

Ve chol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

There Is No Ruler Like Hashem

"ויאמר משה לפרעה התפאר עלי למתי אעתיד לך ולעבדיך ולעמך להכית הצפרדעים ממך ומבתוך רק ביאר תשארנה; ויאמר למהר ויאמר כדברך למען תדע כי אין ה' אלקינו" (ח ה-ו)

Rashi explains that Pharaoh asked Moshe to "pray today that they should stop tomorrow." Why did Pharaoh delay the removal of the plague to the next day? Isn't it the way of the world that when a person asks that he be spared from trouble, he asks that it be done right away? And moreover, if Pharaoh wanted the plague to only be removed the next day, why did he ask Moshe to pray for it today?

Rav Saadya Gaon explained that because Pharaoh believed in the power of the constellations and the stars, and didn't believe in the Kingship of Hashem that rules over everything, it was clear to him that there was no way to pray today for a salvation for tomorrow. Because a star or constellation that reigns on one day has no control on the following day. Therefore, Pharaoh said to Moshe: if you want to prove to me that you are not working through the power of the stars and constellations, and you are coming upon the Word of Hashem Who rules everything, "pray today that they should be taken away tomorrow." And Moshe replied, "As you say," it will be "so that you should know that there is none other like Hashem Elokeinu," Who rules everything, and His Kingship is not limited to one day or another.

This is also the intention of Dovid Hamelech in *Tehillim* (2:3): "*Shiru l'Hashem barchu Shemo basru miyom leyom yeshuaso.*" In other words, sing to Hashem Who reigns over everything at all times and His salvation is not limited to one day or another, but rather "*miyom leyom yeshuaso.*"

Ohr Olam [Rav Y.L. Margulies] p. 23b

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

A Declaration of *Mesirus Nefesh*

In *sefer Daniel* (Ch. 3) there is a description of the *mesirus nefesh* of Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya, when Nevuchadnezzar the king of Bavel warned them that if they did not bow down to the golden idol, he would order them cast into a furnace. Despite the warning, Chananya Misha'el and Azarya were firm in their refusal, and indeed, the evil Nevuchadnezzar ordered them to be cast into the fire – but miraculously, they emerged unscathed.

Chazal (*Pesachim* 53b) relate that a great person named Todous, of Rome, would explained: "What did Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya see that to make them be *moser nefesh al Kiddush Hashem*?" Where did they learn that they should be doing this? "They draw a *kal v'chomer* for themselves from the frogs." When the frogs were ordered to invade the homes of the Egyptians, they jumped unhesitatingly into the burning ovens, even though they are not commanded in the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem*. If so, Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya extrapolated a *kal v'chomer* that they are commanded in the mitzvah of *kiddush Hashem* so how much more so were they obligated to do this.

Throughout the generations, members of our nation have been *moser nefesh* on the altar of their faith, without hesitation. The stories of *mesirus nefesh* are woven into the history of our people throughout the generations. It has been brought down by *seforim* and *sofrim* that in the heart of every single Jew, there is a strong power to be able to be *moser nefesh* for *kiddush Hashem*.

The source of this strength to be

moser nefesh al kiddush Hashem is the *emunah peshutah*, which supersedes common sense and knowledge. And because the *emunah* is built into the heart of a person, one piece after another, through the power of answering amen, it is only natural that being *moser nefesh* is alluded to in amen, as is brought down in the *seforim* that amen is an acronym for **אני מוסר נפשי**.

When a person answers amen with *kavanah*, he declares his faith that Hashem Yisbarach is the "K-I Melech ne'eman" (*Shabbos* 119b). Through this, he establishes the faith in his conscience, and then, the declaration of "*ani moser nafshi*" bursts forth from his heart. Based on this, we can understand what the Semichas Chachamim, whose *yahrtzeit* falls this Erev Shabbos, says that one who answers amen with *kavanah* "*kadosh yikarei*" (*Sefer Hatzava'ah* 26). When a person answers amen with *kavanah* and declares his agreement to be *moser nefesh al kiddush Hashem*, and to fulfill the mitzvah of "*Venikdashti besoch Bnei Yisrael*" (*Vayikra* 22:33), he is counted among the *tzaddikim* who were *moser nefesh al kiddush Hashem* through the generations, and merited to be described as "*kedoshim*."

I have no doubt that a person who treats answering amen like a declaration of *mesirus nefesh* for his faith, will not give it up easily, and will also rise early each day to answer amen after the *Birchos Hashachar* of another person, with *dveikus* and dedication.

**Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein**

It was late one dark night. A shady figure furtively slipped out of one of the houses, looked to each side, and not seeing anyone, disappeared down the street.

It was the days of World War I. Turkey had aligned with Germany and its allies to help out in their war effort.

The Turkish army, known for its failings and the dismal conditions it offered its soldiers, was lacking manpower. It needed soldiers to join in order to push back the army and win the war. At that time, all the subjects of the Ottoman Empire were compelled to enlist, and the decree was signed and issued.

Anyone with common sense knew that the chances of returning from the battlefield after serving in the Turkish army were minimal, if only because of the army's brutal nature. Many soldiers who were sent to the front never returned, and their families did not know for the rest of their lives what their fate was. The derision for human life was notorious in the Turkish army. Everyone made every effort to evade

Late at night, Rav Mutzafi packed his *tallis*, *tefillin* and a bit of food, and left the house secretly.

He was the only Jew in a group of Muslims that were planning to flee for the mountains in northern Iraq, led by professional guides that they had hired, who agreed to take them to a safe area until they could return home.

The route was exhausting and difficult. The fear of being caught by gendarmes also weighed them down, as it had happened before to people who tried to escape to safety along these routes.

When darkness fell, the convoy stopped to rest and regain some strength for the next day.

The smugglers led them to a cave in a crevice in the mountain, where they could put their heads down and disconnect for a few hours from the existential fear that gripped them.

Everyone slept, except for Rav Mutzafi, who sat in a quiet corner and learned the holy Torah.

Silence. Only the sound of the snores of the other members of the group filled the cave. A pale moon peeked through the opening and cast a dim glow on the cave.

All too soon, it was over.

"Up, quickly!" the head smuggler urged them. "We have to be on our way in a few minutes!"

"Can we wait and set out in another hour?" Rav Bentzion asked cautiously. "In another hour it will be sunrise, and then I will be able to pray *Shacharis*."

The smuggler laughed and explained that they had to make it to the top of the mountain and get down the other side before they would be spotted by the Turkish gendarmes. If they missed the time, they would be exposed to danger the entire day. The projection was that in about an hour, the Turkish soldiers would already be patrolling the area.

Rav Mutzafi bent down to his bundle and took out a large sum of money, which he kept for emergencies. "Please," he urged. "It's very important to me to stay in the cave so that I can pray before we set out."

For a moment, a spark of greed lit up the smuggler's eyes, but he recovered quickly: "There's nothing to talk about. Pack up your things and go out. Take

into account that we have a long and difficult road ahead. You won't be able to rest. We will have to walk for many hours without letup. There is no choice. This is the only way to escape the Turkish monster – we are all deserters!"

Rav Mutzafi stood at the entrance to the cave and studied the dark expanses that would soon be bathed in light. He so yearned to daven as always, with the *neitz*. As it is, he was missing out on davening with a *minyan*, but not to daven *k'vasikin*? And who could guarantee that he would be able to daven afterwards?!

The decision was an excruciating one, but together with the weight, Rav Mutzafi knew that it was the only thing that would give him peace of mind.

"I'm staying here," he announced. "I will pray and join you afterwards."

The other members of the convoy tried to persuade Rav Mutzafi to come with them, and not to remain in a dangerous place. "You won't be able to get out of here on your own," they urged him reasonably. "You won't find the escape route, the Turkish army patrols will catch you and you'll be sent to the gallows. It's a shame?"

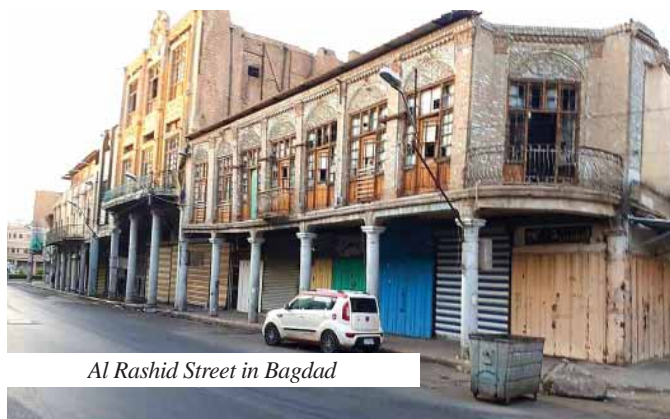
Rav Mutzafi remained alone. The sun began to peek above the mountains and he began to pray – slowly, calmly, lovingly, *passuk* after *passuk*.

The *tefillah* ended, he took off his *tefillin* and quickly got ready to go. The mountain rose ahead of him, looming and threatening, and he began to climb it quickly. Beads of sweat poured down his face, but they could not rinse away the fear. But the decision to remain had been the right one. He would hurry and maybe he'd be able to catch up to the convoy and to see where it was when he reached the peak of the mountain.

The summit was nearing, as breathtaking scenery of sand and skies spread out before him. He lowered his eyes to the slopes of the mountain, and then he saw them: beneath him was the convoy, surrounded by Turkish gendarmes whose weapons were trained on the people. His convoy had been caught. Their fate was known.

Rav Bentzion Mutzafi stood there, between sand and skies, and thanked Hashem for saving him from certain death, and giving him the strength to stick to his principles, and to daven *vasikin* as he always did, even on this day.

Shvilei HaTorah, Parashas Vayeira



Al Rashid Street in Bagdad

this terrible draft decree.

In the city of Bagdad, Iraq, as well, the winds of war were blowing. Turkish gendarmes were patrolling the streets and forcibly picking up men – Jew and gentile alike – to send them to the army.

If a person who had received a draft notice and didn't report was caught, he would be found the next day dangling from the gallows in the town square. Merciless, with no guilt, the Turks forced people into the army.

Rav Bentzion Meir Mutzafi, *ztz"l*, one of the rabbanim of Bagdad, the son of Rav Yechezkel Mutzafi, *ztz"l*, Rosh Yeshivas Midrash Beis Zilcha, a young *talmid chacham*, had to part from his wife and young children and flee northward. If he would remain at home, he would likely be drafted, and was unlikely to ever see his family again.

According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, someone who has finished the *brachah* of "*Habocheh B'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah*" [or "*Ohev Amo Yisrael*" – in *Maariv*] before the *sha"tz*, should not answer amen after this *brachah* when he hears it from the *sha"tz*, because one should not stop between this *brachah* and *Krias Shema*¹. Some say that even one who is after the *brachah* of "*Yotzer Hame'oros*" [or "*Hama'ariv Aravim*" in *Maariv*] should not answer amen, when he hears someone finishing this *brachah*². But the Rema differs and holds that one who is after the *brachos* that precede *Krias Shema* is permitted to answer amen like the *din* of one who is between the chapters of *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*³. But in any case, the *poskim* wrote that one who is after the *brachah* of *Habocheh B'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah* should not pause to answer amen after the *brachos*, unless he hears this *brachah*⁴.

In order to be *yotzei* all the opinions, the *poskim* wrote that *lechatchilah*, one should try to finish the *brachah* of *Habocheh B'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah* together with the *shaliach tzibbur*, because then all agree that he should not answer amen, because a person does not answer amen after his own *brachah*⁵.

1 The Bais Yosef (*Orach Chaim* 59) brings a dispute in the Rishonim regarding the definition of the *Birchos Krias Shema*: According to the Rambam (*Brachos* 1:17), the *brachos* that are recited before *Krias Shema* are like the other *birchos hamitzvos* that are recited before doing a mitzvah, and therefore, one should not stop between them and *Krias Shema* [see *Me'iri* (*Brachos* 11b) that one who does not know how to recite the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* should recite before saying *Shema*: "*Asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu likro es Shema*"]. But the Rosh (in *Shu"t Klal* 4:19, cited by the *Tur* *ibid*) differs and holds that the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* are *brachos* of *shevach*, praise, that were instituted in their own right, and *Chazal* arranged that we recite them before *Krias Shema*, and therefore they do not have the *din* of *birchas hamitzvos*. As such, one is permitted to pause between them and *Krias Shema* to answer amen (and see *Mishnah Berurah* 59:24-25). The Bais Yosef ruled *l'halachah* according to the Rambam that the *din* of the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* are like a *brachah* of a mitzvah, and that is how the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (*ibid* 4): "And he should not answer amen after the end of '*Habocheh b'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah*' because it is a *hefsek*."

2 The *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 24; *Biur Halachah* *ibid*) wrote that the *Shulchan Aruch* was only strict about a pause between *Krias Shema* and the *brachah* that is adjacent to it, right before it. But one who is after the *brachah* of "*Yotzer*" [or "*Hama'ariv Aravim*"] may answer amen even according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, as one who is between the *perakim* of *Krias Shema* and its *brachos* [and see the Rambam (*Brachos* 11b) that wrote clearly that only the *brachah* immediately adjacent to *Krias Shema* has the *din* of a *birchas hamitzvah*, but the one before that is a *birchas shevach*]. But the *Kaf Hachaim* (59:26) holds that according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, one should not stop to answer amen after the two *brachos* preceding *Krias Shema*, because they both have the *din* of a *brachah* on a mitzvah (and see there that he lists many *poskim* who hold this, and that is also what is derived from the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* himself, in his *sefer Bais Yosef* (*ibid*)). And the *Shu"t Yabia Omer* (Vol. III, *Orach Chaim* 6:5) concurs.

The *Kaf Hachaim* (*ibid*) adds that although the *Shulchan Aruch* adopted the opinion like those who hold that one should not stop to answer amen after these two *brachos*, it is still preferable *lechatchilah* for the *tzibbur* to finish these *brachos* together with the *sha"tz*, and then all agree that they should not answer amen because a person does not answer amen to his own *brachah*.

This whole discussion is only regarding the answering of amen after the *brachah* that the *mispallel* finished, and regarding the other *amenim* that are permitted to answer between the chapters of *Krias Shema* and the *brachos*, because those amens and other words of *kedushah* that are permitted to answer even in the middle of *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*, are also permitted for one who is in between the *brachos* and *Krias Shema* (*Kesef Mishneh*, *Krias Shema* 2:17, in the name of Rabbeinu Yona, cited in the *Pri Chadash* 66 1 and the *Kaf Hachaim* *ibid* 27).

3 The Rema (*Orach Chaim* 61:3) rules according to the Rosh (*ibid*) that the *brachos* of *Krias Shema* are not like the *brachos* of a mitzvah, and therefore, one is permitted to stop to answer amen in between them and *Krias Shema*, and the *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 25) wrote that the Acharonim concurred on this *l'halachah*.

4 *Mishnah Berurah* (59:24) in the name of the *Derech Hachaim* (*Dinei Krias Shema* 18). But from the *Pri Megadim* (51 *Eshel Avraham* 3) it seems that even one who is in between the *brachah* of *Ahavah* and *Krias Shema* can answer every amen that was permitted to answer for one who is in between the chapters of *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*, and see *sefer Halachos Yom Beyom* (*Tefillah* Vol. II Chapter 6:30) that the Gra concurs. The *Derech Hachaim* (*ibid*) writes that those amens and words of *kedushah* that one is permitted to answer even if he is in the middle of the chapters of *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*, are also permitted to be paused for between the *brachah* of *Ahavah* and *Krias Shema*. And it appears that the *Mishnah Berurah* did not cite these words because they are the simple explanation, as explained previously in comment 51 that even according to the *Shulchan Aruch* one is permitted to answer them.

5 Even though according to the Rema (61 3) it is correct *lechatchilah* to finish the *brachah* of "*Habocheh*" before the *chazzan* in order to answer amen after him, in any case, the Shelah wrote (*Maseches Tamid Ner Mitzvah* 47) that even according to those who hold that the *brachos* prior to *Krias Shema* do not have the *din* of *birchas hamitzvah*, still, one should not pause between the *brachah* of *Habocheh* and *Krias Shema*, because one should not stop between the "*ahavah*" mentioned in the *brachah* and the "*yirah*" in accepting the *Ol Malchus Shamayim* in *Krias Shema*. In light of this, the Acharonim wrote (*Eliyahu Rabbah* *ibid* 4; *Shaarei Teshuvah* *ibid* 5) that *lechatchilah* it is good for the *tzibbur* to finish the *brachah* of "*Habocheh B'Amo Yisrael b'ahavah*" together with the *sha"tz*. Then, all agree, that he should not answer amen, because a person does not answer amen to his own *brachah*. But if he finished this *brachah* before the *sha"tz*, he should answer amen, as per the Rema, and the *Mishnah Berurah* (*ibid* 25) concurs.

And on the other hand, there are Acharonim who applied the words of the Rema *lechatchilah*, and did not mention the Shelah that is written according to *Toras Hasod*, and see *sefer Halachos Yom Beyom* (45) that lists the opinions of the Acharonim who hold this way. See *sefer Mekor Chaim* (61 3) which writes that on the contrary, one should be careful to answer amen after the *brachah* of "*Habocheh B'Amo Yisrael*" because most of the world is not careful to answer amen to this *brachah* and immediately begin *Krias Shema*.

The *Eshel Avraham* (by Rav A. D. of Butchatch, *ibid* 4) wrote that someone who recited *Krias Shema* without its *brachos* before davening in order to fulfill his obligation (see *Shulchan Aruch* 60 2, and in the *Nosei Keilim* *ibid*) that when a person then repeats *Krias Shema* in the *brachos*, in the order of the *tefillah*, he does not have to be strict not to answer between the *brachah* of *Habocheh* and *Krias Shema*, because he is not fulfilling the mitzvah of *Krias Shema* now, all agree that the *brachos* preceding it are not considered *birchos hamitzvos*.

The Bais Hamikdash Is Built in the Merit of Meah Brachos

"לכן אמר לבני ישראל אני ה' והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים והצלתי אתכם מעבדתם וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים" (ו' 1) *Sefer Pa'aneach Raza (Devarim 10:12)* wrote that one who is strict to recite *meah brachos* each day merits to see the building of the Bais Hamikdash.

This is alluded to in this *passuk*: "לכן" is numerically equivalent to 100. "*Lachen – emor liBnei Yisrael*" – tell Bnei Yisrael that they should recite *brachos* each day, and in the merit that they testify through those *brachos* that "*Ani Hashem*" they will merit to be redeemed, and later, to even build Me the Mishkan

in which there will be 100 *adanim* of silver to correspond to the one hundred *brachos* that they made. (*Ule'Asher Amar*)

Answering Amen After the Birchos Hageulah

"ויאמר ה' אל משה כבד לב פרעה מאן לשלה העם" (ז' יד)

מאן are the same letters as אמן to allude that the reason that we have not yet merited the full Geulah is because we are not sufficiently strict to answer amen and as it says in *Sefer Hagan Vederech Moshe (Day 11)* that the Geulah is taking a long time because we are not careful to answer amen to the *brachah* of "*Hamachazir Shechinaso LeTzion*" – because we are in a hurry to recite the *Modim D'Rabbanan* that follows, and to

the *brachah* of "*Haporess Succas Shalom...V'Al Yerushalayim*" said on Friday night – because we are hurrying to start "*Veshomru*" right after. (*Yoshia Tzion*)

The Purpose of the Makkos Was to Establish Emunah

"ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ירך על השמים ויהי ברך בכל ארץ מצרים" (ט' כב)

נטה – the acronym of these words is amen, to allude that the purpose of the *makkos* in Mitzrayim was to establish *emunah* in the hearts of Am Yisrael, as it says in the closing of the miracles (*Shemos 14:31*): "*Vaya'aminu b'Hashem ubeMoshe avdo.*" (*Niflaos MiTorasecha, Amen*)

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The Michtav M'Eliyahu

24 Teves 5714

Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler was born in 5652 in Hommel (today in Belarus) to his father, Rav Reuven Dov, one of the eminent *baalei mussar* in his generation and a close

talmid of the Alter of Kelm. As a *bochur*, he learned in Kelm, during the time of Rav Tzvi Hirsh Broide, the son-in-law of the Alter. He was given *semichah* by his uncle, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski.

In 5688, Rav Eliyahu Eliezer traveled with his father to England for medical care for Rav Reuven Dov. But when he was offered a rabbinical position there, he decided to remain in England to strengthen Torah and *mitzvos* among the Jews living there. First, he served as Rav in a few places, and opened a yeshivah in the Dalston area of London. At the beginning of the 1940s, he joined the famous *kollel* that was established in Gateshead, where he served as the *menahel ruchani*.

In 5707, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman invited him to serve as the *mashgiach* in Ponevezh Yeshivah that he had established in Bnei Brak. Rav Dessler delivered *shmuessen* there until his sudden passing from a heart attack on 24 Teves 5714.

His *divrei Torah* on the subjects of *emunah* and *mussar* were printed in the five-volume series entitled *Michtav Eliyahu*.

Tremendous Reward for a Small Action

In one of his *shmuessen*, the Mashgiach Rav Dessler said that from the reward promised to those who answer amen, we can learn about the significance of every word that we utter. He said:

In *Maseches Nedarim (32a)* it is brought that Avraham Avinu was punished that his children were enslaved by Mitzrayim because when HaKadosh Baruch Hu promised him the land, he asked for a sign of confirmation of this promise, when he said (*Bereishis 15:8*): "*Bemah eida ki irashenah.*"

Here we find that for saying two words that sounded like a violation of Kavod Shamayim, our fathers were sent to terrible slavery for 210 years in Egypt. Two words rendered the fate of Bnei Yisrael to a prolonged and difficult exile.

For some reason, we tend to think that only the words that Avraham Avinu uttered have such significant consequences but that is not the case. We have to know that every word that we utter, and every small deed that we do, has tremendous significance.

Let's take the mitzvah of answering amen, for example, of which *Chazal* say (*Shabbos 119b*) "Anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him." *Chazal* revealed to us that every Yid, in every situation that he is in, when he stands and answers amen with *kavanah*, he merits tremendous reward for that – to have all the gates of Gan Eden opened for him. Although answering amen is a simple action that does not require special sacrifice, still, the reward that a person receives for it is immeasurable.

Shaarei Hashmanim, Chanukah p. 208