

Vechol Maaminim

A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"



PARASHAS VAYEISHEV

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Why Didn't Yaakov Ask for Mercy for Yosef?

“וישב יעקב” (לז א)

“Yaakov sought to dwell in peace, when the troubles of Yosef were thrust upon him.” (Rashi 37:2)

What is the meaning of the word “kafatz,” were thrust upon him?

Harav Pinchas Menachem Eliezer Yustman of Piltz explained:

Yaakov Avinu was shown all the troubles that would come upon him and he accepted them with love (see *Zohar Vayitzei* 158 2), but the pain of the disappearance of Yosef was withheld from him, and it came upon him as a sudden surprise. The reason that this was not revealed to him was because by contrast to the other troubles, which he accepted with love, when it came to his beloved Yosef he would not have been able to restrain himself from asking for mercy.

Sifsei Tzaddik

Successfully Coping with Difficulties

Harav Moshe Sternbuch, shlita, Raavad of Yerushalayim, related:

One of his friends came to the *tzaddik* **Harav Moshe Schneider**, Rosh Yeshivas Toras Emeis in London, prior to his wedding to ask for a *brachah*. “What *brachah* would you like?” the *rosh yeshivah* asked.

Replied the *bachur*: “That everything should go smoothly and that I shouldn't have to cope with difficulties.”

“That is not a *brachah*!” Rav Moshe exclaimed. “I will bless you that you should be able to successfully cope with the challenges that you will face during your life.”

Chochmah Veda's as

“Salchan for Yisrael, and Mechalan for the Shivtei Yeshurun”

“וישראל אהב את יוסף מכל בניו כי בן זקנים הוא לו ועשה לו כנתנת פסים” (לז ג)

“A person should never differentiate between his children because for a weight of **two selaim** of fine wool that Yaakov gave Yosef more than his other sons, the brothers envied him and this escalated to the point that our forebears went down to Egypt.” (*Shabbos* 10b)

The **Meshech Chochmah** (*Vayikra* 16a) notes that the weight of the *lashon zehoris* placed on the head of the goat that was cast down on Yom Kippur was also **two selaim** (*Yoma* 72a), in order to atone for the sin of selling Yosef. According to *Chazal* (*Shocheh Tov, Mishlei* 1), this sin is still extant in every generation.

Based on this, he explained the unique wording that is used to refer to Yisrael in the *tefillos* of Yom Kippur, a *nusach* that we do not find anywhere else in *tefillah*: “*Ki Atah Salchan l'Yisrael uMechalan leShivtei Yeshurun.*” We can say that with this language we ask forgiveness for the sin of our forebears, the Shivtei Yeshurun, in selling Yosef.

Harav Yosef Cohen, the Av Bais Din of Yerushalayim, *zt"l*, added to this: That is why we must not wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur, so as not to evoke the sin of selling Yosef, because Yosef was sold for shoes, as it states (*Amos* 2:6): “For selling a pious and poor man for shoes.”

Divrei Yosef

Yaakov and Yosef and the Secret of Amen

“יהיה זה יוסף ויהי איש מצליח” (לז ב)

“Yaakov” is numerically equivalent to “amen amen.” Yosef, combined with the Shem Havayah, is numerically equivalent to “amen amen.” Therefore, Yaakov was 91 years old when Yosef was born, because that was how he conveyed to his son the secret of ‘amen.’

This is also alluded to in this *passuk*: “*Vayehi Hashem es Yosef*” – because Hashem attached His Name to Yosef's name, that is why “and he was a successful man.”

Megaleh Amukos; Baruch Avraham

Hashem Can See Into the Kidneys and the Heart

“ויקנאו בו אחיו” (לז יא)

Harav Shmuel Rozovsky, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevezh, asks:

We know that the actions of the brothers with regard to Yosef involved very lofty spiritual calculations, as explained by *Chazal*. Why then does the Torah classify it as hatred and jealousy? He explains: The Navi (*Yirmiyah* 17: 9-10) says,

“*Akov halev mikol v'anush hu mi yeda'enu: Ani Hashem choker lev bochen kelayos.*” When the actions of the brothers of Yosef were examined by the Divine Eye, with the finest and closest scrutiny that is beyond what humans can comprehend, they were found to be sullied by envy. Indeed, if not for the fact that the Torah wrote this *passuk*, we would not be allowed to say this.

With this concept we can understand the wording of the *Viduy* of Rabbeinu Nissim Gaon (recited on Yom Kippur Kattan): “And if You judge me for my actions, woe is me...woe to my soul. And if You seek to cleanse me like one who purifies silver, nothing will remain of me.” These things are loftier than what we can understand – how is it possible that a holy person such as Rabbeinu Nissim, who was far holier than we can imagine, can say that if his actions would be examined nothing would remain of them?!

Based on this we can say that when this *tzaddik* examined himself on the lofty level of “I am Hashem who peruses the heart and examines the kidneys” – in depth that a person cannot fathom, then he realized this dreadful reality and that is why he pleaded with his *Viduy*.

Zichron Shmuel p. 547

Teshuvah Without Sin

“וישב ראובן אל הבור” (לז כט)

HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to him: A person has not sinned before me and repented, and you were the first who began to do *teshuvah*. (*Bereishis Rabbah* 84 19)

Many have wondered about these words of the *Midrash*: Adam Harishon and Kayin were already found to have repented. Why was Reuven considered the first to have actually done *teshuvah*?

Harav Simchah Bunim of Peshischa explained:

In *Maseches Shabbos* (55b) *Chazal* said: “Anyone who says Reuven sinned is making a mistake.” Therefore, we find that Reuven did not really sin, and only committed the slightest touch of a sin. Out of his great *yiras Shamayim* he repented as though he had transgressed a serious sin. This was a first, that Reuven did *teshuvah* – even though he could hardly have considered to have sinned.

This is also evident in the nuances of the word of the *Midrash*: “Never has it been that *lo chata*, a person hasn't sinned before Me, yet has done *teshuvah*.” No one else could have said he did not sin, and yet, had still done *teshuvah*.

Divrei Aviv

Words of the Mashgiach Harav **Dov Yaffe, zt"l**, from a *chizuk* speech he delivered at the Bnei Emunim gathering in Elul 5776

“HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world in a way that the most necessary things – like oxygen and water – are the most abundantly found. The Alter of Kelm said that the same is true with spirituality. Because *emunah*, faith, is a basis for a spiritual life, therefore it is easy to obtain. “Raise your eyes and see Who created these,” (*Yeshaya* 40:26). How wondrous it is to see that amen, too, which contains so many fundamentals of *emunah*, is readily available everywhere. With every reply of amen, we have an opportunity to remember HaKadosh Baruch Hu, to live with our role in this world – to live with the Creator.”

Amen. Live with *emunah*.

Amen Is Readily Available Because of Its Necessity



Ki Sekadmenu Birchos To"v

This remarkable story, which has inspired all those who have heard it, was related by the chairman of Bnei Emunim, Harav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein, sheyichyeh, during his speech at the annual conference for representatives of the Shachar Akadmecha initiative in yeshivos, which took place this past Tishrei.

Shachar Akadmecha was introduced to yeshivos about four years ago, encouraged by gedolei Yisrael, shlita, as part of the more expansive network of activities conducted by Bnei Emunim to strengthen the practice of replying amen after Birchos Hashchar. Today, baruch Hashem, tens of thousands of students in yeshivos are active participants.

The initiative addresses specifically bnei yeshivah seeking to strengthen their recital of Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa, which, aside for being a holy custom adopted by all Gedolei Yisrael, has a unique virtue that applies to bnei yeshivah. Through it, they can launch their day with this unparalleled declaration of emunah, which is the essence of the foundation of the spiritual structure of the entire day. Furthermore,

strengthening this aspect then leads to strengthening in all areas of tefillah bekvana and on time.

With great Hashgachah pratis, on the morning of the conference, Rav Marmorstein arose early, before dawn, and went to the Kosel, where he sought to pour his heart out to his Creator, pleading for success of the gathering and its participants.

It was the first time in his life that he was at the Kosel so early, and after reciting Birchos Hashachar Bechavrusa, as is his longtime custom, he noticed an unusual gathering that aroused his curiosity. This gathering turned out to be a very long "line" that snaked from the place of one of the members of the neitz minyan, with one purpose: to say Birchos Hashachar in front of him so that he could answer amen.

After davening, when Rav Marmorstein remarked to this Yid how impressed he was at how many people recite Birchos Hashachar for him, and inquired about the meaning of his custom, he shared this remarkable story...

The neitz minyan at the Kosel is renowned among the residents of Yerushalayim, and beyond. It's safe to assume that it is the largest, and oldest, minyan in the world. Summer and winter, snow or heat, the minyan never misses a day.

Many of the participants in the minyan arrive at the Kosel hours before davening starts. They learn Torah or Kabbalah, or recite Tehillim for yeshuos. Some are even there from chatzos, having recited Tikkun Chatzos.

As morning draws nearer, the crowds increase, as people come from all over the city, comprising a human mosaic of various communities and sectors.

The tumult reaches a fevered pitch the moment before neitz hachamah, when all the mispallelim, as one, recite aloud together, "Tzur Yisrael kumah b'ezras Yisrael ufedei chinumecha Yehudah V'Yisrael, vene'amar Hashem Tzevakos Kedosh Yisrael, baruch Atah Hashem..." And then, a heavy silence reigns.

As one man with one heart, hundreds of people begin to daven Shemoneh Esrei, at this holiest of sites, beseeching for yeshuos for the klal and for their individual needs.

Among the hundreds of mispallelim who come each day, there is a hard core nucleus of worshippers who, in the past few decades, have not missed a single day with this minyan. Among them is the unique personality, Harav Avraham Mendelson, the son of Rav Pinchas, zt"l, who, for many years, heard daily shiurim from Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zy"a, at his famous shiur at Chevras Tiferes Bachurim, and was a favored talmid.

Rabbi Mendelson is one of the better known members of the minyan, but over the last year, he has become even more renowned, when he undertook the role of "gabbai amen" at this minyan. Each morning, long before davening begins, Rabbi Mendelson can be found at his place near the minyan where he regularly davens, ready to hear brachos from mispallelim.

One after another, dozens of people come to his place and recite Birchos Hashachar, as he answers amen to each and every brachah, slowly and with concentration. At first, about twenty people who did

this, but as the days went by, the number grew.

In response to my question of what led him to begin this unique practice, Reb Avraham shared a beautiful story, which I bring to you as he told it to me:

"A year ago, Reuven, my son-in-law, underwent a routine medical procedure. He returned home healthy, but a few days later, a sudden complication required that he return to the hospital. Unfortunately, within a short time, his condition deteriorated, to the point that he lost consciousness, and the doctors had to connect him to a respirator.

"For a month he lay in the intensive care unit, unconscious and intubated; the doctors were at a loss. Throughout this time, we did what we could to help. Someone was at his bedside twenty four hours a day, singing to him, speaking to him, and doing whatever we could to wake him up—to no avail.

"We tried to consult the biggest specialists and medical askanim, with the hope that they could help us, but we realized quickly that there was nothing they could do. Medically, his condition was critical and almost all the doctors we spoke to clasped their hands helplessly and prepared us for the worst.

"We didn't give up. As believing Yidden, we relied on the words of Chazal: 'Even if a sharp sword is on the neck of a person he should not despair of mercy.' We decided, as a family, to focus our efforts on pleading to Hashem. We davened copiously, organized minyanim for Tehillim at the Kosel, and at the same time, went for brachos and guidance to numerous gedolei Yisrael.

"One morning, when I arrived at the Kosel, as was my custom, I began my regular learning, when I suddenly noticed a scholarly, pious Yid passing by me. I looked at him, and he noticed my downcast expression and asked what I was so worried about.

"I told him in detail about the trouble we were in. He thought for a moment and then said: 'I have a wonderful idea for you, but I'm not sure you can carry it out because it is not easy. You need to hear Birchos Hashachar each day from "tov" (17) people, and to answer amen to them. If you do this, b'ezras Hashem you will merit to see the "tov," the good, already the first day.'

"I was very moved to hear this idea, because the subject is one that is close to my heart. My father, zt"l, used to answer amen to Birchos Hashachar each morning for six or seven people and I also tried to be strict about doing the same...But I never thought of seventeen people. How would I do it?! I decided to try nonetheless. I went over right away to a few friends who I used to say brachos with each morning, told him about the advice I had received, and asked if they could help me.

"Mi k'amcha Yisrael! My friends, who for the past month had shared my pain, were happy to do what they could toward this end. That very morning, they solicited people from all over the Kosel plaza. We were very excited to successfully reach our goal that day. I replied amen after twenty people who recited brachos for me.

"After davening, I hastened to the hospital. Every visit to my son-in-law's room was tense; but this time I entered somewhat encouraged, sure that my effort had not been in vain and that the yeshuah was at hand. I went over to his bed, where he lay like a rock, and in a loud voice I said to him: 'Reuven, this morning I did something big for your recovery. I heard Birchos Hashachar from 17 people. The segulah says that already today it will be good for us. Please open your eyes.'

"I repeated this several times, my voice getting choked up as I did. And then the unbelievable happened—after an entire month, my son-in-law opened his eyes.

"I will never forget that moment as long as I live.

"I called my son-in-law's parents, who had arrived the day before from abroad...They had feared the worst, and were stunned to hear of the miracle. From then until now I haven't missed a single day of this practice, and my son-in-law's condition is improving from day to day."

Reb Avraham concluded his words with heartfelt thanks to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for His many miracles and chassadim, and with a call to all his friends and acquaintances: "If you need a yeshuaah, heed this wonderful practice. You are guaranteed to see tov, good! I have experienced it myself!"



Amen – A Small Word, A Great Merit

Dear Mispallel,

Do you seek to merit a yeshuah?

Are you interested in accumulating hundreds of merits each day, and being blessed with health, par-nassah and a long life?

Join the legion of the King, the mezakei harabbim-become part of the network of gabbai amen in shuls.

To join call 058-325-9191

Ma'aminim bnei ma'aminim. Answer and say amen!