

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Moshe Davened for a "Matnas Chinam"

זאתחנן אל ה' (ג כז)

"The word *chinun* everywhere signifies an undeserved gift. Although the righteous might claim [reward] on their good deeds, they ask Hashem only for an undeserved gift." (Rashi)

The *passuk* (Iyov 41:3): says "Mi hikkidmani v'ashalem, Who paid Me first before I paid them." Chazal explain (Vayikra Rabbah 27:2): "Who praised Me before I gave him a soul?! Who circumcised his son in My Name before I gave him a son?! Who made for Me a gate [maakeh] before I gave him a roof [over his head]?! Who made for Me a mezuzah I gave him a house...?!"

From the words of the *Midrash* it seems that a person cannot depend on his good deeds, because every good deed was preceded by a gift that Hashem gave him, contrary to the words of Rashi.

The *Kli Yakar* explains: Indeed, it is not Rashi's intention that the *tzaddikim* can rely on their good deeds, but rather they can daven for *arichus yamim*, long lives, so that they should have enough time to add more Torah and good deeds. Therefore, the Torah praised Moshe, that in his modesty, he was afraid that perhaps he would not fulfill the *mitzvos* in a worthy fashion, and therefore, he asked for an undeserved gift of years—not in order to do *mitzvos*.

The *Sfas Emes* (Likutim) adds: Rashi here honed in on the word that Moshe asked for a *matnas chinam*, because every gift, even one that is not given as a remuneration, is given as a sign of gratitude. As the *Gemara* says (Megillah 26b) "If he wouldn't have derived pleasure from him he wouldn't have given him a gift." And that is the virtue of *tzaddikim*, that in addition to not asking for a reward for their deeds, they do not even ask to get a gift in gratitude. Rather they only ask for an undeserved gift.

Moshe's Final Tefillah Was Ne'ilah

זאתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר (ג כז)

"From where do we learn that Moshe repeated the same *tefillah* five hundred and fifteen times, as it says "V'eschanan el Hashem ba'eis hahi leimor" and "V'eschanan is numerically

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

"Amen" –the Key to Gan Eden

עלה ראש הפסגה ושא עיניך ימה וצפנה ותימנה מזרח"ה (ג כז)

The *Megaleh Amukos* writes that before the passing of Moshe, HaKadosh Baruch Hu showed him his place in Gan Eden. This is what the *passuk* alluded to when it says "Aleish hapisgah" – go up to the letters preceding the letters [i.e. one letter before *pei* is *ayin*] of "pisgah", which make up "b'eden".

We can add that because in order to enter Gan Eden one needs the key of amen, as Chazal said (Shabbos 119b): "Anyone who answers amen with all his might the gates of Gan Eden are opened before him." Therefore answering amen is alluded to here as well, with the acronym "hapisgah vesa einecha yamah" which is numerically equivalent to "amen."

Megaleh Amukos Ofen 12; Shaashuei Ra'ayonim p. 19

Honoring Ones Parents by Answering Amen

כבד את אביך ואת אמך (ה טז)

As part of the obligation of honoring parents in their lifetimes and after their passing (Kiddushin 31b) it was established that one mourns for a father or more and says *Kaddish* and davens for the *amud* for eleven months after their passing because this practice spares them from the Judgment of Heaven. However, we must know that the primary elevation for the *neshamah* is done by answering amen after the person who is davening, and the sign for this is: "Kibbud av v'eim" is numerically equivalent to "amen" (with the *kollel*.)

Toras Yishai, Yisro

equivalent to the same 515." (Devarim Rabbah 11 1)

The word "leimor" is explained by Rashi: "That You should inform me if You will fulfill my request or not." Why did Moshe ask this particularly in the 515th *tefillah*?

The *Chasam Sofer* explains this beautifully:

Even though the well gave forth water in the merit of Miriam, it seems that the water did not cease to flow right upon Miriam's passing on 10 Nissan. Rather, HaKadosh Baruch Hu waited until the end of the *shivah* out of respect for her. Now let us calculate: If the hitting of the rock after it was decreed that Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael occurred on 17 Nissan, and from that day on, on each day that a person is allowed to ask for his own needs [with the exception of Shabbos and Yom Tov], then he davened to annul the decree three times each day – at *Shacharis*, *Minchah* and *Maariv*. So it emerges that the 514th *tefillah* was *Minchah* of Yom Kippur. When Moshe saw that he had not been answered until then, he stood and composed another *tefillah* – *Tefillas Ne'ilah*—and because he pinned his hopes on it, it is clear why he asked specifically after that to know if his *tefillah* had been accepted.

Drashos Chasam Sofer Vol. II, p. 334

"Achaltzeihu" Even though "Imo Anochi Betzarah"

כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו כה' אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו (ז ד)

The *Chasam Sofer* explains:

The way of a human is (*Brachos* 5b) that "a prisoner cannot release himself from jail." Meaning even a *tzaddik* who has the power to save others cannot save himself. But that is not the *middah* of HaKaodsh Baruch Hu. Even though "Elokim kerovim eilav" and is with us in our pain, that does not prevent Him from answer us "whenever we call Him." Dovid Hamelech alludes to this in *Tehillim* (91:15): "Imo Anochi betzarah," I am with them in their pain, yet still, "achaltzeihu v'achabdeihu," I will rescue him and I will honor him.

Chasam Sofer, Devarim, Likutim p. 156

בבדקה של'מה תאמר אמן

In the name of tens of thousands of "Bnei Emunim" in Eretz Yisrael and worldwide, we extend heartfelt and warmest Mazel Tov

Wishes to the *nasi*, founder and patron of Bnei Emunim, Harav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, shlita

And his son, Harav Zev Marmorstein, sthliya - And their families

In honor of the marriage of their granddaughter – daughter To the *chassan*, Yeshaya Lazar

May Hashem bestow His *brachah* on the *chassan* and *kallah*, and may they merit to build a Torah true home, established on the foundations of Torah and *emunah*, for many years to come, with happiness, success, *nachas* and tranquility, amen v'amen. May the eminent *mechutanim* merit to derive much *nachas* from them and all their offspring, and may this *simchah* bring an abundance upon their homes, and may they know only joy and happiness for many years to come.

With sincerest and fondest wishes, - The Bnei Emunim Family in Eretz Yisrael and worldwide



Krias Shema – Parashas Vayomer (4)

**Techeiles is Compared to...
the Kisei Hakavod**

The Gemara (Chulin 89a) explains the reason the *techeiles* is put on the *tzitzis*: "Because *techeiles* is similar to the sea and the sea is similar to the firmament and the firmament is similar to a sapphire stone and the sapphire stone is similar to the *Kisei Hakavod*."

These terms: *yam* (sea), *rakia* (firmament) *even saphir* (sapphire) and *Kisei Hakavod* are allusions to very lofty and esoteric concepts that relate to the Upper Worlds (*Maharsha*, Vol. I, *ibid*). Yet we can still ask why we were not instructed to include in the *tallis* a string that is the color of the *Kisei Hakavod* or the sapphire stone, and instead we were instructed to place a string of *techeiles* and then had to try to understand that "the *techeiles* is similar to the sea and the sea is similar to the firmament" and so forth to the *Kisei Hakavod*.

1. The *Ksav Sofer* (Chulin 88b) explains that placing the *techeiles* – which alludes to the *Kisei Hakavod* – on the four corners of the *tallis* in which we wrap our bodies on all sides, teaches us that whatever we turn to do, whether with our bodies, or in our dealings in business and other things, we must always see the Hand of Hashem overseeing and guiding us, because Hashem is the One Who gives us the strength to succeed.

Because the primary place of commerce of people living in Eretz Yisrael was at sea, as it says (*Bereishis* 49:13): "*Zevulun lechof yamim yishkon*", therefore, they compared the *techeiles* to the sea. It is to allude to us that, as stated, even when we are busy with our business dealings, we should always raise our eyes to the Heavens and internalize that the Hashgachah of Hashem accompanies us all the time, from Above, and that without it we cannot succeed in anything.

2. Harav Moshe Feinstein learned a basic concept from this: This is how *Chazal* taught us that when we strive to rise higher, we should not immediately skip to a level that is too high for us to reach. Rather, the right way to make great strides in *avodas Hashem* is through toil and effort, to rise steadily, stage after stage, one level after another, because that is the only way we will ultimately merit to reach the *Kisei Hakavod*. (*Darash Moshe, Korach*)

**Techeiles is the Same Root
as "Tachlis"**

The *Ramban* (*Bamidbar* 15 38, and similarly in many other commentaries) says that besides the similarity in the color shades leading up to the *Kisei Hakavod* explained above, the name "*techeiles*" also alludes to the Presence of Hashem. This is because *techeiles* is derived from the same root as "*tachlis*" – an allusion to HaKadosh Baruch Hu,

Who is the *tachlis*, the purpose of Creation, and He encompasses all beings that exist.

The *Akeidah* (*Shelach* 77) explained that putting the *techeiles* on the garment serves as a sign for us at all times not to distract ourselves from the *tachlis* – the purpose, which is knowing Hashem and recognizing His Kingship over us, and to make constant efforts to rise higher in the knowledge of Hashem and in drawing closer to Him, from the level of "*yam*" to "*rakia*" until we reach the level of "*Kisei Hakavod*."

Harav Mendel of Dezh (*Maagalei Tzedek Korach*) added that there is another allusion here. Researchers have studied and concluded that the reason the color of the firmament is *techeiles* is because that is the extent that the human eye can endure, and in order not to harm the eye, HaKadosh Baruch Hu made it the color of *techeiles* and not black or white. This is also hinted at in the color of *techeiles* in the *tzitzis*, because even if we try to delve and understand, the "*tachlis* of our knowledge is that we shouldn't know" (*Bechinas Olam* 13 45), because the power of the human mind cannot grasp the essence of what Hashem is in all its truth. Therefore it is said in this order: *Techeiles* is similar to the sea and the sea is similar to the firmament and the firmament is similar to the *Kisei Hakavod*, because all these concepts are only on the level that we can imagine, but we really don't have the ability to grasp the *tachlis* in its fullest extent.

**An Allusion to Reward and
Punishment**

Rashi cites Rabi Moshe Hadarshan (*Bamidbar* 15:41) that the "*techeiles*" is from the same root as "*shechol*", corresponding to the loss and bereavement that there was on Egypt during *Makkas Bechoros*. His words are explained in the *Sifri* (end of *Parashas Shelach*): "Why is it called *techeiles*, because "*sheniskalu hamitzrim bebechoros*." Another explanation is: "*al shem shekalu haMitzrim bayam*."

The *Maharal* (*Chiddushei Agados Menachos* 34 2) explained the word *techeiles* to be from the root of "*kilui*" – but also added that "*techeiles*" that is from the root of "*kilui*" symbolizes the punishment (*Onkelos Shemos* 23:26) while the pure white clean color symbolizes the reward. Therefore we were instructed to include white and *techeiles* strings on the edge of the garment that envelops our body, because that was the place that symbolizes our actions in this world. The strings of *techeiles* and white that hang from it remind us all the time that each person has the choice to do bad or do good. If he chooses good – he will merit eternal reward, and if he *challilah* chooses bad – then he will ultimately be punished for it.

V'Erastich Li B'Emnuah

The mailbox at the entrance to the Bnei Emunim office is used to receiving wondrous letters with emotional and moving stories. Nevertheless, this letter superseded them all and generated great excitement among those who are involved in this holy endeavor. The letter has been shared in a summarized form at several conferences of the organization and has infused many of the listeners with powerful inspiration. The sequence of events was related by the person it happened to, with minor changes to protect identities:

The truth is that I deliberated whether to write my story. I am sure that you receive many letters from the tens of thousands of participants in the Bnei Emunim programs, in *yeshivos* and *chadarim*, and girls schools. You are praised by so many who owe you a debt of gratitude for effecting their increased awareness and observance of these matters.

Yet, I decided to write. On second thought, I am also sure that you have not received a story quite like mine.

What am I talking about?

I am a student in one of the well known high schools in Yerushalayim. I'm a regular student, like so many others. About eight months ago, the Shachar Avakshecha project was introduced in our school. This wonderful initiative was established for high school students to encourage them to say *Birchos Hashachar* in a perfect fashion. I began, like so many others, to recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa*.

Despite the natural difficulties that I had at first, I was determined to implement this practice every day. You can say that very quickly I began to enjoy the idea and felt connected to it.

I have a pretty long ride to school from my house, and like many of my friends, I use the first few minutes of the bus ride to say *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* with one of my friends. It's not hard, and the satisfaction of knowing that I have fulfilled my obligation as a Jewish woman, to thank the King of Kings – in a perfect way, generates a feeling of spiritual pleasure that I cannot really describe with words.

As I said, I was successful in implementing this practice regularly for several months. It even encouraged me to make sure to leave on time for the bus, so that I could say the *brachos* with my friends and shouldn't have to ask a stranger – which is quite awkward.

One morning, about two months ago, I was late to the bus that I usually take. I knew that I would not have time to say *brachos* once I came to class, and decided that I would not do what I used to do – recite *brachos* at recess – and rather, I mustered up the courage and approached an

elderly woman who was standing at the bus stop and asked her politely if I could say *Birchos Hashachar* for her to answer amen.

The woman looked at me in surprise, but agreed right away. I said the *brachos* with *kavanah*, as I had gotten used to doing since I began participating in Shachar Avakshecha. When I finished, I was surprised when this woman, who I did not know, asked for my name and where I go to school. I was surprised but I answered her questions.

Two weeks passed from that day. One evening, my parents told me that there was a *shidduch* on the table for me – an excellent *bachur* from a respected and well off family. The truth is that I was very surprised and even cast doubt as to how serious the suggestion was. After all, our previous *mechutanim* were all very fine people, but from rather simple families, while this one was a very prominent family. Why should they choose to do a *shidduch* with us of all people?! The question niggled in my mind but I was smart enough to keep quiet about it.

When I came to the first meeting with the mother of the boy, as is our custom, I did not recognize her. We spoke for about an hour and conversation flowed pleasantly. Towards the end of the conversation she turned to me and asked: "Don't you recognize me?" I was surprised at the question. Where should I have known her from?! She noticed my surprise and tried to jog my memory: "You remember, we met about two weeks ago at the bus stop..."

And then the penny dropped...In a flash I remembered that morning.

I could not believe that this was happening. It sounded purely imaginary, but sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. The *shidduch* proceeded smoothly – and everything seemed perfect: an excellent boy, and a very prominent, wealthy family.

A few days later, the *shidduch* was completed.

My father, who only heard about the background to this *shidduch* later on, reacted with shock, and immediately recited the *passuk* "*V'erastich li b'emunah*."

I feel a tremendous debt of *hakaros hatov* to you, because it is through you that my *shidduch* was proposed and came to fruition. I am sure that Hashem has many ways of doing things, but there is only one such wondrous way, and you were helpful in paving the path to it.

Continue with your noble work, and continue motivating people to answer amen and recite *Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa* wherever they are, until we merit the fulfillment of the *passuk*: "*Ve'yemalei Kevodo es kol ha'aretz amen v'amen*."