

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly
Pamphlet
From
"Bney
Emunim"



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Peninei Emunim

Pearls of Tefillah in the Parashah

The Tefillah Is Accepted in the Merit of *Mesirus Nefesh*

“פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתו מעל בני ישראל בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי” (כה יא)

From the words of this *passuk* it seems that Pinchas stopped the plague in the merit of his zealotry for the *kavod* of Hashem. But from the words of the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (106:30): “*Vaya’amod Pinchas vayepallel vate’atzar hamageifah*” it seems that he stopped the plague with *tefillah*. How can these two *pesukim* be reconciled?

Harav Yosef Dovid of Salonika explained:

In *Maseches Brachos* (20a) it says that Rav Pappa asked Abayei: Why, in earlier generations, were there miracles, but when we see a *tzarah*, we get distraught and scream to Hashem in *tefillah* and we are not answered? And Abayei replied: The early ones were *moser nefesh* for *Kiddush Hashem*, and therefore, miracles were performed for them, but we are not *moser nefesh* for *Kedushas Hashem*, and therefore our *tefillah* is not heard.

In light of this, the *pesukim* are very clear: Indeed, Pinchas stopped the plague with his *tefillah*, as it says in *Sefer Tehillim*, but the *passuk* here explains that the reason why his *tefillah* was accepted was because “Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon Hakohein has turned My anger away from Bnei Yisrael,” through his *tefillah*, and why did he merit to have the *tefillah* accepted? ‘*Bekano es kinasi besocham*’ – in the merit of being *moser nefesh* for *Kavod Shamayim*.

We see this also in the words of the *passuk*: It says “*vayepallel*” and not “*vayispallel*,” because he had the merit of *Kiddush Hashem*, “he did not have to recite an entire *tefillah*, and with a bit of *tefillah*, immediately he was answered.”

Tzemach Dovid

Pischu Shearim

A word from the founder and Nasi of Bney Emunim

Presenting Complete *Brachos* to Hashem!

Someone shared with me an interesting incident that he witnessed.

In one of the shuls of Yerushalayim, a Yid approached one of his friends who was about to recite *Birchos Hashachar*, and asked him to have *kavanah* to be *motzi* him with his *brachos*.

The friend nodded in agreement. “It happens that a person doesn’t fall asleep at night,” he thought to himself.

As usual in such a case, the *mevarech* paused for a moment and then began to recite the *brachos* aloud, slowly, one by one, and his friend answered amen to each and every *brachah*.

To the surprise of the *mevarech*, as soon as he finished his *brachos*, the friend who had stood and listened to the *brachos* and said amen then went and said all the *Birchos Hashachar* again, word for word. The *mevarech* was stunned, and after he finished answering amen, he turned to his friend, sounding a bit offended and said: “Were you trying to play a joke on me?”

“*Chalilah*,” his friend replied quickly. “I just felt so bad watching you standing up to say the *brachos* very quickly, without having someone answer amen, and I wanted to give you the *zchus* of complete *brachos*...”

Yes! When we answer amen to a *brachah*, aside from the merit of the mitzvah that we get, we also give the *mevarech* the *zchus* that his *brachah* should be complete! Moreover: The holy *Zohar* writes (*Eikev* 271 1) that the gates of Heaven open in front of a *brachah* that is answered with amen, and it rises to the Kisei Hakavod, and there is a declaration: ‘This is the gift that Ploni [the *mevarech*] has sent the king.’ In other words, despite that the special virtue of the *brachah* is given to it only because of the amen that the listener answered, the *brachah* is still attributed to the *mevarech*, and

it is announced as a gift that he sent the king.

We can say that this is what the *passuk* alludes to (*Malachi* 6:16): “*Az nidberu yirei Hashem ish el re’iehu vayakshev Hashem veyishma*.” The *brachos* of the *yirei Hashem* are spoken and they bless one another so that their *brachos* should be completed with amen, and that is very wanted and accepted on High, and it is regarding this that the promise is made “And Hashem hears and listens” because the *brachah* reaches the Kisei Hakavod.

It makes sense to say that this is another reason for the words of Rabbi Yosi that “the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*” (*Brachos* 53b). The *mevarech* fills his obligation and does a mitzvah that is attributed only to his merit, while the one who answers amen, aside for his personal obligation, also completes the *brachah* of the *mevarech* and does a deed that is attributed also to the merit of the *mevarech*.

It’s important to know that even if the *mevarech* is not concerned by the fact that his *brachah* is not complete, that does not exempt us from offering ourselves to answer amen to his *brachos*. If *brachos* answered by amen are so beloved and wanted by HaKadosh Baruch Hu, then it behooves us to make the effort to present Him with those complete *brachos*!

How great, therefore, is the *zchus* of those who rise early to come to shul to answer amen after *mevarchim*. In their merit, tens of thousands of complete *brachos* that are accepted before the Kisei Hakavod with love rise up, and masses of *mevarchim* are remembered for good and for *brachah*, and without doubt are granted *yeshuos* and compassion.

Good Shabbos
Yaakov Dov Marmurstein

For many years, the Russian empire controlled a large part of Poland. During those years, the Jews in Poland were under the constant threat of being forcibly conscripted to the Russian Tsar's army.

Aside from the fact that these Jews were forcibly torn from the source of their life – the *Gemara* and the *beis medrash* – without any option of keeping Shabbos, kashrus or *mitzvos* in the army – they were also in very real danger. The battles on the various fronts extracted countless Jewish victims. In addition, the families that remained behind often suffered from hunger and poverty, as they had lost their breadwinner and the pillar of their households.

About one hundred and eighty years ago, a *sofer Sta"m* named Rav Chaim Flisser lived in Sochatchov. In addition to being a gifted scribe, he was also a *talmid chacham* and *yarei Shamayim*. The parshiyos that he wrote were renowned in the whole region and people flocked to purchase *parshiyos* for *mezuzos* and *tefillin* from him.

Reb Chaim was also called up with a



The train station in Radzymin, Poland

draft notice to the army. For ten years, from when he was twenty until he was thirty, he received a temporary deferral for one year. By nature, Reb Chaim was weak, and according to the law he was eligible for an exemption, but whenever the commanders saw the Jew with the venerable visage that stood before them, their hatred for Jews overpowered them and they gave him a mere one-year deferral, so that he would have to come back over and over again.

When Reb Chaim appeared before the committee for the tenth time, he was already thirty years old. The draft only obligated men of up to age thirty, and as such, Reb Chaim was sure that this would be the last time he would have to report. But his assumptions were misplaced. Once again, the sight of

a venerable Jew aroused the hatred of the commanders, and they ruled unanimously that he had to enlist immediately. Not only that, they also determined that he would be stationed in Irkutsk, in distant and icy Siberia.

The terrible news hit the family like thunder on a clear day. His close friends and relatives hurried to the Rebbe Rav Yaakov Aryeh of Radzymin, with whom Rav Chaim was close, to ask for advice. The Rebbe instructed them to file an appeal at the regional command office, and to postpone departure for Siberia for the time being.

After extensive efforts, the appeal was filed, and a time was set for a hearing in the city of Plotzk. The frantic family members, who knew that the chances of their appeal being accepted were very low, pressured Reb Chaim to flee the country. But Rav Chaim wanted to first travel to Radzymin to obtain the Rebbe's permission for such a move.

At the time, a new room had been added to the Rebbe's home, and Reb Chaim sat down and wrote a *mehudar mezuzah* on *klaf*, and then set out for the Rebbe.

As soon as he arrived, Reb Chaim hurried to the Rebbe's home. The Rebbe studied him with his piercing gaze and said, "Chaim, why are you enveloped in sadness? Why don't you look good? Did you learn that here?"

"Holy Rebbe," Reb Chaim replied brokenly, "I am in such a huge trouble, and I'm terrified."

"What from? Who are we afraid of besides the Ribbono shel Olam?"

the Rebbe asked. Reb Chaim was silent, and merely took out the mezuzah and gave it to the Rebbe, who opened the mezuzah, studied it, and then nodded approvingly. "Nu, Chaim, shall we affix the new mezuzah in the new room?" the Rebbe asked-declared. "I'll say the *brachah* and you will answer amen."

After they put up the mezuzah the Rebbe sat down and inquired after Reb Chaim's welfare. Now Reb Chaim took out his *kvittel*, in which he had written down all the details, and handed it to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe finished reading, looked at Reb Chaim and asked: "Leave the country? Why?"

Reb Chaim lowered his gaze and said, "This is what my family is advising.

They made a lot of inquiries and reached the conclusion that there is no other choice."

The Rebbe began to pace in the room, and some unintelligible words emerged from his mouth. Finally, he ran to the window, raised his hands and asked with fervor: "Ribbono shel Olam, merciful Father! Chaim Zev ben Charna Chava is a *sofer*. He wrote the letters in Your holy Torah! Holy *tefillin* and *mezuzos*! Ribbono shel Olam, I plead for mercy! Have mercy on Chaim Zev ben Charna Chava. He brought me a special and beautiful kosher mezuzah, to fulfill "*zeh Keli v'anveihu*," and I, Yaakov Aryeh ben Buna asks You that the holy letters that he wrote should protect them that he should not have to wander."

And then the Rebbe turned to the *sofer* and said: "Don't listen to what your advisors are saying. Go to the appeal and do not be afraid of anything! But before you go into the hall where the hearing is being held, recite these *pesukim* three times (*Yeshayah 29:33-34*): "היו מלכים אמניך ושרותיהם מיניקתיך" אפים ארץ ישתחוו לך ועפר רגליך ילחכו וידעת כי אני ה' אשר לא יבשו קווי: היקה מגבור מלקוח ואם שבי צדיק ימלט." And when you are standing in front of them say: "The *zchus* of the Rebbe of Radzymin, Yaakov Aryeh ben Buna, will advocate for me that I should be spared."

The Rebbe placed his hands on Reb Chaim's head and *benched* him, and Reb Chaim emerged in a much happier state of mind.

The time for the appeal came and Reb Chaim traveled to Plotzk. As soon as he arrived, the Jews who were waiting to appear in front of the committee told him that the members of the appeals committee had arrived looking very rigid and somber. The chairman had declared firmly that all those who had filed appeals would be sent to serve the Russian empire in Siberia.

Reb Chaim's turn arrived. He strode into the hall, appearing very calm. At first, there was a general agreement among the members of the panel that his appeal should be denied, but suddenly, the older commander stood up and asked Reb Chaim if he was healthy. "My heart is weak," Reb Chaim replied. The commander asked Reb Chaim to run the length of the hall. Reb Chaim began to run, breathing heavily. "We can see he is not healthy," the doctors told one another.

That day, Reb Chaim was the only one who left the appeals' committee with a discharge letter in hand.

Harav Shimon Kletzkin, *shlita*, serves each morning as a *gabbai amen* in the Bobover shul on Chazon Ish Street in Bnei Brak. We had the privilege of meeting with him for a conversation that reflects on the precious nature of the mitzvah of answering amen, and its great virtue.

Reb Shimon, please share with us how it happens, what brings a person to begin investing hours each day in answering amen after *mispallelim*?

“The recognition of the importance of answering amen was implanted in our family first and foremost by my father, ז”ל, who often spoke about it. But my dedication to this mitzvah is in the credit of my older brother, Reb Gershon, *shlita*, who speaks a lot about the great merit of one who is strict to fulfill this mitzvah.”

Still, many want to strengthen themselves in this mitzvah, but their busy lives and many obstacles prevent them from doing so. What gives you the strength to stand there each day answering amen after dozens of people, with diligence and consistency?

“It’s a good question, but if you don’t mind, I’ll read you a short passage from the *Zohar Hakadosh*, and these words are always in my mind’s eye. I think that after perusing these words of the *Zohar*, your question becomes moot. He writes in *Parashas Eikev* (271 1):

When a *brachah* answered by amen rises On High, there is a declaration in all the firmaments – this is the gift that Ploni sent to the King! This is a gift that is properly fulfilled! And what is that gift? A *brachah* that is answered by amen! Because every *brachah* that is answered by amen is a *brachah* that is fulfilled in the proper way.

Let’s try to imagine what a noise there is Above when a *brachah* answered by amen arrives. The *Zohar’s* description about the lofty effects of answering amen is chilling. It’s a minimal investment when compared to the wondrous outcome. Nu, after such a discovery, can we view answering amen as a *tirchah*, a bother?!”

How does it work, practically? You go over to *mispallelim* and ask them to give you the *zechus* of answering amen to their *brachos*? What kinds of reactions do you get?

“The truth is that I prefer to approach people in a different way. When I see a person about to start *brachos*, I go over to him and ask if he is ready to partner with me on a deal that guarantees huge profits. When he looks at me in surprise, I quote the *Zohar* that I just

cited above, and I tell him: The perfect gift – is a *brachah* answered by amen, and it can only be sent if we make a partnership, you make the *brachos* and I’ll answer amen. Do you think that there’s someone who wouldn’t jump at this opportunity?! It’s the best deal on the planet!

Aside for that, my fellow *mispallelim* know how dear I hold the mitzvah of answering amen and they do not let me down.



Reb Shimon Kletzkin in the Bobover shul in Bnei Brak, answering amen

After all the articles expounding on the virtue of answering amen, how is it that there is still a certainly laxity on the subject?

“Well, it’s certainly just the layman’s view...but it reminds me of that person who says ‘*vesein tal umatar*’ in the summer instead of ‘*vesein brachah*’, and when he is told that he has to repeat the davening he is not ready to accept it. He doesn’t realize how it is possible that because of one mistaken word he has to repeat the whole *tefillah*...”

It’s hard for people to internalize that one word is so important. They look for proportions, but our job is to believe, not to understand. Aside for that, in my view, people do not sufficiently value the answering of amen, specifically because of how easy and available it is to merit this mitzvah. It makes it hard for a person to internalize its lofty

level.

But I have to note that today, the Bney Emunim revolution is very evident, and the awareness of answering amen is mounting every day.

Many say – “I wish we could imbue our children and family members with this mitzvah” – is there something that you can recommend to them?

“The first thing is, like everything in *chinuch*, that imbuing our families to answer amen has to be done calmly and in a pleasant manner. Even if the child did not make a *brachah* aloud, or did not answer amen to the *brachah*, don’t make a big deal of it. The most important thing is a personal example. When a child sees that the mitzvah of answering amen is important and plays a significant role in his father’s life, then naturally, it will penetrate his heart as well.

When I davened from the *amud* during the year after my father’s passing, naturally, I missed out on many amens. What did I do?! I asked my children to please help me make up those amens, and they were happy to do so. Needless to say, after they saw how important amen is to me, they became much stricter about it, and it continued far beyond that year.

As someone who values the mitzvah of amen over the years, do you have a story of *siyata diShmaya* that you can share with readers?

“Of course! I merit to see *siyata diShmaya* every step of the way, but for me the biggest benefit I have are the many *zchuisim* that come my way. I’ll give you a small example – a bit of a humorous so one – that happened recently. *Baruch Hashem* I participated in my grandson’s wedding and I had the *zechus* of making the *brachah* of “*Asher Yatzar*” and had about 100 people answer amen to it. During the *mitzvah tantz*, just as I was being called up as the grandfather of the *chassan*, I had the opportunity to make this *brachah*. My brother, Reb Yisrael Aharon, who lives today in Lakewood, and who was the *badchan*, and knows about my love for this mitzvah, honored me with making the *brachah* in front of everyone, so it happened that about 100 people answered amen to my *brachah*...”

Pleas Instead of *Bikkurim*

“אלה בני אפרים למשפחתם לשותלה משפחת השתלחי לבכר משפחת הבכרי לתחן משפחת התחני” (כו לה)

Chazal (*Tanchuma* 1) taught us that the three *tefillos* we daven each day were established to correspond to the mitzvah of *bikkurim*, which we cannot fulfill when there is no Bais Hamikdash. They said: “Moshe saw in *Ruach HaKodesh* that the Bais Hamikdash would be destroyed, and the *bikkurim* would cease, and he then instituted for Am Yisrael to pray three times each day.”

Rav Tzvi Yitzchak Abramowitz, the Rav of the Kirya Hachassidit in Chatzor Haglilit, says that this *Midrash* is alluded to in this *passuk*: “*LeBecher mishpachas haBachri, leTachan mishpachas haTachani.*” Instead of בכר, the *bikkurim*, Moshe instituted תחן the

techinos and *tefillos*.

Taam Hatzvi

Davening a Bit Later on Shabbos

“וביום השבת שני כבשים בני שנה תמימים ושני עשרנים סלת מנחה בלילה בשמן ונסכו” (כה ט)

The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 281 1) rules: “And it is customary that on Shabbos we come a bit later to shul than during the week, because the *Tamid* of the weekdays says “*baboker*” (*Bamidbar* 28:4) and on Shabbos it says “*ubeyom haShabbos*” (*Bamidbar* 28:9) which indicates a lateness.” But the *Ba”ch* (on the *Tur*, *ibid*) notes that the word “*ubeyom*” applies to the *Korban Mussaf* and not the *Korban Tamid*, so how can we learn from it about *Tefillas Shacharis* – corresponding to the *Tamid* – being late?

Harav Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the Rav of Frankfurt, explained

that although the word “*ubeyom*” applies to the *Korban Mussaf*, it still indicates a later time for getting up on Shabbos, and therefore, a later time for *Shacharis*. Because *Chazal* learn from this word (see *Rashi Pesachim* 58a, ad loc. *Rabbi Yishma’el*) that the time for sacrificing the *Mussaf* was from the sixth hour in the day, and the same is for *Tefillas Mussaf* that corresponds to it. So because a person cannot eat before *Mussaf* (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 286 3), and on the other hand, a person must not fast on Shabbos later than six hours from when he rises (*ibid* 288 1; *Magen Avraham* 157 1), therefore, it is customary to rise later on Shabbos so that the person can daven *Mussaf* in the sixth hour without having had six hours pass from the time he wakes up until he returns home to make *Kiddush* and eat.

Panim Yafos

Shaarei Gan Eden

Amen and Brachos in the Teachings of a Baal Hayahrtzeit



The tziyun of Rav Raphael Moshe Elbaz in Sefrou, Morocco

Harav Raphael Moshe Elbaz 22 Tammuz 5656

Harav Raphael Moshe Elbaz was born to his father, Rav Shmuel in 5584 in Sefrou, Morocco. He studied under the *gedolim* in his city: his grandfather Rav Yehuda Elbaz, his father Rav Shmuel, his uncle Rav Amram Elbaz and Rav Amor Abitbul.

Rav Raphael grew in the *beis medrash* of his uncle Rav Amram, until, already at the age of twenty eight, he was named a *dayan* in his city.

When his uncle Rav Amram passed away, Rav Raphael Moshe was named the Raavad of Sefrou. His fame spread far and wide, and people sent halachic questions and other issues to resolve from many cities.

He authored many *seforim* on all subjects of Torah, among them: *Shu”t Halachah LeMoshe; Eden Mikedem* – *Midrashim* and commentary in the order of the *aleph beis; Ateres Paz* on *Kabbalah* subjects; *Arba’ah Shomrim* – *dinim* and *mussar*. He also wrote many poems and lamentations that were disseminated among the Jews of Morocco. He led his community for forty-five years, and on 22 Tammuz 5656, he passed away and was laid to rest in the section of his forebears in Sefrou.

The Obligation of Being Careful to Answer Amen

The holy *Zohar* (*Vayeilech* 285 2) expounds on the punishment waiting in the World to Come for one who is lax about answering amen, and says the *passuk* (*Iyov* 7:9) “Just as a cloud is consumed and goes away, so will one who descends to the grave not ascend.” Rav Raphael Moshe wrote piercing words about this *Zohar* in his *sefer Arba’ah Shomrim* (*Shomer Habris Tikkun* 32):

“And one who hears [the words of the *Zohar*] about this will be pained and anguished, as the person will imagine a reckoning with his soul at how many times he cancelled answering amen with dismay. And even those amens that he did answer were without *kavanah*, and without the proper knowledge, and they do not have wisdom. And a person should delve while still alive, while the sun is still on the land, until the days of bad and he will move on to the next world, and then he will be asked about this and it will be found written in his account, back and forth, how many countless amens he did not say. And therefore, he should introspect into his deeds and should not return to his foolishness, and may Hashem have mercy.”

In contrast, Rav Raphael Moshe wrote (*ibid*) regarding one who is strict about amen that by doing this he draws down abundance from the higher Source and he rectifies the flaws and the damage that his sins caused to this abundance.