

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Parashas VAYEISHEV | 5785 | Issue No. 561

Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah
in the Parashah

Our Job in This World Is to Overcome Difficulties

“וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען” (לז א)
Rashi brings the explanation of Chazal (*Bereishis Rabbah* 84 3) that the *passuk* “*Vayeishev Yaakov*” expresses Yaakov’s yearning to dwell in peace in this world. But his request was not fulfilled, and he was stricken with the troubles of Yosef, as HaKadosh Baruch Hu said: “Is it not enough for the *tzaddikim* what is waiting for them in Olam Haba, and they ask to dwell in peace in this world?!”

The *Teshuvos Vehanhagos* explains that a person should not aspire to dwell in peace in this world, because the way he handles difficult events that afflict him in this temporary and transient world in which we live is what determines his status in Olam Haba.

In this context, he brings a story that occurred with his *rebbe*, Rav Moshe Schneider, Rosh Yeshivas Toras Emes in London: One of the *talmidim* went before his wedding to the Rosh Yeshivah’s room and asked for a *brachah*. “What would you like to ask for?” the Rosh Yeshivah asked, and the *bochur* replied, “That everything should go smoothly in my home and I shouldn’t have to deal with difficulties.”

“That’s not a *brachah*!” the Rosh Yeshivah replied right away, “I’ll bless you that you should successfully cope with all the difficulties that you will experience in your life.”

Chochmah Veda’as

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Tzaddikim in the Merit of Answering Amen

The Megaleh Amukos in this *parashah* reveals that the root of Yosef Hatzaddik is in the *sod* of amen, as alluded by the *passuk* said about him at the beginning of the *parashah* (*Bereishis* 37:3): בן זקנים הוא – and the acronym of the last letters is amen.

We can say that this is also manifested in the description “*tzaddik*” that Yosef was given (see *Yoma* 35b, and in other places), and indeed, his name was thus established for generations as “Yosef Hatzaddik.” Rabbeinu Bechaye says that his adherence to answer amen gives a person the merit of being called “*tzaddik*” as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): “*Pischu she’arim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim,*” so Yisrael is called a “*goy tzaddik*” in the merit of their being strict to answer amen (*Kad Hakemach, Emunah*).

Hashem gave me the *zechus* to be close to one of the special *tzaddikim* that He planted in the last generation, the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Aharon Yehuda Leib Steinman, *zy”a*, whose seventh *yahrtzeit* is this Wednesday.

I merited to know him well and to see his special affinity for answering amen. I saw his *dveikus* to anything relating to the mitzvah of answering amen, and this is well known to anyone who was close to him.

We always remember the wondrous and moving scene that took place in his home each morning. A short time after dawn, before *Shacharis vasikin* began in his home, he would stand up to say *Birchos Hashachar* for the *tzibbur*. The *brachos* were

said word for word, like he was counting coins, and all those gathered would answer amen after him. After saying the *brachos*, he stayed in his place to hear the *brachos* from the others gathered there and to answer amen to them.

The Rosh Yeshivah would often urge his followers about the virtue of answering amen, and its importance, and he would wonder how people could be lax in this mitzvah.

“In Olam Haba we will see that every amen is worth millions,” he would cry out from his pure heart. And these are not just random words! They obligate all those who follow his light to introspect and see how they treat the mitzvah of answering amen, and especially the *minhag* he held so dear – saying *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

I remember that at one of the gatherings of Bney Emunim that he attended, when I asked him to speak about the importance of answering amen, he told me in surprise, with a smile on his lips: “If Chazal write such lofty things about answering amen, what’s there to add on the subject?”

Indeed, there is nothing to add! We will follow the path of *tzaddik*, we will rise early and go to shul to answer amen to the *Birchos Hashachar* of other *mispallelim*, and perhaps this way we will soon see the fulfillment of the words (*Tehillim* 34:16): “*Einei Hashem el tzaddikim v’oznav el shavasam.*”

Good Shabbos

Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

Shabbos Parashas Vayeishev, 20 Kislev 5785, marks 44 years since the passing of Rav Yitzchak Hutner, author of Pachad Yitzchak. This story describes a tumultuous event when he was in the crosshairs of a terrorist incident that put the lives of him and his family in tremendous danger. It was an incident that united Am Yisrael in tefillah and miraculously concluded with no injuries.

It was around the year 1970. The Jordanian empire had become the home of Palestinian terror organization, which operated overtly from its territory and often launched attacks from its borders to Israeli citizens.

The Hashemite dynasty, to which King Hussein of Jordan belonged, represents only about twenty percent of the population of the country, while many of the citizens are actually Palestinians. That is why the Palestinian organizations at the time were a real threat to the



A TWA plane taking off

stability of the Jordanian regime.

Armed terrorists wandered around openly in Palestinian enclaves in Jordan. They put up roadblocks, collected taxes, and mercilessly assaulted anyone who did not submit to their authority. From time to time, they even attacked Jordanian military and police units.

On 5 Elul 5730, the clash became a real war. On that day, Palestinian terrorists hijacked two passenger planes and landed them in Jordan. Some four days later, another plane

was hijacked and also forced to land in Jordan. The passengers were held hostage. In exchange for their release, the terrorists demanded the release of all terrorist imprisoned in Israel and in other countries.

One of the planes that was hijacked belonged to an America company that operated at the time called Trans World Airlines (TWA). On the day of the hijack, the plane flew from Israel to the international airport in Frankfurt, Germany, from where it was supposed to continue to New York. On the flight were dozens of Jews, including the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Yitzchak Hutner and his Rebbetzin, their only daughter and her husband, Rav Yonasan David.

A short time after takeoff from Frankfurt to New York, the terrorists overtook the cockpit and announced a hijack. The planes were landed in a remote Jordanian airport, near the city of Zarka, also known as Dawson's Field. Within a few days, most of the hostages were released,

with the exception of 56 of them, including passengers identified as Jews.

For three weeks, Rav Hutner and his family along with the other hostages were held captive by the terrorists. The first week, they remained on the plane in Zarka the entire time. Then the Rav was taken by terrorists to an

isolated home, where he was alone under the watch of two terrorists. For the third week, he was with other hostages, as heavy gun battle raged around them as a result of the war that the king of Jordan had declared on the terrorists. Throughout his captivity, he hardly ate, and he lost twenty kilograms. His daughter and son-in-law and two of his *talmidim* on that flight, suffered from hunger and thirst.

The Jewish world was aghast upon hearing that the revered Rosh Yeshivah was in the captivity of

evil terrorists, and galvanized to save him. *Gedolei Yisrael* called on everyone to increase their davening, and many *tefillah* rallies were held for his welfare and salvation. The Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, traveled for a *chizuk* trip to arouse the *tzibbur* to storm the gates of Heaven with their *tefillos*.

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During that time, the renowned Mashgiach Rav Eliyahu Lopian passed away. A short time before his passing, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz was hospitalized in serious condition, and from his sickbed, he asked his son-in-law to call Rav Elya and ask him to daven for his recovery.

As soon as Rav Elya heard about Rav Chaim's serious condition, he went to the *heichal* of the yeshivah in Kfar Chassidim, where he served as Masghiach, opened the *aron kodesh*, and began to daven fervently. Miraculously, a short time later, Rav Chaim stood up from his bed, to the shock of his doctors. He was subsequently released to go home in good health.

Now, during Rav Elya's *levayah*, Rav Chaim stood up and delivered an emotional *hesped*. In the middle, he suddenly stopped, turned to the *niftar* and said: "Rav Elya, you helped me during my illness, I ask you, please, arouse Heavenly mercy at the Kisei Hakavod for Yitzchak ben Chana who is currently in captivity, that he should be released quickly. He is an *adam gadol*...I testify that of him..." A ripple of emotion passed through the crowd, which tearfully joined the fervent plea.

Indeed, about a week after Rav Elya's passing, after the Jordanian army fought determinedly against the Palestinian terrorists and killed thousands of them, the terrorists holding the hostages capitulated unconditionally and released the passengers of the plane, including Rav Yitzchak and his family, who went free. The Jewish people rejoiced, and thanked Hashem for this wondrous miracle of salvation they had witnessed.

On 27 Elul, the day they were >

– Pausing to Answer Amen to Birchas Kohanim –

One who hears *Birchas Kohanim* while he is saying *Krias Shema* and the *brachos* can stop to answer amen even if he is in the middle of the *perek*¹. And some say that he can stop to answer amen even after the *brachah* of *Asher Kidshanu Bikdushaso shel Aharon*, which the Kohanim recite before their *brachos*². But when there is no Kohein and only the *sha"tz* says the *brachah*, then one should not stop to answer “*kein yehi ratzon*” even during *Pesukei Dezimrah*³.

1. The *Chareidim*'s view on this is well-known (12 18, cited in *Biur Halachah* at beginning of 124) that the mitzvah of *Birchas Kohanim* includes both the obligation of the Kohanim to bless Am Yisrael and the obligation of the Yisra'elim to be blessed by the Kohanim (*Biur Da'as Hachareidim*, see the *Hafla'ah Kesubos* 23a). The *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* Vol. IV, 21, 2) proves from the words of the *Shulchan Aruch* in the *halachos* of *Nesias Kapayim* (128:25) that the mitzvah of *Birchas Kohanim* also includes the obligation of the Yisrael who receives the *brachah* from the Kohanim to answer amen after the *brachah*. In his words, this is the form of the mitzvah: The Kohanim make the *brachah* and the nation hears and answers amen to the *brachah*. For this reason, he ruled that after the three *pesukim* of the *brachah* – where the obligation to answer amen is from the Torah – one should answer even in the middle of a *perek* in *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*. But after the *brachah* of *Asher Kidshanu Bikdeshusaso shel Aharon*, for which the answering amen is only *d'Rabbanan*, one should not answer amen during *Krias Shema* and its *brachos*, like the *halachah* with the rest of the amens. Rav Elyashiv concurs (*Vayishma Moshe* Vol. II p. 27) as does the *Piskei Teshvuos* (128:41). See also *Maaseh Ish* (Vol. IV, p. 117) that when the Chazon Ish was asked about answering amen in the middle of the *perek* after *Birchas Kohanim*, he answered, “that it is not explained to him now, and he needs to delve into it.”

In Harav Chaim Kanievsky's introduction to *sefer Nachalas Eliyahu*, he wrote that Rav Eliyahu Dushnitzer also ruled that one should stop in the middle of saying *Krias Shema* and the *brachos* to answer amen after *Birchas Kohanim*. Rav Chaim explained (*ibid*) that it is possible that the reason is that *Birchos Kohanim* has the *din* of a “*davar shebikedushah*” said in a *minyan* of ten that pause to answer even in the middle of the *perek*, because the *kohanim* do not offer the *brachah* with less than ten people (*Megillah* 23b), and as the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* explains (66 5) that this is why we pause to answer amen after the *brachos* of the *olim* to the Torah, even in the middle of the *perek*.

2. The *Pekudas Elazar* (66 3) says that because the Kohanim only make this *brachah* with ten people, the *halachah* of answering amen after it is like the *din* of a “*davar shebikdushah*” where one pauses even in the middle of the *perek* to answer, and the *Shu"t Yabia Omer* concurs (*Orach Chaim* Vol. VIII 12:5).

3. Even the ones who have a custom to answer amen after the *chazzan* when there are no Kohanim should not stop for this reason (*Halichos Shlomo – Tefillah* Chap. 10:5).

released, the *shivah* for Rav Elya Lopian was completed. In a *hesped* in Yeshivas Meah Shearim in Yerushalayim, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz stood up to speak, and he thanked Rav Elya for advocating for the release of Rav Yitzchak at the Kisei Hakavod.

In time, Harav Avraham Mordechai Isbee, one of the *roshei yeshivah* of Bais Yisrael in Ashdod, wrote about this story in his *sefer Chelkas Mordechai* (Shavuos p. 303):

“I will relate a wondrous story

where we saw *yeshuas Hashem* with *shleimus*, without the intervention of human hands. In 5730, Palestinian Arabs *ym"ts* hijacked a number of planes, and suddenly, Hashem turned the heart of the king of Jordan, and put fear in his heart from the Palestinian terrorists, that if they would succeed they might eventually topple him from the throne. He declared war against them. Our brethren all over the world were afraid of this turn of events, sure that now, in the midst of war, with fire on both sides, and the captives in the middle, the

situation was hopeless, *chalilah*. But ultimately, this was their salvation, because Hashem put in the hearts of the terrorists that they would not fall captive to the king of Jordan no matter what, so that he would not have the satisfaction of capturing them. And it was from Hashem that instead of killing the captives, they surrendered them to the United Nations, and all of them returned home safely.”

Sefer Hazikaron LaGra
”ch Shmuelevitz, p. 106;
Siach Yosef Vol. II p. 121

Razei Emunim

Allusions to Meah Brachos and Amen in the Parashah

Answering Amen Silences the *Mekatregim*

”והנה אנחנו מאלמים אלמים בתוך השדה והנה קמה אלמתי וגם נצבה והנה תסבינה אלמתיכם ותשתחווין לאלמתי” (לז טז)

Harav Nosson Shapiro, the Megaleh Amukos, reveals that the root of Yosef Hatzaddik is in the *sod* of amen, as alluded to in the *passuk* said about Yosef (ibid 37:3): “בן זקנים הוא” – the final letter of each word comprises amen. The Megaleh Amukos adds that in light of this, the vision that he saw in his dream “*vehinei anachnu me’almim alumim*” – teaches us that when we want to silence the *mekatregim* so that they should be mute, *אילמים*, one should be careful in answering amen, because the angels created from answering amen fight the *mekatregim* and silence them. Therefore, *והנה קמה אלמתי* – that Yosef Hatzaddik, whose root is in the *sod* of answering amen, prevailed over them and silenced them.

Megaleh Amukos Vayeishev p. 43b and p. 48b

This goes in hand with what is brought in *Seder Hadoros* (Rabi Yochanan) that Rabi Yochanan was *mehader* in

answering amen, and the *Gemara* (*Brachos* 20a) brings that Rabi Yochanan said of himself that it is fitting for the descendants of Yosef to be *mehader* with amen.

Artzos Hashalom Brachos 20a

I Am Asking for My Brothers

”וימצאהו איש והנה תעה בשדה וישאלהו האיש לאמר מה תבקש: ויאמר את אחי אנכי מבקש הגידה נא לי איפה הם רעים” (לז טז-טז)

Rav Yaakov ben Elimelech of Lizhensk explained:

“And a man asked him what do you seek” – if a person asks you what the most worthy *tefillah* before Hashem is, “and he said I seek my brothers” – tell him that the best thing is to pray for our brethren Bnei Yisrael who are in dire straits and captivity.

The Rebbe **Rav Leibush of Brezhan** added that such a *tefillah* is more powerful On High, and even the *mekatregim* reluctantly answer amen to it, as alluded to in the words of the *passuk*: “*Hagidah na li*” – the words *נא לי* are numerically equivalent to amen.

Bais Yaakov p. 98; Imrei Yehudah [Brezhan]

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



Harav Yitzchak Hutner

20 Kislev 5741

Rav Yitzchak Hutner was born to his father, Rav Chaim Yoel in 5666 in Warsaw Poland. When he was about fourteen, he began to attend Lomza Yeshiva, and later learned in Slabodka, where he was very close with the Alter of Slabodka and the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein.

In 5684, he came to Eretz Yisrael with the yeshivah and studied for a few years in Chevron and Yerushalayim. In 5695, he moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he was appointed Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin. He was known for his extraordinary *shiurim* and deep *shmuessen*, which he based on the teachings of the Maharal of Prague. His *shiurim* were published in the renowned series *Pachad Yitzchak*.

The Mashgiach Rav Shlomo Wolbe, who was just eight years younger than him, wrote of him (*Alei Shor* Vol. II p. 12):

“More than ten years ago, I became close to Hagaon Hagadol Rav Yitzchak Hutner, *ztz”l*, Rosh Yeshivas Chaim Berlin in New York and Yeshivas Pachad Yitzchak in Yerushalayim and author of *Pachad Yitzchak*, and I became his *talmid*. He was one in a generation in the breadth and depth of his knowledge in all parts of Torah, and wisdoms, and nothing was beyond him. As much as his greatness was revealed in his eight volumes of *Pachad Yitzhak* that have already been published, his greatness will be revealed even more when more of his works will be released.”

In 5739, he moved to Eretz Yisrael, which he always yearned for, and many flocked to hear his *shiurim*.

Rav Hutner passed away on 20 Kislev 5741 and was laid to rest on Har Hazeisim.

Listen to the Brachah to Be Able to Answer Amen K’halachah

He would often speak to his family about the fact that answering amen has a few meanings, and the *kavanah* of amen to a *brachah* of praise cannot be compared to the amen of a *brachah* for a request. Therefore, we need to listen well to the *brachos* so that we can know what to answer. And he added that this is what *Chazal* alluded to (*Sanhedrin* 92a) with the words “*gedolah de’ah shenitnah b’tchilas brachah*” – when we make an effort to pay attention from the beginning of the *brachah*, then we can answer amen properly to it. (*Kesser Malchus* p. 272)