

# 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

### An Everlasting Yeshuah – Only Through Tefillah

“איש כי ידר נדר לה' או השבע שבעה לאסור אסור על נפשו לא יחל דברו ככל הינא מפיו יעשה” (ג' ג)

The *Bney Yissaschar* cited his Rebbe, the **Chozeh of Lublin** that even though sometimes, a person can be answered from Above even without davening, but rather “through a random comment that he says ‘it should be like this,’ and if it is an *eis ratzon* his words re fulfilled,” still, there is no comparing someone who davens and is answered to someone whose request is fulfilled without him davening. Because when someone is answered only because it was an *eis ratzon*, the *yeshuah* may not have a *kiyum*, it may not be long lasting, while someone who prayed and was answered is guaranteed that his *yeshuah* has a *kiyum*.

The *Bney Yissaschar* explained the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (69:14): “*V’ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon Elokim berov chasdecha aneini b’emes yishecha*” according to this concept. Dovid Hamelech says: “*V’ani sefillasi Lecha Hashem eis ratzon*” – because even during an *eis ratzon*, I chose to daven to You and did not suffice with just random statements, therefore “*aneini b’emes yishecha*” – with a *yeshuah* that is long lasting.

Based on this, **Harav Yehoshua Buxbaum, Hy”d**, the Rav of Galanta, explained the connection between the three *pesukim* in which the word יחל appears in *Tanach*: One is this *passuk*, the second is יחל ישראל אל ה' כי עם ה'

החסד (*Tehillim* 130:7), and the third is יחל ישראל אל ה' מעתה ועד עולם (ibid 131:3). Even though during an *eis ratzon*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu לא יחל דברו of the person, even when he did not intend it as a *tefillah*, still יחל ישראל אל ה' in *tefillah*, because only through prayer will the *yeshuah* be everlasting, and the words “מעתה ועד עולם” will be fulfilled.

*Bney Yissaschar Ma'amarei HaShabbasos Ma'amar 8:16; Ohr Pnei Yehoshua*

### 'Hallelukah' In the Number of Aharon's Years

“ואהרן בן שלש ועשרים ומאת שנה במתו בבהר ההר” (לג לט)

*Chazal* say (*Yerushalmi Shabbos* 16a) that in earlier times, it was customary that the *Hallel* said on the Mo'adim was only said by the *chazzan*, while the *tzibbur* was *yotzei* by listening, and the answering of 'Hallelukah' after each segment. Furthermore, they would divide the *Hallel* into 123 segments, so it emerged that the *tzibbur* answered *Hallelukah* 123 times – the same as the number of years Aharon lived.

*Chazal* base these words on the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 150:1): “הללויה הללו א-ל” – ביקדשו – Praise Hashem by saying *Hallelukah* the same number of times as the years of Aharon's life, as he was called the *Kadosh Hashem* (ibid 106:16). And **Harav Eliyahu Hakohein Ha'Itamari**, the author of *Shevet Mussar*, wrote that this custom teaches us that throughout the 123 years of Aharon's life, he did not stop praising and thanking Hashem for even a minute.

*Aggadas Eliyahu Yerushalmi Shabbos 16a*

### A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

#### Amen – The Protective All of Am Yisrael

Answering amen – aside from being a great mitzvah – also serves as a protective wall for Am Yisrael. And as *Chazal* explain (*Tanna Devei Eliyahu Rabbah* 11) the *passuk* that *Devorah Haneviah* said in her song, after Am Yisrael prevailed in the war over *Sisera* (*Shoftim* 5:2): “*Bifroa pera'os b'Yisrael behisnadev am barchu Hashem*” (*Shoftim* 5:2) – “What did *Devorah* prophesize for Am Yisrael? She said to them: In the merit of who does HaKadosh Baruch Hu take revenge on the nations of the world for Am Yisrael? In people that go to the *beis knesses* and *beis medrash* morning and evening and answer amen and bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu with amen, as it says, “*Bifroa pera'os b'Yisrael*,” in the merit of “*behisnadev am barchu Hashem*.”

Today as well, as the enemies of Am Yisrael try over and over to harm us, we clearly see how, in keeping with the words of *Chazal*, Hashem takes revenge on them and prevents them from carrying out their evil plans. This is only because of the strict adherence to answering amen! There is no doubt that the millions of amens that Am Yisrael says each day are a protective wall for Am Yisrael against their enemies.

We can find an allusion to this in the *parashah*, in the *passuk* that describes the way the *pekudei hachayil* informed Moshe that not one of the people who went out for a war against Midyan fell in battle (*Bamidbar* 31:49): “Your servants counted the heads of the people of the war וְלֹא נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ, and not one of them is missing.” The acronym of נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ is amen, to

teach us that answering amen helped the wondrous success of the revenge of Hashem in Midyan, and the fact that no one in Am Yisrael fell in battle.

I will add that these words are also alluded to in the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 53b), which, when describing the virtues of answering amen, compares the *oneh* to the hero that triumphs in the war. Even though these words are a parable, they can still be explained in the simple sense, and they surely allude to the *segulah* inherent in answering amen, as it is the “hero” in whose merit Am Yisrael prevails in war.

The day will yet come when every one of those who merited to be strict in answering amen with all his strength, and will be considered a “*shomer emunim*,” will be astonished to see how many souls he saved, and how many tragedies he was able to prevent in the merit of being strict to answer amen. And who knows, perhaps the *mitzvos* that those people who were saved fulfilled after they were spared will be added to his count of merits...

Dear Yidden! Am Yisrael needs a protective wall. Will we ignore the fact that this is all in our hands?! *Chazal* are not demanding from us more than we are obligated to do. They are suggesting something simple: Keep the halachah, and by doing so, you will establish a protective wall. Be strict to say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each morning, and through that, you will merit to protect Klal Yisrael wherever they are, and you will all accrue countless merits.

Good Shabbos  
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

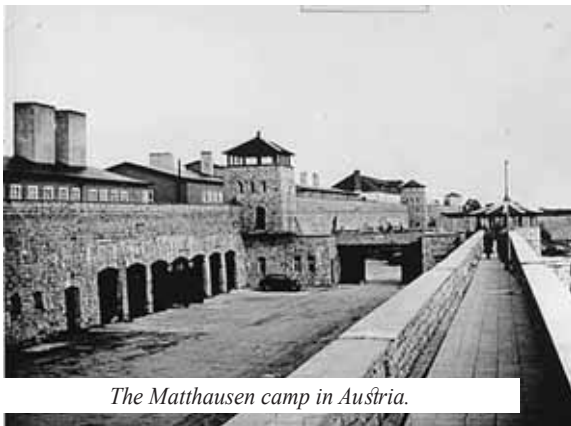
### The Other Side of the Story

It was the end of 5705/1945 in the Matthausen death camp in Austria. As the smoke of the furnaces still hovered over the skies of the camp, Harav Eliezer Silver, *zt"l*, the Rav of Cincinnati, Ohio, and one of the leaders of Agudas Harabbanim of America, had already arrived. He had worked tirelessly during the war and afterwards to help the survivors of the camps.

Rabbi Silver arrived together with the American soldiers, the liberators of the camp, and with *mesirus nefesh*, spent time walking through the camp, amidst the smoking pyres, gathering people to him, pained souls, skeletal beings, many of them who had lost all interest in living.

Rabbi Silver established an improvised shul for the survivors, and when Shabbos arrived, he waited with them for a *minyan* to gather for *Maariv*. Eight survivors sat and waited together with Rabbi Silver for a tenth man, who failed to turn up.

One of the survivors offered to go out and look for a tenth man, and he



The Matthausen camp in Austria.

quickly found one. Right outside the shul stood a Yid; he was bareheaded and had an indifferent expression on his face. "Reb Yid," the first survivor addressed him, "we're nine people, perhaps you can complete a *minyan* for us?"

He had prepared himself for an evasive answer, but did not expect such a hostile response: "I don't care about your prayers!" the man said angrily. "I don't want to see a *siddur* or a shul! Leave me alone!"

The first man went back into the shul, pained and hurt; he briefly told Rav Silver about the response he had received, and suggested that he

try to reach out to the man himself. Hopefully, he would at least respond with *derech eretz*.

Rav Silver was not deterred, and went out to the man. He placed a hand on his shoulder and gently explained to him how important, and how worthwhile, it was for him to come in. But the man remained firm. "Your shul simply doesn't interest me!" he declared impudently. "I don't want to see religious people anymore, or a *siddur*..."

When the Rav saw how deep the man's feelings were, he decided to leave him be, but not before he asked for an explanation. "I understand you don't want to daven, but what is it that makes you hate so much?"

In response, the man looked into Rav Silver's eyes and shared his horrific story:

"I was in the Matthausen camp," he related. "On the bunk beneath mine was a religious Jew who had smuggled a *siddur* into the camp. It was the only *siddur* in the whole barracks, and there was tremendous demand. Each morning, from five until six, there was a line near his bunk, and each person on that line wanted to daven something from a *siddur*. The man passed the *siddur* from hand to hand, and each one davened the passage that he chose, recited *Krias Shema* and passed the *siddur* to the next one in line.

"But the man did not do this for free; he conditioned use of his *siddur* on payment, and he got what he asked for. In exchange for using the *siddur*, the man demanded one half of each user's daily bread ration. The whole ration was so paltry to begin with, and those Yidden had to part with half their bread and starve, because of this terrible person's greed. So while all the prisoners of the camp were like walking skeletons, this man was satisfied and looked much healthier.

"If this is what the religious people and the *siddur* are like, I don't want connection with any of them!" the man concluded, and began to walk off.

But Rabbi Silver was not one to give up so easily: "I understand you very well," he said, "but still, I would like to ask you that before you go, listen to

a story that I want to tell you, although you need to know beforehand that after you hear the story, you will probably come in to complete our *minyan*..."

The man agreed and Rav Silver told the man the same story that he had just related, but in contrast, he presented the other side of the coin:

"In the Matthausen Camp, there was just one *siddur*, whose owner saved the situation, and without any shame, he demanded from every Jew who wanted to use the *siddur* payment of half his daily bread ration.

"The prisoners of the camp suffered horrifically from starvation, but that did not prevent them from standing in line each day near the man's bunk, and risking their chances of surviving the day, just to be able to pour their hearts out to Hashem from the precious *siddur*.

"Remember, these people had long lost everything that was dear to them; they left parents and siblings, a wife and children in the crematoria, and yet, they continued to hold on to their love of Hashem, and their *emunah*, to the extent that they were ready to sacrifice an hour of their tortured sleep and half of their meager rations to say *Shema Yisrael* and to cleave to Him, even in the valley of death.

"Look at Am Yisrael's beauty, dear Yid," Rav Silver concluded, as he noticed a tear roll out of the man's eye. "Choose to see the other side of the story. Don't look at this Jew, whose lot was so bitter that he sank to such depths. Look at those precious Yidden who, even in the valley of death, chose to cleave to their faith and to sacrifice their last bit of bread for it."

Rav Silver concluded his words as he pressed the hand of the other man warmly. It was not surprising when the latter agreed to join the *minyan* for davening.

This story was shared by Mr. Simon Wiesenthal, known as the Nazi hunter, after dedicating his life to hunting down and prosecuting Nazis. Mr. Wiesenthal related the story at the end of his life, in a speech that he gave at a Rabbinical gathering in Europe. And then he moved the crowd even more when he concluded:

"I was that Jew! And that moment that Rabbi Silver taught me to look at the world through positive glasses is one that I will never forget!"



## — Amen With Kavanah —

After a Request Unrelated to the Essence of the *Brachah*

Even though we said that when answering amen to *brachos* that include both praise and a request, one must have in mind both “it is true” and “*yehi ratzon*,” that is only in the case where the request that is in the *brachah* is related to the essence of the *brachah*. But in a *brachah* where the request is unrelated to its essence, one should have in mind in amen only the essence of the *brachah*. One example is during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, when we add the request of *Zachreinu Lechaim* in the *brachah* of *Avos* – and there, one should only in mind “it is true” when saying amen.

## Sources and Explanations

This is brought in *sefer Notrei Amen* Vol. II (Chapter 3, 7-8), in the name of *Shevet Halevi*, *Ayeles Hashachar* and *Derech Emunah*. And see there (*Netivei She'arim Shaar Gimmel*) who wrote that he heard from the *Shevet Halevi* that although we say that answering amen has *kavanah* for the whole *brachah*, this is only applicable if the request is related to the content of the closing of the *brachah*, because the closing of the *brachah* expresses its essence and we cannot have in mind when answering amen a request that does not relate to the essence of the *brachah*. Therefore, during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, one should not have in mind when answering amen to *Magen Avraham* that the request of *Zachreinu Lechaim* should be fulfilled. Likewise, on the Yamim Noraim, we should not have in mind when answering amen after the *brachah* of *HaMelech HaKadosh* that the request of *Uvechen Ten Pachedecha* should be fulfilled. The *Notrei Amen* further stated (ibid in the comments) that one should not have in mind when answering amen to the request of *Zachreinu Lechaim*, because this is an addition by the Gaonim, and it was not instituted by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, who established the format of the *brachos* (see *Rosh Brachos* 1:16). But *sefer Olas Tamid* (Chapter 23 in the comments) wrote that in the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, one should have in mind when answering amen after the *brachah* of *Magen Avraham* also that the request of *Zachreinu Lechaim* should be fulfilled, but *sefer Notrei Amen* (ibid) wrote that these words were not written by the rav who authored it.

The Kavanah of Amen After the *Brachos* of the *Tefillah*

The *brachos Baruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach* are a matter of praise and gratitude, and therefore, the amen that follows should be answered with the *kavanah* of “it is true.” When answering amen after the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* of *Shacharis* and *Arvis*, one should have in mind that “it is true,” except in the *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu*, which, because it has requests, one should have in mind when saying amen both “it is true” and “may it

be.” But there are those who hold that even when answering amen to *Birchas Yotzer Ohr*, and after the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah*, one should have in mind both *kavanos*, because they include a request.

## Sources and Explanations

The *Magen Avraham* wrote (124 10) that the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* (ibid 6) that one should answer amen with the meaning of “it is true” are said regarding the *brachos* of *Baruch She'amar*, *Yishtabach* and *Ga'al Yisrael*, because they are *brachos* whose content is only gratitude and there is no request. This is cited in the *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 25). And see also *Yesod Veshores Ha'avodah* (*Sha'ar Hashir* Ch. 7) who explained that the meaning of amen on the *brachah* of *Yishtabach* is: “Amen, that it is fitting and honest to praise You Hashem with these praises.”

The *Karnos Tzaddik* (ibid) wrote that all the *brachos* of *Krias Shema*, both morning and evening, are considered *brachos* of gratitude where amen should be answered with the meaning of “it is true,” except for the *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu*, said in *Maariv*, because it contains request. Therefore, when answering it, one should have in mind both that “it is true” and “may it be.” But the *Siach Halachah* (124 20) wrote that even in the *brachos* of *Yotzer Ohr* and *Ahavah Rabbah* there are requests, so when answering amen after them, one should have both meanings in mind. It also seems from this that the *Magen Avraham* (ibid) included in the *brachos* of *hoda'ah* for which we answer amen meaning “it is true” also the *brachos* of *Baruch She'amar*, *Yishtabach* and *Ga'al Yisrael*, and he omitted the *brachos* of *Yotzer Ohr* and *Ahavah Rabbah*.

We should further point out that for those who customarily say at the end of *Ga'al Yisrael* “*Tzur Yisrael kumah b'ezras Yisrael ufedeh chinumecha Yehudah v'Yisrael*” this *brachah* also contains a request for the *Geulah* [see *Tzelach Brachos* 21a who wrote that these words are usually said as a *tefillah* and a request] and if so, then one must have both *kavanos* in mind when answering amen. The *Olas Tamid* (ibid) concurred. Perhaps the *Magen Avraham* shared the opinion of those who say not to say this request in the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*. Regarding the change of *muscha'os* in this *brachah* see *Likutei Mahari"ch* (*Seder Birchos Krias Shema* after it).

Regarding the *brachah* of *Hama'ariv Aravim*, everyone agrees that one should have in mind only “it is true”, because even if we explain that the *tefillah* of “*Kel chai vekayam tamid yimloch aleinu l'olam va'ed*” as a request, still, the meaning of this *brachah* was not included in its essence and in its conclusion (*Notrei Amen* ibid). Regarding the *brachah* of *Ahavas Olam*, said at *Maariv*: According to the Ashkenazi *musach*, this *brachah* concludes with a request that is sort of a conclusion: “*Ve'ahavascha al tasir mimenu l'olamim*,” but the Sephardic *musach* is “*Ve'ahavascha lo sasur...*” This is not a request, but rather a declaration and an expression of confidence that the love of Hashem for us will continue in full force for eternity. (*Bad Kodesh V'eschanan*)

## Amen Around the Year

### The Three Weeks

### Three Brachos

As is known, the *mochichim*, those who delivered rebuke, cautioned to be strict to answer amen after the two *brachos* of *Geulah: Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion* and *Haporess Sukkas Shalom...V'al Yerushalayim*. The also said that because of a lack of strictness in answering amen to these two *brachos*, the *Geulah* is being delayed (*Derech Moshe* for Day 11; *Sefer Habris* Vol. II, *Ma'amar* 12, Ch. 1). *Sefer Hapanim* (47) added a caution about answering amen to another *brachah* of the *Birchos Hageulah*, and that is the *brachah* of *Mechayeh Hameisim*, as many begin reciting *Kedushah* and forget to answer it, thus delaying the *Geulah*.

**Harav Yehoshua Alter Vildman**, Av Bais Din of Koneskowola, explained that the obligation to answer amen to these three *brachos* is alluded to in the *tefillah* of *Nachem*, said on Tisha B'Av: "*Al kein Tzion bemar tivkeh*" – this is the *brachah* of *Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion* which "cries bitterly" that people are not careful to answer amen after it. "*V'yerushalayim titen kolah*" – is the *brachah* of *Haporess Sukkas Shalom...V'al Yerushalayim*, which raises its voice that they do not answer amen after it. "*Libi libi al chaleleihem*" is the *brachah* of *Mechayeh Hameisim*, which is also lamenting over those who are not careful to answer amen after it. (*V'Imru Amen*, Vol. II, 24)

## Iggeres Emunim

### A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

May you see much *brachah* and success in the *Kiddush Hashem* that you are effecting through your continuous work to restore the *Kavod Hashem* to its rightful place by inculcating generations to be "*Yodei Shemecha*" and without a doubt, you will merit to be counted among those who are "*Lomdei Torasecha lishmah*."

I recently encountered the awesome words of the *Shelah Hakadosh* about the virtues of answering amen. He wrote (*Maseches Tamid* 80): "In the *seforim* of the *Mekubalim*, who draw from the wellspring of the *Zohar*, they expounded on the secret of the word amen and its letters, **and they wrote that the Eloyonim and Tachtonim, the Upper and lower worlds are all dependent on the word amen, and that is the ikkar, and the root and the fundamental institution of all the worlds.** And someone who has *kavanah* on every single *brachah* that emerges from the mouth of the *mevarech* and answers amen with *kavanah* according to *halachah*, causes tremendous *kedushah* On High, and brings down an abundance to all the worlds, because he opens the Upper Source, the Source of *Mayim Chaim*, like one who opens the wellspring to give all that needs watering to drink..."

I thought to add that these words, that the fundamental of all the worlds depends on answering amen, are alluded to in the *nusach* of the *brachah* of "*Roka ha'aretz al hamayim*" – על is numerically equivalent to 100, an allusion to the one hundred *brachos*. מים (with the *kollel*) is numerically equivalent to אמן. And that is the meaning, that Hashem is "*Roka ha'aretz al hamayim*" – that the entire creation is predicated על המים - on the *brachah* and on amen.

With deepest respect,

**Yehudah Lemberger**, Beit Shemesh

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## Shaarei Gan Eden

### Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



### Harav Shmuel Rozovsky, zt"l

27 Tammuz 5739

Harav Shmuel was born in the city of Grodno, Lithuania, to his father Harav Michel Dovid Rozovsky, who was a *dayan* in the city. When he grew up, he began to learn in Yeshivas Sha'ar HaTorah

in his city, under his rebbi, Harav Shimon Shkop, from whom he was strongly influenced. In 5696, he traveled to Eretz Yisrael to learn in Lomza Yeshivah in Petach Tikva. He married the daughter of the Rav of Yerushalayim, Harav Tzvi Pesach Frank, author of *Har Tzvi*.

With the establishment of Ponevezh Yeshivah in 5704, he was asked to head the yeshivah, and kept the position until his passing. He became renowned as one of the leading *roshei yeshivah* in the generation. He had many *talmidim* and his teachings are widely disseminated in the yeshivah world. His *chiddushim* were published in the series *Shiurei Hagra"sh Rozovsky, Chiddushei Rav Shmuel and Shiurei Rav Shmuel*.

He passed away in Bnei Brak on 27 Tammuz 5739, and was buried in the Ponevezh Cemetery in the city.

## The Gates Open to the Oneh Amen

*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 (*Yeshaya* 26:2): '*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim.*' Do not read it '*shomer emunim*' but rather '*she'omrim amen.*'" And there is a question: Weren't *Chazal* referring to the individual who answers amen, as the wording '*kol ha'oneh amen*' indicates? Why did they conclude with "*poschim lo Shaarei Gan Eden*" in the plural?

The Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Shmuel Rozovsky, explained this in two ways:

1. When a person devotes himself to the mitzvah of answering amen, and fulfills with "with all his strength", then aside for the gates that are opened to him to Gan Eden, many additional gates are opened for all those in his generation, and they also merit to inherit Gan Eden in his merit. [Similar to what we find (*Eiruvin* 54b) that in the merit of Rav Preida's dedication to teaching his student Torah, a Bas Kol emerged and said that Rav Preida and all of his generation were invited to a life of Olam Haba.] (*Notrei Amen* Vol. I, p. 50)

2. In their promise to have the "gates of Gan Eden" opened, *Chazal* mean that all gates of spiritual abundance in this world will be opened in front of one who answers amen with all his strength. And because "all the gates of spiritual abundance in the Creation" are opened before one who "answers amen with all his strength," not only the gate of spiritual abundance that belongs to the mitzvah of answering amen, therefore it says "*sha'arei*," gates, in the plural (*Zichron Shmuel* p. 638)