* pointed out to his friend a sign on the side of the road indicating that there was a large prison nearby.

"Maybe we should take the children to visit the prison..." the *rebbeim* made the



Mountain scenery in the Catskill Mountains

surprising suggestion. "They've never seen the inside of a prison..."

"A prison?" his friend was taken aback. "Why should they let us in?"

"Who knows," the first one urged, "perhaps the wardens will agree to take the children on a tour of the prison. Let's at least try. Look how disappointed they are."

The bus soon turned towards the prison, and the *rebbeim* who initiated the idea shared it with the children. The boys were very enthusiastic, even if they were a bit puzzled...

When the bus reached the gates of the prison, it was blocked by a husky guard. The guard almost burst out laughing when he heard the idea of a visit. "Bring

a group of children in to tour the prison? Do you have a crazier idea? And besides, it could be really dangerous...! Back you go!" But the *rebbeim* was not ready to give up so fast. He looked around and noticed an internal road winding around the walls of the prison. "Nu, if we can't go into the prison, at least we'll have a look from the outside...Who knows, perhaps we will see from a window a Jewish prisoner, and distant soul that needs *chizuk*..." he shared his idea with his friend again.

In their enthusiasm, they did not notice a sign stating clearly that entry to the road was forbidden for strangers. The barriers were open, so the bus drove on, unhindered. The children's moods began to pick up. They were seeing a real prison from very close.

At one point on the road, where they could see the windows of the cells, the bus stopped. The children got off, and the *rebbeim* explained to them: "It's possible that in one of the cells there is a lonely Jewish soul that needs *chizuk* and encouragement. Let's scream towards that *neshamah* words of *chizuk* and *emunah*, we will sing for it and lift its spirits..."

The children liked the idea and began to shout towards the walls: "Dear Yidden! Don't give up! Hashem is with you! We are praying for you! Strengthen your *emunah*, the *yeshuah* will soon come!" Then they began to sing the famous song, "*Nohr emunah*..." in Yiddish, which means "Only *emunah* in the Borei Olam! Dear beloved Yidden, trust in Hashem, and it will be good for you today and every day, in this world and in Olam Haba!"

As they sang, the children gazed at the prison, waiting for a response...Suddenly – unbelievable! Through one of the narrow windows, they saw a pair of hands waving at them, to the beat of the music. This drove the boys to sing even louder. A few of them took out cameras to take pictures of the heartening scene. But a moment later, the party came to a halt...A Prisons' Service jeep pulled up with a screech of the brakes, and a furious warden emerged. He had no idea how to contain the surreal scene the likes of which he had never seen before: "What are you doing here?" he shouted. "Don't you know that strangers are not allowed in here?" The *rebbeim* tried to explain that they were a bunch of disappointed children looking for an alternative attraction. But the guard was

not interested. He ordered them to leave right away.

The surprising 'trip' was short, but it left an indelible impression on the boys. They no longer needed any 'consolation prize.' What a *zechus*! They had been *mechazek* a Jew who was in prison!

Two years later, in the same camp, the children gathered to hear the fascinating personal story of Yosef, a former prisoner in a federal prison, who after miraculously discovering his Yiddshkeit in prison, merited to be released in a miraculous way. In keeping with "*sichu bechol nifle'osav*", he undertook to tell his story to as many Yidden as possible.

Yosef described his experience in prison, until he reached the jewel in the crown of his story. "Over the years," Yosef related, "I was one non-Jew among many Jews in the prison. I would not have remembered the fact that I was Jewish, if my 'friends' would not have taken care to remind me, not always in the most pleasant ways.

I was far, and disconnected, until that day when my non-Jewish cellmates called to me in a hurry, claiming that Jewish children were calling me. I drew close to the window, and indeed, from afar, I heard children shouting to me: 'Yidden don't give up, trust in Hashem!' and encourage things like that. I was in shock, and didn't know where this was coming from. And then the children began to sing in a language I don't know. The song was so sweet, that spontaneously, I did the only thing I could do to make it go on – I put my hands out the window and encouraged them to sing more.

Suddenly, the singing stopped, breaking my heart. Something in my soul opened. And when some time later, a Rav came into the prison and offered me to put on *tefillin*, even though I had never cooperated in the past, I agreed. I was so moved at *Krias Shema*, and I asked the Rav to teach me to daven more. The last two years in the prison were spent in a state of spiritual growth, until I became a *baal teshuvah*, and here I am telling my story."

The *rebbeim* and the children were stunned. They suddenly realized the meaning of everything that had happened two years earlier. Now it was their turn to stun Yosef. They pointed to one of the walls, where there were photos of that unforgettable day. Yosef almost fainted when, in the central picture, he saw the hands waving enthusiastically through the windows of the prison. They were his hands.

— Waiting for the End of Amen —

1. When repeating the *tefillah*, the *sha”tz* must be careful not to begin the *brachah* before most of the people are finished answering amen to the previous *brachah*, and even if they prolonged the amen more than they should have. But if most of the *tzibbur* has answered properly, and only a few of them prolong it, there is no need for the *sha”tz* to wait for the minority. But some say, that he does need to wait for this minority, even if they prolonged the amen too much.

Sources and Explanations

Chazal say (*Brachos* 47a, and *Rashi* *ibid* ad loc. *Ad*): “One who cuts [the bread] may not cut it until the *onim* finish answering amen [on the *brachah* of *Hamotzi* that he said]. Rav Chisda said most of the *onim*.” This is because the *brachah* of *Hamotzi* needs to be finished before the bread is cut, and because answering amen is considered part of the *brachah*, one must wait until the *onim* finish answering amen. But Rav Chisda holds that when the minority who do not follow *halachah*, and prolong the amen too long, one does not have to wait. The *Shulchan Aruch* (167:16) ruled like Rav Chisda, and it is also evident from (124 9) that the *din* of *Chazaras Hasha”tz* is equal to the *brachah* of *Hamotzi* on the bread, because there, as well, the *sha”tz* has to wait for most of the *onim*. Indeed, the *Biur Halachah* (*ibid*) brings that the *Prishah* agrees. The others who rule this way are: *Maharikash* in *Hagahos Erech Lechem* (128:18); *Ma’amar Mordechai* (124 12); *Aruch Hashculchan* (*ibid* 13). The *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 37) wrote that this *halachah* is practiced also with the recital of *Kaddish*, as the one who says *Kaddish* needs to wait for most of the *onim* to answer amen. The *Ma’amar Mordechai* also wrote (*ibid*, cited in *Biur Halachah* *ibid*) that if it happens that most of the *tzibbur* answers amen hastily, and the minority answered it the right way, then everyone agrees that the *sha”tz* has to wait for the minority. But he noted that this is something that is not common and there is no reason to be concerned about it.

But the *Pri Migadim* (*Eshel Avraham* 124:15) holds like the *Magen Avraham* (*ibid* 15), that in *Chazaras Hashatz*, the *sha”tz* needs to also wait for the minority that prolongs the answering of amen. This is because it is an obligation of the *tzibbur* to hear the *brachah* of the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esreh* from the *sha”tz*. If the *sha”tz* begins making a *brachah* before the minority finished answering amen, they will not hear the beginning of the *brachah* (*Mishnah Berurah* *ibid* 38). In contrast, with the *brachah* on the bread, where there is no *brachah* after it, the one cutting the bread does not have to wait for the minority who prolong the amen (see *Shiurei HaGrish Elyashiv*, *Brachos* *ibid*, comment 82). The *Shu”t Mahara”m Mintz* (81) and

the *Eliyah Rabbah* (128 37) concur. The *Biur Halachah* (*ibid*) cited this view, but it seems like he questions it regarding the practical *halachah*. See *Kaf Hachaim* (124 52) who writes that according to the *Arizal* that it is an obligation to hear *Chazaras Hashatz*, and its virtue is even greater than the whispered *tefillah*, then certainly the *sha”tz* needs to wait for the minority as well.

As noted, everyone concurs that it is obligatory for the *sha”tz* to wait for most of the *misparallelim* to answer amen, and it is appropriate to bring on this subject what the *Mishnah Berurah* points out: “And with our great sins, many people fail in this when they daven from the *amud*, and they are in a hurry to start the next *brachah* right after ending the previous *brachah*, and do not wait in between them at all.”

2. In the *brachah* that is said to be *motzi* many people in their obligation, the *mevarech* is not allowed to begin the *brachah* before the *tzibbur* finishes answering amen to the previous *brachah*.

Sources and Explanations

The *Magen Avraham* proved this (124 15) from the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* (128 18) that in *Birchas Kohanim*, the Kohanim are not allowed to begin the *passuk* of the *brachah* before the whole *tzibbur* finishes answering amen to the previous *passuk*. That is because in a place where the *tzibbur* is obligated to hear the *brachah*, the *mevarech* has to wait for the minority, even if they are erroneously prolonging the amen, so that they should hear the *brachah* as well. The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (124 12) and the *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 38) concur.

A Hefsek With a Spoken Word

A person should not pause to speak - even one word - between hearing the *brachah* and answering amen, and if he does speak out, he should not answer amen.

Sources and Explanations

This is brought by the *Biur Halachah* (124 11) in the name of *Hagahos Rabbi Akiva Eiger* (*ibid* 5). And it is evident from his words that even if he said one word, he cannot say amen, even though he is still within the time of *kedei dibbur* to complete the *brachah* (*Mishnah Acharonah* *ibid* 79). The *Halichos Shlomo*, *Tefillah* (22:18) concurs. See also *Halichos Shlomo* (*ibid*) that noted a *tzarich iyun* regarding if the person uttered a half a word, or that he completed a word that he had begun earlier.

Otzros Emunim

Making Hishtadlus to Answer Amen

Accumulate Amens With All His Strength

Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b) that “anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him,” as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): ‘*Pischu she’arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim,*’ do not read it *shomer emunim*, but rather *she’omrim amen*.”

In the *Rif’s* commentary on *Ein Yaakov* (*Shabbos* 119b) Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto explains that when saying “anyone who answers amen with all his strength,” Chazal meant that a person should make an effort “with all his strength” to say as many amens as possible, “not one and not two, but anything that he is able to do to answer amen, and he should answer often.” For this reason, the *passuk* says “*shomer emunim*” in the plural, that a person should be on guard and wait to answer many amens.

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma’aminim* and the staff of *Bney Emunim*,
I read your pamphlet regularly and marvel at all that you do.

It’s disheartening that we even have to be *me’orer* about such an important mitzvah, and it’s distressing to see sometimes that even *bnei Torah* are not aware of the importance of answering amen.

Most of the *avodah* of *tefillah* established by Chazal is comprised of *brachos* and amen, and I will detail just a bit from *Tefillas Shacharis*: The *tefillah* begins with *Birchos Hashachar*, and then with *Pesukei Dezimrah* which are bookended by *brachos*; likewise *Krias Shema* has a number of *brachos*, the heart of the *tefillah* is *Shemoneh Esreh* which is comprised completely of *brachos*, and the symbol of *tefillah betzibbur*, which is *Kaddish*, where the *chazzan* urges the *tzibbur* “*v’imru amen*” – it is based on the amen that the *tzibbur* answers.

Of course, in your merit, awareness of this matter has been transformed. But I plead with you, do not desist, generate even more awareness, because *bechasdei Shamayim* you have the right tools, the right approach, an excellent ability to explain, and most importantly, *siyata diShmaya*.

I personally am extensively involved in this subject, and I would like to share a *remez* that I recently spoke about.

The *passuk* says (*Devarim* 7:12) “*Vehayah eikev tishme’un,*” and *Rashi* explains that the word “*eikev*” is derived from the term “*akev*” and alludes to a mitzvah that a person “grinds with their heels” meaning that a person tends to be lax about. The Torah promises that if a person will keep those easy *mitzvos*, he will merit the explicit promises in these *pesukim*.

As is known, the mitzvah of answering amen is easy to fulfill and very commonly found, and therefore, it is one of the *mitzvos* that we are often lax about. Dovid Hamelech says about this: (*Tehillim* 49:6): “*Lamah ira beyemei ra avon akeivai yesubeini.*” One who peruses this further will be amazed to see that עקבי is numerically equivalent to 182, which is twice amen!

May you see much *brachah* in your work, amen!

With respect,

Yishai Shimon, Yerushalayim

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Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Matzeivos in the Jewish cemetery in Brody.

Harav Shlomo Kluger

30 Sivan 5629

Harav Shlomo Yaakov Yosef Kluger was born in 5546 in Komarov, to his father Rav Yehuda Aharon Kluger, who served as the Rav of the city. While he was a young child, people marveled at how much Torah he knew, his father dedicated himself to teaching his child Torah.

When he reached bar mitzvah age, his father passed away, and his mother sent him to Zamosc, where he learned from the Mishnas Chachamim. The Dubno Maggid, who served as the maggid in Zamosc at the time, was very impressed at his greatness in Torah, and he learned with him each Erev Shabbos all the *midrashim* on the *parashah*.

After his marriage, he moved to the town of Rava, near his father-in-law, who supported him. In 5570, he was appointed Rav of Kulikov, and later served as Rav in a number of communities in Galicia and Poland.

He authored many works on all subjects of Torah. In his *sefer Ubacharta Bachaim* (29) he wrote of himself: “Thanks to Hashem that I have about 115 large compilations on *Tanach* and on all of *Shas* and *poskim*, *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*, and countless *sheilos* and *teshuvos*.” He wrote this in 5604, about twenty-five years before his passing.

On Erev Shabbos *Parashas Korach* 5580, he was hired to serve as *Av Bais Din* and *Maggid* in the city of Brody, which was a city filled with scholars. On 30 Sivan 5629, he passed away in Brody, and was laid to rest in the cemetery in the city.

One Who Answers Amen Is a Metzueh V’Oseh

Chazal say (*Kiddushin* 31a) that “One who is instructed and does something is greater than someone who is not instructed and does something.” In other words, the reward of one who does a mitzvah that he is obligated to do is greater than the reward of one who voluntarily does a mitzvah that he is not obligated to do. That is because someone who is instructed to do something has a greater *yetzer hara* to sin, and he needs more strength to fight it (*Ritva* *ibid*).

Based on this, Rav Shlomo Kluger explained the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 53b) that “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.” The one who makes *Birchos Hanehenin* is considered “*eino metzueh v’oseh*,” because he can refrain from this pleasure and then he would not be obligated to make the *brachah* at all. In contrast, one who answers amen is a “*metzueh v’oseh*,” because one who hears a *brachah* is obligated *mitzad hadin* to answer amen. Therefore, the reward of the one who answers amen is that he is a *metzueh v’oseh* and he needs to have more strength to fight his *yetzer hara* “*yoser min hamevarech*” – who for some *brachos* is an “*eino metzueh v’oseh*.” (*Shu”t Shenos Chaim Kuntress Derech Hachaim Derech Chamishi*)