

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

'Veshinantam Levanecha' Through 'Vedibarta Bam'!

We say the commandment of "*veshinantam levanecha*," written in this *parashah*, every single day. It instructs us to teach our children Torah and its *mitzvos*. The reason for this commandment does not need to be explained. The foundations of Torah in our nation are fulfilled only through the power of the *mesorah* that passes from generation to generation. Parents give the Torah over to their children, and they, in turn, will give it over to their children when the time comes.

We can learn about the importance of conveying the fundamentals of Torah to our offspring from its centrality in *Birchas HaTorah*. Our first request each morning is "And may we and our offspring [and our offspring's offspring] all know Your Name and learn Your Torah *lishmah*."

Chazal ranked the obligation of teaching Torah to our children in accordance with the child's age. For this reason, they say (*Sukkah* 42a) that as soon as a child learns to speak, his father should teach him the *passuk* (*Devarim* 33:4): "*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe...*" and the *passuk* (*ibid* 6:4) "*Shema Yisrael Hashem*"

But there is something that we should teach our children even before that, and that is to answer amen. Based on the words of the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 110b) that from when a child answers amen he merits life in *Olam Haba*, the *Rema* rules (*Orach Chaim* 124 7, based on *Sanhedrin* 110b): "And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as a child answers amen, he has a share in *Olam Haba*."

It is well known that personal example is the most effective way to teach and be *mechanech* children. This is also true regarding answering amen. If we want to teach our children to value the *mitzvah* of answering amen, and to bring them to a life in *Olam Haba*, we ourselves have to be careful to uphold this *mitzvah*.

When a child comes to shul and sees that his father or Rav are lax, *chalilah*, about answering amen, he learns to imitate their ways, and thus they teach him not to answer amen. It is painful to see that sometimes, instead of teaching children to answer amen, they learn from the figures they most admire

and appreciate to be lax about amen.

Harav Yitzchak of Korbil, one of the *Baalei Hatosafos*, writes in his *Sefer Mitzvos Kattan* (*Mitzvos* 12) just such a thing: "*Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): 'The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*, and the gates of *Gan Eden* are open to him, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): "*Pischu she'arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*" – do not read it '*emunim*' but rather '*amenim*' (*Shabbos* 119b). And from that time, a baby merits life in *Olam Haba* (*Sanhedrin* 110a). **And if so, woe to those who speak mundane matters or make jokes and banter in the shul during davening, and withhold *Olam Haba* from their children.**"

Often, people seek to compliment me for the work that Bney Emunim does in education institutions. "My children are strict to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each day," they tell me. And in response, I ask if they, too, are strict about it, because I know that this wonderful practice will not last long without a personal example.

The giants throughout the generations have told us that the *passuk* "*veshinantam levanecha*" itself expresses the importance of *chinuch* through personal example, and thus they explained this *passuk*: The right way to do "*veshinantam levanecha*" is when the father himself shows his son a personal example of how important the review is, and he should himself fulfil the words "*vedibarta bam beshivtecha beveisecha uvelechtechu baderech ubeshochbecha uvekumecha*."

Let us be strict to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* each day, and to answer amen, and thus we will convey the importance of answering amen to the generation of the future, and we should merit to see the fulfillment of the request: "And may we and our offspring and our offspring's offspring all know Your Name and learn Your Torah *lishmah*."

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmorstein

Excitement spread throughout the town. The giant of the generation, the Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov, was going to be making a historic visit to serve as *sandak* at the *bris* of the son of Reb Fishel the tailor, a simple villager who had merited a son after many years of waiting.

During the many years that Reb Fishel and his wife waited to merit a child, they tried every possible *segulah*. They distributed the meager amounts of money that they had to charity, and went from one *tzaddik* to another to ask for *brachos*. They performed many acts of *chessed*, but most of all, they never ceased davening for a *yeshuah*!

Their close family had already given up all hope. The expressions on the doctors' faces had never boded well, but Reb Fishel and his wife did not give up. They pleaded and poured their hearts out tearfully to the Ribbono shel Olam to see their angst

by holding a grand meal for the *bris*.

The *bris* drew closer, and friends and relatives had already been invited. Now they just needed to arrange a *sandak*. The parents wanted only a truly lofty person to serve as their son's *sandak*, so that he could bestow from his greatness to their son on this day of his *bris*. Indeed, a day before the *bris*, the new father set out for the nearby city of Sochatchov, which was famed for the *tzaddik* who lived there, the giant of Polish Jewry, the Avnei Nezer.

Reb Fishel wanted to honor the Avnei Nezer with serving as *sandak*. His friends who heard this tried to dissuade him, because it was known that in recent years, the Rebbe had hardly left his house for events, not even those held by his closest *chassidim*. Surely, he would not participate in the *bris* of a child of a simple Jew who he did not even know...

Yet, the villager resolved to try,

and he set out hopefully. Indeed, his efforts were not for naught. He came to the home of the Avnei Nezer and told him of the miracle he had experienced, and asked the Rebbe to serve as the *sandak*. To the surprise of all those present, the Rebbe accepted. He asked about the time and place, and then requested that his attendants prepare for the trip.

Overjoyed, Reb Fishel hurried home to share the news with his wife.

The news about the Rebbe's unusual acquiescence spread rapidly. People stood on street corners and discussed it, trying to figure out why the Rebbe had agreed. They could not believe it – what a merit, the Sochatchover Rebbe would be the *sandak* at the *bris* of the son of Reb Fishel the tailor...

Various assessments were cast about. Some claimed that they had long suspected Reb Fishel of being a hidden *tzaddik*. As proof, they mentioned his pure *tefillos* that he offered each day in the shul. Others recalled various events of the past

that could indicate a close connection between the Rebbe's family and Reb Fishel's family. Others claimed that the *bris* was just an excuse, and there was a secret reason for the Rebbe's agreement to attend...

Whatever the reason was, on the morning of the *bris*, the Rebbe's carriage rolled into the town. All the local children went out to greet him dressed in their Shabbos best and carrying flags. The shul was packed with people.

The Rebbe spent just a short time in the town. The baby was brought into the covenant of Avraham Avinu on the Rebbe's knees. At the end of the *bris*, the Rebbe warmly blessed the child and his parents, and before he managed to leave, many of the town's residents passed by the Rebbe, shook his hand and received a *brachah*.

The short visit left those close to the Rebbe wondering, and led them to deviate from the norm and to ask the Rebbe why he had made the effort to attend the *bris* of a simple tailor.

The answer was no less surprising than the question: "This simple villager," the Rebbe explained, "astonished me with his *emunah peshutah*. Over the years that he waited, he surely received *brachos* from *gedolei Yisrael* and tried many *segulos*, but when he finally merited a *yeshuah* he came to me and said simply: Rebbe, after fifteen years, I was *zocheh*, and Hashem in His great compassion, granted me a son. Now I am *zocheh* to bring him into the *bris* of Avraham Avinu, and I am asking the Rebbe to please honor me and serve as *sandak*.

"When I heard his words I decided on the spot to accept. His pure *emunah* touched my heart. It's been a long time since I have heard, not even from eminent *chassidim* and *bnai Torah*, that Hashem is the One Who granted them a *yeshuah*. One attributed his *yeshuah* to a *brachah* he received from this Rebbe, the other to a *segulah* he received from another *tzaddik*. But Fishel the tailor came and declared in the simplest fashion that Hashem had granted him a *yeshuah*. And in honor of the Mekadesh Shem Shamayim, I had to deviate from my custom and participate in his *simchah*!"

Yagdil Torah Parashas Vayeitzei



The city of Sochatchov, Poland. In the center of the phot is the Bzura River that runs through the city.

and send them a *yeshuah*. Fifteen years of pain mingled with hope passed, accumulating into thousands of days of endless anticipation. And when the *yeshuah* of Hashem finally came, there was no limit to their joy. A healthy baby was finally placed in their trembling arms, and their hearts overflowed with gratitude, as tears of joy flowed from their eyes and their lips murmured praises and songs to the One Who holds the key to life in His Hands, for sending them salvation.

Right after the birth of his son, the father began preparing for the *bris* and the *seudah* that would follow. After such a long wait, the parents wished to express their feelings of gratitude

”אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים” (ה ג)

This *passuk* is the source for the mitzvah of *emunah* that obligates a person to believe that there is a Creator and Leader in the world (Rambam, *Sefer Hamitzvos Mitzvas Aseh* 1; *Sefer Hachinuch* 25). In contrast to most of the *mitzvos* that are bound by time, place or other elements, this mitzvah is constant, and whenever a person thinks about the *Metzius Hashem*, he fulfills it. The *Ohr Zarua* (1 140) writes that this is why *Chazal* did not institute to make a *brachah* before it, as one makes a *brachah* on the other *mitzvos*, because they only instituted to say a *brachah* before a mitzvah that comes from time to time. This is because the *brachah* on the mitzvah expresses the love for the mitzvah at a time when a person has an opportunity to fulfill it, which belongs only to *mitzvos* whose obligation is renewed from time to time, and not *mitzvos* that have to be fulfilled at all times, and there is never something new about them.

Although there is no special *brachah* for this mitzvah, the *mitzvos* of answering amen after *brachos* and *tefillos*

were instituted because of this mitzvah of *emunah*. As Rabbeinu Bechayei says (*Shemos* 14:1): "And because *emunah* is the fundamental of the entire Torah, *Chazal* instituted that we answer amen in *tefillah* and in *brachos*, as it is derived from the term 'emunah' and 'hoda'ah,' that one accepts upon himself the words of the *mevarech* and admits (is *modeh*) to them." The *Megaleh Amukos* wrote (*Parashas Ha'azinu*): "The *ikkar* of *emunah* is contingent on answering amen."

Indeed, the meaning of answering amen is the declaration of absolute *emunah* in the Creator. The *Gemara* asks in *Maseches Shabbos* (119b), "What is amen?" And it replies that the word amen is an acronym for the words א-ל מלך נאמן. *Rashi* explains (ibid ad loc. K-l) that one who answers amen testifies of his Creator that He is a 'K-l Melech Ne'eman.' The *Tosafos* (ibid ad loc. *Amar Rabi Chanina*) derives from these words of the *Gemara* that when answering amen, one should have in mind that Hashem is the "K-l Melech Ne'eman."

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Power of Tefillah Betzibbur Is Exclusive to Am Yisrael

”כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו כה' אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו” (ד ז)

In *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* (18a), the *Gemara* explains that this *passuk* is referring to *tefillas rabbim*, which, even after the decree is sealed, Hashem is close to the people to hear their *tefillos* at any time, and their *tefillos* can be accepted. In contrast, the *passuk* says (*Yeshayahu* 55:6) of an individual who davens for his decree to be torn up: "*Dirshu Hashem behimatzo, kera'uhu behiyoso karov*," the power to tear up his decree is only in *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, when Hashem is very close to him.

Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveichik of Brisk says that in light of this, we can understand the emphasis of the *passuk* on the special closeness that Am Yisrael has regarding having their *tefillos* accepted, as compared to the nations of the world:

Although in general, prayer is effective for the nations of the world as well, as Hashem accepted the *tefillah* of the people of Ninveh (*Yona* 3:10) and *Yeshayah Hanavi* says (56:7): "*Ki Beisi beis tefillah*

yikarei lechol ha'amim," still, the virtue of *tefillah* of the *tzibbur* that is accepted at all times is exclusive to Am Yisrael, because there is no concept of joining a "*tzibbur*" among non-Jews.

Based on this, *sefer Rimon Peretz* explains the term "*v'oneh l'amo Yisrael be'eis shavam eilav*," said in the *brachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*: Hashem answers His people Yisrael, and only them, "when they cry to Him," in *tefillas rabbim*.

Chiddushei Maran R"YZ Halevi Al HaTorah; Rimon Peretz p. 23

When Is the Individual's Request Accepted?

”ובקשתם משם את ה' אלקיך ומצאת כי תדרשנו בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך” (ד כט)

Why does the *passuk* begin with the plural "*Ubikashtem*" and concludes with the singular "*umatzasa*"?

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained:

Chazal say (*Rosh Hashanah* 18a) that the *tefillah* of the *tzibbur* is accepted at all times, and there is no need for a special *eis ratzon*. From the words of *Chazal* there, it appears that the *kavanah* is not only for a request of the entire *tzibbur*, which is requested when said with the *tzibbur*. Even an individual who asks a personal

request during *tefillah betzibbur* is guaranteed that his request will be answered. In order to teach us this concept, the *passuk* begins in the plural and concludes in the singular: "*Ubikashtem*" – during the time of *tefillas rabbim "umatzasa"* – that the individual request of one person is also accepted.

Harav Duber Yaffeh, the Rav of Otian and a *talmid* of Harav Chaim of Volozhin, explained it differently:

In *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* (18a), Rabbi Meir asks how it is possible that two people became sick and bedridden, and they were in the same condition, yet one was healed and the other was not? He replies that the reason is because one davened a complete *tefillah*, meaning with *kavanah*, and the other did not daven a complete *tefillah*! Thus the *passuk* begins with the plural and concludes with the singular: "*Ubikashtem*" – even though two people are asking only one of them merits "*umatzasa*" – and that is the one who fulfills with all his heart the words "*ki sidreshenau bechol levavcha uvechol nafshecha*."

Imrei Shefer; Yesod Ohel Moed p. 29



The Vayechi Yosef of Pupa

The 'Vayechi Yosef' 13 Av 5744

Harav Yosef Greenwald was born in 5663 in the city of Tzehlem to his father, Harav Yaakov Yechezkiyahu of Pupa, author of *Vayaged Yaakov*. As a child he still knew his great grandfather, the Arugas Habosem. As a *bochur*, he traveled to Satmar to learn in the yeshivah of his uncle, the Keren LeDovid, and after his marriage, he was appointed as a *dayan* in the city of Satmar.

After the passing of his father in 5701, Rav Yosef was appointed to succeed him as Rav and Rosh Yeshivah in Pupa. During his time, the number of *talmidim* in the yeshivah swelled to a peak of more than 400.

In 5704, he was taken by the Nazis to a labor camp, and his Rebbetzin and ten children were killed *al Kiddush Hashem*. After the war, he worked tirelessly to rebuild the Torah world, and also remarried. In 5711, he arrived in New York and rebuilt the Pupa dynasty.

He illuminated American Jewry for thirty-three years, leading his community and drawing masses to hear his holy words. He authored a series of *seforim* entitled *Vayechi Yosef* on Torah and Moadim, and *Shu"t Vaya'an Yosef*, a six-volume set.

He passed away on Friday night *Parashas V'eschanan*, 13 Av, 5744, and was buried in the Pupa cemetery in Williamsburg.

A Fool Loses What He Is Given

"It really is wondrous in my eyes," the Vayechi Yosef wrote, "how it is possible that people should be lax about answering amen, despite the words of Chazal extolling the value of this mitzvah. Regarding the laxity in amen one can use the words of Chazal (*Chagigah* 4a): "Who is a fool? The one who loses all that is given to him!"

The truth is that people are sometimes swept up with the masses who are lax in this mitzvah, especially as at times, we see respected people acting this way. But we need to read the words of Chazal (*Yoma* 84b) about this: "Regarding *pikuach nefesh* we do not follow the majority." With improper behavior, such as being lax about answering amen, which is a danger to the soul, one should not follow the majority, rather a person needs to take a stand and be strict to answer amen according to *halachah* (*Vayechi Yosef Moadim* 1, Shabbos Shuvah p. 198).

Bring the Children Only If He Gets a Reward

The *passuk* says (*Devarim* 3'1:12): "*Hakhel es ha'am*, gather the nation, the men, women and children," and the *Gemara* asks (*Chagigah* 3a): "We can understand why the men and women were gathered to teach and hear, but "why did the children come?" And the *Gemara* answers:

"To give a reward to those who bring them." *Tosafos* there adds (ad loc. *Kedei*): "And it is upon this that they based bringing young children to the *beis knesses*."

Harav Menachem Di Lonzano wrote:

A person should not bring his little children to shul unless they know how to be careful about the sanctity of the shul, and do not disturb the *mispallelim*. But someone whose children are lax about respecting the shul, and they act wild there, instead of the words "to give a reward to those who bring them" being applied, of him it will say "to punish those who bring them," *chas veshalom*. It is similar to someone who has an appointment in the king's palace and he brings his foolish servant with him. This servant then embarrasses the king in front of many people. Of course the king would not punish the servant, who is not responsible for his actions, but rather, the master that brought him will be punished. Likewise, someone who brings a child who is not respectful to shul will be punished; the child who does not know better is not the one who will be punished (*Shtei Yados*, [Venice 5378] p. 117).

The Vayechi Yosef adds that these words are alluded to in the *Gemara*:

The *Gemara* asks: "why were the children brought" – why did the *passuk* need to explicitly say that the children should be brought? If the men and women were commanded

to come, surely they would not leave the children alone at home?

The *Gemara* answers: "To give a reward to those who bring them" – the *passuk* teaches us that one should only bring the children in a way that those who bring them will be rewarded, meaning, in order to be *mechanech* them to answer amen and other holy things. If, *chalilah*, their presence disturbs the *mispallelim*, the ones who brought them will be punished, and it is better that they should stay home (*Vayechi Yosef*, *ibid* p. 182).

'Venomar Amen' Is Also a Request

In *Birchas Hachodesh*, recited on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh (see *Magen Avraham* 417 1), it is customary that the community answers amen after each one of the requests in the *tefillah* of "*Yechadsheihu HaKadosh Baruch Hu...letovah ulivrachah, lesasson ulesimchah...*" In light of this we can understand why we then say at the end of this *tefillah* "*venomar amen*." Didn't we already answer amen after each request individually?

The Vayechi Yosef wrote that he heard a witty way to explain this: The words "*venomar amen*" are also a *tefillah* and a request, that we should merit to be strict to answer amen according to *halachah* after each and every *brachah* (*ibid* p. 210).