

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



ת.ד. 102 בני ברק | פקס : 03-5055919
9139191@gmail.com

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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

Teshuvah Transforms a Rasha into a Tzaddik

“ויאמר ה' אם אמצא בדםם המשיים צדיקם בתוך העיר ונשאתי לכל
המקום בעבורם” (י חכו)

Why does it say “*im emtza*” in the future tense? Doesn't Hashem surely know if there are fifty *tzaddikim* to be found in Sodom?

Harav Aizik Ausband, Rosh Yeshivas Telz Cleveland, explained:

The *passuk* (19:24) says “*V’Hashem himtir al Sodom v’al Amora gofris v’aish,*” and Chazal explain (*Mechilta Beshalach Parashah 8*): “If they did *teshuvah*, then it is a *matar*, and if not – *gofris v’aish*” (and the *Targum Yonasan* there says the same.)

In light of this we can explain that Hashem said to Avraham as follows: Even if right now there are no *tzaddikim* in Sodom, still, “if I find in Sodom fifty *tzaddikim*,” who will repent - even only after the punishment begins, that will be enough for me to forgive the whole city for their sake, and I will send upon them only rain.

Lekach Da’as

The Wholeness of the Angel Is Testimony to the Wholeness of the Mitzvah

“ויקרא אליו מלאך ה' מן השמים ויאמר אברהם ויאמר הנני; ויאמר אל תשלח ירך אל הנער ואל תעש לו מאומה כי עתה ידעתי כי ירא אלקים אתה ולא חשכת את בנךך את יחידך ממני” (כב יא-יב)

How does the angel tell Avraham “*velo chasachta...mimeni*” – did Avraham seek to sacrifice his son to the angel?

The **Gra** explained:

It is known that with every mitzvah that is done, an angel is created, and the level of that angel is determined by the way the mitzvah was performed. The more complete the mitzvah is, the higher is the level of the angel that is created by it. Because the angel that spoke here to Avraham Avinu is the one created from the mitzvah of the Akeidah, therefore he said to him: “*mimeni*” – from the fact that I was created at such a high level I can learn to what extent “*yarei Elokim atah,*” how G-d fearing you are.

Kol Eliyahu

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Ten Minutes That Make the Difference

From the words in this *parashah* (*Bereishis 19:27*): “*Vayshkem Avraham baboker el hamakom asher amad sham,*” Chazal learn (*Brachos 6b*) that Avraham Avinu instituted that we daven *Shacharis* each day, as it says “*ein amidah ela tefillah.*”

From the words of Chazal it emerges that not only did Avraham Avinu institute for us the actual tefillah of *Shacharis*, he also taught us practices in life, to rise early to pray it in the morning, as the *passuk* says of him: “*Vayashkem,*” and he woke up early in the morning. As such, rising early for *Shacharis* is not only *hiddur*, or another virtue, it is a part of how we have been taught to daven by Avraham Avinu.

Indeed, if one takes heart he will notice that when a person gets to *Shacharis* just a bit late, or even “exactly on time,” he might lose out a full world, in every sense! More than 20 *brachos* are recited before *tefillas Shacharis*, and when a person comes exactly on time to daven – how are they said?!

In the small amount of time that he has, he needs to put on his tallis and make the *brachah*, to put on tefillin, and to make the *brachah*, and then to also say *korbanos*...

It is very sad to see *yirei Shamayim* cramming all of this into a few short minutes...

In addition, those who seek to say *Birchas Hashachar bechavrusa*, in a fitting way, cannot do this if they do not dedicate time for it – before the beginning of davening. It is not for naught that we list each morning after the *Birchos HaTorah*, among the things that “a person eats the fruits in this world, and the virtue continues to exist for him in Olam Haba,” – “*hashkamas beis hamedrash Shacharis v’Arvis.*”

We have to understand, and internalize, that the beginning of a worthy *Shacharis*, with *Birchos Hashachar* according to halachah, is at least ten minutes before the time set in the shul for the beginning of the *tefillah*. When a person comes exactly at the appointed time of davening, he might discover that he has actually come too late to daven in a worthy fashion...

A person who has an appointment with an important person will not come exactly on time, he will make sure to arrive early. If this is the case for a meeting with a human being, then how much more so should it be for an encounter with the King of kings... Coming early to davening is self-understood for someone who believes that he is going to be speaking with the King of kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, when he davens.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

This story was written based on sefer Iggeres Keitz Chai (p. 12) by Rav Yisrael Nosson Brukstein, the Rav of Pusin, the son of Rav Chaim Yosef of Pistin, author of Tosafos Chaim, and a descendant of Rav Yitzchak Chayut, author of Zera Yitzchak on Mishnayos. The sefer was printed in the city of Chernowitz, Ukraine, in 5622.

There are many lofty and esoteric stories associated with Rav Yitzchak Chayut, *ztz"l*, a famed sage in his day who was proficient in all parts of Torah, and who served for many years as the Rav of the community of Sekulah, in Galicia. The Pnei Yehoshua describes him in an approbation for his sefer: “*Harav Hagaon Hagadol hamefursam bador...whose reputation has spread around the world.*” Many *talmidim* from Galicia and its environs flocked to learn Torah from him and to listen to his holy words.

Rav Yitzchak Chayut authored numerous works in his lifetime, many of them deep writings on all parts of Torah, including Toras Hasod, but he did not print them in his lifetime and many of them never got published. His commentary on *Mishnayos*, entitled *Zera Yitzchak*, was published by his son, Rav Eliezer, who testified that his

wondrous manner.

One of the wondrous stories related about Rav Yitzchak Chayut has to do with the town of Drohobitz, to which he moved towards the end of his life. A local Yid, a wealthy man, named Shmuel Biness, had many thriving businesses and was blessed with abundant wealth and connections with senior government authorities. He would give large sums of money to Torah scholars and their families and did what he could to help them.

Shmuel Biness considered it a great merit to provide generously for Rav Yitzchak Chayut, and was at his service whenever needed. Rav Yitzchak was very grateful and expressed his *hakaras hatov* at every opportunity. A short time before his passing from this world, Rav Yitzchak asked his students to summon Shmuel to his beside. When Shmuel Biness heard that Rav Yitzchak was calling him, he quickly closed up his business and hurried over.

When Rav Yitzchak saw Shmuel standing at the door to his room, he asked him to come closer, near his head. After greeting him with words of gratitude and blessing for his loyalty for so many years, and for his dedication to Torah scholars in Drohobitz, Rav Yitzchak closed his eyes and made the most exceptional promise. “Whenever you need something, you can come to my resting place and pray and ask, and I will be at your side to advocate for you in front of the Kisei Hakavod that your wishes be fulfilled from Above.” Shmuel Biness emotionally thanked the Rav for his promised, and departed.

And Rav Yitzchak’s promise was fulfilled! Whenever Shmuel had a request, he headed for the cemetery, placed his head on the holy *matzeivah*, and offered a *tefillah* – and all his *tefillas* were accepted. Shmuel saw tremendous success, his home was filled with Haem’s blessings and his life hummed along smoothly.

But over the years, the *yetzer hara* did an insidious job on Shmuel and he strayed from the right path. He became a money-hungry, greedy man who did

not hesitate to inform on his brethren at the cost of risking their lives and their livelihoods. If that was not enough, no one in the community was able to stop him, because whenever he was in trouble, he headed for the *kever* of Rav Yitzchak Chayut, davened there, mentioned his merit, and the *tzaddik* was faithful to his *brachah* and kept the promise – that his *tefillah* would be accepted and Hashem would help him succeed.

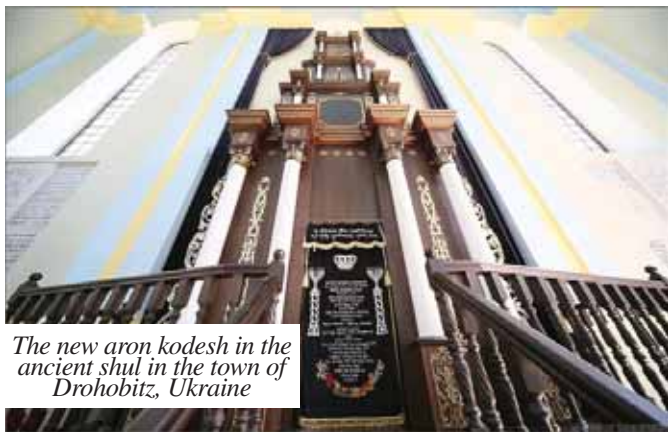
After one excessively evil incident involving Shmuel Biness, the members of the community came to the conclusion that as long as the *tzaddik* was at his side, there was no chance of overcoming his cruelty and evil deeds. He would always come out on top. The heads of the community convened and came to a decision: Ten *talmidei chachamim* would go to the *tziyun* of the *tzaddik*, and would ask him for compassion and to please forgive them, but that he should no longer daven from Gan Eden for the success of Shmuel, who was taking advantage of this promise to do bad things, to inform on his brethren to the authorities, and to do everything in his power to harm them.

Just a few days after their awe-filled *tefillah*, Shmuel got into trouble with the authorities, and a brigade of district policemen were sent to arrest him and bring him to court. When Shmuel realized that the worst was happening to him, he hurried, as he usually did, to the cemetery to plead at the *tziyun* of the *tzaddik*, confident that the *tzaddik* would fulfill his promise and effect a *yeshuah* for him.

When he entered the cemetery, he turned down the familiar path, but he could not find Rav Yitzchak’s *matzeivah*! He looked this way and that, among the pathways and *kevarim*, and then pinched himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming. But his work was for naught, the *tzaddik*’s *matzeivah* had disappeared as if it had never been there.

When he realized that all hope was lost, he returned home, dejected and humiliated. There, the officers were already waiting for him, and they handcuffed him hand and foot and hauled him off to prison.

A tremendous miracle took place at the time in Drohobitz - the holy *matzeivah* could not be found, and thus the townspeople finally got rid of the threat of Shmuel Biness, without the *tzaddik* violating his holy promise that he would advocate for him whenever Shmuel davened at his *kever*.



The new aron kodesh in the ancient shul in the town of Drohobitz, Ukraine

father made the effort to come to him in a dream from the World of Truth and urged him to complete the work of printing his writings. A few generations later, one of his descendants printed his commentary on *sefer Tehillim*.

At some point in his life, Rav Yitzchak lost his sight and he remained this way for six years, but the blindness did not prevent him from continuing to instruct his *talmidim* and to teach them from his phenomenal memory and expansive knowledge. After six years, following a remarkable story described in *Iggeres Keitz Chai*, his holy eyes suddenly regained their ability to see in a most

The Reward of Amen Is At Least as Great as the Reward of the *Brachah*

Chazal say (*Chulin* 87a) that the reward of every *brachah* is ten gold coins, and therefore, one who snatches a *brachah* away from a friend needs to pay him damages in this amount (as ruled in *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* 382 1).

Rabbeinu Tam is *mechadesh* (*Tosafos Bava Kama* 91b ad loc. *Vechiyevu*) that because *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): “The one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*,” the reward of the one who answers amen to the *brachah* is at least as great as that of the *mevarech*. So, we find that the reward for every amen is also at least ten gold coins. Therefore, when a person is called to the Torah and a different person insists that he comes first and takes the *aliyah* in his place, Rabbeinu Tam exempted the one who came second from paying even though he came up to have an *aliyah* not in his place. This is because the first person could have answered amen to the *brachos* of the second, and as we said that the value of amen is not less than the value of the *brachah*, we find that no damage was caused to him.

The *Rosh* adds (*Chulin* 6:8) a similar example: A person who had a son and invited a *mohel* to perform the bris. But another resident of the city then comes first and circumcises that baby, and thus snatches away the mitzvah and the *brachah* from that *mohel*. Here, as well, Rabbeinu Tam exempts the snatcher of the *brachah* from paying the ten gold coins to the *mohel* who was originally invited, because the *mohel* had the option to answer amen after the *brachah* of the one who snatched it away from him, and thus, his reward would have been ten gold coins, the same as the *mevarech*.

One Can Accumulate Tens of Millions of Gold Coins

Based on the *chiddush* of Rabbeinu Tam, Rav Mordechai Malka, the Rav

of Elad, raises another point that we need to pay attention to: There are so many treasures all around us. Think about it. If every amen is worth ten gold coins, when we are strict about the quota of answering ninety amens a day, then we can accrue a daily reward of nine hundred gold coins. If we multiply that by thirty days of the month, we can reach a monthly reward of twenty-seven thousand gold coins. And in a year, 324,000 gold coins. One who is strict for all seventy years of his life to answer ninety amens a day can reach the huge some of 22,680,000 gold coins!

Let us pay attention, that even if the reward of answering amen was not stipulated in gold coins, whose value is tremendous [during the time of the *Gemara* (see *Peah* 8 8 and Rav Ovadia MiBartenura *ibid*) a person could live for a whole year from 200 *zuz*, which is eight gold coins!], but rather would promise a sum of ten dollars for every amen that is answered, is there a single person who would give up a monthly salary of \$27,000?

Unfortunately, and shamefully, when we look around us, we have no choice but to determine that many of us do not properly value the answering of every single amen. A person who believes in the words of *Chazal* that the reward of every amen is tremendous will not be willing to miss even one amen (*Aspaklaria* Vol. 134 [Yom Hakippurim 5778] p. 81).

Fifty Gold Coins for Five Amens

This story took place during the times of the Ben Ish Chai:

There were two business partners who lived in Baghdad – they dealt in old clothes. One day, they heard about a non-Jewish family that was offering old clothes for sale, and as they usually did, they went together to check out the offer.

On the way, they passed a shul, and the *gabbai* came out to greet them and asked them to complete a minyan to recite *Kaddish*. That was

when their paths diverged: One was afraid to lose out on the deal and he excused himself with the claim that his time was tight, while the other was of the view that “when a mitzvah comes your way to not miss the opportunity.” Without hesitating, he entered the shul, waited, and answered amen to the *Kaddish*, and only then did he continue on his way.

When he arrived at the site of the sale, he discovered that his friend had preceded him and had purchased most of the items, except a few faded rags that he had not found to be of any interest. But in order not to return empty-handed, he purchased those rags for pennies and turned to go home.

At home, a surprise awaited him. Among the rags was a faded pillow. When he unraveled the stitches to reuse the feathers, he found a pearl inside it. He hurried to a dealer, who appraised the value of the pearl as fifty gold coins, and he paid that amount for it on the spot. The clothing dealer returned home, thrilled, while his wife, who was familiar with the nature of good stones, was angry to hear how much he had been paid for it and tried to persuade him that the dealer had tricked him and that he should go back and demand the real value of the pearl or cancel the deal. Before taking any action, the man decided to consult with his rebbi, the Ben Ish Chai. The Rav heard the story in detail and replied: “According to the words of *Chazal* (based on *Tosafos* *ibid*) it seems that the reward for every amen is ten gold coins. So, we find that because you heard *Kaddish* and answered five amens, then it is fair that you should get fifty gold coins in this world, in addition to the reward in Olam Haba, so why should you dispute the reward?!” (*Ahavas Chaim Parashas Chayei Sarah*)

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Meah Brachos and Amen in the Parashah

Amen – A Segulah for Finding Favor

“ויאמר...אם נא מצאתי הן בעיניך אל נא תעבר מעל עבדך” (יה ג)

Harav Noach Gad Weintraub explained:

The acronym of אָם נָא מִצְאָתִי is amen [and the words אָם נָא also contain the word amen]. Thus, the Torah alludes that one who is strict to answer amen merits to find favor in the eyes of Hashem, even if he sinned, *chalilah*. As Chazal say (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1): “One who answers amen with all his strength has a decree of seventy years torn up.”

Some explain this *passuk* as a directive for generations: “Vayomer A-doni” – when you hear a person making a *brachah beShem Hashem*, “אָם נָא מִצְאָתִי” – answer amen after him.

Noam Chein [Rav N.G. Weintraub] p. 5; *Vayisyaldy Al Mishpechosam* p. 295

Completing Meah Brachos on Shabbos

“ויטע אשל בבאר שבע ויקרא שם בשם ה' א-ל עולם” (כא לג)

Harav Asher Anshel Jungreis, the Rav of Gyongyos, Hungary:

During the six days of the week, a person can easily reach the quota of 100 *brachos*, but on Shabbos, when he is 20 *brachos* short (see *Bais Yosef, Orach Chaim* 46) Chazal say (*Menachos* 43b) that he is able to complete them by reciting *brachos* on eating fruits and other confections.

We can say that this is why Avraham planted an אשל so that ויקרא שם בשם ה' א-ל עולם – through the *brachah* on its fruits, they could complete the *brachos* that were missing on Shabbos. We can bring an allusion to this from the fact that the word שבע עשרים ברכות is an acronym for עשרים ברכות שבת.

Zachor Veshamor

Iggeres Emunim

A Letter from a Loyal Reader

Dear *Vechol Ma'aminim*,

First, I'd like to extend my thanks for your rich and high-level pamphlet about amen. I would also like to comment on what you wrote a few times, that the mitzvah of answering amen is special in the fact that it can be fulfilled without any boundaries. I thought of a wonderful allusion to this: The acronym of the words אין לדבר סוף (see *Pesachim* 7a) is numerically equivalent to 91 – which is equal to אמן. There is an allusion here that there is no end to the amens that a person can merit to answer each day, if he only tries, and there is also no end to the abundance of *brachah* that he will merit as a result.

Rabbi G.R., Yerushalayim

Letters can be sent to fax number 08-9746102 or emailed to the Vechol Ma'aminim email address. 9139191@gmail.com

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Chazon Ish

15 Cheshvan 5714

Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz was born to his father, Rav Shmaryahu Yosef, in 5639 in the small town of Kossova. Already at a young age, his genius was evident, and there wasn't a *melamed* in the whole village who could teach him. He learned for a few years under his father, and when he became bar mitzvah, he had expansive knowledge in the sea of Talmud and dedicated his days to learning on his own,

with great dedication and *prishus*.

During World War I, he moved to Vilna, where Harav Chaim Ozer Grodzhenski discerned his greatness, and often shared matters of the community with him and sought his advice.

Slowly, his name gained renown throughout Lithuania and Poland. In 5671, he published a compilation of his *chiddushei Torah* anonymously, entitled *Chazon Ish*. Since then, over the years, he added to the series, printing one *sefer* after another.

When he moved to Eretz Yisrael in 5693, Rav Chaim Ozer sent a letter of introduction to the sages of Eretz Yisrael informing them: “A lion has ascended from Bavel to Eretz Yisrael.” The Chazon Ish lived in the Land for twenty years. For a short time, he lived in a room in Tel Aviv, and then moved to Bnei Brak. As the *posek* and leader of the generation, his home in Bnei Brak drew tens of thousands of people.

On Friday night of *Parashas Lech Lecha* 5714, he returned his soul to is Maker at the age of 73. After Shabbos, he was laid to rest in the Zichron Meir cemetery in Bnei Brak.

With All His Strength – With All His Kavanah

When saying *Kaddish*, the Chazon Ish would stand-lean on a *shtender*, covering his eyes with his hands as he concentrated on answering amen. Once, the *tefillah* came to an end, and when none of the *mispallelim* began to recite *Kaddish*, the Chazon Ish turned to go. But as he walked, one of the *mispallelim* began to say *Kaddish*. The Chazon Ish did not stand to answer amen where he had stopped. Rather, he returned to his regular place near the *shtender*, covered his eyes and answered amen after the *Kaddish* with full concentration – “*bechol kavanaso*.” (*She'al Avicha Veyagedcha*, Vol. III, p. 266)