

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

A Brachah With Kindness

לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום" (כה יב)

"To be a covenant of peace for him like a man who harbors gratitude and favor towards someone who benefitted him." (Rashi)

Harav Tzvi Aryeh Frommer of Kozhiglov explained the meaning of this *brachah*:

At the end of the *brachah* of *Sim Shalom*, after we detail all our needs, "good and blessing, favor and *chessed*" and so forth, we then add a request: "Bless us our Father as one **in the light of Your Face**", meaning: Don't grant us our requests with shame, as one normally does to a nudge who pesters and pleads, and is granted his request only so that he should leave quickly. Rather, bestow upon us Your abundant goodness with kindness, compassion and good will, as it says (*Tehillim* 44:4): "V'or Panecha ki retzisam."

Here, too, HaKadosh Baruch Hu preceded by saying that He would give the "*Bris Kehunas Olam*" to Pinchas with kindness, "like a person towards whom one harbors gratitude and favor..."

Eretz Tzvi

A Complete, Unblemished Mitzvah

לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום" (כה יב)

Harav Yaakov Katina, the Rav of Chust, explained:

When a person merits to fulfill a mitzvah with completion, he must immediately offer a *tefillah* that he not be overcome with arrogance, so that he does not lose his reward. That is because the trait of pride can ruin everything, as *Chazal* say (*Megillah* 29a): "*Mahn deyahir – baal mum hu*—one who has pride, is blemished."

Therefore, HaKadosh Baruch Hu promised Pinchas: "*Lachen emor hinnei nosen lo es Brisi Shalom*" – he should not fear that the big mitzvah he has done will cause him to have arrogant thoughts, rather, even after it, he will remain *shalem*, whole, without a blemish.

Korban He'ani

Who Returns Souls to Dead Bodies

"כי אמר ה' להם מות ימותו במדבר ולא נותר מהם איש כי אם כלב בן יפנה ויהושע בן נון" (כו סה)

The renowned Yerushalmi *Maggid Harav Shalom Schwadron* related:

One of the most eminent residents of the Shaarei Chessed neighborhood in Yerushalayim was Harav Mordechai Kaminetzky. Although he was quite old in years, Reb Mordechai had a unique custom: whenever he woke up at night, even if only an hour had passed since he'd gone to bed, he would arise and go to shul to serve his Creator.

When he was asked about this custom, he related:

"When I was young I got very sick and the doctors gave up on my life. But Hashem had mercy on me and I recovered. After I got

well, I thought to myself: I must have been worthy of death, and if not for the Heavenly Compassion, I would not have remained alive. If so, then I am like the people in the generation of the desert who were punished by death because of the sin of the *meraglim*, the spies. Therefore, each year, on Tishah B'Av eve, they would all dig ditches and lay in them until the morning, waiting to see if they would die or would continue to live (*Rashi Taanis* 30b). And if one of them awoke in the middle of the night and realized that he was destined to continue living, would it enter his mind to continue to lie in his grave until morning?!

"I too, have that same feeling each night. When I awake from my sleep and see that I am still alive, I am happy about the realization that I am still alive and that galvanizes me to rush to shul to serve my Creator."

She'al Avicha Veyagedcha, Vol. II, p. 293

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Pinchas – Malach – Amen

"פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל" (כה יא)

The acronym of "Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon Hakohen" is numerically equivalent to 91, which is amen. Pinchas closed the mouths of the prosecutors and assuaged the fury of Hashem upon Yisrael with the power of the *Yichud* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu inherent in the letters of amen. As *Chazal* said (*Tikkunei Zohar* 40 1), "anyone who answers amen with all his might, his decree is torn up for seventy years."

In addition, Pinchas merited in his afterlife to become an Angel of Hashem, as the *Zohar* says (*Ki Sisa* 190 1): "Pinchas is Eliyahu" and "*malach*", angel, is numerically equivalent to "amen."

Ben L'Oshri --- Balak; Vayelaket Yosef, Maareches 80

Source of Blowing Shofar During Elul

"יום תרועה יהיה לכם" (כט א)

From this *passuk*, **Harav Chaim Pinchas Luria**, one of the Rabbanim of Lodz, brought proof of the custom of blowing *shofar* after *Shacharis* beginning on Rosh Chodesh Elul until Erev Rosh Hashanah (*Rema Orach Chaim* 581 1):

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 22b) teaches us that one who pledges *nezirus* upon himself without a limitation of time [*stam nezirus*] must practice the *nezirus* for just thirty days, indicated by the words of the *passuk* (ibid 6:5): "*Kadosh yihiyeh gadel pera se'ar rosho*." *Yihiyeh* is numerically equivalent to 30, and from here we learn that "*stam nezirus* is for thirty days."

Similarly, we can explain this *passuk* as well: "*Yom teruah yihiyeh lachem*" – blow the *shofar* for thirty days, the same as the numerical value of "*yihiyeh*."

Koheles Chaim p. 163



Erev Shabbos Parashas Pinchas, 23 Tammuz, is the *yahrtzeit* of the *gaon* Harav **Moshe Cordovero**, zy"va. In his *Sefer Gerushin* (22) he cites a *chiddush* that he learned with the "Maggid" sent to learn with him from Above:

Chazal said "one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*." Even though in our eyes it appears that the one answering amen is inferior to the one making the *brachah*, according to *Toras HaSod*, the *brachah* by itself cannot rise On High as it needs to.

The one who answers amen gives it the power that propels it On High to be accepted willingly before the Creator.

Amen elevates the brachah.

Answering Amen Elevates the Brachah

Krias Shema – Parashah of Tzitzis (1)

Vayomer in a Soft
Language

There is a known rule that “*dibbur*” in the Torah represents a harsher language while “*amirah*” represents a softer language. (*Makkos* 11a) In the *parashah* of *tzitzis* the Torah begins with a soft language: “*Vayomer Hashem el Moshe leimor*,” and then continues with a harsher language “*daber el Bnei Yisrael*” and then concludes softly: “*V’amarta aleihem*.” Many have asked why this is so.

There are several answers:

1. The *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh* explains (*Bamidbar* 15:37): The Torah begins with the word “*Vayomer*” because this *parashah* comes right after the *parashah* of the *mekoshesh*, the one who gathered wood on Shabbos. After the man desecrated Shabbos, Bnei Yisrael turned to Hashem and said: “On weekday You gave us *tefillin* as a sign and symbol to keep *mitzvos*,” but what can we do on Shabbos when we do not lay *tefillin*? Therefore, they were given the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, so that on Shabbos as well they should have an “*os*”, a sign, to help them keep *mitzvos*. Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu was very pleased by this request, it opens with “*Vayomer*”, a language representing kindness and good will.

However later, when the Torah goes into the details of the mitzvah, which include the obligation and the virtues of the mitzvah, it uses a harsher language for the obligation part, and softer language for the virtues of the mitzvah.

2. The *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim* 11 1) ruled that a person can tell his wife “weave for me *tzitzis*” as long as she does so “*lishmah*”, for the purpose of the mitzvah. According to this, the *Hagahos Rabi Akiva Eiger* (ibid) in the name of the *Divrei Shlomo* explained that that is why the *pasuk* changed the language. At first: “*Daber el Bnei Yisrael*”, in a harsher language on the main point of *mitzvas tzitzis*, which is designated for the men. Then the Torah added that with regard to making the *tzitzis*, it can be done by a woman, and thus a softer language is used: “*V’amarta aleihem v’asu lahem tzitzis*.” (See *Rashi Shemos* 19:3)

3. The Bnei Yissaschar of Dinov explained: Because *tzitzis* is a *mitzvas asei*, people might be lax in its observance. Therefore, the *pasuk* begins with a harsher language: “*daber*”, and as the *Gemara* says (*Menachos* 41a) that when the *middas hadin* reigns, then people are punished even for annulling an *asei*. But then the Torah adds “*v’amarta*” in a softer language, to teach us that the reward for the mitzvah

of *tzitzis* in this world and the next world is invaluable, and as we find in the *Gemara* (ibid 44a) how great the reward is for someone who is careful with the mitzvah of *tzitzis* in this world. (*Igra Dekallah*, end of *Parashas Shelach*)

4. The *Avodas Leivav (Krias Shema* and *Tefillah*) offered a beautiful explanation: The obligation of *tzitzis* is not equal among all, because one who wears a garment that has four edges is **obligated** in *tzitzis*, but someone who does not wear such a garment has a **mitzvah** to obtain a four cornered garment, and to place *tzitzis* on it and wear it. Therefore the Torah writes in a harsh language on the one side – for someone who is wearing a four cornered garment, and concludes in a softer language, for someone who is not wearing a four cornered garment, and who has a mitzvah to obtain one.

From Third Person to
Second Person

The commentaries further ask: Why does it say here in third person “*v’asu lahem*” while later it says in second person “*vehayah lachem letzitzis*.”

There are several answers:

1. The Maharal Tzintz explains: The mitzvah of *tzitzis* is equivalent to all the other *mitzvos (Nedarim* 25a), and when one fulfills the mitzvah of *tzitzis* it is as though he fulfills the whole Torah (*Sifri Bamidbar* 115). We find among the 613 *mitzvos* that there are *mitzvos* that in our day are hidden, such as sacrificing *korbanos*, and others. By performing the mitzvah of *tzitzis* it is considered that we fulfilled all those hidden *mitzvos*. Therefore, the Torah alluded here at first with third person: “*lahem*” – those ‘hidden’ *mitzvos*, and later in second person “*lachem*” – corresponding to the open *mitzvos*. (*Drashos Mahara”l*, Vol. IV, *Drush Lemitzvas Tzitzis*)

2. The *Maggid*, Harav Reuven Karelinstein explained this according to the *Gemara* in *Menachos* (43a) that anyone who is careful about the mitzvah of *tzitzis* merits to greet the Shechinah. According to this we can understand: At first the Torah refers to making *tzitzis* before actually performing the mitzvah. Therefore HaKadosh Baruch Hu spoke about Klal Yisrael in third person. But later, when speaking about the actual performance of the mitzvah, the second person is used, “*vehayah lachem letzitzis*”, because performing the mitzvah brings about greeting the Shechinah. (*Chumash Hamaggidim Shelach*)

Amen Opened His Mouth

This uplifting story was related several years ago by a Ra”m in one of the prominent yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael, which was among the first who joined the Bnei Emunim revolution in the yeshivos. This is the wondrous story about the power of one small kabbalah, especially on matters of amen, to open gates in the Upper Worlds and bring about wondrous yeshuos for those who are scrupulous about this mitzvah.

The *bachur* Shlomo Zalman had earned his place on the eastern wall of yeshivah by merit. It was hard to know if he earned it because of his unbelievable diligence, or his sharp mind in learning. In any case, over the years, he became an integral part of the scenery in the *bais medrash*. He sat in his place from morning to night, swaying over the open *Gemara*, his eyes delving into its holy letters. Some claimed, only partly in jest, that it was his job to switch off the lights at night and switch them back on in the morning.

By the time he was twenty, Shlomo Zalman’s name was renowned as one of the top boys in the yeshivah. After four years there, he had managed to fill his mind with Torah, and to excel in *Yiras Shamayim* and good *middos*. He was also a role model in his pleasant ways.

There was one problem with Shlomo Zalman: he was extremely introverted. Even before he had entered *yeshivah gedolah*, his *rabbanim* in *yeshivah ketanah* had reported this. They hoped that when he entered *yeshivah gedolah*, the problem would be resolved, but over the years, it became clear that the problem was only becoming more acute. Shlomo Zalman never opened his mouth in public, not in *yeshivah ketanah* and not when he became one of the top boys in *yeshivah gedolah*. There was a custom in *yeshivah* that from time to time, the *bachurim* took turns giving *chaburos* on the *sugya* being studied. Naturally, Shlomo Zalman should have been one of the first boys giving such a *chaburah*, in light of his knowledge and learning, but he firmly refused every such offer.

At first his friends and *rebbeim* tried to persuade him over and over, but to their disappointment they quickly realized that they had to let up. Shlomo Zalman was absolutely incapable of opening his mouth in a public forum.

Even during the *shiurim*, his voice was never heard. It was sometimes apparent from his expression that he had what to comment on the *maggid shiur*’s remarks, but he would stifle it with effort and not utter a sound.

Although he had a melodious voice, Shlomo Zalman never davened for the *amud*, and when he was called to the Torah, he just barely managed to recite the *brachos*. On Shabbos he didn’t sing *zemiros* with the rest of the yeshivah, and when he was honored with the “*mezuman*” he shyly declined.

In personal conversations he often expressed his sadness at his extreme introversion, but despite his efforts and those of his parents and *rebbeim*, he could not resolve the issue,

even after implementing a host of advice and *segulos* suggested to him over the years.

The turning point was during a *siyum* that Shlomo Zalman held on *Maseches Bava Basra* together with his good friend. It was a special *siyum* because they had learned the *sugya* for two straight years, during the hours *bein hasedarim*. They had completed *Gemara, Rashi* and *Tosafos b’iyun*.

For some reason, a few of his friends decided to exert heavy pressure on Shlomo Zalman to break his silence and speak at this event. His good friend also joined the chorus...and Shlomo Zalman just could not refuse this time.

He stood up in his place and dozens of pairs of eyes were fixed on him expectantly. A long moment elapsed before he opened his mouth; his body trembled and a few words emerged from his mouth with difficulty...

After uttering those few words, he collapsed back into his chair, spent. His face was white as plaster and his body was trembling violently. He lowered his eyes in shame, and looked like he wanted the earth to swallow him up.

The *bachurim* and *rabbanim* from the yeshivah looked on, their hearts clenching in pity. They felt a desire to help him but they had no idea how to do so.

The *yeshuah* came from a totally unexpected direction—

It was the beginning of the Shachar Akadmecha initiative in *yeshivos*. A small ad hanging at the entrance to the dining room in Shlomo Zalman’s yeshivah informed the *bachurim* of the new initiative being proposed by Bnei Emunim, in an effort to strengthen the recital of *Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa*.

Shlomo Zalman’s sharp eyes spied the little ad, and he felt drawn to the initiative. He had seen in his daily study of the *Mishnah Berurah* the *Shulchan Aruch*’s words on the subject, and was especially moved by the words of Rabbeinu Chaim Vital in *Shaarei Teshuvah* about his *rebbei*, the Ari HaKadosh, who would answer amen after *Birchos Hashachar* each day, sometimes for up to one hundred people.

If the Ari HaKadosh had invested his precious time in this mitzvah, then it must surely be a lofty matter, Shlomo Zalman was sure.

Now, encountering this ad, he felt that it was sent to him from Above. But a heavy cloud marred his aspirations; saying *brachos* aloud in front of his friends was excruciatingly difficult for him. Still, he felt that this time, he really had to try.

Suddenly he felt a gentle tap on

his shoulder. He turned around; it was a new *bachur* from *Shiur Aleph*. Shlomo Zalman didn’t know his name, and he was even more surprised when the *bachur* asked gently: “Would you agree to be my *chavrusa* for *Birchos Hashachar*?”

Shlomo Zalman could not believe it. What courage...! If a *bachur*, several years younger than him was mustering up the courage to ask him this question, then he must be a very unique person. The request captivated him.

He could not believe it when his mouth suddenly uttered an agreement: “Yes!” was all he said. The *bachur* didn’t need more. He disappeared—and returned the next morning!

A few minutes before *Shacharis*, the young *bachur* appeared next to Shlomo Zalman’s place and began to recite *Birchos Hashachar*. When he finished, he looked into Shlomo Zalman’s eyes expectantly...

Shlomo Zalman also began to recite the *brachos*, first quietly and haltingly, and then in a voice that grew steadily stronger and more confident.

A few days passed this way. Shlomo Zalman got used to the new reality. Each day, the young *bachur* stood beside him and listened to his *brachos*, recited in a slow but clear voice. Word by word. Then he listened to the *brachos* of the younger boy.

One morning, on the way to the dining room, the younger *bachur* approached Shlomo Zalman and said, trying to conceal his excitement: “I’m a few years younger than you but when I hear you say *Birchos Hashachar* each day, the words of the *brachah* suddenly take on a different meaning. Without words, you are able to explain to me each day the “*pshtat*” of the *brachos* in the most remarkable way.”

“I’m sure,” the *bachur* added, “that if that’s how you can explain without words, then dozens of boys must stream to your *chaburos* here...” The *bachur* said this innocently; he had no idea that the older boy who had become his friend had never opened his mouth in public...

For Shlomo Zalman, these words were like cool water on a searing hot day. The compliment was said with such obvious sincerity, and it penetrated deep into Shlomo Zalman’s heart. He decided to try.

It wasn’t easy at all, but that very week, Shlomo Zalman delivered his first *chaburah*. It reaped many compliments and praises, which encouraged Shlomo Zalman to try again.

Today one can say that in this area as well – he stands out a cut above the rest!