



ורב ראמינים

עלון שבועי מבית 'בני אמונים'

309

PARASHAS VAYEISHEV

תש"פ

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Yosef's Trouble Were suddenly "Thrust" Upon Him

"ישב יעקב" (לז א)

"Yaakov sought to live in tranquility, when the troubles of Yosef were thrust upon him." (Rashi)

What does the word "*kafatz*" used in this *passuk* mean?

The Rebbe Harav Pinchas Menachem Eliezer Yustman of Piltz, explained:

All the troubles that he was destined to endure were revealed to Yaakov Avinu (see *Zohar Vayeitzei* 158 2), except for the distress of the disappearance of Yosef. This was a catastrophe that was suddenly thrust upon him. The reason that this particular tribulation was not revealed is because, in contrast to other troubles, which Yaakov Avinu accepted with love and did not *daven* for them not to happen, he would not have been able to withhold himself from *davening* for the loss of his beloved son Yosef, and pleading that the decree be annulled.

Sifsei Tzaddik

I Seek My Brothers

"ישאלהו האיש לאמר מה תבקש; ויאמר את אחי אנכי מבקש הגידה נא לי איפה הם רעים" (לז טו-טז)

Harav Yaakov, the son of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, explained: "And the man asked him, saying, what do you seek?" – if a person asks you what is the worthiest *tefillah* before Hashem, "and he said, I seek my brothers" – tell him that the best thing is to *daven* for our brethren, Bnei Yisrael, who are in trouble

"Vayema'en" – Vai - Amen

"וימאן... ואיך אעשה הרעה הגדלה הזאת וחטאתי לאלקים" (לט ח-ט)

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

Chazal explained (*Beitzah* 16a) the word "*Vayinafash*" said regarding Shabbos (*Shemos* 31:17), as an abbreviation for "*Vai aveidah nefesh*." [When Shabbos departs, a person mourns because his *neshamah yeseirah* given to him at the onset of Shabbos is taken from him.] Similarly, we can explain here: "*Vayema'en*" – *vai amen*, because Yosef said: How will I stumble in sin and thus harm the Yichud of the Holy Names that are alluded to in the word "amen."

Furthermore, we can explain, that by mentioning "amen", Yosef Hatzaddik alluded to the *tefillah* of *Ein K'Elokeinu*, which is organized in the same order of letters as "amen": "*Ein k'Elokeinu... Mi K'Elokeinu... Nodeh L'Elokeinu...*" Through it we recall the loftiness of the Creator and our obligation to serve him and thank him, and thus to refrain from sin.

Even Shlomo, 24

The order of the praises of "*Ein K'Elokeinu*" according to the letters of amen is not coincidental. Rabi Yehudah the son of Rabi Yakar, the Rebbe of the Ramban, explains that even though it would have seemed more fitting to being with the question of "*Mi K'Elokeinu*?" and only then to reply "*Ein K'Elokeinu*", still, we say it in this order because it is an allusion to amen.

Mahar"i Tzalach, one of the Torah leaders of Yemen, adds in his commentary *Eitz Chaim* on the Siddur, that the reason why it was composed in order of the letters of amen was passed down from the early sages of Yemen: "Once, an evil regime decreed on Bnei Yisrael not to answer amen. What did they do? They established a way to say it by allusion, with the words "*ein...mi... nodeh*," so that they authorities should not understand. Even though the decree was annulled, this *takanah* remained."

Peirush Hatefillos Vehabrachos, p. 126; Eitz Chaim, Tefillas Ein K'Elokeinu

We can add that this is why they first alluded to "amen" in the *tefillah* of "*Ein... Mi... Nodeh L'Elokeinu*" before the praises that allude to the *brachah* itself: "*Baruch...Atah Hu Elokeinu...*" By doing so, they asked to hint to the fact that amen has a greater virtue than the *brachah*, as Chazal say (*Brachos* 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the one making the *brachah*." (*Brachos* 53b)

Furthermore, we can explain from the fact that in this *tefillah* we mention Hashem's Name in many ways [*Elokeinu*, *Adoneinu*, *Malkeinu*, *Moshienu*] we can learn about the great esoteric value and virtue of answering amen. The early *mekubal* Rabi Aharon Hazaken of Kardina, author of *Sefer Karnayim* [lived about 1000 years ago] wrote in his *sefer Iggeres Hata'amim* (p. 12): "that the word amen is filled to the brim, front and back, top and bottom... and it lacks nothing, from *Nigleh* and *Nistar*, inside and outside, it is full of wonders and tremendous secrets along the length and breadth, and they are the...deepest of Torah secrets, which are so deep who can find them. Who can praise the strength of Hashem, and the wise one will understand."

Chairman of Bnei Emunim, Harav Yaakov Dov Marmorstein

and captivity.

The Rebbe Harav Leibish of Brezhan added:

Such a *tefillah* is more accepted Above, and even the prosecuting forces reluctantly answer "amen" after it, as alluded to in the *passuk* "*Hagidah na li*" – *na li* is numerically equivalent to "amen."

Bais Yaakov (Yanovsky) p. 98, Imrei Yehudah [Berzhan]

Yosef Was Saved in the Merit of Hamotzi

"מה בצע כי נהרג את אחינו וכסינו את דמו" (לז כו)

The commentaries cite the *Midrash Pliah* (see *Midrash Tanchuma Eikev* 6): "If we kill our brother, how will we make *Hamotzi*?"

Harav Shmuel Abba Horodetzky explained:

The reason we make the *brachah* of "*Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*", even though the land gives forth grain and not bread, is explained by Harav Yitzchak Karo: It was established for the future, as Chazal said (*Shabbos* 30b): "Eretz Yisrael is destined to give forth ready baked goods and *kli milas*, clothing made of high quality wool." Thus we can understand the words of the *Midrash*. The brothers said: Isn't the reason we say *Hamotzi Lechem* because in the future there will be lots of ready baked goods and quality clothing? How then can we ask to kill our brother out of hate that it sourced in a *kesones "milas"* – a coat made of that same wool (*Shabbos* 10b) that he received from our father?!

Toldos Yitzchak Behar; Pealim L'Torah (printed at the end of Sefer Bais Ha'otzar) p. 7

In Those
Days, In
These Times
אין כאלוקינו
מי כאלוקינו
נודה לאלוקינו

The Mahar"i Tzalach, one of the eminent sages of Yemen, brings in his commentary on the Siddur, *Eitz Chaim*, the accepted reason among the Sages of Yemen as to why the *tefillah* of "*Ein K'Elokeinu, Mi K'Elokeinu...*" was established in the order of the letters of amen. The reason is because, "once, the evil regime decreed that Am Yisrael should not answer amen. What did they [the sages] do? They established that it would be said by allusion, with the acronym of *Ein K'Elokeinu*, so that the authorities would not understand."

Birchos Hashachar Bechayrusa

Every day, especially on Chanukah!

Birchas Hamazon – Hatov Vehameitiv (8)

Fifteen Requests

We conclude the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* with fifteen requests, each of which is a world unto itself. As Harav Shimshon Pincus said in one of his *drashos*:

“A Yid once stood next to the Chofetz Chaim and recited the *brachah* of *Hatov Vehameitiv* very quickly. When he finished, the Chofetz Chaim asked him: “Do you know that you just asked for no less than fifteen things?” The man was taken aback to hear this, and the Chofetz Chaim listed for him, as an example:

“First you asked “*lechen*”, that you should find favor in the eyes of people. Then you asked “*chessed verachamin verevach*” – that you should have space to live comfortably and not in cramped conditions. “*Hatzalah*” – think of how many times each day our children cross the street ...? Isn’t “*hatzalah*” necessary for every single one, each and every minute? “*Hatzlachah*” – when you go learn, you should succeed in your learning. Then it says later, “*brachah yeshuah nechamah parnassah vechalkalah verachamin vechaim veshalom vechol tuv*” – each word contains a very deep request.”

“If so,” the Chofetz Chaim concluded, “imagine that your son will ask you, ‘I need this and this and that and the other thing...’ quickly, without any attention to what he is saying. Is this how one makes requests?!” (*Nefesh Shimshon, Emunah* p. 67)

Revach Before Hatzalah

The order of the requests: “*Ulerevach, hatzalah*” is based on the words of the *passuk* in *Megillas Esther* (4:14): “*Revach vehatzalah yaamod laYehudim*.” Indeed, Harav Shlomo Kluger wonders, that usually, first there is the *hatzalah*, the salvation, and then the *revach*, the reprieve. Why here is *revach* said before *hatzalah*? He answered based on the words of *Chazal* (*Megillah* 13b) that HaKadosh Baruch Hu precedes the cure to the ailment. As such, because until the blow comes a person does not know what the cure that preceded it is, and only after he is healed does he realize that the cure preceded it, therefore, it is fitting to say “*revach*” before “*hatzalah*.” Only after a person has reprieve does he recognize the lifeline that was sent to him, even before he is actually spared. (Cited in *Inyano Shel Yom* Vol. III, p.72)

Others explain according to the *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 75 13) that Yaakov Avinu asked HaKadosh Baruch Hu that if troubles are decreed on Am Yisrael, He should not bring them all at once. Rather, He should give some reprieve between them to make it easier for them. Therefore, we say first “*revach*” and then “*hatzalah*” because even before the *hatzalah*, we ask that the troubles that are

decreed upon us should not be sent all at once. (*Tapuchei Chaim, Eshet ibid; Mikdeshei Hashem*, Vol. II, Introduction)

Even After the Hatzalah, We Still Need Hatzlachah

Just like we ask here for *hatzlachah*, after the *hatzalah*, in *Hallel* as well, we first ask, “*Ana Hashem Hoshiah na*” and then “*Hatzlichah na*.” Why do we need to ask for *hatzlachah* after already asking for *hatzalah*?

At a *seudas hoda'ah* that Agudas Yisrael held in the Jewish Quarter after it was liberated in 1967, Harav Yechezkel Sarna, *zt”l*, Rosh Yeshivas Chevron, spoke. He began with a story from his years as a *bochur*:

“During the time that I learned in Yeshivas Slabodka in Lithuania, there was a *bochur* there named Gedalya. This *bochur* was exceptionally talented, and was beloved by all the students and *rabbanim* in the *yeshivah*. One day, the *bochur* became terribly ill, and for healing purposes, he needed to travel to Vienna, the medicine capital of the world, where he was hospitalized for six months until he recovered.

We heard that Gedalya had recovered, and we waited expectantly for him to return to the *bais medrash*. But we were deeply disappointed when Gedalya didn’t return to *yeshivah*. Some time later, we learned that while he had been in Vienna, he had become influenced by several doctors who were assimilated Jews. They persuaded him to leave the ways of Hashem and thus the Torah world lost a ben Aliyah who could have illuminated the world with his Torah. Gedalya merited *hatzalah*, but he did not reach *hatzlachah*.

Cried Rav Yechezkel: For so many years, we *davened* for the *yeshuah* to come, and for the enemy to be banished from Yerushalayim. *Bechasdei Shamayim*, we have finally merited the *yeshuah*, but now we need *hatzlachah*. If because of the *hatzalah*, something bad will come about, and even one Jew will go onto Har Habayis in an impure state, then this will not be a *hatzlachah*, and the *yeshuah* will turn out not to be worth it.

Often, we plead for a *yeshuah*, but even when we merit to experience it, we must remember that it behooves us to use it as a springboard for spiritual advancement. If *chalilah*, after the *yeshuah*, we remain in the same state, then we had *hatzalah*, but not *hatzlachah*. (*Leha'ir, Zemiros Shabbos* p. 549)

Ana Maltah Nafshi

This story began in 5749/1989, during the period when the Iron Curtain fell, after seventy years during which the Communist regime closed the gates of the Soviet Union to its hundreds of thousands of Jews. They remind behind the Iron Curtain, completely cut off from their brethren, and under harsh decrees by the brutal regime, which did whatever it could to sever them from their Yiddishkeit.

That year, a group of six *rabbanim* was invited from Israel, Europe and the United States to meet with the leaders of the government in the Kremlin. After the meeting, the *rabbanim* were permitted to visit the Jewish communities in two cities, Moscow and Leningrad – or St. Petersburg. Harav Yisrael Meir Lau, *shlita*, who participated in the delegation, relates:

“Our visit to Moscow was on May 1, Mayday a major Communist holiday. The city was bedecked in red – the color of the Communist Revolution. Red flags flew over all the homes, and in this atmosphere, it was up to my fellow *rabbanim* and I to fulfill the *passuk* of “*Es achai anochi mevakesh*” and seek out the remnants of the Jewish community who still remained faithful to their Judaism.

On Rosh Chodesh Iyar, we arrived in one of the poor neighborhoods of Moscow, Marina Roscha, where the old wooden shul remained standing. In 5678/1918, the year of the Communist Revolution, the leaders of the movement agreed to leave it standing for the poor, old Jews who prayed there.

This shul remained partially active throughout the years of Communism. When we arrived there, we found two small groups of Jews: one of very elderly people, who had remained loyal to their Yiddishkeit despite the difficulties involved, and a group of young *baalei teshuvah*, with *peyos* and *tzitzis*. After more than seventy years of atheistic and heretic education, the latter group was nothing sort of a miracle.

The worshippers at the shul honored me with *davening Hallel* for the *amud* as it was Rosh Chodesh. I walked over to the *amud* and looked in front of me. Normally, over the *amud tefillah* in shuls one sees the *passuk* “*Shivisi Hashem lenegdi samid*.” Or “*Da lifnei Mi atah omed*.” Here, I was in for a surprise: On the *amud* in the Marina Roscha shul were other words, four words from *Hallel*, “*Ana Hashem maltah nafshi*.”

Throughout the emotional *tefillah*, I looked at those simple, innocent words and felt them infusing warmth in my heart, in the biting cold. When I finished *davening*, I went over to one of the elder *mispallelim* and asked him why this *passuk* was etched over the *amud*. He told me something that he had witnessed:

When this shul was given to us by the leaders of the Communist revolution

in 1918, we quickly realized where these evil people wanted to lead us. We looked for an indirect way through which we could convey our faith to the subsequent generations, and to make clear that even when evildoers rule our bodies, our souls remain loyal and belong to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Therefore, we chose this *passuk*, which reminds us that even when “*tzarah veyagon emtza*” we can always call to Hashem, “*ana Hashem maltah nafshi*.”

A few months after our visit in Russia, we were horrified to learn that the Marina Roscha shul had been set flame by Soviet anti-Semites. The entire shul, with its contents, was burned, except the *sifrei Torah* which were rescued just in time.

In 1996, I was again invited to Moscow to inaugurate a *mikveh* and to lay the cornerstone for the new Marina Roscha shul. This time, they planned to build a real shul to replace the old hut that had burned down.

It was already quite some time after the fall of the Communist regime, and many Jews came from all over the world for the cornerstone-laying. Among other guests were the mayor of Moscow and the American ambassador to Russia.

I was asked to speak. But before I went up to the podium, three leaders of the community came over to me and presented me with a piece of wood. They said that aside for the *sifrei Torah* that had been saved, this piece of wood had also been spared the fire. It was the only object in the shul to survive the inferno that night. I gazed at the piece of wood in disbelief: it was none other than the little sign on which was etched the words: “*Ana Hashem maltah nafshi*.” Of course, I recognized the sign well from that visit that I had made to Moscow seven years earlier.

I could not control my tears, and it was hard for me to deliver the speech I had prepared. From then, to this very day, whenever I reach the words in *Hallel* on Rosh Chodesh, Yamim Tovim and on Seder night of “*Ana Hashem maltah nafshi*,” I cannot help but recall that moving moment. In my mind’s eye I see the ancient shul, meager in its physical appearance, but rich in substance, as a remarkable manifestation of the *mesirus nefesh* that has carried our nation through two thousand years of exile. Even in the depths of pain and tribulations, our eyes were always raised On High in *tefillah*: “*Ana Hashem maltah nafshi*.”

The wisdom of the elders of the Moscow community during the generation of the Revolution gave them to understand that this was the most important message that they could convey to the coming generations. Whatever our bodies endure, our souls remain in the Hands of Hashem, and we will never desist from raising our eyes to Him until He redeems us in His mercy.

Haggadah Shel Pesach, Yachel Yisrael, p. 153