

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"



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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

### Tefillah in a Fitting Place

“ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה: ויפגע במקום וילן שם כי בא השמש” (כה י-יא)

There was a community in America whose shul was too small for the many *mispallelim* who came to daven there on the Yamim Noraim. They wanted to rent a large hall nearby to hold the *tefillas*, but because this hall was used during the year to hold raucous and immodest parties, the community asked the Tchebiner Rav, the author of *Dovev Meisharim* – if one can rent such a hall for davening.

At the beginning of his response, the Rav mentions the words of Chazal (*Brachos* 59a): “*Ein kateigor na’aseh saneigor*” – the prosecutor cannot become the defendant, and in light of this, wonders, “how is it possible that a place where such immodest singers and the like are heard is chosen as a place where *tefillas* and *tekiyas* can be accepted?”

He then explains that it’s important to take into consideration the place where one davens, because when one davens in a holy place, the *segulah* of that place helps the *tefillah* be accepted. This concept is learned in the *She’iltos DeRav Achai (Vayeitzei She’ilta 22)* from the words of Chazal (*Chulin* 91b), that after Yaakov came to Charan he sought to return to Har Hamoriah, saying, “Is it possible that I passed the place where my ancestors prayed and I didn’t pray?” Just like Yaakov wanted to daven in a place that his forebears had designated for *tefillah*, likewise, every Yid should daven in a shul, which is a place designated for *tefillah*.

The Rav then added an explanation of the words of Chazal (ibid) on the *passuk* “*Vayifga bamakom*,” that as soon as Yaakov resolved to go back and daven in the place where his ancestors davened, the way was shortened for him and he found himself at Har Hamoriah. So the miraculous *kefitzas haderech* that he experienced is a directive for generations that indeed, a person has to daven in a place that is designated and sanctified specifically for *tefillah*.

*Kovetz Yeshurun, Vol. 13, p. 270*

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Two Who Answer Amen

There are many *gematrios* around the word אמן that have been shared by the *gedolim* through the generations. In this pamphlet, and from time to time even in this section, we often bring their words and discuss various ideas that are derived from them. In the coming lines, I’d like to focus on one of the more famous *gematrios* mentioned in the sources, and that is about the name יעקב which is numerically equivalent to twice amen.

The double amen is not random, because we have found that the *passuk* itself has doubled this word in a number of places, such as in *sefer Nechemiah* (8:6), where It says, “*Vaya’anu kol ha’am amen amen*.” Dovid Hamelech also concluded the first three *seforim* in *Tehillim* with “*amen v’amen*” (41:14; 72:19; 89:53).

But what is the meaning of the double amen?

We can say that it alludes that to answer amen there needs to be cooperation between two Jews who love answering amen: the *mevarech*, who seeks to have his *brachah* completed with the answering of amen, and another Jew who is happy to answer amen to the *brachah*.

I thought to add an explanation according to the *Zohar* in this *parashah* (160a) which says that the secret of the *brachos* is that one recites it and two answer amen. The *Zohar* (ibid) cites the words of the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:3): “*Ki Shem Hashem ekra havu godel l’Elokeinu*,” and explains: “*Ki Shem Hashe ekra*” – with the *brachah*, “*havu godel l’Elokeinu*” – with answering amen from two people, as it says “*havu*” in the plural.

So we find that there is special *hiddur* for each *brachah* to be said with three people, one who makes the *brachah* and two who answer amen after it. Based on this we can explain that the double amen comes to allude to this *hiddur* that there should be two who answer amen.

I thought to add a beautiful *remez* to the words of the *Zohar*. The *passuk* “*havu godel l’Elokeinu*” from which the *Zohar* derived this special *hiddur* of two *onim amen* after the *brachah* is also numerically equivalent to exactly twice amen!

Let us be strict to complete the *brachos* with answering amen, and if we are *zocheh* that two people answer – then surely we will be doubly blessed.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Gavriel was eighteen years old when World War II broke out on 17 Elul 5699. Having been orphaned of his parents at a young age, he was raised in the home of his mother's brother in Lomza, Poland.

Gavriel was one of the brilliant *talmidim* in his yeshivah, known for his sharp mind and diligence in learning. At night, he was among the last to close his *Gemara*, and in the morning, he was among the first in the *beis medrash*.

When World War II broke out, Nazi Germany's massive army began to march towards Polish cities, with impressive air superiority in the form of incessant bombings on cities and residents.

Lomza also suffered from constant bombardment, that led to unbearable losses. Many of the city's residents perished in the bombings, including many Jews.

News about the German army's impending capture of the city sowed panic among the Jewish residents. The younger residents hurriedly packed a few things and began to flee to the east, near the Russian border, in the hope that the Nazis



Remnants of headstones that remain from the Jewish cemetery in Lomza

would not dare get close to there.

Gavriel was among those who fled. With the blessing of his uncle, he headed to the town of Baranowitz, where he had relatives and where he hoped to be able to continue learning until the storm passed.

As part of the deal signed between the Russians and the Germans at the beginning of the war, known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, they divided up Poland's territory amongst themselves, and Baranowitz, which was in Poland at the war's outbreak, was now

annexed along with Eastern Poland to soviet Russia. The Russian annexation was greeted with mixed feelings by the Jews of Baranowitz. On the one hand, they were happy that their city was not annexed to Nazi Germany, which was out to annihilate the Jewish people. On the other hand, the Jews were afraid of the religious persecution that the Communist regime was notorious for.

The yeshivah students, Gavriel among them, decided that even if the authorities would persecute them, they would not desist in their adherence to Torah and *mitzvos*. Indeed, even under the heretic Russian rule, they continue to learn and daven underground. They were not deterred even when Gavriel and some of his friends were detained for questioning and released with a warning that if they'd continue learning Torah and doing *mitzvos* they'd be sent to exile.

In the winter of 1942, the Russian rule in Baranowitz came to an end. The Germans violated the agreement they had signed, and launched a surprise assault on Russia. The waves of war engulfed eastern Europe all at once. The German bombers began systematically bombing Baranowitz, and as a result, hundreds of people died. The Russian government authorities were taken by surprise, and they fled deep into Russia, which meant that most of the city's residents followed them in panic. Thousands of people gathered at the train station with bundles in their arms. Those in the know related that very soon, the Russians would be bombing the tracks to make it difficult for the German army to move further into Russia. These thousands of people wanted to be among the lucky ones to board the last train, their only hope for survival.

Early that morning, Gavriel was woken up by his friends screaming:

"*Pikuaach nefesh!* Get up Gavriel! We have to flee and it's our last chance to do so!" Gavriel got up quickly and listened to his friends' panicked explanation: "In the next hour, the last train to Russia is going to be leaving Baranowitz. The Germans are closing in on all sides, and this is our final chance to be saved."

But an internal voice told Gavriel that he had to daven *Shacharis* first. With determination in his tone, Gavriel replied to his friends: "I won't leave before I daven *Shacharis*. There, on the packed train, there's no way I can do it before the *zman tefillah* passes."

The friend tried to persuade him that the *pikuaach nefesh* involved could certainly defer the davening, but Gavriel was resolute: "My heart tells me that I will have no benefit from hurrying to leave and missing out on davening on time. I've never missed out davening on time, and in a time of distress, how much more so will I not do it! I'll daven first and then I'll find a way to try and get to Russia."

No cajoling could change his mind and his friend had no choice. He left Gavriel and raced to the train station, where he managed to cram into the packed train car at the last second before it pulled out of the station.

Meanwhile, in his little hut, Gavriel donned his holy *tefillin*. The serious situation worried him deeply, and fear of the unknown filled his heart. He immersed himself emotionally in his *tefillah*.

At the end of davening, Gavriel kissed his *tefillin*, stuck them into his satchel and also hurried to the station. Deep down, he hoped that the last train had not yet left and that he could flee with it to Russia.

When he arrived at the station and saw the frightened, dejected expressions on dozens of faces of people that had been left behind, he realized that the train had departed. Gavriel was about to trudge back out of the station when the unbelievable occurred. They heard the loud whistle of an arriving train, sowing a seed of hope within many hearts. It was a train that happened to be passing through, and when the driver saw the passengers, he stopped, and urged them to board quickly. The

### – Pausing for Amen During Krias Shema and its Brachos –

One who hears *Kaddish* while in the middle of *Krias Shema* or the *Brachos* of *Krias Shema* should answer “*amen, yehei Shmei rabba*”<sup>1</sup>, and amen after “*d’amiran b’alma*,” even if he is in the middle of a *perek*<sup>2</sup>. Some say that he has to also answer amen after “*Yisgadal Veyiskadash Shemei Rabba*”<sup>3</sup>, and some wrote that he should answer all the amens that one answers in *Kaddish* until “*d’amiran b’alma*.”<sup>4</sup> But he should not stop to answer amen after the requests that we say from “*d’amiran b’alma*” and onwards, even if he is between *perakim*.<sup>5</sup>

1 The *Mishnah Berurah* (56 9) ruled that those who usually answer until the word “*yisbarach*,” when they are in the middle of *Krias Shema Ubirchoseha*, they should only answer until the word “*olmaya*.” But the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (66 5) ruled like the *Magen Avraham* (ibid 6) that one should also answer then until the word “*yisbarach*,” and the *Derech Hachaim* (*Dinei Krias Shema Ubirchoseha* 5) concurs. The Ben Ish Chai (*Parashas Shemos* 6) and the *Kaf Hachaim* (66 17) wrote that those who follow the Arizal to continue until “*d’amiran b’olma*” should do that also when they are in the middle of *Krias Shema* and the *brachos*, even in the middle of the *perek*. But the *Shu”t Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, 108:40) wrote that only one who is in between *perakim* can answer until “*d’amiran b’olma*” and in the middle of the *perek* one should only answer until “*yisbarach*.”

2 Regarding the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* (66 3) that one should stop even in the middle of *Krias Shema* and the *brachos* to answer *Kaddish*, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes (ibid 17): “This means ‘*amen yehei Shemei rabba* until ‘*olmaya*’...and he should answer amen after ‘*d’amiran b’olma*’, but regarding *Tiskabel, Yehei Shlama, and Oseh Shalom* – he should not answer amen because it is only a *minhag*.” And it appears from his words that answering amen after “*Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei rabba*” one does not stop (not even between the *perakim*), and the *Shoneh Halachos* (ibid 2) concurs. From the words of the *Mishnah Berurah* earlier (56 12) who wrote “After *yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei rabba* the *minhag* is to answer amen”, it is explained that this amen is only a *minhag* and its *halachah* is like answering amen after the requests at the end of *Kaddish* and see further in the next footnote.

3 *Shu”t Dvar Yehoshua* (Vol. II 8) brought in the name of the Ya’avetz (*Siddur Amudei Shamayim*, in the *halachos* before *Birchas Yotzer Ohr*), that one who is up to *Krias Shema* should answer amen also after “*Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei rabba*.” And he explained there that in the words of the *Mishnah Berurah* that were cited in the previous footnote, there is no ruling, because he did not count the amen after “*Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei rabba*” - not at the beginning of his words when he listed the amens that one answers in the middle of *Krias Shema* and not at the end, when he listed the amens that we do not answer, not even between *perakim*. He further explained that one should not compare the answering of amen after “*Shemei rabba*” to answering amen after the requests that are after *Kaddish*, even though it is only a *minhag*, because while the actual saying of the requests at the end of *Kaddish* is a *minhag*, as they are not the main point of *Kaddish*, the words “*Yisgadal veyiskadash Shemei rabba*” are the *ikkar* of *Kaddish* and only answering amen after them is a *minhag*. He writes that this is what the *Mishnah Berurah* meant when he wrote: “Regarding *Tiskabel, Yehei Shlama, Oseh Shalom* – one should not answer amen **because it is only a minhag**,” meaning that the actual saying them is only a *minhag*, and the *Machatzis Hashekel* (66 6) concurs.

4 The *Ben Ish Chai* (ibid) and the *Kaf Hachaim* (ibid 23) wrote that according to the Arizal that one needs to answer five amens in each *Kaddish* from *Yisgadal* until *d’amiran b’olma* five amen, one should pause in *Krias Shema* even in the middle of a *perek* to answer all five of these amens.

5 *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid). and from the words of the *Ben Ish Chai* (*Parashas Vayigash* 9) it appears that in any case, he should think these amens in his heart.

passengers quickly boarded and the train picked up speed as it headed deep into Soviet Russia.

Gavriel sat down on the train and after thanking Hashem for the rescue train that He had ordained for him, continued with an emotional *tefillas haderech* in which he asked Hashem to watch over him on his unknown path forward.

Just a few hours later the magnitude of the miracle became clear: The

earlier train, which Gavriel had missed because of his insistence to daven, was bombed by the German army as it passed over a bridge that ran over a wide river. The bridge collapsed and the train and all the passengers fell into the river. Most of the passengers perished – some from the bombings and some from drowning. Few survived.

After the war, for many years after, Gavriel made sure to gather his

children and grandchildren each year for a *seudas hoda’ah* on the day when he refrained from boarding the death train. He would stand up and tearfully recount the miraculous rescue, as he used the opportunity to instruct his offspring to always be strict to daven before the *zman*, a strictness that saved him from near certain death.

*Shabbos Supplement,  
Beha’alosecha 5758 p. 10*

#### With the Power of Meah Brachos

”ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך הרנה” (כה י)

The **Chasam Sofer** wrote that the final letters of this phrase make up the words ארבע כה. **Harav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal**, author of *Mishnah Sachir*, explains that four times כה is equal to one hundred, and thus the *passuk* alludes that Yaakov set out on his way with the power of the mitzvah of reciting one hundred *brachos* a day. That is because with the power of being strict to say one hundred *brachos* a day, a person subdues the powers of impurity so that they cannot harm him, which Yaakov needed very much at those times, when he ran away from his brother Eisav to the home of Lavan.

*Mishneh Sachir*

#### A Short Tefillah – Shortens Life

”אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ומשרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך” (כה ז)

The Rebbe **Harav Eliezer Zev of Kretchnif** explained: *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 13b): “Anyone who prolongs the ‘Echad’ [in *Krias Shema*] – has his days and years lengthened.” Likewise, they say (*Brachos* 47a): “Anyone

who prolongs his ‘amen’ – has his days and years lengthened.” So because *Chazal* instituted that one who traveling davens a ‘*tefillah ketzarah*’ (*Brachos* 3a), we find that one who is traveling loses out on the *segulah* of *arichus yamim* that one who prolongs his *tefillah* is *zocheh* to – with ‘*Echad*’ and amen. There is even an allusion to this in *Tehillim* (102:24): “*Inah baderech kochi kitzar yamai*” – the way caused me to have shortened days.

*Olam Shel Abba* p. 437

#### Yaakov Vowed to Make One Hundred Brachos

”והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלקים וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך” (כה לב)

We can explain that the vow of Yaakov was to bless and thank for “all that You give me,” both *Birchos Hanehenin* and *brachos* of *shevach* and gratitude, until he would reach one hundred *brachos* a day. Because the words “עשר עשרנו” can be explained as ten times ten – meaning one hundred.

*Imrei Baruch [Rav Baruch Avraham Toledano]*

## Shaarei Gan Eden

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



#### Rav Chaim Naftali Hertz Zelibanski

7 Kislev 5755

Rav Chaim Naftali Hertz Zelibanski was born in 5699 in Tel Aviv to his father Rav Mordechai of Bialystok. While still young, he became known for his diligence and his many

talents in learning. As a *bochur* he learned in Yeshivas Be’er Yaakov, where he learned under the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro and the Mashgiach Rav Shlomo Wolbe. From there, he went to Yeshivas Brisk, and learned under Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik.

In 5736 he opened Yeshivas Me’or Hatalmud in Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim, and two years later, he established the yeshivah in Rechovot, together with the city’s Rav, Rav Simchah Hakohein Kook, and *ybl”c* his brother Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohein Kook, who serves as Rosh Yeshivah.

Rav Chaim disseminated Torah to his *talmidim* for twenty five years until his passing. His *shiurim* and *shmuessen* became known in the yeshivah world for being unique in their depth and clarity, and he was dedicated heart and soul to the success of his students.

He became ill in Elul 5751, and suffered from his illness for a long time. At the same time, he continued to learn with dedication and to give *shiurim* in the yeshivah until his passing on Shabbos Kodesh *Parashas Vayeitzei* 5755.

#### By Answering Amen, We Convey Emunah to the Next Generations

In one of his *shmuessen*, Rav Chaim Naftali Hertz Zelibanski spoke about the importance of being strict to answer amen, the importance of being *mechanech* to this and how significant it is for conveying *emunah* from generation to generation. He said:

The role of every Jew on this earth is to cleave to his *emunah* every single moment of his life, as it says (*Chavakuk* 2:4): “*Vetzaddik b’emunaso yichyeh.*” Such a level of *emunah* does not come on its own, and in order to achieve it, one must do deeds of *emunah*, like being careful to answer amen according to *halachah*.

Answering amen is so significant to conveying *emunah*, that the *poskim* obligated that young children who just learned to speak should be taught to answer amen, as the Rema rules (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): “And he should teach his young children to answer amen because as soon as the child answers amen he has a share in Olam Haba.”

When the children become accustomed already when they are very little, to answer amen after *brachos* regularly, then this practice will leave an impression of *emunah* on their young hearts for the rest of their lives.

*Chinuch* to answering amen when children are very young is, in a sense, in the hands of the mother, because usually, the children are around her during the day. This is included in the caution of the *passuk* (*Mishlei* 1:8): “*V’al titosh Toras imecha.*” (*Notrei Amen* Vol. I p. 40)