

Ve chol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Tefillah That Is Dependent on Mesirus Nefesh

"פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם" (כה יא)
 From this *passuk*, it seems that Pinchas stopped the plague in the merit of his zealotry for *Kavod Shamayim*. But from the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (106:30) "And Pinchas stood and prayed, and the plague was halted," it appears that he stopped the plague with *tefillah*. How can these two *pesukim* be reconciled?

Harav Yosef Dovid of Salonika explained: It states in *Maseches Brachos* (20a) that Rav Pappa asked Abayei: 'What is different about the earlier generations, for whom miracles occurred and what is different about us, as we scream in *tefillah*, yet we are not answered?' Abayei replied, 'The previous generations were wholly dedicated to *mesirus nefesh*, while we are not as dedicated to the sanctification of Hashem's name...and that is why our *tefillas* are not heard.'

Hence, this *passuk* can be explained as follows: "Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon Hakohen *heishiv es chamasi me'al Bnei Yisrael*" – returned Hashem's anger on Bnei Yisrael with his *tefillah*, but the reason that his *tefillah* was accepted was "*bekano es kinasi besocham*" – in the merit that he was *moser nefesh* for *Kavod Shamayim*. Likewise, the *passuk* in *Tehillim* can be explained: "*Vaya'amod Pinchas vayepallel*," and not "*Vayepallel Pinchas*" – to teach us that because he had the merit of *Kiddush Hashem*, and as soon as he stood up to daven – he was answered.

Tzemaeh Dovid

'And the Light of the Moon' Was Like the Light of Moshe's Face

"ונתתה מהודך עליו למען ישמעו כל עדת בני

Amen Opens the Gates of Wisdom

"לפוח משפחת הפוני" (כו כג)

"It should have said הפונה and wrote הפוני to tell us that all of Yisrael turned to them (פונים אליו) to learn from their Torah." (*Baal Haturim*)

Harav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger, author of *Lev Ha'ivri*, explained:

"פנה" is numerically equivalent to amen. The *passuk* alludes to the concept that one who engages in Torah must be especially careful about being *meyached* the Names of Havayah and Adnus, which are united in the word amen. One who does this has the gates of wisdom opened for him and merits that "all of Yisrael turn to him to learn from his Torah."

Harav Moshe Dovid Estreicher, the Rav of Chimpas added that is why we ask in *Birchas HaTorah* "*Venihiyeh anachnu vetze'etzeinu...kulanu yodei Shemecha velomdei Torasecha lishmah*." "*Yodei Shemecha*" alludes to the two Holy Names that come together when answering amen. From here we learn the obligation of those who learn Torah to be strict about this holy Yichud, so that they merit the *brachah* of "*lomdei Torasecha lishmah*."

Toras Yechiel 63; Tiferes Adam, Matos

ישראל" (כו כ)

"Some of your radiance, but not all of your radiance. Hence we learn that the face of Moshe was like the sun and the face of Yehoshua was like the moon." (*Rashi*, based on *Bava Basra* 75a)

The Rebbe **Harav Dov Berish of Biala** said:

In the *zemiros* of Motzaei Shabbos we ask: "*Yehi hachodesh hazeh k'nevua avi chozeh*" – and it can be explained as follows:

"*Hachodesh*," the month, is determined by the cycle of the lunar renewal, and it alludes to the moon. "*Yehi hachodesh hazeh*" – that the moon should return to illuminate, "*k'nevua avi chozeh*" – like the light of the face of Moshe Rabbeinu, the father of all the prophets, whose face was luminous like the sun. We make a similar request each month after *Birchas Halevanah*: "And the light of the moon should be like the light of the sun and like the light of the Seven Days of Creation, as it was before it was diminished."

Chaim Chein p. 16

Korbanos – for the Tzibbur; Tefillos – for the Individual

"את קרבני לחמי לאשי ריח ניחחי תשמרו להקריב לי במועדו; ואמרת להם זה האשה אשר תקריבו לה' כבשים בני שנה תמימים שנים ליום עלה תמיד; את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני תעשה בין הערבים" (כח ב-ד)

The *passuk* begins in the plural "*tishmeru lehakriv Li...asher takrivu l'Hashem*," and concludes in the singular: "*es hakevess ha'eachad ta'aseh baboker...hasheini ta'aseh bein ha'arbayim*." Why? The question becomes even bigger in light of the words of the *Gemara* (*Menachos* 65a) that from the fact that this *passuk* is written in singular the Tzedokim might err and think that an individual can donate the *Korban Tamid*, and that it is not mandatory to bring it from communal funds.

Harav Yosef Yisrael Deutsch, the Rav of Balassa-Gyarmat, explained:

The two first *pesukim* relate to the time when the Bais Hamikdash was standing, where, indeed, the *Tamid* was considered a *Korban Tzibbur*. But the last *passuk* relates to the time after the Churban, when the *tefillas* were instituted to correspond to the *Korban Tamid* (*Brachos* 26b). Because *tefillah* is an obligation for every individual, this *passuk* is said in the singular tense.

Ben Garni



This Shabbos will mark 451 years since the passing of one of the leading Kabbalists, Rabi Moshe Cordovero, known as the Ramak. The Ramak wrote extensively in his *sefarim* about the greatness of answering amen.

In his siddur *Tefillah L'Moshe* (*Shaar* 4:3) he wrote:

The quota of holy things that a person must say each day is alluded in the word 90 – צדיק 90 amens, 4 *Kedushos*, 10 *Kaddish* and 100 *brachos*, to teach us that one who is strict about this quota is undoubtedly called a *tzaddik*.

Yigdal (12): The Eleventh Principle: Reward and Punishment

Reward and Punishment in *Olam Haba*

The eleventh principle obligates us to believe that HaKadosh Baruch Hu pays reward to whoever observes the *mitzvos* of the Torah, and punishes whoever transgresses them. The best reward that the *tzaddikim* who observe the *mitzvos* merit is life in the World to Come – *Olam Haba*. There, their soul will merit to bask with Hashem in the Light of the Shechinah. The most severe punishment, given to the wicked, will be that their souls will be cut off and they will not merit eternal life in *Olam Haba*.

A person should not think that the pleasures of this world are the reward that is promised to those who follow the right path, because there is no comparison and no way to fathom the tremendous and eternal reward given in the world of eternity to the pleasures of this world, which are temporary and bound by time. But because *Hashgachah* ordained that in this world, the soul is housed in a physical body, and in order for that body to exist, and fulfill his obligations in the world, he must have peace and comfort, therefore, the Torah promises a person good things and pleasures in this world, equal to the value of his deeds. This way, he will be able to keep the *mitzvos* of the Torah with joy, without disturbances. When the soul will be released from the confines of the body, to its place in *Olam Haba*, it can then benefit from the true good that is being kept there for it, based on its deeds in this world. (*Rambam Peirush Hamishnayos, Sanhedrin*, Introduction to Chapter 10, *Teshuvah, Perakim* 8-9)

Reward and Punishment
Even for Easy Things

A person must know that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not forego, or look away from, even one small sin that the person does not repent for, even if it seems to be very minor and simple in the person's eyes. The Ramchal writes (*Mesilas Yesharim* 4): "Because HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not allow any small good to be forgotten, likewise, He will also not forfeit judging and reproving any small bad deed, to remove [the idea] from the hearts of those who want to be tempted and think that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will not raise in His judgment the easy things, and will not reckon them."

The Vilna Gaon prevented those close to him from serving drinks to a heretic Jew, because he would not make a *brachah* on them. When this person grumbled bitterly, "I've long given up my religion, and renounced every tenet of Judaism and I transgress the most severe sins in the Torah, so why have you accosted me about one *brachah*?" The Gaon responded to this: "Do not think that after you have tossed everything behind your back, that you are exempt from even one mitzvah. Because just like then, now as well, you are obligated to observe all the *mitzvos* in the Torah, down to their details, and you will have to give a reckoning for every *halachah* that you have transgressed, and you will be punished for each one!" Upon hearing these firm words, the heretic's soul was moved, and some time later, he repented completely. (*Kesser Rosh, Ma'amarim* 5)

Scrupulous in Reward for Mitzvos

Chazal say (*Bava Kamma* 50a): "Anyone who states that HaKadosh baruch Hu is forgiving [a *vatran*] of transgressions, his life will be relinquished [*yivavru*], as it is stated: "HaTzur tamim pe'alo, the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice" (*Devarim* 32:4). In other words, Hashem does not waive Heavenly justice. This is because when a person says that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is *mevater*, and forgives a sin without *teshuvah*, he shows all the creations that they can sin without being punished (*Rashi* *ibid* ad loc. *yoser*).

The Maharshah says that just like it is forbidden for a person to say that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is *mevater* on the punishment of a sin, one must likewise not say that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave him too much reward for a mitzvah that he did, unless he explains that this was done because of the merits of his forebears, and not by way of *vitur* (*Yam Shel Shlomo, Bava Kama* 5 23). But the *Magen Avraham* (156 2) says that this rule

that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is not a *vatran* is said only regarding punishment for sin, but with regard to reward for *mitzvos*, on the contrary, He gives reward in a most generous fashion, far more than a person deserves.

The Importance of Knowing About
Reward and Punishment

Knowledge of reward and punishment is a very important fundamental in our faith, because it is this knowledge that gives a person power to become closer to his Creator, and to refrain from sin. When a person puts in his mind's eye that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is so *shalem*, that it is inconceivable that He will not repay each person in accordance with his ways, good or bad, as Shlomo Hamelech says (*Koheles* 12:14): "For every deed Hashem will bring to judgment-for every hidden thing, whether good or bad," then certainly he will fear every trace of sin that may bring him down to the abyss. Hence, he will seek to acquire more merits in this world, which will then help him acquire the eternal and wondrous *Olam Haba*. (*Mesilas Yesharim* Chapter 4)

Chazal (*Bava Basra* 78b) explain the *passuk* (*Bamidbar* 21:27) "Al kein yomri hamoshlim bo'u cheshbon," as follows: "Let us make the calculations of the world, the loss of a mitzvah compared to its reward, and the reward of a sin against its loss." A person must consider the temporary loss that he incurs sometimes by doing a mitzvah, against the reward promised to him in the future, and the momentary reward for a sin, against the future loss.

He Repays Chessed to a Person
Based on His Actions

This principle is worded in the *piyut* of *Yigdal* as follows: "Gomel l'ish chessed kemifalo, nosein lerasha ra kerishaso." Many have asked why the poet altered the terminology, and did not write "nosein lerasha ra kemifalo" as he wrote regarding the *tzaddik*?

Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev explained that there is an allusion here to the *middah* of Hashem's kindness and *chesed*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu, in His great compassion, pays "L'ish chessed kemifalo" – not only like the value of his actual mitzvah that he did, but the value of the results of that act of mitzvah. Therefore, when one gives *zedakah* to a poor person, and that man purchased food to revive his family, the giver receives merit not only for the *zedakah* but also for the results – the feeding of a poor man and his family. In contrast "nosein lerasha ra" – only "kerishaso" – he is only punished based on the value of the action that he actually did. There is no additional judgment for the results of those actions that may continue beyond what he actually did. (*Kedushas Levi, Likutim*. See also *Eitz Yosef in Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*)

The Maggid of Vilna, Harav Yitzchak Eliyahu Landau, further explained: When doing a mitzvah, Hashem pays "l'ish chessed", meaning even someone who by nature is a *baal chessed* – "kemifalo" – according to the value of his deed, even though he did not need to make the effort and submit his nature to do this mitzvah. In contrast, for someone who is a *rasha* by nature, He pays "ra kerishaso" – meaning, he takes into account the person's bad nature and habits that caused him to sin. (*Siddur Dover Shalom*)

With the difference in the language: "Gomel l'ish chessed...nosein lerasha," the poet sought to express the *middah* of Hashem's goodness when He judges a person. The term "gemul" expresses full reward, the reward that is given according to the value of the person's action. In contrast, the term "nesinah" expresses a *matnas chinam*, a gift, like a poor person who receives a gift as per the wishes of the giver. This expresses the kindness of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, that one who does good receives full reward as per the value of his action, while the evil person is given – due to Hashem's compassion – only according to "nesinah", as Hashem wishes to give, not according to the value of his sin. (*ibid*)

The Creator gomel l'ish chessed – gives with His middah of rachamim to the tzaddik a reward kemifalo – in the value of the outcome of his good deeds. While He is nosein lerasha ra only kerishaso – according to the action he did, and not taking into account its outcomes.

Tefillas Minchah That Crossed the Border

The Steipler Gaon, Harav Yaakov Yisrael Kanivsky, zt"l, author of *Kehillos Yaakov*, was famed during his last few decades as one of the *gedolei hador*.

Not too many are aware of the difficult periods that he endured early in his life, when he was trapped in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution. The Revolution coincided with his years in yeshiva, while he was making great strides in his Torah learning.

When he was nineteen, he was appointed by the Alter of Novhardok to lead a *yeshiva ketanah* established in the town of Rogatchov. While there, he was taken in the middle of giving a *shiur* to serve as a soldier in the Red Army. He had to serve there for an entire year, during which he endured a lot of suffering. There are a number of wondrous stories about his *mesiris nefesh* during that time to fulfill *mitzvos* despite serving in the Russian army.

But above all those was his virtue utilizing every spare moment for Torah learning, even during his most difficult times. His students secretly sent him small volumes of *masechtos* in *Shas*, and he toiled over them whenever he was able. Later, he related that an entire *siman* in his *sefer Kehillos Yaakov* was written during that trying time.

After Rav Yaakov Yisrael was released from the army, in a miraculous way, he returned to his learning, as a *talmid* in Novhardok. The yeshiva had moved during his absence to Kiev, in Ukraine. As he invested his efforts in his Torah learning, he also strengthened his *middah* of *bitachon*, which was the guiding light of the Alter of Novhardok, zt"l, until it became an integral part of his personality.

In 5680, the Alter passed away, and his son-in-law, Harav Avraham Yaffin, zt"l, was appointed to lead Yeshivos Novhardok. During that time, the Bolshevik Revolution took place throughout Russia and its surrounding areas. The Yevseksia, the emissaries of the revolutionaries, set a goal for themselves of snuffing out every religious ember that they could find.

The primary target of their harassment in Kiev was the glorious Novhardok Yeshiva, which at the time numbered six hundred erudite students. The Steipler was one of the prime students at the time. From time to time, the Yevseksia people would burst into the yeshiva and take *bochurim* and *rabbanim* under various and sundry claims. They were imprisoned and only released after extensive lobbying and bribery on their behalf.

The situation of the yeshiva students under the Bolshevik regime became too difficult to bear. The Chofetz Chaim, who was asked about the situation, instructed that it behooved the *bnei yeshiva* to do everything they could to smuggle across the border to neighboring Poland, where there was freedom of religion.

Faithful to his directive, over the following year and a half, the six

hundred *bochurim* of Novhardok made every possible effort to cross the border. They had to traverse pitch dark routes, putting their lives in danger; the *middas bitachon* that they had acquired from their unforgettable *rebbe*, the Alter, zt"l, was their guiding light. Keeping their focus on the goal, and confident that Hashem was helping them every minute, they made their way through mountains and valleys, crawling and running, disguised as farmers. Group after group they crossed the border, until a year and a half after it began, the operation was complete. There wasn't a single Novhardoker *bochur* left under Bolshevik rule.

Among those who smuggled across the border was the Steipler Gaon, but like many, it was no easy feat. He tried to make the journey a few times, and had to turn back.

The Steipler and those in his group sealed a deal with a village gentile, a resident of one of the villages that abutted the border, who was very familiar with all the forest paths, and the breaches in the border, which they could smuggle through. They gave him a bundle of gold coins, and he began to do his work. After a number of failed efforts, the day arrived when they entered the thick forest right near the border. Towards evening, they arrived at the border, and waited for the signal they had agreed upon with the smuggler that the coast was clear and that they could cross. The Steipler, who saw that the sun was about to set, stood up to daven *Minchah*, as *Chazal* say "A person should always be careful about *Tefillas Minchah*." And when he began to daven, as always, he forgot everything around him.

As he was standing in *tefillah*, the smuggler emerged from the thicket, and signaled to the *bochurim* to cross the border immediately. The *bochurim* hurried towards the border, but the Gaon, immersed in his *tefillah*, did not even consider stopping.

When he finished davening, he found himself alone in the forest. Once again, it seemed as though he had missed the chance to cross the border. But this time, he had the words of *Chazal* in his mind about the virtue of davening *Minchah*. With the power of his *tefillah*, he began to march, completely immersed in lofty thoughts and strengthening his *middah* of *bitachon*. He did not even know where he was going. For an hour he walked without stopping, until he suddenly found himself standing near a shul. When he asked passersby where he was, they told him that he was in the city of Slutsk, which was in Poland.

The Rav was stunned at the miracle he had experienced, and did not stop there. He immediately entered the shul as his lips murmured words of thanks to the Creator for redeeming him in such a miraculous way. He took a *Gemara* from the shelf and sat down to satiate his hungry soul with Torah learning.

Toldos Yaakov, p. 40