

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



310

PARASHAS MIKEITZ

תש"פ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Viduy from the Depths of the Heart

"ויאמרו איש אל אחיו אבל אשמים אנחנו" (מב כא)

The word "aval" is explained by *Onkelos* to mean "bekushta" – in truth. Why did the brothers add this word here?

The Rebbe **Harav Yisrael of Modzitz** explained:

When we admit to our sins, we must do so from the depths of our heart, and not just as lip service. We express this in the *tefillah* of *Viduy* by saying "*Tafalnu sheker*" – we even said the *Viduy* itself just as lip service and not from the depths of the heart. Indeed, we need to make sure that at least these words should be said with *kavanah*...

When the brothers sought to express their remorse and distress over the sale of Yosef, they stressed: "*Aval asheimim anachnu*" – we really regret selling our brother, and are not just expressing our regret superficially, as lip service.

Divrei Yisrael

Expressing Regret Even for a Warning

"ויאמרו איש אל אחיו אבל אשמים אנחנו... ויען ראובן אתם לאמר הלוא אמרתי אליכם לאמר אל תחטאו בילד ולא שמעתם" (מב כא-כב)

The word "*leimor*", saying, seems redundant here, because it seems that it would be enough to write: "*Vayaan Reuven osam halo amarti aleichem...*"?

Harav Bunim of Peshischa explained:

Someone who sins after he is warned not to sin is worse than someone who sins without a warning. When the sinner who was warned does

Teaching Children to Answer Amen

"ואת אחיכם הקטן תביאו אלי ויאמנו דבריכם" (מב כ)

Chazal put a special emphasis on teaching children to answer amen. The *Gemara* says (*Sanhedrin* 110b): "From when does a child merit Olam Haba? The *Breisa* says in the name of Rabi Meir: from the time he says amen, as it says (*Yeshayah* 26:2): '*Pischu shearim veyavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim*' – don't read it *shomer emunim*, rather '*she'omer amen*.'" As such, the *Rema* rules (*Orach Chaim* 124 7): "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."

Harav Shmuel Laniado, the Baal Hakeilim, explains that the reason that Rabi Meir learned specifically from this *passuk* about the amen of a child is because it says: "*goy tzaddik*", and we have already seen that a child is called a "*goy*", as it says (*Bereishis* 28:29): "*Shnei goyim bevitnech*."

A beautiful allusion to this *halachah* is brought by the Rebbe **Harav Yehosef of Kosson** from this *passuk*: "*V'es achichem hakatan tavi'u eilai*" – In what merit does the child come to Olam Haba? In the merit of "*vaye'amnu divreichem*" – that he is taught to answer amen.

Klei Paz, Yeshayah 26:2; Likutei Bnei Shloshim, Mikeitz

Harav Eliyahu Hakohen of Izmir, author of *Shevet Mussar*, explained that Dovid Hamelech said of himself that he was careful about amen as a child, saying "לולא האמנתי" – if not for the fact that I would have been practicing since I am a child to answer amen after each *brachah*, then I would not have merited to see all the good of Hashem in Olam Haba, because in the merit of answering amen one merits Olam Haba.

Harav Eliyahu Hakohen added that Mordechai Hatzaddik also taught *Esther* Hamalkah, who grew up in his home, to answer amen. We can explain the *passuk* as follows (*Esther* 2:7): "*Vayehi omen* – אמן – *es Hadassah hie Esther bas dodo ki ein lah av v'em*" – Because *Esther* did not have a father and mother to teach her to answer amen, therefore Mordechai took their place, "ויהי אמן" – he taught her to answer amen.

The Mekubal **Rabi Emmanuel Chai Riki**, author of *Mishnas Chassidim*, cites an allusion to the words of Rabi Meir that a child merits Olam Haba from when he answers amen, from the fact that the acronym of the final letter of the words "בן" is "עולם הבא" is "amen."

Minchas Eliyahu, 32; Choshev Machshavos, Maamar Ruach Nevuah, 26

teshuvah, he needs to say *Viduy* for ignoring the warning, in addition to regretting the actual sin.

When Reuven heard his brothers expressing their regret, and saying "But we are guilty" he added and said to them: It is not enough that you are regretting the actual sin, because you need "*leimor*" – to express regret also for the fact that before the sin "I told you...don't sin with the boy" and yet, you sinned "and did not heed" my warning.

Kol Simcha

Each of the Brothers Feared for His Brother

"ויצא לבם ויחרדו איש אל אחיו לאמר מה זאת עשה אלקים לנו" (מב כח)

The words "*ish el achiv*" seem to be redundant, as it could have been enough to write: "*Vayechedu leimor, mah zos...*"

Harav Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich, the Rav of Shamloi, explained:

The Torah wants to emphasize that each of the brothers justified the *din* *Shamayim* that was meted out to him, as *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 54a): "A person must bless for the bad the same way he blesses for the good." However, because this *halachah* is only said regarding a person's obligation towards himself, he certainly has to commiserate with his friend's distress, thus the Torah said of the brothers: "*Vayeitzei libam*", meaning they 'emerged' (*yatz'u*) from their personal distress, and that is not what they feared, but rather, "*Vayechedu ish el achiv*" – each one for his brother.

Drashos Lechem Shlomo, Drush 135

"חנוך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה"

We have found in our sources special emphasis on the obligation of teaching children to answer amen:

"From when does a child enter Olam Haba? The *Breisa* says in the name of Rabi Meir: From when he says amen." (*Sanhedrin* 110b)

"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."

(*Rema, Orach Chaim* 124 7)



ברכות השחר: בקול כוונה בחבורתא.

Birchas Hamazon – Hatov Vehameitiv (9)

Verachamim Vechaim Veshalom

After we asked above "lechen, ulechessed ulerachamim", why do we again have to ask for "rachamim vechaim veshalom"? Similarly, in the brachah of Sim Shalom, we find that first we ask "chen vechessed verachamim," and later "verachamim vechaim veshalom". Why is this?

Chazal tell us (Beitzah 34b): "Anyone who has compassion on other creations is then treated with compassion from Above." According to this we can understand that first, we asked HaKadosh Baruch Hu not to withhold His compassion from us, and now we are asking that He give us from His middas harachamim, as the passuk says (Devarim 13:18): "Venasan lecha rachamim" (see Ohr Hachaim ibid), so that through the compassion that will be given to us we can have compassion on others. In turn we will then receive compassion from Above in any case. (Haggadah Shel Pesach, Yalkut Shimoni, Toldosan Shel Avos, p. 226)

Peace – A Vessel that Holds Blessing

The request of "veshalom" is necessary at the end of the requests for "hatavah" because the brachos are not effective if there is no peace with them, as Chazal say in the Mishnah (Oktzin 3:12): "The only vessel Hashem has found that holds blessing for Yisrael is peace." The Midrash says (Bamidbar Rabbah 11 7): "The brachos are not effective unless there is peace with them."

The Torah Kohanim says (Bechukosai 1:8) that this is especially with regard to food, noting that the brachah of "and I will give peace on the land" is necessary after the brachah of "and you should eat your bread to satiation" (Vayikra 26, 5-6) because even when food is found in abundance – if there is no peace in the land, then the food is not beneficial for anything. It explains there that is why we say: "oseh shalom uborei es hakol" – through peace, the entire creation is completed. (See also Pirkei DeRabi Eliezer, Perek Hashalom 1-2)

Vechol Tuv Umikol Tuv

Why is this worded redundantly "vechol tuv umikol tuv", especially after we requested earlier so many words of hatavah, of benefit? What more is left to ask with the words "umikol tuv l'olam al yechasreinu"?

There are a few explanations:

1. There are a lot of people who have kol tuv, all the good, but they cannot enjoy it, whether

because they are ill or for other reasons. Therefore, we add a request "umikol tuv al yechasreinu" that aside for all the good that we have, we should be able to use it. (Otzar Hatefillos – Iyun Tefillah)

2. Another explanation is illustrated by the story in the Gemara (Taanis 25a) about Rabi Chanina ben Dosa. When he suffered extreme poverty, he davened, and a golden table leg was brought down for him from Above. But then his wife dreamed that they were sitting in Heaven at a table that lacked a leg. She understood that some of the reward coming to them in the future had been given now, and she demanded that Rabi Chanina daven that the leg be taken back so that they would lose any of their reward. He had to ask for mercy to have the leg taken away. Therefore, we ask: "Umikol tuv l'olam al yechasreinu" – that even after we merit all the good we asked for, it should not detract from our reward in the World to Come. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Tzof Amarim, in the name of Rav Meir of Premishlan)

3. Harav Menachem Mendel Chaim Landau in the sefer Vaya'as Avraham explained that "tov" symbolizes the primary good things that a person needs, but "tuv" represents the extra special things. As Pharaoh said to the children of Yaakov (Bereishis 48:18): "V'etnah lachem es tuv eretz Mitzrayim." We first ask HaKadosh Baruch Hu to give us all the good, we then ask "al yechasreinu" that we should also not lack tuv, the extra special goodness.

Taking Care to treat Bread With Respect

In our request to Hashem "al yechasreinu" it's important to remember that it is a clear halachah in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 180 4) that someone who is not careful about respecting bread, and is not respectful of the crumbs that remain may chalilah become poor.

Harav Nochum Dovid Herman, zt"l, related that when he was at the home of the Chofetz Chaim, he saw how careful the sage was about the crumbs that fell on the floor. He was a bit puzzled by this, and the Chofetz Chaim noticed and said: "You are wondering why I am careful about the crumbs?! Listen, a Jew does not need to pursue wealth but he certainly does not need to invite the minister of poverty to his house...!" (Haggadah Shel Pesach, Tiferes Shimshon)

Speaking with the Real Doctor

This remarkable story was heard by the Maggid, Harav Shlomo Levinstein, shlita, from his friend Rabbi Benzion Sneh, of America, who is heavily involved in encouraging people to improve their tefillah and expression of gratitude to Hashem. Rabbi Sneh related:

One day, someone who I know poured out his troubles to me: "My son has been suffering for years from attention deficit issues. In addition, and maybe as a result, he speaks in a halting and garbled manner, and he has a very hard time socially. These problems hamper him in all areas of life, both scholastically and socially. We've tried to do everything to help him. We hired a private tutor, we took him to emotional and behavioral therapy, using the top people in the field. We visited doctors, and nothing – there has been no improvement. On the contrary, things are just getting worse. I've already invested more than forty thousand dollars in him and nothing has moved," the man said, and then added bitterly, "I feel lost and hopeless."

A short sympathetic silence ensued, and then I asked the man, "Have you been at this certain doctor?" I purposely noted the name of a well-known child development specialist, who had a reputation for charging very steep fees for a consultation. "Sure!" he replied, and he began to detail in a voice that carried a trace of pride: "We sat with him for more than two hours, and I paid top dollar for that time. He's a very professional and thorough doctor, and he questioned us at length about my son's life from his birth until now. He must have been trying to understand the source of his negative emotions."

"After that visit, we came for another visit, and that wasn't short or cheap either," the father added, and then said, "But as I told you, nothing helped. Even this famous doctor could not find a solution to my son's issues..."

"My friend," I cut him off with a question, "I hear that you've spent endless hours at doctors and other specialists. When is the last time you spoke to HaKadosh Baruch Hu about your son's problem for a few hours?"

The father was quite taken aback by the question, and he thought for a moment before answering: "Truthfully...I think if I would add up all the time I have spoken to Him in the last year about this, it wouldn't even reach three hours..."

"I don't understand," I replied. "You went to a human doctor – which is only a hishtadlus, an effort – you paid enormous sums of money and spoke to him for two hours. You came to him again for another two hours and you paid for that, too. But with the Healer of all flesh, the Almighty, Who is ready and able to listen to you at any time, for free, you haven't found the time to speak?! You've even been speaking to me for more than fifteen minutes already..."

"What should I do?" the man defended himself. "It's always been hard for me to daven for a long time. Even during Shemoneh Esreh, as soon as I start, my mind begins to wander,

and thoughts assail me from every direction...How much more so is this the case in tefillah that is not the regular order."

"So what should I do if that is the only address that you can turn to right now? You've said yourself that you have tried everything else. Listen to me: set aside two or three hours, write down what you are going to say, and this way, you'll be sure you won't be distracted."

Rabbi Sneh then continued:

Two weeks later, I got a phone call from the father, who informed me happily: "I got an answer from the Doctor."

"Which doctor?" I asked. I had more or less forgotten about the story. "The Rofei Kol Basar Umafli Laasos!" the emotional father replied. Then he explained:

"Already the morning after our conversation, I decided to take your advice seriously. Early in the morning, I informed my boss that I'd be a few hours late to work. I davened Shacharis with kavanah in the shul near my house, and right after learning my regular shiur and eating a quick breakfast, I set out in my car to a quiet little woods area. I sat down on a shaded bench and began to daven."

"As expected, the disturbing and distracting thoughts appeared right away, but I had prepared for that ahead of time. I was ready with a sheaf of papers on which I had written all the subjects I wanted to talk to Hashem about. So for a few hours, I poured out all my bitterness that had accumulated in my heart after such a long period of challenges. I spoke with Hashem about everything; I told Him about all the difficulties we had experienced with our son, and before I asked for the future, I thanked him warmly for all the good that He showers upon me."

"When I finished my long tefillah, it was already time for Minchah. I went back to shul and davened Minchah, and from there, I sent out for my office. I felt a sense of peace pervading me. I felt like finally, Someone had listened to me..."

"That was on Sunday. On Thursday of the same week, the bochen, the tester of the cheder where my son learns called me. We'd spoken a lot in recent years; usually these were not pleasant conversations, but this time the conversation was different. The bochen was happy to tell me that this week, my son had done well on the test. He had repeated the entire shakla vetarya (question and answer) with clarity. It was remarkable."

"A week later, I got a call from the Rabbi. It was a short conversation, and basically he said, 'Your son has completely changed...' That week I also got a phone call from my son's private tutor; he was also very impressed. 'It's like a new boy has come to learn with me.'

"I am so very grateful to you," the emotional father concluded. "You seem to have referred me to the right doctor, the Healer of all flesh, and the yeshuah arrived very quickly."

Umasok Ha'or – Chanukah, p. 209