

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

The Obligation of the Hour Precedes the Obligation to Make Up

ותמת שרה בקרית ארבע הוא חרוון בארץ כנען ויבא
אברהם לספד ושרה ולכתה" (כג ב)

The way of the world is that in a time of grief and pain, weeping precedes the eulogy. This is also understood from the words of the *passuk* in *Yeshayah* (22:12): "Vayikra Hashem... bayom hahu libchi ulemisped," first weeping and then *hesped*. This also seems evident from the words of the *Gemara* (*Moed Kattan* 27b): "Three days for weeping and seven for eulogizing." Why then, did Avraham precede the eulogy to the weeping?

Sefer Asifas Yehuda brings in the name of "a *gaon*" who explained this according to the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 108 1), that if someone mistakenly did not daven one of the *tefillos*, he davens the next *tefillah* twice, the first for the obligation of the current *tefillah* and the second to complete the previous *tefillah* that he missed.

Because when Sarah passed away, Avraham was still on Har Hamoriah (*Bereishis Rabbah* 58 5), and because the way from there to Chevron, where Sarah passed away, took three days, as explained in the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 22:4), that on his way to Har Hamoriah he saw the mountain only on the third day of his departure, we find that he came back to Chevron at the end of the days of weeping. Therefore, like the *din* of one who forgot a *tefillah*, who has to first daven the current prayer and then to make up the missing one, likewise Avraham first fulfilled the *hesped* whose time had come and only later, did he complete the days of weeping that he had missed.

Asifas Yehuda [Frankfurt 5523]

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Who Desires Life?

Chazal promised that one who is strict to answer amen according to halachah will merit long days and years: "Anyone who prolongs his amen has his days and years extended" (*Brachos* 47a). The *Baalei Hatosafos* brought an allusion to this promise from the *passuk* in this *parashah* (24:1): "V'Avraham zaken ba bayamim v'Hashem beirach es Avraham bakol." The acronym of the final letters of the words זקן בא בימים is amen, to teach that anyone who answers amen will live long."

I always marvel to see how people invest energy and money, some more and some less, into life insurance policies, while at the same time they are lax about answering amen according to halachah, which does not require any monetary investment and all, and is very easy to do.

Moreover, the insurance cannot guarantee life for a person. Instead, it is an agreed upon and limited monetary compensation in a time of trouble. Answering amen *k'halachah*, in contrast, has the power to extend the life of a person in goodness and comfort, to protect him from bad, and to obviate the need for insurance. When a person answers amen slowly – according to the *psak* of the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 124 8): "And he should not answer a brief amen, but rather a slightly longer one, so that he can say 'Kel Melech ne'eman'" – then he surrounds himself with a solid wall that protects him from all bad, as it says in *Tehillim* (91:7): "Yipol mitzidcha elef urevavah mi'yeminecha eilecha

lo yigash."

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Avodah Zarah* (19b) speaks about the *Amora Rav Alexandri*, who announced: "Who desires life?" When people gathered around him, Rav Alexandri opened a *sefer Tehillim* and recited the *pesukim* (34:13-15): "Mi ha'ish hechafetz chaim ohev yamim liros tov; netzor leshoncha meira usefasecha midaber mirmah; sur meira v'aseh tov bakesh shalom veradfeihu."

In light of *Chazal's* words, we can also read out to the *tzibbur* seeking an answer to the question of "who desires life?" the promise for *arichus yamim* that is preserved for one who prolongs their answering of amen. Life is dependent on a person's mouth and tongue. On the one hand, he has to guard his tongue from speaking evil, and on the other hand, he must also fulfill the 'aseh tov' – to answer amen according to halachah. Thus, he will also fulfill the words "bakesh shalom veradfeihu," because when a person respects his friends and completes his *brachos* by answering amen then he is a 'rodef shalom'!

Let us rise early to answer amen according to halachah after *Birchos Hashachar* of *mispallelim*, and undoubtedly, we will see the fulfillment of the promise of *Chazal* and we will merit to do this until a ripe old age, for many good years to come, amen.

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

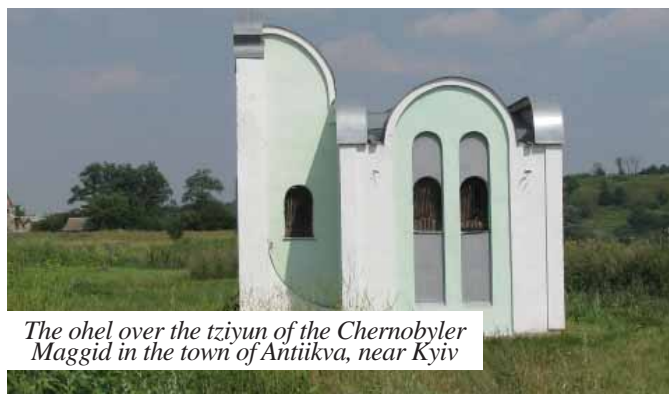
Erev Shabbos Kodesh, Shabbos Mevarchim. As every month, Shimon the wagon driver waited for his loyal customers.

“Ach, such customers... I wish everyone could be like them,” he thought to himself. Slowly, everyone gathered. The first one sat down in his place and greeted Shimon warmly. Soon enough, everyone was seated and the trip began.

For a long time already, they had been traveling together, the wagon driver and the *chassidim*, each Shabbos Mevarchim. The beautiful scenery that whizzed by at dizzying speed, on the long route from the village where they lived towards Chernobyl, did not draw their attention. They were busy the whole time with *divrei Torah* and *chassidus*, and from time to time, they sang a vibrant Chassidic *niggun*, preparing themselves for Shabbos with their Rebbe, Harav Mordechai of Chernobyl, *ztz”l*.

As soon as they arrived at their destination, Shimon the wagon driver would hurriedly turn around and return home to spend Shabbos with his family. At dawn on Sunday, he traveled back to Chernobyl to bring the *chassidim* home.

This puzzled the *chassidim* who traveled with him. How was it possible



The *ohel* over the *tziyun* of the Chernobyl *Maggid* in the town of Antiikva, near Kyiv

that Shimon the wagon driver had been passing near the home of their Rebbe once a month for a few years now, but he never visited the Rebbe – not even to receive a *brachah* or to gaze at his holy visage?

They tried to speak to him. Each month anew, they offered him to go in to get a *brachah*, but their words fell on deaf ears. “What will it help me to see the Rebbe? Would that improve my dismal situation? Can the Rebbe provide food for my hungry children?”

With the stubbornness of a wagon driver, Shimon’s resistance remained firm, and the *chassidim* kept urging him and trying to convince him, until finally,

he acquiesced. This coming Sunday, he told them, he’d come to Chernobyl early, and if they would take him into the Rebbe’s room, he would not object.

Sunday morning. The wagon driver kept his word, and the familiar clip clopping of his horse could be heard making its way through Chernobyl earlier than usual. He davened *Shacharis* with the *chassidim*, and right after davening, he was brought into the Rebbe’s room. The *chassidim* expected to see him emerge within a few minutes, but to their surprise, the conversation stretched on. When he emerged, the wagon driver was enveloped in uncharacteristic silence. It was evident that the Rebbe had succeeded in penetrating the deepest part of his soul. The *chassidim* understood, and did not urge him to tell them what had happened. On the first half of the ride, he remained silent, but as they drove on, and the *chassidim* began to speak about their lofty Shabbos with the Rebbe, the wagon driver suddenly interjected solemnly, “I don’t think any of you was as elevated on this trip as me.”

The surprising admission aroused the curiosity of the *chassidim*, and the wagon driver shared with them what had happened. “When I went into the room, the Rebbe asked me to describe my daily schedule. At first, of course, I chose to describe the days I did not work, and as you surely know, unfortunately, in our poor town, such days are rather common. I detailed how I get up early in the morning and hurry to daven in shul and even stay for a *shiur Mishnayos* and to say *Tehillim*. In the afternoon, I return for *Minchah* and *Maariv* and for a *shiur* in *Ein Yaakov*, which takes place between the *tefillos*.”

“‘This is what you do on days when you don’t have work,’ the Rebbe stopped me, and then wondered, ‘And how do you conduct yourself on a day that you do have work?’”

“I was ashamed to answer but the Rebbe pressed me, so I told him in a low voice: ‘On such days, I get up early, I grease the wheels of my carriage, check how it’s doing, and hurry to be on the way. So I have to put on *tefillin* quickly and daven at one of the stops.’”

“The Rebbe did not let me be and continued asking: ‘And why don’t you start working after davening properly?’”

“‘Because then I’ll lose out even the few customers that I have!’ I replied shamefacedly.”

“In response, the Rebbe told me a story: ‘There was a person who worked hard for a living and after being absent from his home for many months, he made his way home with a lot of money that he’d managed to earn. He had three sacks in his hand. One was filled with golden dinars, another with silver coins, and a third with copper coins. He walked along the route for a few days, and as Shabbos approached, he hurried up to reach the nearest town that had a Jewish community, and a short time before Shabbos began he knocked at the Rav’s door and asked if he could deposit his money sacks there.’”

“‘From there, he hurried to the inn, but right when darkness fell, doubts began to plague him. Who knows, maybe the Rav won’t guard the deposit well, and if so what will be with me? Am I going to lose all my money?!’”

“‘Thus Shabbos passed, and he was overcome with worry. He hardly tasted the delicious food that was served to him, and he could barely sleep.’”

“‘As soon as Shabbos ended, he hurried to the Rav’s house, and with bated breath, demanded his money back. But the Rav was in no hurry... I won’t touch the money before *Maariv* and *Havdalah*, he said placidly. The visitor had to wait patiently. After *Havdalah*, the Rav went into the inner room, and returned holding three familiar sacks. But the man was not leaving just yet: With trembling hands, he poured out the contents of the first sack and began to count the coins, one after another. To his relief, they were all in place. Later, he counted the silver coins – and all was in order. When he was about to spill out the contents of the third sack, the Rav could not hold himself back and chided: That’s enough! After you checked me and saw that I didn’t touch your silver and gold coins, you would suspect me of filching from your silly copper coins?!’”

“That’s how the Rebbe finished his parable and said to me, ‘My dear man! Every night, you give your *neshamah* to the Creator, and in the morning, you open your eyes – and see a world filled with so much color, you move your limbs – and they all work well – would you suspect, *chalilah*, that the simplest matter – *parnassah* – is something that Hashem cannot provide for you?!’”

“Now you tell me,” the wagon driver concluded, “am I not the one who was most elevated than all of you on this trip?!”

Birchas Dovid, Behar

Rav Tzvi Elimelech Haltovsky's enthusiasm radiates to all those around him. Our conversation dives into the depths of answering amen, and the deep *emunah* that is ingrained in the heart of anyone who is strict to answer it. One can easily say of him, and those like him, that all the objects in this world do not equal the love that they have for the mitzvah of answering amen!

Each morning, he takes his position in the Nadvorna shul in Yerushalayim. His heartfelt words leave an indelible impression which we will share with you.

Where do you get the strength to dedicate so much time each morning to answer amen to other *mispallelim*?

“The truth is that I get the *koach* from the *mispallelim* themselves,” Reb Tzvi Elimelech relates, and explains: “On the one hand, I come to shul early to be able to answer amen to the *Birchos Hashachar* of those who come early to learn before davening, because I see how important it is for them to make the *brachos* for someone who can complete them with amen. On the other hand, there are *mispallelim* who want to say *Birchos Hashachar* and that makes them come to davening on time. Some of them have even told me that their desire for me to answer amen to *Birchos Hashachar*, along with *baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo*, which one does not recite after *Baruch She'amar*, galvanizes them not to be late to davening...”

And what brings you to hold this mitzvah of answering amen so dear?

Upon hearing this question, Reb Tzvi Elimelech goes back to the days when he was a *bochur*, and was sick with a serious illness: “Those were not simple days, I was a youth when I was struck with the disease. The doctors were ready to despair and gave me no chances of survival. But as you

see, in Shamayim it was otherwise ordained...”

During those difficult days I held on only in the merit of my firm *emunah* in Hashem. When a person believes and cleaves to Hashem, nothing can break him. Being strict to answer amen is a way to acquire deep and strong *emunah*, as you cited a number of times in your pamphlets in the name of *sefer Megaleh Amukos (Parashas V'eschanan)*: ‘The *ikkar* of *emunah* is contingent on the answering of amen.’



Rabbi Haltovsky in the Nadvorna shul in Yerushalayim

Anyone who answers amen frequently will quickly see that the levels of *emunah* and *dveikus* to Hashem that he can reach through answering amen are very lofty. The Bais Aharon writes in *Seder Hayom*: ‘I agree that each person should hear from his friend every *brachah* that needs to be said to be able to answer amen. Because it says in the writings of the Arizal, who would hear *Birchos Hashachar* even from one hundred people, even though in one minute he could have been *meyached* all the Olamos, nevertheless, he did not worry about his time and was not lazy to hear even one hundred times, ‘*Hanosein lasechvi binah*,’ and all the *brachos*.’ These words are so moving! From his holy words it is clearly evident that *dveikus* and *emunah* that one reaches through answering amen is preferable to the ‘*yichud* of all the Olamos.’!”

How can we connect the *tzibbur* of

mispallelim to the age-old practice of reciting *Birchos Hashachar* in front of someone who can answer amen?

Reb Tzvi Elimelech has a surprising answer: “First of all, I think the *tzibbur* is very connected. I spoke not long ago to a friend who lives in Williamsburg and he described the big awareness that there is about amen due to the extensive advertising on the Boro Park-Williamsburg buses.

“In addition, when a person comes to recite *Birchos Hashachar* for us, we must welcome him warmly, and show him that we are happy with the *zchus* he is presenting us with – answering fifteen amens, as the *passuk* says (*Mishlei* 15:23): ‘*Simchah l'ish bema'aneh piv*.’ This way we will cause him to keep coming and to recite *Birchos Hashachar* each day.”

You have been involved in *zikkui harabbim* for many years. Have you encountered a special story that occurred as the result of saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*?

Reb Tzvi Elimelech smiles broadly: “You’re asking me? Of course, I experienced it myself! As I told you, as a *bochur* I was very ill and during the better times, I moved around in a wheelchair. But I always made sure there was someone there to answer amen when I recited *Birchos Hashachar*. Saying the *brachos* in a complete way strengthened my *emunah*, because physical health is only in the Hands of Hashem, and He is the *Matir assurim* and *Meichin mitzadei gaver*, and that infused me with the strength to cope. The doctors didn’t give me a chance of surviving, and I’m sure that it is only the power of answering amen that helped me recover completely, marry, and see wonderful generations of offspring.

Amen - So That You Should Live a Long Life

“ואברהם זקן בא בימים וה' ברך את אברהם בכל” (כד א)

The Baalei Hatosafos explained: “זקן בא בימים – the acronym of the last letter of each word is amen. From here we learn that anyone who answers amen will live a long life,” as Chazal say (*Brachos* 47a): “Anyone who prolongs their amen has his days and years prolonged.”

Chacham Menachem Menashe adds that the words “*ba bayamim*” also allude that one who answers amen will merit to receive life in Olam Haba as well, as Chazal say (*Shabbos* 119b): “Anyone who answers amen with all his strength has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him.”

The next part of the *passuk* “*V’Hashem beirach es Avraham bakol,*” teaches us that in the merit of answering amen “one merits all goodness and an abundance of blessing and success, children, happiness, wealth, *nachas*, tranquility and *kol tuv*.”

Tosafos Hashalem; Ahavas Chaim Hashalem

The Oneh Is Greater Than the Mevarech

The Rebbe, Harav Yaakov Yitzchak of Koidenov, explained this *passuk* as follows:

Answering amen is alluded to at the beginning of this *passuk* with the last letters of the words זקן בא בימים, while saying the *brachah* is alluded to by the following words ברך וה'. From the fact that the *passuk* preceded the *brachah* with amen, we can learn an allusion to the words of Rabi Yosi (*Brachos* 53b): “The *oneh amen* is greater than the *mevarech*.”

Imrei Yaakov

Ninety Amens from Day to Day

Another one explained that the word amen is alluded to in the words זקן בא בימים, that the quota of ninety amens in a day can be completed *bedieved* through answering amen “*bayamim*” – even the next day. Therefore, someone who did not meet the quota of answering ninety amens in a day, can, *bedieved*, complete them the next day by adding to the daily quota of ninety amens the number that he was short the day before.

Mishnas Yosef, Vol. II, Introduction

A Segulah for a Good Zivug

“הוא ישלה מלאכו לפניך ולקחת אשה לבני משם” (כד ז)

Harav Avraham Kessler, author of *Notrei Amen*, explained:

The acronym of הוא ישלה מלאכו לפניך ולקחת אשה לבני משם is numerically equivalent to ninety-one, which is the same as amen. This alludes that being strict to answer amen is a *segulah* to merit a good *zivug*.

Mei’Hashem Yatza Hadavar p. 321

Collect Amens Wisely

“ויבא האישי הביתה ויפתח הגמלים ויתן תבן ומספוא לגמלים” (כד לב)

Rav Shlomo Aharon Auerbach, a *maggid* in Boyan, explained:

“תבן ומספוא לגמלים” – the acronym of the final letters is amen, and we need to explain: תבן is from the term *teivnos*, and we need to explain: תבן is from the term *teivnos*, *אסיפה* is from the term *teivnos*, *מספוא* is from the term *teivnos*, *גמול* is from the term *teivnos*. To teach that a person must collect more and more amens that are said with *tevunah*, meaning with *kavanah* of the heart, and thus he will merit *gmul*, reward of an abundance of goodness and blessing from Above.

Tiferes Shlomo [Rav S.A. Auerbach]

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Yeshivas Mir
in Brooklyn, NY

The Sukkas Dovid

24 Cheshvan 5770

Rav Dovid Kviat was born in 5679 to his father, Rav Avraham Eliezer, a distinguished Slonimer chassid in Bialystok. Already in his youth, his *hasmadah* and diligence was outstanding, and when he was young he was accepted as a *talmid* to Yeshivas Mir.

During World War II, he went with the yeshivah to Shanghai, and after the war, he

moved to New York. In 5722, he began to give *shiurim* in Mirrer Yeshivah in Flatbush, and later was appointed to head the yeshivah. He also served as the Rav in the Agudas Yisrael of 18th Avenue of Boro Park.

Rav Dovid was one of the eminent *marbitzei Torah* in America and taught legions of students. He also authored the series of *seforim Sukkas Dovid* on Torah and *Shas*.

He passed away on 24 Cheshvan 5770 at the age of 91, and was buried on Har Hamenuchos in Yerushalayim.

Amen With All His Kavanah

The Rebbe Rav Moshe of Kobrin explained that the *passuk* (*Bereishis* 7:1): “*Vayomer Hashem leNoach bo atah vechol beisecha el hateivah,*” the Torah hinted to every Jew that when he takes the *teivos*, the words of *tefillah* out of his mouth, he must infuse them with his entire heart and thought.

The *Sukkas Dovid* (*Bereishis* *ibid*) notes that this is what Chazal intended (*Shabbos* 119b) when they said: “Anyone who answers amen with all their strength has the gates to Gan Eden opened for him.” The *Tosafos* there (*ibid ad loc. Kol*) explained that “*bechol kocho*” means “with all his *kavanah*,” meaning that when a person puts himself entirely in to the word amen, by saying it with all his powers of *kavanah*.