

VeChol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

All Brachos Are in the Merit of Eretz Yisrael

"ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך; ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה" (יב א-ב)

Among the seven *brachos* said for a *chassan* and *kallah*, we dedicate a *brachah* to the rebuilding of Yerushalayim – "*Mesame'ach Tzion bevaneha*." What does that have to do with the *simchas chassan v'kallah*? **Harav Aryeh Tzvi Frommer, Av Beis Din Kozhiglov**, explained based on what we learn from this *passuk*:

The reason we say *sheva brachos* at a *simchas chassan v'kallah* is to nullify the curse that Adam Harishon was cursed with, along with his descendants. The main power of the *brachah* is drawn from the words "*Veheyei brachah*" that Avraham Avinu was blessed with. Rashi explains those words: "the *brachos* are given to your hands." But Rashi explains that the *brachah* of "and I will make you a large nation," was conditioned on "go from your land...to the Land that I will show you," and we learn from this that all the *brachos* said here are conditional on dwelling in the Land. Therefore, in order that the residents of *chutz l'aretz* should also be able to merit the power of the *brachos* that Avraham was blessed with, it was instituted that we ask in *sheva brachos* for the building of Yerushalayim, so that their yearning for Yerushalayim will be considered as if they dwelled there, and that is how the *brachah* of "*Mesame'ach Tzion bevaneha*" will be fulfilled.

Eretz Tzvi, Vol. II, Drushim, Drush 6:9

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A Brachah According to Halachah Effects a Revolution

Nearly 2,000 years after Creation, the light of Avraham Avinu dawned on the world, and a new era began. Avraham Avinu was the first of the *ma'aminim*, the ones who believed in Hashem, and he is the one who began to spread the light of *emunah* in the world.

Chazal (*Sotah* 10a) describe the way Avraham Avinu taught the people in his generation to believe in Hashem. He built a tent, where he would host passersby and served them food and drink. After they ate their fill, the guests thanked him. But then Avraham would protest: "Did you eat from my food? It is the food of the G-d of the world! Thank and bless the One Who made a statement and created the world!"

We all grew up knowing these words of *Chazal*, but without realizing the wonderful message that they contain: The great influence of saying a *brachah* on the soul of a person! Through *chinuch* to recite *brachos* – Avraham Avinu was able to disseminate *emunas Hashem* in the world! Complete gentiles, who had never heard of Hashem, learned to recognize Him and believe in Him through saying a *brachah*!

Another understanding: As someone who worked all his life to feed passersby, Avraham Avinu was perceived as a pillar of *chesed* and kindness. That is true, of course, but we have to also take notice that the main *chesed* of Avraham Avinu, the "*rosh hama'aminim*," was that he brought the light of *emunah* to all those foolish people who grew up believing in idols. When serving food to his guests, and providing their needs at that moment, Avraham Avinu wanted to

grant them a real benefit, bringing them to eternal life by teaching them to make a *brachah* and thank Hashem, and that's how he planted *emunah* in Hashem in their hearts.

This is what the *passuk* refers to (*Bereishis* 21:33): "*Vayita eshel b'Be'er Sheva vayikra sham beShem Hashem Kel Olam*" and Reish Lakish explained (*Sotah* 10b): "Do not read it '*vayikra*' but rather '*vayakri*' – the purpose of planting the tree was to issue the call of the Shem Hashem to all the creations, teaching them to bless and thank Hashem.

Perhaps this is the source for the famous statement in the name of *tzaddikim* that the eating does not cause the *brachah*, but rather, the *brachah* causes the eating – the whole purpose of eating is the *brachos* that we say over the food. Because, as noted, Avraham Avinu dedicated his life to feeding passersby who crossed the threshold into his tent, in an effort to teach them to thank Hashem and bless Him for the food they received.

"The actions of the fathers are a sign for the sons." We, the descendants of Avraham Avinu, should also issue the call of the Name of Hashem to other people! When we notice a person about to make a *brachah*, we should ask him to answer amen after his *brachos*, and by doing so, aside of the actual meriting of the mitzvah of amen, we will cause him to say the *brachah* properly.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein,
New York

The Russian night had long gotten used to the frost and the dull hum of cold that whistled through the barracks.

The soldiers in the military camp were exhausted, and they curled up in the thin blankets that had been provided to them as part of a meager package of basic supplies - whose goal was to speed up the adjustment of the soldiers to the combat conditions in the field.

Soon, the first rays of dawn would break, casting thin beams of light on the roofs of the huts, a sign that a new day of training had arrived. There was absolute silence in the whole camp, save for the chilling sound of the guards' boots rhythmically marching, as their eyes scanned the horizon and their ears were on alert for any unusual sound.

In the next hour, the morning roll call would take place, when the soldiers would have to display absolute discipline to the military hierarchy.

From one of the huts, sounds could be heard slicing through the deep silence.

Reb Yosef Kaddish Krishevsky had gotten up early, into the chill, and stretched his freezing bones. His face registered excitement as he made his final preparations for davening, to stand in front of the Leader of the world Who is "yotzer ohr uborei choshech," even in an isolated barracks.

Reb Yosef, a low ranking but very determined private, enveloped himself in his *tallis* and wrapped his *tefillin* around



The Lefortovo prison in Moscow

his arm. Soon, he was deeply engrossed in his warm *tefillah* that cast a halo on the entire hut, and with a special tune, he whispered the words of the *pesukim* slowly and carefully. From the side, it appeared to his roommates that he had nothing in his life but this moment of being enveloped in *tefillah*.

The scene continued for a long time, as Reb Yosef basked in the confines of the *heichal hatefillah*. He did not notice the morning rising and growing brighter, and seemed oblivious to the impending roll call. It would be heralded with the guards trumpeting their golden trumpets to wake the troops for a new day of grueling training.

The brigade's soldiers awoke to the sound

of the Russian anthem, and stretched their stiff muscles. They didn't have any spare minutes to wet their lips with a hot drink, or to even enjoy the fresh new day. They had a very short time to get ready and be standing for roll call. They hurried to tie up their boots and straighten their berets, and were no longer very moved by the scene of Reb Yosef closing his eyes fervently and swaying in a corner.

'Dobroye utro!' (good morning), the guard growled, and motioned with his hand to for the high ranking guest to enter. 'Zdravstvuyte,' (hello) the senior officer with many medals on his chest replied. He had arrived the night before at the barracks by surprise, and already he was striding arrogantly among the rows of soldiers, studying each and every one carefully.

His satisfaction at the absolute discipline of the rows of troops was soon replaced by a furious expression when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Reb Yosef Krishevsky engrossed in his *tefillah*.

The angry officer waved at the errant private and motioned for him to desist, but Reb Yosef was concentrating on his davening and did not even notice anything else. The patience of the guest was very short, and he demanded that the soldier stand at attention and salute, while Reb Yosef calmly stepped back three steps and finished the *Amidah*. The officer was fuming now, and was not ready to let the soldier's impudence go unpunished. With a sharp move, he grabbed Reb Yosef's *tefillin* and threw them wildly to the ground.

Reb Yosef bent down to his precious *tefillin* and kissed them lovingly, and without hesitating, he raised his hand and slapped the arrogant officer on the face, in objection to the violation of the *tefillin*.

The stunned officer was breathing heavily with fury, and he ordered his soldiers to handcuff the private and throw him into prison. As Reb Yosef was dragged to the cell, the officer hollered at him, 'You've debased the Russian Army, you're going to be sentenced to death!' But even hearing this words did nothing to alter Reb Yosef's tranquil gaze; he didn't appear to be the least bit worried.

Reb Yosef sat in a dark, moldy cell, his eyes glowing. There was no sun penetrating this dungeon, but the words of *tefillah* filled him with vitality.

His firm *emunah* did not give any way to despair.

Even when he was offered the right to a military defender, he firmly rejected it,

and preferred to cast his lot on Hashem, and no other.

When Reb Yosef's trial began, everyone in the courtroom, from the dignitaries to the visitors in the gallery laughed heartily at the defendant, who had not utilized his right to defense, which every citizen deserved. When the military prosecutor finished listing the crimes of the Jewish private, the panel of judges expressed their horror at this criminal offense against the Russian Tsar. Especially at the fact that it had taken place during morning roll call, in front of hundreds of soldiers. An offense to the Russian Tsar was unforgivable.

The stamp that would seal his death sentence had already been dipped into the inkpad. A moment before the verdict was issued, the defendant was given a chance to say a few words in his defense. Reb Yosef stood up calmly, as if a death sentence was not hovering over his head. With clarity and confidence, he said, "When I was drafted to the Russian army, I was asked to take an oath of allegiance on the object that is most dear to me. I pondered what that thing is, and then selected my *tefillin*. With the *tefillin* in my hand, I pledged an oath of allegiance to the regime until my death. Do you think I can violate my word?! Our Creator has commanded us to honor every word that comes out of our mouths, and a false oath is one of the most serious transgressions in our book of laws. From the moment I swore with the *tefillin*, then do not think for a moment that I will not accord honor to the Tsar."

A strange buzz rippled through the crowd. Reb Yosef continued: "When the officer threw this holy object upon which I had taken the oath of allegiance, he was acting with terrible denigration toward the military hierarchy, and toward the ceremony of the soldiers' swearing in. Thus, he was challenging the Russian Tsar. And because of my allegiance to the Tsar, and my absolute submission to his entire hierarchy, I protested for the honor of the army and I smacked the officer in my dismay. I do not forgive this criminal act."

Recess! The judge banged with his gavel and an usher removed everyone from the hall.

After a stormy consultation among the judges, everyone was called back, and the presiding judge read out the protocol of accusations from the officer. "The court was convinced by the solid claims of the private and has acquitted him of all guilt. The officer will be demoted one rank and will pay for court expenses."

"Adjourned!" the usher announced to the confused crowd, and Reb Yosef calmly walked out of the courtroom, as if he'd foreseen the verdict. Or more accurately, he'd foreseen the power of *tefillah* to the Melech Hamishpat.

It is with awe that we sit down for a conversation with the Yid who probably holds the longest-standing title of “*gabbai amen*” in our generation.

Rabbi Shalom Landsberg, *shlita*, is a *gabbai amen* of the most authentic kind. For decades, before the Bney Emunim revolution took hold and publicized the awareness of answering amen, Reb Shalom stood each morning in his *tallis* and *tefillin*, and answered amen to the *Birchos Hashachar* of many Yidden. It has been going on for many years, first in Kiryat Sanz in Yerushalayim, and more recently in Beit Shemesh.

How many years have you been serving as a *gabbai amen*?

The truth is, it’s hard to remember an exact date, but it’s more than fifty years that I have been *zocheh* to answer amen to people making *Birchos Hashachar*. Although I was not always a real *gabbai* for all those years, there were always a number of regular *mispallelim* who came over to me to say their *brachos* and merit amen.

The main time was in the *beis medrash* of Sanz in Kiryat Sanz, Yerushalayim, where I lived for many years. There, I merited to be a *gabbai amen*, *baruch Hashem*, and today as well, after moving to Beit Shemesh, I merit to continue this holy work of answering amen during the week in K’hal Chassidei Yerushalayim. On Shabbos, because it’s hard for me to walk, there’s a *minyán* in my house with my grandsons, and they also come over to me and recite *Birchos Hashachar*, and I answer amen and give out sweets.

Where do you get the strength and energy to dedicate time each morning to *mispallelim* to recite *Birchos Hashachar*? What brought you to value the mitzvah of answering amen so much?

I am a *talmid* of Yeshivas Chevron, and while I was learning there, the Rosh Yeshivah was Harav Aharon Cohen. I was very close to him. I once went with Rav Aharon to the Kosel, even before the establishment of the State, and we met Harav Ahron Roth, the Shomer Emunim. From that time, a deep bond was forged between the Rosh Yeshivah and the Shomer Emunim, and as a result, I got involved in the *seforim* of the Shomer Emunim. He writes extensively about answering amen to *Birchos Hashachar*, and about the

kavanah of amen, with very special and inspiring words. Since then, I feel very connected to the *inyan* of amen...

I began to approach *mispallelim* and asked them to say the *brachos* for me, I always had a desire that it should become more established and regular, and that people should come to say amen for me, and indeed, *baruch Hashem*, today I am *zocheh* that many people come over on their own each morning to say *brachos*.



How did it all begin? When did it become more official?

In the *beis medrash* in Kiryat Sanz, there was a group of a few Yidden who wanted to answer amen. We would spread out around the shul and say amen after the *mispallelim*. The minute we were a group it was all much easier. We began answering amen to one another, and soon enough, more people joined.

After many years, we received a sign from Bney Emunim, and to this day, that sign serves me well. The advantage of the sign is that even when I come to a place where I don’t usually daven, I put out the sign, and immediately people come and say the *brachos* for me.

When I moved to Beit Shemesh, I found in shul a Yid name Rav Zaks, a grandson of the Chofetz Chaim, זי”א, who was already a *gabbai amen*. The first time, I simply sat down next to him to hear the amens, and then something interesting happened. We were two *gabbaim* together and I’m telling you, it has an even greater virtue, because when you say the *brachos* for one *gabbai*, the *mispallelim* can say *Birchos Hashachar* quietly, but when you say it in front of two, it becomes a *shiur*...

you have to say it louder, slower, so that they should both be at the same pace, and for years, we answered amen together. Until one day, he didn’t feel well, and for now I’m doing the job myself.

Why do you think people sometimes are lax about this lofty mitzvah?

I don’t know why people are lax, but I do know one thing: the very existence of *gabbai amen* in the shul increases the awareness of saying *brachos* and answering amen in the whole shul, even among those who do not actually come to say the *brachos* for us yet.

So every *gabbai amen* needs to know that although there are those who don’t come to say *Birchos Hashachar* for them, the fact that they see that there is a *gabbai amen* makes the matter of saying *brachos* with *kavanah* more important to them. Sometimes, without anyone even noticing, they do say the *brachos* aloud, so that the one standing next to them will answer amen.

And that, of course, is also in the merit of the *gabbai amen*.

What is the way to connect the *tzibbur* to this age old practice of making *Birchos Hashachar* for someone who will answer amen?

I can share what connected me very much and helped me over the years: To read the wonderful *Vechol Ma’aminim* pamphlet every week. I travel each week to a place where I can get these pamphlets in our area. I think that it is unique and unlike any other publication, because it is written so well, so clearly, in a style that is suited both to a child of eight and to a Yid of my age that has already passed the age of ninety *bechasdei Hashem*.

How much time does this task take you each morning? How many people do you hear *brachos* from?

First of all, the wording of the question “how much time does it take” is not precise, because answering amen is not a task that needs to be finished... It’s a huge *zechus*, so it makes no difference how much time it takes. And second, I daven *neitz* and come early to davening, so *baruch Hashem* I have lots of time available to answer amen to all the *mispallelim* in my *minyán*, and from other *minyanim*.

One Who Answers Amen Draws Good Down Upon Am Yisrael

”ומלכי-צדק מלך שלם הוציא להם להם ויין והוא כהן לאל עליון” (יד יה)

The holy *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) says that in the merit of answering amen with *kavanah*, the gates of *brachah* and goodness are opened on High and much abundance is brought down to all the worlds.

The Mekubal, Rav Shlomo Aharon Auerbach, a *maggid* in Boyan, brought an allusion to this from the acronym of the last letters of the words *הוציא להם ויין* which is amen, to prove that the power of answering amen *k'halachah* has good *hashpa'os* on Am Yisrael.

Tiferes Shlomo [Rav S. A. Auerbach, Chernowitz, 5651]

Inheriting the Land in the Merit of 100 Brachos

”ויאמר ה' אלקים במה אדע כי אירשנה” (טו ה)

Harav Eliyahu Hakohein Ha'itamari, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained:

In *Maseches Menachos* (43b) *Chazal* cited the source for the mitzvah of *Meah Brachos* as the *passuk* (*Devarim* 10:12): “ועתה: ”ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שאל מעמך – and Rashi explains (*ibid ad loc. Mah*) that the *passuk* is explained in the form of ‘don’t read’ – don’t read it as “mah” but rather as “meah” – *meah* [brachos each day] is what Hashem asks of you.”

Here, as well, we can explain the word במה as if it says במאה and Avraham Avinu said כי במ[א]ה אדע כי אירשנה in the merit of saying *Meah Brachos* a day I will know that Am

Yisrael will merit to inherit the land and to settle in it, as we find that *Chazal* say (*Nedarim* 81a) that the Land was destroyed because the people in that generation were not strict to say *Birchas HaTorah*.

Einei Ha'eidah

The Sin of Amen Ketufah

”ודור רביעי ישובו הנה כי לא שלם עון האמרי עד הנה” (טו טז)

The *halachah* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 124 8 and in the *Biur Halachah* *ibid*) that one must not answer amen by dropping one of its letters, and such an amen is known as “amen ketufah.”

An allusion to this *halachah* can be found in this *passuk* עון לא שלם – the acronym of the last letters of each word is amen to teach that amen that is not complete is considered a sin if one answers it. (*Chelek Yaakov*)

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Rosh Yeshivah Harav Boruch Mordechai Eizrachi speaking at a Bnei Emunim event

Harav Boruch Mordechai Eizrachi 11 Cheshvan 5784

Harav Boruch Mordechai Eizrachi was born to his father, Reb Yisrael in 5689 in Yerushalayim. Already as a child, he was known to be brilliant, and he was very close to the Rosh Yeshivah of Slabodka, Rav Yitzchak Eizik Sher. As a *bochur*, he frequented the home of

Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveichik of Brisk. Before the age of bar mitzvah, he entered Chevron Yeshivah, where he learned *bechavrusa* with the Rosh Yeshivah, Harav Moshe Chevroni.

The Mashgiach of the Yeshivah, Harav Meir Chodosh took him as a husband of his daughter, and right after his marriage, he began to deliver *shiurim* in the yeshivah.

In 5736, he established Yeshivat Ateret Yisrael, which he led until his final day. For decades, he was *marbitz Torah* and taught thousands of *talmidim*, among them prominent rabbanim and *roshei yeshivah*.

He passed away on 11 Cheshvan 5784 and was buried on Har Hazeisim in Yerushalayim. His *shiurim* and *chiddushim* were published in the series *Birchas Mordechai* on Torah and *Shas*.

The Depth of Amen

In a fiery speech that the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Boruch Mordechai Eizrachi delivered at a Bnei Emunim event in Av 5776 in Bnei Brak, he said:

“Answering amen is part of the *matzav* and the *tzurah*, the form of *tefillah* of the *tzibbur*, that when ten people stand and one of them is the *shaliach tzibbur* and nine answer amen, that is *tefillah betzibbur* (see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 124 4).

This word that was revealed to us by *Chazal* is very deep. The *Rambam* (*Brachos* 1 11) rules that “anyone who answers amen after the *mevarech* is like the *mevarech*.” Answering amen expresses the content of the words of the *mevarech*, and therefore, answering amen after the *brachah* is considered like saying the *brachah*. That is why the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*Orach Chaim* 284 3) that on Shabbos and Yom Tov, a person can complete the quota of *Meah Brachos* that he must make each day by having *kavanah* to hear the *brachos* of those who go up to the Torah and the *brachos* of the *Haftorah* and answers amen after them.

If so, we find that this small word contains both an agreement with and joining in to the words of the *mevarech*, and the *emunah* – that his words should be believed, and the yearning and *bitachon* that his request will be fulfilled.”