

# Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly  
Pamphlet  
From  
"Bney  
Emunim"



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## Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah  
in the Parashah

### Yearning for Eretz Yisrael

“ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה את  
יעקב איש וביתו באו” (א א)

Why does it say “*haba'im*” in the present tense? Wasn't the Torah given long after Bnei Yisrael went down to Mitzrayim?

**Harav Yehoshua of Belz** explained:

Usually, after a person moves to a new place, he may initially feel longing for his previous place of residence, and wants to return to it. However, as time passes, he gets used to his new place and becomes more settled. And then the words of *Chazal* are fulfilled: (*Sotah* 48a) “*chein makom al yoshvav*,” a place finds favor in the eyes of the people who live there. Yaakov was afraid that perhaps his children would get too settled in Mitzrayim and would not want to leave to return to the land of their forebears. Therefore, he davened that they should always be like “*haba'im*” – as if they had just come, that the new place should not find favor with them, and they should always yearn to return to the land of their ancestors.

This *tefillah* is also alluded to in the *passuk* that begins the *haftarah* to this *parashah*: “*Haba'im yashresh Yaakov yatitz uparach Yisrael*” (*Yeshayah* 27:6). In the merit that “Yaakov” ingrained in his children that they should always be like “*haba'im*”, and thus caused that they should always have that burning desire to return to the land of their fathers, “*yatitz uparach Yisrael*” – Am Yisrael merited to flourish and be redeemed from Mitzrayim.

*Nifla'os Chadashos*  
[Rav Y.M. Greenwald]

## Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

### Answering Amen with Simchah Is the Middah of Aharon Hakohein

When HaKadosh Baruch Hu chose Moshe Rabbeinu as His prophet, and sent him to take Am Yisrael out of Mitzrayim and to give them the Torah, Moshe Rabbeinu was hesitant, afraid that his older brother, Aharon, would be resentful when he saw his younger brother rising to such greatness. HaKadosh Baruch Hu reassured him and said (*Shemos* 4:14): “Your brother Aharon...behold he is coming out to greet you and he will see you and rejoice in his heart.”

What a wonderful testimony Hashem gave about Aharon! Fortunate is the person who merits to have his praise written in the Toras Hashem, from Hashem! Aharon, with his pure heart, not only did not resent Moshe's rise to greatness, on the contrary, he rejoiced in his younger brother's greatness!

Our holy Torah is eternal and everything written in it is a directive and a lesson for generations. From the description of Aharon's joy at Moshe's greatness, we can learn about a custom for generations, and I am referring to a daily practice that we can derive from Aharon's *middos*.

What do I mean? When we see a person making a *brachah* and we approach him and complete his *brachah* by answering amen, we recognize his virtue, and we express to him to what extent the *brachah* that he is uttering is important and worthy of being crowned with the answering of amen. Yes! When we go over to answer amen after a friend's *brachah*, that is also addressing the virtue of the *mevarech*, not only the virtue of the *brachah* itself.

So, with such a simple and easy

action of answering amen, we merit to follow the path of Aharon Hakohein. Just like joy filled his heart when he heard about his brother Moshe, likewise, when we see another Yid about to make a *brachah* – we should recognize his virtue, and through that, we should join him in answering amen, with an *ayin tovah* and *simchah* in our hearts.

It is possible that this is what the *passuk* we say each morning alludes to: “*His'hallelu beShem kodsho, yismach lev mevakshei Hashem*” (*Tehillim* 105:3). Those who are *mevakshei Hashem* are happy in their hearts when they hear someone who makes the *brachah* and praises Hashem, and they go over to answer amen with joy in their hearts. Thus, they are acting like Aharon HaKohein, of whom it is said, “*Vera'acha vesamach belibo*.” Indeed, I found an allusion that indicates that this *passuk* refers to those who answer amen, from the fact that the acronym of the *passuk* “*שמח לב מבקשי*” is numerically equivalent to 90, the number of amens that a Yid ideally should answer each day, as the *poskim* taught us.

May the image of Aharon and his *middos* be in our mind's eye always, and we will merit to rejoice in the joys and successes of others, we will join their *brachos* and complete them with answering amen, with an *ayin tovah* and joy in our hearts, with *Birchos Hashachar* and with all the *brachos*. In this merit, we should be treated from Above with a *middah tovah kefulah*, amen.

**Good Shabbos**

**Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**

Rav Yeshayahu Cheshin was a pious *talmid chacham* who lived in Yerushalayim; as a youth, he was *zocheh* to serve the Saraf of Brisk, the Mahari"l Diskin. Rav Yeshayah would tell the following story to every bar mitzvah boy who came up to him to receive a *brachah* and *hadrachah*:

One bitter day, it happened. A terrible plague began to spread in the town of Ostra'ah, and it took many lives. Men, women, old and young, fell ill and passed away a short time later, as there was no medication that could cure it.

The residents of the town were panicked and weepy, terrified that they or their families would get sick. Doctors were brought from nearby cities; some were afraid to come, while others claimed there was nothing to do, a plague was a plague. Not every plague was stoppable.



The Maharsha's shul in Ostra'ah, Ukraine

The Rav of the city and his *beis din* declared a *taanis* and day of *tefillah*, when all the healthy residents would gather in the shul to plead on behalf of the sick people and beg Hashem to remove this terrible decree.

The Rav also asked that if anyone knew about something that was not right in the community or among its members, he should come to the *beis din* and speak about it, so that they could rectify it, and perhaps bring an end to the plague. Because we are believing Jews – and everything that happens is because we need to introspect into our deeds and repent, as the Rambam rules in *Hilchos Taaniyos* (1:2-3): “When a trouble arises...everyone should know that the bad things are because of their

bad deeds. But if they do not cry and plead, but rather say, this is the way of the world that this happened, and it's a coincidence, that is a cruel way and it causes them to cleave to their bad ways...”

In Ostra'ah there was a mysterious person who did not attend shul during davening. Two members of the town decided to keep an eye on him, to check how it is possible that a Yid who is a *yarei Shamayim* is absent from the *tefillos*. They began to track him, but didn't find anything. The plague continued to rage through the town, and these two people refused to give up. Perhaps the actions of this strange Jew were what had brought this trouble upon them?

The resolved to continue to check his actions and to try and figure him out. They made up to come to his house after darkness; maybe at night they would find something that would explain his behavior.

The two men hid behind a tree near the home of that Yid. Silence hung over the town; everyone was ensconced in their homes, and only these two men near the tree were outside, looking at the small house to try and find a solution to the mystery.

At about midnight, the darkness deepened and the two shivered with cold. Just then, the Yid got up from his bed, and came out of the house, as the two followers silently walked after him.

To their surprise, this Yid went into the thick forest on the outskirts of the town. It was a dark forest that no one dared go into by himself during the day, and certainly not in the middle of the night. The two Jews studied the figure of the mysterious man as it grew more distant and disappeared into the forest. They did not dare follow him in...

They returned to the Rav and told him what they had seen. He said

to them, “I will come with you tomorrow night to follow this Yid. It looks like there is secrecy surrounding his deeds.”

The next night, again at midnight, the pair accompanied the Rav and together, they made their way into the dark forest. There, they discovered the Yid, sitting on the ground saying *Tikkun Chatzos* as he cried bitterly and shed hot tears, that melted the hearts of those who were watching him.

But something else aroused their wonder: Another voice, which they could not identify, joined the lamentations of this Yid, saying them together with him. They heard a voice – but could not see to whom it belonged...

When the Yid finished his *tikkun*, the Rav approached him and revealed that he was watching him. The Yid recoiled with shock at being discovered, and the Rav asked, “Who is the voice saying *Tikkun Chatzos* with you?”

The Yid tried to be evasive, but the Rav instructed him: “I decree, as the *mara d'asra*, that you tell me the truth!”

Upon hearing this, the Yid said: “It has long been my custom to grieve for the *churban* Bais Hamikdash, and I was answered from Above, and each night, Yirmiyahu Hanavi comes to the forest to say *Tikkun Chatzos* with me...”

The Rav asked: “Because you have merited this great thing, why do you not daven to nullify the terrible decree that has taken hold in our town?”

The man said: “Indeed, the Rav is right, tomorrow I will ask the Navi Yirmiyahu what I should do.”

The next day, the Yid came to the Rav and said, “Yirmiyahu Hanavi revealed to me that the *churban* was supposed to happen forty years before it actually did. But because the Yidden were careful not to speak idle talk in shul, the Bais Hamikdash remained standing for an additional forty years!

“But after the *mispallelim* began to speak idle talk, the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed – and all the troubles



### Saying Amen Slowly Is a Segulah for a Long Life!

”ותבאנה אל רעואל אביהן ויאמר מדוע מהרתן בא היום” (ב יח)

In *Maseches Brachos* (47a), *Chazal* determine that the life of a person is contingent on answering amen slowly. They say: “Anyone who prolongs the amen has his days and years lengthened.” In contrast: “One who answers a short amen – has his days shortened.” (The punishment of one who answers a shortened amen does not appear in this *Gemara*, but the *Rishonim* hold that it is so in the *Gemara*, and see *Tur Orach Chaim* 124.)

The “one who prolongs his amen” is someone who answers amen slowly, as is fitting, which means as long as it takes to say ‘*Kel Melech Ne’eman*.’ He should take care, however, not to answer an amen that is too long, because when one prolongs the amen too much, then he takes it out of context, as the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 124 8): “And he should not answer a short amen, but rather a bit of a longer one, with enough time to say: *Kel Melech Ne’eman*, and he should not prolong it too much because then the word is not heard.”

The *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid 36) explains when one answers amen quickly this manifests a laxity in the mitzvah, as the *oneh* says it as if it is a heavy burden that he is seeking to absolve himself of.

The obligation to answer a longer amen is alluded to in this *passuk*: אמן – מהרתן בא היום. So the *passuk* is seeming to ask us: Why did you hurry to answer amen, and by doing so you failed by answering a shortened amen and you lost the merit and the reward of one who

answers a long amen?!

*Torah MiSinai*

### Answering Amen Combines Two Holy Names

”כה תאמר אל בני ישראל ה' אלקי אבותיכם אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק ואלקי יעקב שלהני אלנים זה שמי לעולם וזה זכרי לדר דר” (ג טז)

Regarding the *passuk* “*zeh Shemi l’olam*” *Chazal* explain (*Pesachim* 50a) that we have to read the word לעולם written without the *vav*, as if it says “*l’alem*” – from the term *ha’alamah*. In other words, we have to hide the *Shem Hameyuchad* – *Shem Havaya*”h, and not read it as it’s written in the Torah, but rather “*vezeh zichri ledor vador*” – it should be pronounced א-ג-ד-ה.

The holy *Zohar* explains that these Names are the lofty *sod*, the secret, of the virtue of answering amen, because amen is numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same as the numerical value of the *Shem Hameyuchad* as it is written [הו"ה] and as it is written [א.ג.ד.ה.] and together they amount to 91.

Based on this, the *Rokeach* explains the words of the *Breisa* (*Brachos* 53a), that “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*.” It would seem that the *mevarech* is the one who praises and thanks Hashem, while the *oneh* merely agrees with his words. Why, if so, do *Chazal* say that the *oneh* amen is greater than the *mevarech*?

Because while the *mevarech* only mentions the Name of Adnus, the *oneh* amen after him mentions with his answer the Names of Hava”yah and Adnus together, and therefore, he is greater than the *mevarech*. (*Haroke’ach*, *Hilchos Seudah* 330; *Ba’al Haturim Devarim* 27:26)

Regarding the *sod* of answering

amen and the *sod* of the Holy Names that are included in it, the *mekubal Rav Aharon Hazaken of Kardina* author of *sefer Karnayim*, describes it remarkably, and writes in *Iggeres Hata’amim*: “Because all the Holy Names, as one, contain hidden *segulos* that are covered up by the word amen...of which the *passuk* says (*Yeshayahu* 26:2): ‘*Vayavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*,’ and it means to say that just like the one who guards the treasury, who is deep inside the inner chambers, likewise, this pure and holy word has a sources that is more valuable than pearls...If so you, Ben Adam, should see how many *remazim*, secrets and *razim* are based on the precious foundations... and where is the place of amen? *Kodesh kodashim*.”

The ancient siddur *Seder Nehora Hashalem* brings in the name of the early sages that indeed, at the time of answering amen, one should have *kavanah* to combine the Names of Hava”yah and Adnus which are numerically equivalent to amen. And he adds that this is alluded to in the *passuk* we say each morning in *Hodu* (*Divrei Hayamim* I 16:36): “*Vayomru kol ha’am amen vehallel l’Hashem*” – the whole nation should be strict to answer amen. And what should they have in mind with it? “*Vehallel l’Hashem*,” meaning to combine the Name of Adnus that is numerically equivalent to *hallel*, - l’Hashem to the Name Hava”yah, and combined they are numerically equivalent to amen.

*HaRokeach Hilchos Seudah* 330; *Iggeres Hate’amim* [Mantua 5342] p. 12b; *Seder Nehora Hashalem* beginning of Ch. 15 and in the *Haga”h*

in our generation are because people speak idle talk during davening in shul!”

The Rav convened the whole community in the shul and spoke about *kedushas bais haknesses*, and the laws of the proper respect and fear one has to have there. He

recounted the frightening story he heard from the mysterious Jew that Yirmiyahu Hanavi told him. Ultimately, he concluded that this was the reason the terrible disease was raging in their town.

The residents heard this, and they began to sob, and do heartfelt

*teshuvah* for being lax about their respect of the shul. The entire community undertook not to speak idle talk in shul, especially when wearing *tefillin*.

Wondrously, right after that, the plague stopped completely.

*Birchas Dovid, Parashas Terumah*

”ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנהו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבדה” (ב כג)

Why did Am Yisrael cry out specifically after the death of Pharaoh?

The **Ramban** explained: Throughout the reign of Pharaoh, Am Yisrael waited for his death, with the hope that a new king would rise after him who would nullify the decrees of his predecessor. But when Pharaoh died, and Am Yisrael saw that the new king was as cruel and evil – if not more – than his predecessor, they felt despair and thought there was no hope for them.

The *Teshuvos Vehanhagos* adds to the Ramban's explanation, that it can be explained that the cry that emerged from their hearts as a result of the brutality of the new king was not a cry of despair, but rather one of *tefillah*. Because when they saw that the new king was making the burden even worse, they realized that the reason for their bondage was solely because

it was a decree from Above, and they could not pin their hopes on the new king, but rather on the *yeshuah* of Hashem. As such, they then turned to Him in *tefillah*, until their cries rose up to Hashem.

From here, we learn a lesson for generations, concludes the *baal Teshuvos Vehanhagos*, that whenever there is a time of trouble we must not pin our hopes on a regime change, but always only cry out and daven to Hashem to have mercy.

The *Tzeror Hamor* explained that the cry of Bnei Yisrael was actually before the death of Pharaoh, and because their cries were heard, Pharaoh was punished and died. The *passuk* is explained as follows: “*Vayamas Melech Mitzrayim*” – the reason that the king of Egypt was punished and died is because “*Vata'al shava'asam el haElokim.*”

**Rav Yitzchak Arameh**, author of *Akeidas Yitzchak*, further explained: With Pharaoh's death, all the

Egyptians gathered to eulogize him, as was customary, and Bnei Yisrael were also obligated to eulogize and mourn for him as is fitting for servants to do with the passing of their master. At this time, Am Yisrael used the opportunity to gather with their wives and children and to direct their cries as a *tefillah* to the King of kings. And through that, the gates of Heaven were opened and their *tefillah* was accepted.

Based on this the *Imrei Shammai* explained the words in *Ana Bekoach*: “*Shavaseinu kabel ushema tza'akoseinu yodea ta'alumos.*” Even when on the outside the real reason for the cry is not apparent, such as with the death of Pharaoh, when it looked like Bnei Yisrael were participating with the Egyptians in their mourning, then, as well, the Yodea Ta'alumos discerned the real reason for their cries and accepted their *tefillah*.

*Peirush HaRamban al haTorah; Tzeror Hamor; Akeidas Yitzchak Sha'ar 34; Panim Yafos; Imrei Shammai; Ta'am Veda'as*

## Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The tziyun of the Semichas Chachamim in Istanbul

### The Semichas Chachamim

24 Teves 5479

Rav Naftali Katz was born around the year 5410 to his father, Rav Yitzchak Hakohein. Already while he was a youth, his greatness and talents were evident, and his reputation spread throughout the cities of Ashkenaz.

While he was still a youth, he was abducted and taken captive by the wild Tatars, and only miraculously was he

rescued and returned home, as he described in a song that he printed in is *sefer Semichas Chachamim*, with many words of praise for being spared from captivity.

In 5447, Rav Naftali became Rav in Ostra'ah and its environs, following the passing of his father-in-law, who was the Rav; he was only 37 years old at the time. In 5451, he was appointed *Av Beis Din* and Rav in the city of Posna, where he served for 15 years. In 5606, he was appointed as Rav and *Av Beis Din* in Frankfurt, where he served for five years until a terrible tragedy struck him and the entire city, when a fire that began in his home spread and burned down more than 500 homes, including the entire street of the Jews, and its shuls.

After the fire, Rav Naftali had to leave Frankfurt for Prague, and from there to Breslau, and he wandered from city to city until he decided to travel to Eretz Yisrael. He headed out via Istanbul, where he was delayed a few months; there, he fell in, and passed away in an awesome scene, of which there are descriptions, on 24 Teves 5479.

### The Oneh Amen with Kavanah Is Called Kadosh!

The will that Rav Naftali Katz, author of *Semichas Chachamim*, authored was printed in dozens of editions. Part of it turns to his sons and instructs them on their ways in life. There, Rav Naftali cites the Arizal and lists twenty-one things that sanctify a person, and when a person is careful about them, he fulfills the mitzvah of “*Vehiskadashtem veheyisem kedoshim*” (*Vayikra* 21:7). Among the things, Rav Naftali lists is answering amen with *kavanah*. He writes (letter 21 *ibid*):

“The intention of amen means that he should answer amen with all his strength, literally, because the voice arouses *kavanah*, as we see in the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur that one is allowed to daven aloud to arouse one's *kavanah*...And he should have in mind when answering: ‘*Kel Melech Ne'eman*’ (see *Shabbos* 119b)... ‘*Kel*’ is *chessed*, as it says (*Tehillim* 52:3): ‘*Chessed Kel kol hayom.*’ ‘*Melech*’ is *din*, as it says (*Mishlei* 16:10): ‘*Melech bamishpat ya'amid eretz*’... ‘*Ne'eman*’ is *rachamim*...as its says ‘*Ani Hashem*’ – *ne'eman* to pay good reward and ‘*Ani Hashem ne'eman* to punish (see *Rashi Shemos* 6:2). He also should have in mind: *Shem Havay*”ah and *Adnus*, which combined equal the numerical value of amen.

And when he does all this, he will be called a *kadosh*, as it says (*Vayikra* 20:7): ‘*Vehiskadashtem veheyisem kedoshim ki Ani Hashem Elokeichem.*’ And it is explained (*Brachos* 53b): ‘*Vehiskadashtem...Ani Hashem Elokeichem is a brachah [Birchas Hamazon], and if the mevarech is called kadosh – then how much more so is the oneh amen called kadosh because gadol ha'oneh amen yoser mei'hamevarech.*’ (*Brachos* *ibid*).