

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

When All Hope Is Lost - The Yeshuah Comes

"ויאמר ה' אל משה מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו" (יד טו)

The Sfas Emes explained:

When a Yid reaches the realization that he has no way to be saved from his troubles, and he pins his hopes entirely on his Creator – that is when he sees salvation. That is what happened when Am Yisrael stood at the shores of Yam Suf, with Pharaoh's army behind them, the sea ahead of them, and nowhere to flee. Because they saw that there was no way out, they turned completely to Hashem, and immediately, the sea split for them.

This is what Hashem said to Moshe: "Mah – titz'ak Eilai" – have Am Yisrael reached a state that they are confident in nothing but the yeshuah of Hashem that they are turning "Eilai" and shouting "mah" - what will we do now? Their salvation has already arrived! And therefore: "Daber el Bnei Yisrael veyisu."

Vaya'an Yosef [Rav Y. Mandelkorn] p. 111

The Ruzhiner Rebbe was quoted as saying that Dovid Hamelech alludes to this concept in *sefer Tehillim*, with the words (12:2-3): "Ad anah Hashem tishkacheini netzach ad anah tastsir es Panecha mimeni" – "ad anah ashis eitzos benafshi." As long as a person still has all kinds of ideas and seeks a natural way to extricate himself from his troubles, HaKadosh Baruch Hu hides His Face from him and does not extract him from his troubles. But when the person sees that only Hashem has the yeshuah, then the *haSaras Panim* ceases and he is spared.

Yismach Yisrael Parashas Vayigash

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

The Wondrous Revelation of Rabbeinu Bechayei

This Shabbos, we have a wonderful opportunity to delve – even a bit – into the meaning of answering amen, its tremendous power and its lofty effects. Why?! Because one of the leading commentators on the Mikra, Rabbeinu Bechayei, expounded on the lofty virtue of answering amen specifically in this *parashah*, in his commentary on the *passuk* (*Shemos* 14:31): "Vayir'u ha'am es Hashem vaya'aminu b'Hashem uveMoshe avdo." In his words, Rabbeinu Bechayei explains the meaning of the word amen in *halachah*, *agadah*, and in *Toras HaSod*, and he also details the reward of one who is strict to answer amen according to *halachah*, and the punishment of one who *chalilah*, does not take heart to do this.

If we look Heavenward in the darkness of night, we can discern tens of thousands of tiny stars, some of which are hardly seen. These stars appear small to us because they are light years away, but there is no one who will cast doubt on the fact that they are entire worlds in and of themselves.

Rabbeinu Bechayei in this *parashah* reveals to us that amen is exactly the same. In our eyes, it appears small and minute, but On High, it is large and so significant that entire worlds are contingent upon it, as *Chazal* testify (*Devarim Rabbah* 7:4): "There is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Am Yisrael reply."

I had the thought that Rabbeinu

Bechayei had special *kavanah* when choosing specifically this *passuk* of "Vaya'aminu b'Hashem uveMoshe avdo" of all the *pesukim* in the Torah that describe *emunah* to offer his explanation on the tremendous power of the virtue of amen. This is because one who is strict to answer amen strengthens both his *emunah* in Hashem, as he joins as a second witness to the testimony of the *mevarech* who is coronating the Creator, as Rabbeinu Bechayei wrote, and the *emunah* in "Moshe avdo" – in the sages of the generations, who work through the power of Moshe Rabbeinu, and who established for us to answer amen, and warned us to utter it according to *halachah*.

I will add that the fact that Rabbeinu Bechayei's words are written on the *passuk* that we say each morning ahead of *Shiras Hayam* is a daily reminder for us about the importance of answering amen, and about the tremendous reward that a person who is strict to answer it properly acquires for himself.

Let us heed the words of *Chazal*, and multiply our answering of amen, let us rise each morning to answer amen after the *mevarchim Birchos Hashachar* in shul, and thus we will increase *kavod Shamayim* in the world, and we will firmly establish our *emunah* in the Creator – and even merit great reward for this.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Yerushalayim, 350 years ago: The Turkish pasha, the representative of the Ottoman Empire, ruled ruthlessly over the residents of the Holy City. It was wintertime, but there was no rain. As the weeks passed, the hearts of the residents filled with worry. It had been many years since the city's residents had experienced such a dry winter.

The water cisterns had long been emptied; there wasn't a drop of wetness in them. The ground was dry and cracked. The crops were withering and crumbling, and people's worry escalated to severe fear for their survival. No water meant no life.

The Jews grasped onto the craft of their ancestors and filled the shuls, pleading and praying to Hashem. But nothing happened. The skies of Yerushalayim remained cerulean blue, with nary a cloud dotting them. It seemed that the gates of Heaven had been closed to them.

When the pasha saw this, he decided that he had to do something before the people turned their anger on him. He called Rav Moshe Galanti, the Rishon Letzion, and threatened: "You Jews

Immediately, Rav Moshe Galanti instructed three fast days, during which they would daven incessantly in the shuls, day and night, men women and children, pleading for compassion that Hashem should open the gates of Heaven and shower them with blessed rains.

After three days of fasting, *tefillos* and tears, Rav Moshe called the community and asked them to come with him to the holy *tziyun* of Shimon Hatzaddik, a short walk from Bab al Amud – more familiar to us as Sha'ar Shechem, or the Damascus Gate.

Before they left, Rav Moshe instructed them to return to their homes and don winter clothes, coats and scarves, and to put on shoes that would be suitable for winter weather. That's how confident he was that Hashem would hear their *tefillos*, and send salvation in the blink of an eye, as soon as they finished their *tefillos* at the *kever* of Shimon Hatzaddik.

At the time, the sun was shining throughout the Holy City, with no sign of rain on the horizon. Yet, with *emunah temimah*, the residents of the city listened to their Rav, and hurried home to put on their winter clothes. Then they returned to follow him to Kever Shimon Hatzaddik.

The guard at the Damascus Gate did not believe the sight that met his eyes. Hundreds of Jews from the city were walking in a long procession, wearing heavy winter clothes. "Where are you going and why

are you dressed like that?" he asked the crowd.

"We are going to the *kever* of Shimon Hatzaddik," they replied. "And we are dressed this way because our Rav instructed us to, because we have *bitachon* that our *tefillos* will be answered and the rains will begin to fall within a short time."

The guard heard the Jews' response, raised his eyes to the skies, and when he saw not a single cloud, he got angry. He strode towards Rav Moshe Galanti, who was walking venerably at the head of the procession, and gave him a slap on the face.

Rav Moshe looked at the wild Arab guard in surprise, but then lowered his eyes in humility and continued walking silently to the *kever* of Shimon Hatzaddik, his pained community

walking behind him.

There was tremendous awe of Heaven in the *kever* and the courtyard. The sages and rabbanim of Yerushalayim, led by Rav Moshe, entered the cave, prostrated themselves at the ancient gravesite and began to pray. Rav Moshe stood before the *amud*, and the *bnei Yerushalayim* who surrounded the gravesite said the chapters of *Tehillim* along with him, with broken hearts and intense *kavanah*.

As they stood davening, a strong wind began to blow. The thick olive trees planted at the top of Har Hazeisim began to sway noisily in the wind. A thick layer of heavy clouds rolled over the city of Yerushalayim, and it grew dark. Then, with a thunderous roar, the rain began to pour down onto the ground.

Rivulets of water streamed through the city, purifying the air and ground from the dust, rinsing the streets, satiating the dry ground, and the withered trees with an abundance of water. The empty cisterns began to fill, and the stifling air became clear and fresh.

Rav Moshe Galanti and the members of his community did not even have a chance to turn back towards the city when they saw the figure of the Arab guard from afar. He was running frantically towards Rav Moshe, and when he reached him, he fell on his face and pleaded for forgiveness for having humiliated him in front of so many people. Then he picked Rav Moshe up and carried him on his shoulders all the way back to his home, as the residents of the city gazed at them with surprise and admiration.

The rain did not let up for three days and three nights. The dry ground absorbed huge quantities of water, and the cisterns filled to capacity. The gentile residents of the city clearly saw that HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears the *tefillos* of His nation, as the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 4:7): "*Ki mi goy gadol asher lo Elokim kerovim eilav k'Hashem Elokeinu bechol kareinu Eilav.*"

A few days later there was a knock at Rav Moshe Galanti's door. It was the gentile guard who had come secretly, seeking to convert after seeing so clearly that Hashem listens to the pleas of His people and hastens their salvation. When Rav Moshe saw the sincere intentions of the guard, he acceded to his request, and converted him according to *halachah*. That guard became a resident of Rav Moshe's home, and served him faithfully for the rest of his life.

Od Yosef Chai, Parashas Beshalach



The inside of Kever Shimon Hatzaddik in Yerushalayim

claim that you were chosen by your G-d to be the Chosen Nation, and that you are closer to Him than all the other nations. Let us see that in real time. Call all the Jews of the city for a prayer rally for the drought that is threatening to destroy us, and if your prayers will be accepted and the skies open, that will be a sign that you are right. But if rains do not fall within three days of today, I will command that all the Jews be expelled from the city!"

The Jews were gripped by despair when they heard the pasha's decree. Who of them had the power to bring rains, or to make the winds blow?! The key to rains lies in the Hands of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and there is no living being that can control the Heavenly systems to bring clouds and rain. Were they decreed to be expelled from the city? Where would they go?!

From Rabbeinu Bechayei in this Parashah, on the Virtue of Answering Amen
In his commentary on the *passuk* (Shemos 4:31):
“Vayir’u ha’am es Hashem vaya’aminu b’Hashem uveMoshe avdo”

משמעות תיבת “אמן”

ומפני שהאמונה יסוד כל התורה כולה, תיקנו לנו רבותינו זיכרונם לברכה בתפילה ובברכות לענות אמן, שהוא נגזר מלשון אמונה, ומלשון הודאה שמקבל עליו דברי המברך ומודה בהם¹. וזהו שאמרו רבותינו זיכרונם לברכה (שבועות לו א): ‘אמן קבלה², אמן שבועה³, אמן קיום⁴.

עניית אמן קיום העדות

ועל זה אמרו (גזיר סו ב): גדול העונה אמן יותר מן המברך. וביאור העניין: כי המברך מעיד בברכתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא מקור הברכה, והעונה אמן הוא מקיים השטר והוא העיקר, שאין קיום העדות בעד ראשון אלא בעד שני שהעדות נגמר על ידו, והעונה אמן הוא העד השני⁵, וצריך הוא שיצטרף עם העד הראשון שהוא המברך, כי עימו העדות קיים⁶.

חובת הזהירות בדקדוק הגייתה

וכבר האריך רבותינו זכרונם לברכה לדבר במשפט הזכרת אותיות התבה הזאת ואיך יתחייב להגות בהן אדם, והוא שאמרו (ברכות מז א): “אין עונין לא אמן קטופה⁷, ולא אמן קטופה⁸, ולא אמן יתומה⁹, אלא אמן ארפה¹⁰. בן עזאי אומר העונה אמן קטופה יתחטפו ימיו,

1 The *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* (124:6) also ruled that when answering amen one should have in mind both: “The *brachah* that the *mevarech* made is *emes*, true,” and “**I believe this**” – and it seems that like the words of Rabbeinu, the meaning of answering amen is both a declaration of *emunah* and an agreement and confirmation of the words of the *mevarech*.

2 Just like in the event of the *brachos* and *klalos* that took place as Am Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, they took upon themselves to fulfill the Torah by answering amen after the words of the Levi’im, as it says (*Devarim* 27:26): “Cursed is the one who does not establish the words of this Torah to fulfill them and the whole nation said amen” (*Shevuos* *ibid*).

3 Like a woman takes upon herself the *shevuas ha’alah* said in the *parashah* of *sotah* by answering amen after the oath said by the Kohein, as it says (*Bamidbar* 5 21:22): “*Vehishbia haKohein...v’amrah ha’ishah amen amen*” (*ibid*).

4 In other words, expressing hope that the words will be fulfilled, as Yirmiyahu Hanavi said (28:6) “*amen kein ya’aseh Hashem*” regarding the news of Chananyah ben Azur that the *klei hamikdash* and the exiles of Yehudah would be returned (*ibid*). Previously in *Maseches Shevuos* (and in the *Yerushalmi Sotah* 2 5 and in *Devarim Rabbah* 7 1) under the term “*kiyum*” that Rabbeinu mentioned, the term “*ha’amanah*” is mentioned, and they mean one and the same.

Rabbeinu intended to bring proof from the words of the *Gemara* that answering amen expresses absolute agreement with the words of the ones who answer amen after it. But for the premise that answering amen is derived from the word *emunah* there is no proof from this *Gemara*, but it emerges from the words of *Chazal* who say (*Shabbos* 119b): “What is amen? K-l Melech Neme’an,” and *Rashi* explains (*ibid*): “This is how he testifies of his Creator that He is a K-l Melech Ne’eman.”

5 In *Maseches Brachos* (45a), *Chazal* explain the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 34:4): “*Gadlu l’Hashem iti uneromemah Shemo yachdav*” regarding answering amen, and the *Ritva* (*ibid*) explains that the *mevarech* calls to the listeners “*Gadlu l’Hashem iti*” with answering amen, and that is as Rabbeinu here says, that the *mevarech* and the *oneh amen* are two witnesses who together, glorify the Name of Hashem (and see further in the commentary on *Maseches Nazir* 66b, ad loc. *Echad ha’oneh*). And see the previous note, that *Rashi* also classifies the *oneh amen* as an “*eid*”, a witness.

6 Because the *oneh amen* is like a “second witness” that joins the testimony of the first one, then the *oneh amen* is like one who finishes the mitzvah that the *mevarech* began, and because *Chazal* say (*Sotah* 13b) “Anyone who does something and does not finish it, and someone else comes and finishes it, the *passuk* considers it for the [one] who finished it as if he did [all of it]”, therefore “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*” (*Sukkas Dovid Parashas Metzora* 38, in the words of Rabbeinu there. And see *Tosafos HaRosh Brachos* 53b)

7 That he answers amen by swallowing one of its letters (*Rashi* *ibid* ad loc. *Ketufah*, based on *Bach Orach Chaim* 124).

8 That he reads the *aleph* with a *chataf-pasach* and not a *kamatz*, and says “ahmen” instead of “omein”, and Rabbeinu explains further on like this, and Rav Y. of Lunil (*Brachos* *ibid*) concurs, and similarly, *Rashi* explains (*ibid* ad loc. *chatufah*).

9 That he answers amen without knowing which *brachah* he is answering to. (*Rashi* *ibid* ad loc. *yesomah*)

10 But the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 124 8) that he should not prolong the answering of amen too much (and it should be as long as it takes to say the words ‘Kel Melech Ne’eman’), because otherwise it loses the meaning of the word.

קטופה יתקטפו ימיו¹¹, יתומה יהיו בְּנוֹ יתומים, אַרְכָּה מַאֲרִיכִים לוֹ יָמָיו וּשְׁנוֹתָיו. וְעִנְיָן חֲטוּפָה שֶׁהוּא חוּטֵף הָאֵלֶּף בְּשֵׁבֶא פֶתֶח. וְהִנֵּה זֶה הַפֶּה הָאֲמוּנָה מִמָּה שֶׁכְּתוּב בְּאֲמִנוֹן (שְׁמוּאֵל ב' יג, כ): "הָאֲמִינוֹן אַחִיד הִיָּה עִמּוֹ", וּפְרָשׁוֹ "ל דְּשַׁקְרִי" בְּלַע"ז¹². וְהָא לְמַדְתָּ שֶׁהַעוֹנָה אֲמֵן חֲטוּפָה הִנֵּה הוּא מְהַפֵּךְ הַקְּעָרָה עַל פִּיהָ וּמוֹרִיד לְאָרֶץ יְסוּדוֹת חוֹמוֹת הָאֲמוּנָה.

לכפול עניית אמן

... וְכַל מִן הַמְּכֻוֹן וְהַכּוֹפֵל אֲמֵן-אֲמֵן זֹכֶה לְשֵׁנֵי עוֹלָמוֹת, וְכֵן אֲמַר דָּוִד עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם בְּסוּף מְזֻמּוֹר ע"ב (תְּהִלִּים עב יח-יט): "בְּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹקִים אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת לְבָדוֹ. וּבְרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם וְיִמְלֵא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ אֲמֵן וְאָמֵן". וְעוֹד בְּמְזֻמּוֹר פֶּט (פסוק נג): "בְּרוּךְ ה' לְעוֹלָם אֲמֵן וְאָמֵן"¹³. וְזֶה הַמְּכַבֵּד אֶת ה' יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּאֵמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו אֲמַר הַכְּתוּב (שְׁמוּאֵל א ב ל): "כִּי מְכַבְּדִי אֶכְבֵּד".

ענישו של המזלזל בעניית אמן

וְכַל מִי שֶׁאִינוֹ נֹזֵהר בְּמִילַת אֲמֵן לְכוֹן בְּכָל כַּחוֹ וְכוּנָתוֹ, הָרִי זֶה מְבַזָּה אֶת הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, וְעָלָיו אֲמַר הַכְּתוּב (שָׁם): "וּבְזֵי יִקְלוּ"¹⁴. וּמִשְׁבָּעָה מְדוּרִין שֵׁשׁ בְּגִיהֶנֶם מוֹרִידִים אוֹתוֹ לְאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁבְּכָלֶם שֶׁהוּא כְּפוּל¹⁵, וְהוּא נִקְרָא (אִיּוֹב י' כב): "אָרֶץ עֲפָתָה"¹⁶, וְהוּא אָרֶץ שְׂאוֹל תְּחִתִּית, כִּי "שְׂאוֹל" מְדוּר אַחַד וְ"תְּחִתִּית" מְדוּר שֵׁנִי, וְאוֹתוֹ תְּחִתִּית נִקְרָא "אֲבָדוֹן" וְזֶהוּ (מְשָׁלִי טו יא): "שְׂאוֹל וְאֲבָדוֹן נִגְדָה", מִי שֶׁיִּרְדַּד לְאֲבָדוֹן שׁוֹב אִינוֹ עוֹלָה¹⁷. וְעַל זֶה אֲמַר הַכְּתוּב (יְרֵמְיָה ב' יג): "אֲתִי עֲזָבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים" - הַמְּבַזִּים לְעֵנּוֹת אֲמֵן עֲזָבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים, הוּא הַנוֹבֵעַ שְׁנֹרֵמָז לְמַעַלָּה¹⁸. וּמָה יְהִיָּה עֲנֻשׁוֹ - "לְחַצְב לָהֶם בְּאוֹרוֹת בְּאוֹרֵי נְשִׁבְרִים", כְּלוּמֹר: הָרִי הֵן יוֹרְדִים לְגִיהֶנֶם מְדַרְגָּה אַחֵר מְדַרְגָּה¹⁹ בְּעֻנְשׁ כְּפוּל, וְזֶהוּ שֶׁפָּל: 'בְּאוֹרוֹת בְּאוֹרֵי', וְהַכֵּל מְדָה כְּנִגְדָה מְדָה בֵּין בְּעֻנְשׁ בֵּין בְּשִׁכָר²⁰.

11 To explain the difference between “yiskatfu” and “yischatfu” see *sefer Birchas Rosh (Brachos ibid)*.

12 Rabbeinu explains that *Chazal* were strict about the punishment of one who answers amen with a *chataf-pasach* under the *aleph*, because by doing so, the meaning of the word is switched from expressing *emunah* to expressing a lack of faith. As we find that when Avshalom wanted to condemn Amnon in the ears of Tamar his sister, he called him “Aminon” – the *aleph* with a *chataf-pasach*, and Rashi explained that “Aminon” “דשקרי” is “בלע” which means a lack of faith. But here, the copiers omitted these words of Rashi in his commentary on the *passuk* (see *Ma’ayanei Agam* p. 12). And see *sefer Toras Chaim* (commentary on Rabbeinu Bechayei, by Rav Chaim HaKohein of Tripoli), on what he explained on this subject.

13 The *Yerushalmi (Megillah 4 10)* says that just like one who repeats “*Modim Modim*” is silenced because it looks like he is thanking two deities, likewise, one who answers “amen amen” is silenced. *L’halachah*, the *poskim* are divided: The *Bais Yosef (Orach Chaim 61)* believes that one is permitted to answer amen amen, but the *Rema (ibid 12)* rules that one should not do so. The *Levush (ibid)* wrote that even according to the *Rema* one is allowed to answer amen twice, one after the other, if he adds a “*vav*” to the second amen and says “amen v’amen,” as the words of the *passuk*; the *Mishnah Berurah (ibid 28)* concurs. According to Rabbeinu, there is no difference between answering “amen amen” and “amen v’amen.” And he brings proof of this from the *pesukim* in *sefer Tehillim* that one may answer a double amen, and on the contrary, it is considered *hiddur*. The *Magen Avraham (ibid 10)* brings the words of Rabbeinu here, and rules like him. But the *Eliyahu Rabbah* writes (*ibid*) that even Rabbeinu, who write “*hamechaven vekofel*” did not permit doubling amen, unless one is answering amen with *kavanah*, but someone who does not have *kavanah*, must not answer amen twice even according to Rabbeinu. As the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim 104 7*) that someone who cannot have *kavanah* in his *tefillah k’halachah* should not daven a *tefillas nedavah*, because the *passuk* says of someone like him (*Yeshayah 1:11*): “*Lamah Li rav zivcheichem*.”

14 The source of the words of Rabbeinu from here on is in the *sefer HaZohar, Parashas Vayeilech (285b)*. In *sefer Pri Eitz Chaim (Sha’ar Kavanas Amen Ch. 3)* it is brought that from the fact that the last letter of each word of the *passuk (Tehillim 83:17)*: מלא פניהם: *amen*, and the word that begins this *passuk* “מלא” is comprised of the same letters as the word *אלם*, alludes that one who acts like a mute when he hears a *brachah* and does not answer amen is punished with *kalon*.

15 As will be explained further along that there are two sections: one that is called “*she’ol*” and the other that is called “*tachtis*” and “*avadon*.”

16 The *Zohar (ibid)* explains that *ארץ עפתי* means a double land, as *Onkelos* explained (*Shemos 28:16*) the words *כפול* as *רבע* יהיה כפול as *רבע* יהא ערף and see also *Pri Eitz Chaim* that explained that “*afсах*” is also from the term *אפילה*, as the darkness is sourced in this section, where those who do not answer amen are sent, and “from there came the darkness of Mitzrayim during which someone was not even able to stand up.”

17 In *Pri Eis Chaim (Mishlei 5 6)* he explained that the lower section in Gehinnom is called “*avadon*” because as its name says “*ki sham avdan hanfesh, besod (Vayikra 23:30): ‘Veha’avadeti es hanefesh hahu mikerev amah*.””

18 In the previous segment regarding the secrets of amen (which was omitted in this part), Rabbeinu explained that one who answers amen draws down *brachah* to this world “like one who opens a well to water all those that need watering.”

19 Until they reach the lower section of Gehinnom, as mentioned previously in Rabbeinu’s words.

20 It means: The Leadership of Hashem in the word through *middah kenegged middah* is manifested in this, both with the reward of those who answer amen *k’halachah* and in the punishment of those who are lax about it.