

Vechol Maaminim



A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim"

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Why Did Aharon Not Daven Like Moshe?

"ויאמר אלהים בן מאה ועשרים שנה אנכי היום לא אוכל עוד לצאת ולבוא וה' אמר אלי לא תעבר את הירדן הזה...הושע הוא עבר לפניך" (לא ב-ג)

Harav Yehudah Assad offers a beautiful explanation on the words of this *passuk*:

With these words, Moshe wanted to explain to Bnei Yisrael why only he davened to merit entering the land, by contrast to his brother Aharon, who was also decreed not to enter the land, but he did not daven to be able to do so. There are three reasons alluded to here:

1. "I am one hundred and twenty years old today" – Moshe Rabbeinu, the select of the human race, was like the "contribution—*terumah*—of the world", and therefore he lived to be 120 years old. That is one fiftieth of the six thousand years of the world, and one out of fifty is the average measure of *terumah* (*Bechoros* 11a). Because *terumah* is one of the *mitzvos* contingent on being in the land, therefore, he wanted to complete the contribution of his years specifically in Eretz Yisrael.

2. "I can no longer come and go" – Aharon's soul was destined to be reincarnated in Ezra Hasofer, who merited to go up to the land, but Moshe would not be reincarnated in this world, and therefore, he said it would be better for him to go into the land now.

3. "Yehoshua is passing before you" – Aharon could be consoled by the fact that his children would succeed him, but Moshe's sons did not take his place. Rather it was his disciple Yehoshua who did so; therefore he davened to be able to enter the land himself.

Divrei Mahar"i

Bringing the Children In Order to Evoke Compassion

"הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף" (לא ב)

"And the children – why did they come? To bring merit to those who brought them." (*Rashi*)

Even after *Rashi's* words, we need to

understand the specific reason why the children were brought. Why were Bnei Yisrael not instructed to bring something else to provide them with merits?

Harav Shlomo Ephraim of Luntzitz, the Rav of Prague, explained:

The whole purpose of the mitzvah of *hakhel*

Razei Emunim

Hints of Amen in the Parashah

Gather the Little Ones to Answer Amen

"הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף" (לא ב)
"Taf", (with the *kollel*) is numerically equivalent to amen. This is an allusion to the words of the *Rem"i* (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): "And he should teach his young children to answer amen, because as soon as a baby answers amen he has a share in the World to Come."

was to arouse the nation to do *teshuvah*, and toward this end, there is a purpose in bringing specifically the children, who arouse the nation to ask for compassion and forgiveness in their merit. As we ask in *Avinu Malkeinu*: "Have mercy on us and on our babies and children." That itself the reward given to those who bring them—because of the children they are awakened to *teshuvah*.

Kli Yakar

Hester Panim – The Reason for Troubles

"והרה אפי בו ביום ההוא ועזבתים והסתרתני פני מהם והיה לאכל ומצאהו רעות רבות וצרות" (לא ז)

Harav Yaakov Dovid Wilovsky, the *Ridba"z*, explained:

It is known that the sins of a person are what cause his troubles, as alluded to in the *passuk* in *Tehillim* (89:33): "*Upakadeti beshevet pisham ubinegaim avonam*." The sin itself is

the *shevet*, the staff, and the *avon*, the sin, is the *nega*, the blemish.

When one **completely** repents, his sins are erased, however one whose repentance is not complete does not see his sins erased. Rather, HaKadosh Baruch Hu conceals him and protects him from the sins. That is our request in the *tefillah* of *Arvis*: "*Ubetzel kenafecha tastireinu*", and in the shadow of Your Wings, conceal us. Similarly, during the days of compassion and *selichos* we ask: "*Yachbienu tzel yado tachas kanfei haShechinah*," hide us in the shadow of His Hand under the Wings of the Shechinah.

That is what the Torah alludes to here: Because "*Vehistarti Panai meihem*", and I will conceal My Face from them, and will not protect them, then inevitably "and many bad troubles will find him."

Chazon Yechezkel al HaTorah p. 252

"Bayom Hahu" – The Reason for the Hester Panim

"ואמר ביום ההוא הלא על כי אין אלקי בקרבי מצאוני הרעות האלה; ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני ביום ההוא על כל הרעה אשר עשה כי פנה אל אלהים אחרים" (לא ז-ח)

Because Klal Yisrael already recognized the reason for their troubles: "*al ki ein Elokaï bekirbi*", why did Hashem then add that He would conceal His Face from them?

The *Maharsham of Berzhan* explained: That is why the Torah emphasizes "and He said on **that day**" to teach us that their regret would only be on that day, and then they will return to their lives and routine and will forget about it. Therefore, Hashem will continue to hide His Face from them, because that is not genuine *teshuvah* according to the ruling of the *Rambam* (*Teshuvah* 2 2): "And what is *teshuvah*? It is that the sinner should abandon his sin and remove it from his thoughts and should resolve in his heart not to do it again...And then the One Who Knows all secrets will testify of him that he will never return to this sin."

Techeiles Mordechai

Make the Trivial – The Important

The *Chemdas Yamim* (Vol. III, *Yom Kippur* Chapter 3) writes fiery words about the great virtue of those who are careful to answer amen properly, with regard to the *tefillos* of the *Yamim Noraim*. "And my soul refuses to be comforted by several boors in the nation. The ground splits at the sound of their amen when the *shaliach tzbibur* says during these days... 'Hayom Te'amtzeinu'...and they hasten themselves and their young children as well as the older ones to answer amen aloud with all their might, and they will not tire or grow weary. And when they hear *Kaddish* and *Brachos* – they are silent! They have made the trivial the *ikkar*, the main thing, and the main thing into the trivial."

Let us make sure to answer amen properly and we will merit to have our *tefillos* accepted. *Hayom Te'amtzeinu...* amen, with compassion and *ratzon*.

Gemar chasimah tovah. Amen.



The Requests of Avinu Malkeinu

The Source of Avinu Malkeinu

The *tefillas* of Avinu Malkeinu include more than forty requests that we recite one after another, and which arouse within us emotions of holiness during the days of compassion and forgiveness, on fast days and during the Ten Days of Repentance. These requests, whose source goes back to the times of the holy Tannaim, were already included in the *Siddur* during the times of the Rishonim, and their *nusach* varies and has been expanded in some communities.

In this short article we will try to clarify their source, to understand the *nusach*, and to encapsulate a few facets of their great virtue.

As stated, the source of Avinu Malkeinu goes back to a very early time. The Rishonim (*Machzor Vitri* 347) attributes them to Rabi Akiva, stating that he was the first to daven the *nusach* of Avinu Malkeinu. The *Gemara* (*Taanis* 25b) says: "There was a story with Rabi Eliezer who davened before the *amud* and said twenty four *brachos* and was not answered. Rabi Akiva went after him and said 'Avinu Malkeinu ein lanu Melech eia Atah. Avinu Malkeinu lema'ancha rachem aleinu.' And the rains fell."

The Rishonim write (*Machzor Vitri* ibid) that because *Chazal* saw that Rabi Akiva's *tefillah* was answered, they added more requests and established that we say them on days when we seek forgiveness.

The *Match Moshe* (801) cites an allusion to the identity of the author of these requests from the fact that the words "Avinu Malkeinu chatanu lefanecha" are numerically equivalent to "Akiva ben Yosef yesado bo." (See there where he brings other allusions to the name of Rabi Akiva in Avinu Malkeinu.)

Sefer Sheimos (Venice print 417, letter 70, entry "Akiva") writes that that is what the *Gemara* meant when it states that the reason Rabi Akiva's *tefillah* was accepted was because he overcame his *middos*, and he was not afraid to allude in his *tefillas* to the name of his father, "Yosef", even though he was a convert. He was also not afraid to admit in his prayer "we have sinned before You."

Corresponding to Shemoneh Esrei

The *Poskim* have noted that the order of these requests correspond to the order of the middle *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Thus the *Shelah* writes in his *Siddur*:

"This *tefillah* is great and wondrous like the *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, and Rabi Akiva was answered with this *tefillah* and therefore one must have utmost *kavanah* when saying it...and the essence of the *tefillah* is, because Hashem is our Father and our King on the part of our souls... therefore we should merit to cleave to Hashem Yisbarach, and no *klipah* or... prosecutor should cling to us, and He should remove all sin from us, and He will forgive and atone, and that will be through returning us to full *teshuvah* and He will remove from us all bad so that we will be available to serve Him at all times. [And through this] The glory of Yisrael and of Mashiach will be raised, and He will do all this for His Sake because we are part of Hashem through our neshamah... That is why we conclude Avinu Malkeinu with: "Asei lema'an Shimcha haGadol, haGibor, vehaNora shenikra aleinu." [Our *yeshuah* comes because all our requests will be granted because we are part of Him.]

The *Levush* (*Orach Chaim* 584 30) writes in more detail:

"Avinu Malkeinu chaneinu v'aneinu" corresponds to "Choneh Hadaas",

"hachazireinu biteshuvah" corresponds to "Harotzeh Biteshuvah." "selach umechal" corresponds to "Selach Lanu"; "kasveinu besefer geulah" corresponds to "Goel Yisrael." "Shelach refuah" corresponds to "Refaeinu", "chadesh aleinu" is for "Barech Aleinu", *harem keren* is for "Tekva Beshofar," and "batel mei'aleinu" corresponds to "Hasivvah...Vehaser mimeni yagon v'anachah." *Kalei kol tzar* corresponds to "Shover Oyvim" and "mechok berachamecha harabbin" is for "Yehemu Rachamecha", *harem keren meshichecha* is for "Vekarmo tarum", *hatzmach lanu* corresponds to "Matzriach keren yeshuah." *Shema koleini* is for "Shomea tefillah", and then we added [more requests which are] the needs of the masses."

Some add that the final Avinu Malkeinu, "Chaneinu v'aneinu ki ein banu maasim..." should be recited in a whisper, because it uses the word "chaneinu" corresponding to the "Tachanun" recited after *Shemoneh Esrei*. (*Aliyah Rabbah* 584 5)

The Dubno Maggid would explain this with a parable: A person asked to purchase merchandise on credit so that after he sold it and profited he could pay the cost to the vendor. He approached the seller and confidently recited his list of requests, but ultimately, when he was asked to pay, he leaned over towards the seller and said in a whispered plea: "I don't have money right now to pay you, please give me the merchandise on credit, and when I earn the profit I will pay you."

So, too, after we finish asking these many requests, we turn with a whisper to the Ribbono shel Olam, "chaneinu v'aneinu" even though "we do not have deeds." Still, we ask, "do with us a *tzedakah* and *chessed* and send us salvation." (*Kisvei Hamaggid MiDubno*, Vol. I, p. 382)

The Wording of Avinu Malkeinu

There are a few explanations for the unique virtue of the request of "Avinu Malkeinu" composed by Rabi Akiva:

1. The *mochiach*, Rabi Berachiah of Klimantov, explained:

The relationship between a father and son is different to that of a king and his servant. The compassion of a father to his son is natural compassion that is aroused of its own accord. By contrast, a servant needs to arouse the compassion of his master in order for the latter to have mercy on him. Therefore, we precede by asking "Avinu" – if we are like sons to You, have mercy on us because we are Your sons, however "Malkeinu" – even if we are only considered servants before You, then we plead with you to have mercy and compassion on us. (*Zera Beirach Shelishi* [Frankfurt 5487] Vol. I, p. 27).

2. In his final *shmuess* to his students (*Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* 5696) the Masghaich Harav Leib Chasman explained: The father wants to give his son, but he doesn't always have the ability to do so. The king, by contrast, can always give to his subjects anything they want, but he doesn't always have an interest in doing so. Therefore we ask Avinu Malkeinu, You are a Father and certainly want to give us all good, and on the other hand, You are a King, and all the good in the world is at Your disposal, and therefore, we ask that You send us salvation. (*Ohr Yahel*, Vol. I, p. 296)

Rav Shabsi the Bookbinder Cleaves to His Tefillos

The defender of Klal Yisrael, Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, zy"l, would sit beside the Maggid, Harav Yisrael of Kozhnitz, zy"l, and while he spoke he asked a very understandable question: How is it that your father Rav Shabsi Hopstein, the bookbinder, who was a simple, innocent man, merited such a great son as you, who illuminates the entire world?

The Maggid listened to the question and smiled. "Indeed, my father was a simple, innocent Jew," he replied. "Yet at the same time he was a *chasid* and very scrupulous about *mitzvos*. If you want to hear the story that explains his greatness, I can point to the following one:

"The city of Apta was mourning. The beloved *chazzan* had passed away at the prime of his life, leaving a huge void behind. It was the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and even before the days of mourning were over, the community began searching for a *chazzan* to replace him for the *tefillas* of the holiest day of the year.

It was a difficult task; it was not easy to find a person of the stature worthy to fill the shoes of the venerated *chazzan* who had served the community until then. Names were raised and then rejected, but no suitable candidate was found.

It was none other than Munish the tailor who decided to step into this deep void.

Munish had grown up in Apta. As a child, he was sent to cheder, but his parents quickly realized that their son was not capable of sitting and learning for long. He caused his *melamdim* endless headaches, and having no choice, his parents decided it would be better if they apprenticed him to a tradesman to keep him away from idleness.

With a heavy heart, Munish was taken to the tailor's house. The tailor had agreed to take him on as an apprentice and to teach him the secrets of the trade. This time, Munish did not disappoint. He excelled at the art of tailoring. He spent a few years as an apprentice to the tailor, and then gradually branched out on his own.

By the age of eighteen, Munish had already garnered a reputation as an expert tailor who was unmatched in his skill. Many noblemen and wealthy people came to him, and his upscale client base grew each day. Munish became wealthier, and his pride and arrogance grew in proportion to his wealth. It was no longer fitting for him to dwell among his Jewish brethren, and he purchased a home in a gentile neighborhood, near his loyal clients, who frequented his home often.

Regretfully, Munish was not only physically distant from his brethren, he also drifted

away from his heritage. He adapted his behavior and his attire to his non-Jewish surroundings and almost completely abandoned the Jewish way of life.

Munish had an innate talent that he had developed as a child and continued to nurture into adulthood. In fact, he used his talent whenever possible.

Munish liked—and knew—how to sing. Even in his non-Jewish surroundings, everyone knew about this talent. His lips were always singing songs, poems and more. While he worked, his lips clamped around the pins, he would hum and serenade his listeners.

Most of his listeners were his customers, but sometimes, there were also uninvited guests, passersby who listened to him silently under the windows of his home, after they were drawn to the resonant singing.

As stated, the *chazzan* passed away suddenly during *Aseres Yemei Tehsvah*, and the community tried to find a suitable substitute. But in the meantime, Munish sat in his room and crafted a plan.

In the end, he made a decision. He hurried to the home of the *poritz* who was in charge of the district—an old friend of his. Munish knew that the members of the community would never agree to appoint him as the *chazzan* in a peaceful way, so he decided to use war tactics.

There is no way to know how Munish was able to influence his friend the *poritz* but the fact was that a few days before Yom Kippur, the leaders of the community received an official letter from the *poritz* with a clear directive: Munish would serve as the *shaliach tzibbur* as much as he wanted, from the onset of Yom Kippur until it was over.

The news struck the community like thunder on a clear day. They could not have thought of a worse candidate for *chazzan*. With all due respect to his pleasant voice and beautiful singing, they did not think for a moment that Munish, the scoffer, would fill the place of the pious and G-d fearing *chazzan* who had passed away.

Although the community saw no way around the *poritz's* order, in their hearts they decided to do whatever they could to make sure this would not happen. Munish's voice would not resound through the *bais medrash* on the holiest day of the year.

The eve of *Kol Nidrei* arrived. The *mispallelim* of the shul lowered their eyes when Munish strode haughtily to the *amud*, his gleaming white *tallis* over his shoulders. The *mispallelim* looked at one another with glances that radiated tense expectation. Munish cleared his throat,

and, as though speaking of himself, began to trill: "Al daas haMakom v'al da'as hakahal...anu matirin lehispallel im ha'avaryanim."

Munish was about to begin *Kol Nidrei*. This was the moment the community had waited for. As one, they began to chant the words of the *tefillah* aloud, with the *chazzan*, as they banged emotionally on the *shtenders* in front of them. Munish, surprised, tried to raise his voice, but the loud voices continued. He raised his voice even more until he was literally hollering the words of the *tefillah*. *Kol Nidrei* concluded, but Munish's voice hadn't been heard for one bit of it. During *Maariv*, Munish tried his luck again, but the *kehillah* did not concede. The screaming and banging were heard far and wide, and at the end of the davening, Munish was forced to slink out of the shul in abject shame, never to return.

In those days, the bindings of *Machzorim* were made of wooden plates, which was useful in generating even more noise as the community tried to drown Munish out. They banged their *Machzorim* loudly, but when davening was over, they saw that from the impact, many of the *Machzorim* had come apart and needed to be rebound.

In the corner of the shul stood Rav Shabsi Hopstein, the bookbinder, who had just finished his own pure *tefillah*. A few of the young *mispallelim* approached him with a smile on their lips and said, "Reb Shabsi, you must have davened well, because your income for the next few months is guaranteed..."

To their shock, Rav Shabsi looked at them quizzically. He had no idea what they were talking about. They tried to explain again that because of the banging the bindings of the *Machzorim* had torn and now the people would need to bind them. But Rav Shabsi had no idea what banging they were talking about.

The stunning truth quickly emerged: Rab Shabsi was so engrossed in his davening that he did not even notice the noise and ruckus in the shul. The screams, and the banging, did not reach his ears; He was engrossed in his fervent *tefillah* and didn't feel a thing.

"At the time, my father had no children, and during that year, I was born," the Kozhnutzer Maggid concluded his remarkable story. Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev immediately replied, "A Yid with such a level of *tefillah*... it is no wonder that he merited such a great son, at an advanced age."

Toldos Hamaggid Mikozhnitz, p. 200