

VeChol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

Viduy By Proxy

”וסמוך אהרן את שתי ידו על ראש השעיר החי והתודה עליו את כל עונות בני ישראל ואת כל פשעיהם לכל חטאתם” (טז כא)

Harav Yosef of Trani – the Mahari”t – wrote that even though it states regarding all mitzvos that “*shlucho shel adam kemoso*, the emissary of a person is like the person himself” (*Kiddushin* 42a), this does not apply to mitzvos that are performed through speech. No proxy can perform such mitzvos on behalf of a person. (See *Gittin* 66b)

The commentaries were puzzled by his words, because this *passuk* clearly states that the Kohein Gadol was a *shaliach*, a proxy, for Bnei Yisrael, to admit to their sins. Hence, we see that even a mitzvah done with speech, like *Viduy*, can be done through a proxy (see *Minchas Chinuch* 364 8).

Harav Shlomo Kluger explained:

The *Viduy* of the Kohein Gadol was not said for Bnei Yisrael and on their behalf, but rather for himself, because it behooved him to protest to the sinners and to stand guard that they should not sin again (see *Shavuos* 39a). And therefore, he bore responsibility for Am Yisrael’s sins.

Shu”t Mahari”t, Vol. I, 127; *Chochmas HaTorah* p. 176

‘Seder Ha’avodah’ Like Rabi Elazar ben Azariah

”כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה’ תטהרו” (טז ל)

The *Mishnah* states (*Yoma* 85b): “Rabi Elazar ben Azariah explained: ‘*Mikol chatoseichem lifnei Hashem tit’haru*’ – the sins *bein adam laMakom* are atoned for on Yom Kippur, while sins between man and his fellow man are not atoned for on Yom Kippur until he appeases his friend. Rabi Akiva said: Fortunate are you, Yisrael, before Whom do you purify yourselves, and Who purifies you – your Father in Heaven...”

Answering Amen Fosters Peace

”ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה” (י טיח)

At the end of *Maseches Nazir* (66b), after the Gemara states “the one who says amen is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*” it adds the well-known statement: “*Talmidei chachamim* foster much peace in the world.” **Harav Eliyahu Schick**, the Rav of Lida, explained the connection between these two thoughts:

If not for the fact that *Chazal* had determined that the one who answers amen is greater than the *mevarech*, in cases where the *tzibbur* fulfills its obligation through hearing the *brachah* there would constantly be disputes among people. Everyone wanted to merit to be the one to recite the *brachah*. But after *Chazal* determined that the one who answers is greater, these arguments were prevented – and hence, with this *takanah*, the *talmidei chachamim* foster peace in the world.

Ein Eliyahu Nazir 66

The **Maharsha** (*ibid*) explains that Rabi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabi Akiva differed as to where the words “*Lifnei Hashem*” should be applied. Rabi Elazar ben Azariah attributed them to the words stated prior, that Yom Kippur atones for Am Yisrael only “*mikol chatoseichem [asher] lifnei Hashem,*” referring to sins between man and Hashem. Rabi Akiva applies them to the words that follow, “*Lifnei Hashem tit’haru*” – and therefore, he explained from the *passuk*, “*Lifnei Mi atem metaharin...Avichem Shebashamayim.*”

Thus, the Gaavad, **Harav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss** explained the *nusach* of the *Seder Ha’avodah* of *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur: “*Vekach hayah omer...ki bayom hazeh yechaper aleichem letaher eschem mikol chatoseichem lifnei Hashem...vehaKohanim*

ve’ha’am ha’omdim ba’azarah...v’af hu hayah miskaven ligmor es haShem kenegged hamverachim v’omer lahem: ‘Tit’haru.’ It would seem puzzling - how we can separate the words “*lifnei Hashem*” from the word “*tit’haru*” – does the *passuk* not lose its meaning that way, and seem to be stating Hashem’s Name in vain?

However, it can be explained that the author of this *piyut* agreed with Rabi Elazar ben Azariah, and the explanation of the Maharshal, that the word “*tit’haru*” is a freestanding matter, and therefore, there is no pause in the middle of a subject.

Shu”t Minchas Yitzchak, Vol. VII, 41

Tefillah – The Best Salvation

”לא תעמד על דם רעך” (יט טז)

“To behold his death and it is in your power to save him, such as when one is drowning in a river.” (*Rashi*)

The **Chazon Ish** wrote:

Simply, the commandment of ‘*lo sa’amod al dam rei’acha*’ refers to the physical effort that a person must make when he sees his friend in trouble. But we need to know that this *hishtadlus* is nothing more than ‘repaying a debt’ that is incumbent upon us, and we must not think that we have the power to save him, in the sense of “*kochi v’otzem yadi*, the might and the power of my hand have achieved this great thing” (*Devarim* 8:7). For this reason, the influence of the one who davens for his friend who is in trouble is more powerful than one who tries to actively save him.

However, it is self-understood that if one sees a friend drowning in the river, and instead of jumping into the water to save him he stands to daven for him – he is like a murderer! But if the person knows for a fact that he has no way to save the drowning person, instead of making futile efforts whose only purpose is to quiet his conscience, he must begin to daven for the victim, because *tefillah* must be the primary effort.

Hachazon Ish Bedorosav, p. 217



Do you need a *yeshuah*? Do you want the gates of blessing to be opened for you? Are you yearning to have your *tefillos* accepted with compassion and willingness?

There is a tried and true piece of advice that is very simple. Just answer **amen** with *kavanah*,

Amen: One word, three letters, an abundance of *brachos* and *yeshuos*



as Rashbi promises in the holy Zohar (*Vayeilech* 285 2):

When Am Yisrael below are careful to listen to a *brachah* from the *mevarech* in order to answer amen properly to it, and are careful to have the *kavanah* of amen in their hearts as necessary, in this merit, how many openings of blessing are opened for them Above, how many good things are found in all the worlds, how much joy there is every place – just like Yisrael opened the gates of blessing, likewise, now the gates of *tefillah* were opened for them and their *tefillos* were accepted.

Yigdal (2)

The First Principle: Metzius Hashem

The first stanza in this *piyut* corresponds to the first of the 13 Principles of Faith, which obligates us to believe in the *metzius*, the existence of Hashem in His completion, and in that He created everything, and that His existence is what gives the entire creation the ability to exist at all times. (*Rambam Yesodei HaTorah* 1 1; *Peirush Hamishnayos Sanhedrin* beginning of Ch. 10)

The poet chose to express this principle with the words “*Nimtza, ve’ein eis el metziuso.*” The existence of the Creator is beyond the comprehension of human beings, but everyone understands that He does exist, and therefore He is called “*nimtza*” (*Peirush al HaRambam Yesodei HaTorah*, *ibid*). In addition, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is the only real Metzuius in the universe and all the other creations are dependent on Him, and cannot exist for one second without Him. As the Rambam writes (*Yesodei HaTorah* 1 4): “As the Navi says (*Yirmiyahu* 10:10): ‘*V’Hashem Elokim emes*’ – He alone is the truth and no other being has truth like His Truth, and that is what the Torah says (*Devarim* 5:4): ‘*Ein od milvado*’ meaning there is no other truth besides Hashem and like Him.” (*Yachel Yisrael* p. 78)

In contrast to every other entity, whose existence begins at a certain point, and until that time, creation existed without him, the *metzius* of Hashem ‘*ein eis*’ – it has no specific time, because the entire creation is done by Him, and there is no detail that can exist without Him. Aside for that, all the existence of all creatures eventually come to an end, even for a short time, while the Metzuius Hashem cannot cease at any time, because the concept of ‘*eis*’, of time, is a human concept with a limited capacity. For this reason, we also cannot comprehend it but we must know that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is above every concept of time and. (*Eitz Yosef, Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*)

Emunah in the Existence of Creation and Its Leadership

Aside from the fact that Metzuius Hashem is what gives creation its existence every moment, this principle also includes the faith that HaKadosh Baruch Hu supervises and leads His world every single moment, as He wishes (*Rambam* *ibid* 5). As described in the *Ani Ma’amin* of this principle, which we say after davening: “I believe with complete faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is the Creator and Guide of all the created beings, and that He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.”

The source of this principle is in the first mitzvah we were commanded in the *Aseres Hadibros* (*Shemos* 20:2): “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha asher hotzeisicha mei’Eretz Mitzrayim*” (*Rambam* *ibid* 6). “This means, it is as though He said, know and believe that there is a G-d in the world.” (*Sefer Hachinuch Mitzvah* 25)

Harav Chaim Volozhin spoke of the great benefit that a person derives from delving into the existence of Hashem and His absolute control of His world. He wrote (*Nefesh Hachaim* 3:12): “And it is truly a great matter and a wonderful *segulah* to remove and annul from himself all the *dinim* and the will of others, so that they cannot control him or have any influence on him: When a person resolves in his heart and

Yigdal Elokim Who *Chai* lives for eternity *veyishtabach* that even though we have no concept of Him we believe that He is the true *nimtza* that all the creations depend upon Him, *v’ein eis* and that there is no way to quantify *metziuso*.

says: Hashem is the true Elokim, and there is no other besides Him and there is no other force in the world and in all the worlds at all, and it is all full of only His Achdus. And the person completely negates himself and does not pay attention to any power or desire in the world, and he submits and cleaves the purity of his thoughts only to the single Master, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, then Hashem will give him the ability that all the powers and forces in the world will not be able to have any effect on him at all.”

The Land Is Filled With His Honor

The words “*nimtza v’ein eis el metziuso*” contain an important concept on *tefillah*: HaKadosh Baruch Hu is ‘*nimtza*’, is present next to us always, and listens to our *tefillos* all the time, as the *passuk* says (*Devarim* 4:7): “*Ki mi goy gadol asher lo Elokim kerovim eilav k’Hashem Elokeinu bechol kar’einu Eilav*, for what great nation is there that has Hashem so near to it, as Hashem our G-d is at all times that we call upon Him?”

Yet, let us not think because we are so close to Him we can fathom His Essence, because “*ein eis el metziuso*” – there is no time at which a physical human can fathom the essence of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. (*Siddur Dover Shalom* [Rav Y. Landau])

When Harav Naftali of Ropschitz was a small child he was known for his exceptional wit and cleverness. One day, a person approached and asked to test his wisdom. He said to the person, “Naftali Tzvi, I’ll give you a whole golden coin if you show me where HaKadosh Baruch Hu is.” The child replied with a mischievous smile, and his trademark wit: “And I’ll give you two golden coins if you show me where He is not....” (*Tzidkas Hachacham* p. 39)

Praise and Greatness

The poet begins the *piyut* with the words: “*Yigdal Elokim chai, veyishtabach.*” The description of ‘*gedulah*’ is measured as compared to the other, while “*shevach*” is measured according to the person who is being praised. With regards to Hashem, the poet used both the word “*yigdal*” and the word “*yishtabach*” in order to allude to the ideas presented in the principles of faith described in this *piyut*: Hashem, who exists for eternity is ‘*gadol*’ as compared to the other creations in the world, and ‘*meshubach*’ in and of Himself, as He embodies every single virtue and attribute, and is perfect in every sense that can be perceived by the mind. (*Eitz Yosef, Siddur Otzar Hatefillos*)

Furthermore, in the description of “*yigdal*”, the poet alluded to the concept that expresses his *emunah*. The non-Jews describe Hashem with the description of “Rom” – which means lofty, because they do not believe in His Hashgachah on this world, and they believe He is lofty and elevated above us. We believe that Hashem, in His great humility, looks down with *Hashgachah pratis* on each and every creation and understands their deeds and thoughts, as *Chazal* say (*Chulin* 7b): “A person does not injure his finger down in this world unless it is declared that it should happen Above.” Therefore, the poet begins, “*Yigdal Elokim Chai*” – Hashem is great as He lives for eternity from the lower land upon which His Hashgachah reigns up to the Heavens, “*veyishtabach*” – and in fact, His Hashgachah on the creations of the world is His praise. (*Siddur Dover Shalom*)

A Dog Sent from Heaven

This story took place more than forty years ago. That year, the *yahrtzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu fell on Erev Shabbos. Since ancient times, there was a custom to go to Meron on this day, and that year, as well, transportation was organized from Bnei Brak and Yerushalayim on Thursday, with plans to return on Friday morning.

Reb Naftali G., *zi”l*, and *ybl”c*, his friend Reb Yehoshua R., *shlitia*, of Yerushalayim, who were used to traveling each year on this holy day to Meron, could not depart on Thursday. Because they had resolved not to miss out on the great *zechus* of traveling to Meron on this day, they decided to travel together on Friday morning, and then to spend Shabbos in Meron.

Early Friday morning, the two departed on an old bus from Yerushalayim towards Tzefas. After a long, tiring journey, they got off at the stop near to the entrance of Meron.

Everyone who has visited the *tziyun* of Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai knows that as soon as his foot treads into Moshav Meron, the heart overflows with emotion and yearning. They, too, debarked from the bus, and hurried to walk up the steep hill to the *tziyun*. Within a few minutes, they were davening at the cold, marble headstone under which the *tzaddik* was buried.

During those lofty moments, as they stood in the place auspicious for having one’s *tefillos* accepted, they forgot all their worries; their hearts and minds were focused only on pouring their hearts out to Hashem.

They remained at the *tziyun* for a long time, and only when they felt their souls were satiated did they busy themselves with arrangements for Shabbos lodgings and meals. *Baruch Hashem*, they quickly found a group of *chassidim* that had come for Shabbos and were staying at a local guesthouse, and they were happy to include the two visitors from Yerushalayim. The pair took their things to the room they were given. When they finished their preparations for Shabbos, they saw that they still had some time to candle lighting, so they decided to use it to take a walk through Moshav Meron, and to inhale the clear mountain air and the ancient ambiance that envelops the entire Galilee region in general and Meron in particular.

They walked through the paths, and chafed about various subjects. But as they got deeper into conversation, they also grew further away from their starting point. When one of them remembered to glance at his watch, he was shocked to discover how late it was. A raucous honking also startled them, and they realized that they were quite far from the guesthouse and if they would not find a shortcut very quickly, they would get back after Shabbos began.

They looked around, and suddenly, one of them recalled that right nearby was a shortcut that could lead them to the *tziyun* of Rashbi, and from there, it was just a short distance to their guesthouse.

So they turned off the main path on which they had been walking, and found the path they were looking for. They strode along quickly towards the *tziyun*. But suddenly, as if it had emerged from the depths of the ground, a large, threatening black dog appeared in front of them. He rose up on his hind legs and began to bark loudly, causing the pair to beat a hasty retreat. This seemed to calm the dog and he stopped barking, but did not move from his place. The two stood still, wondering what to do. They didn’t have much time to

think, and decided to try their luck with the age old method of *doron*, *tefillah* and *milchamah*. First they tried to appease the dog by whispering to it, but the dog responded with distinctly unfriendly barking. They tried to say the known *passuk* for such a situation but it was not effective; the dog remained in his place.

They didn’t get to the stage of *milchamah* because they realized that this was a very stubborn dog and they were better off not confronting it. Having no choice, they decided to retreat and run back on the main path, hoping that they would still get to their lodgings before the sun set.

The sun was very low in the sky as they began to jog towards the main road, not stopping until they reached the gate of the town. They were about to enter, but then they heard the sounds of bitter sobbing. They looked back and to their surprise, they saw an older woman, standing on the side of the road and sobbing. Compassionate Yidden that they were, they did not think of their own pressure for time, and asked her what the issue was.

She raised her red, tearful eyes, and when she saw the two angels that seemed to have appeared from Heaven, a grateful smile spread across her face, and she wiped her tears with a handkerchief.

She had two large suitcases at her side; without her needing to say a word, they realized what they had to do. Each one picked up a case, and began to walk up the hill, as the old woman trudged behind them.

Wondrously, they were just in time for candle lighting. They helped her carry her suitcases to her lodgings, and wanted to still dash to their own rooms, but the woman asked them to wait a minute, because she wanted to thank them properly for the *chesed* they had done with her.

“You came to me like angels from heaven,” she said, “after I waited in vain for so long for someone to help me carry my cases to my host’s house. When I heard the siren heralding the onset of Shabbos, my heart sank. I was sure I’d have to leave my valises on the wayside, and would need to walk up the hill with just the clothes on my back.”

“But before I gave up, I decided to offer a heartfelt *tefillah*. I davened to Hashem fervently: ‘Ribbono Shel Olam, I cannot think of leaving my cases here on the road; please, send me a *yeshuah* from Above and spare me from this situation.’”

“Not even a moment passed from when I finished, and you appeared like angels from Heaven. Without saying a word. You took my cases up the hill. Until we arrived and you began to speak over here, I was sure that indeed, you were real angles. Now I see that you are regular people, so I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help, and to bless you with all the *brachos*.”

The old woman finished speaking, and the two accepted her thanks politely and hurried on their way. The late hour did not allow them to tell the old woman that indeed, an angel from Above had been sent by the power of her *tefillah* to prevent them from passing the path they wanted to take, and that is why they had to pass by where she was standing, and ended up become good *shlichim* to help her get to her destination.

Heard firsthand