

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim"



386

PARASHAS KORACH

תשפ"א

IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

What Did Yaakov Daven For?

"ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי" (טז א)
 "And the Torah does not mention, 'the son of Yaakov,' since Yaakov asked [Hashem] for mercy for himself that his name be omitted from their dispute, as it says 'Let my honor not be identified with their assembly.'" (Rashi, based on *Tanchuma* 4)
 The question is obvious: Didn't everyone know that Levi was the son of Yaakov? What did Yaakov's *tefillah* that his name not be mentioned help?

Harav Zalman Sorotzkin explained:

Indeed, Yaakov did not mean to ask that the Torah should conceal the fact that Korach was descended from him, but rather that Korach should not use his name as a tool to fulfill his plans. If not for Yaakov's request, Korach could have deceitfully claimed that in his dispute with Moshe, he was following the path of his grandfather Yaakov. He also wanted to divide the firstborn status with his brother Eisav, because he wanted the service of the Kehunah. Until the Mishkan was built, the firstborns carried out the *avodah* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 12). Because Yaakov thought that by using this claim, Korach might succeed in drawing many others after him, he asked that his name not be mentioned in their dispute.

Oznayim LaTorah

Do Not Get Distracted from Tefillah for the Geulah

"ובקשתם גם כהנה" (טז י)
 The word "*ubikashtem*" appears three times in *Tanach*: One, in this *passuk*; two, in *Parashas V'eschanan* (*Devarim* 4:29): "*Ubikashtem misham es Hashem Elokecha umatzasa ki sidreshenu bechol levavcha ubechol nafshecha*", and three, in the words of the Navi (*Yirmiyahu* 29:13): "*Ubikashtem osi umatzasim*

Chessed and Amen Meet

"ויצא משה את כל המטת מלפני ה' אל כל בני ישראל ויראו ויקחו איש מטהו" (יז כד)

Why did the Torah have to write that each one of the *Nesi'im* returned and retrieved his staff?

Harav Avraham Baruch Toledano, one of the *dayanim* of Meknes, Morocco, explained that with this the Torah wanted to praise the *Nesi'im*. After it was determined from Above that Aharon was selected for the *Kehunah*, they accepted the decree with love, and therefore, each one retrieved his staff, to show that Hashem had not chosen them, but rather Aharon.

He added: This praise can also be said of any person who answers amen after his friend's *brachah*, because he is also showing with his action that he believes that the *brachah* that the other person said was made in accordance with *halachah* and that it is important and worthy of coming to fruition. Therefore, *Chazal* say (*Brachos* 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the *brachah*." The one who makes the *brachah* has only the reward of reciting the *brachah*; the one who answers amen, besides for the reward of amen that he has, also merits a reward because he held another person in esteem and made him greater.

Imrei Baruch

ki sidreshuni bechol levavchem" (see *Baal Haturim*). **Harav Moshe Leib Litsch Rosenbaum**, one of the *dayanim* of Pressburg, explained the connection between the three *pesukim*:

The *passuk* "*ubikashtem misham es Hashem Elokecha umatzasa...*" refers to the period when Bnei Yisrael would be exiled among the nations, and there

would be periods of reprieve from their troubles. However, because the nature of a person is to forget his Creator when things are going well, the *passuk* warns: "*Ubikashtem Osi*," that even during this time, they should not *chalilah* forget Hashem, Who gives them strength to succeed. In addition, "*Ubikashtem gam kehunah*" – that they should not distract their minds from the Bais Hamikdash, which lies in ruins, so there is no service of the Kohanim. Rather, one should pray for the building of the Bais Hamikdash and the restoration of the service of the Kohanim all the time.

"Imros Hashem"

Moshe and Aharon Prayed in a Moment of Anger

"וידבר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן לאמר; הבדלו מתוך העדה הזאת ואכלה אתם כרגע; ויפלו על פניהם ויאמרו..." (טז כ-כב)

Usually, the term '*Vayedaber Hashem... leimor*' is an introduction to a commandment given by Moshe and Aharon to tell something to Bnei Yisrael. Here, it would seem that they were not commanded to tell Bnei Yisrael anything; why did the *passuk* use this language?

The Maharal Tzitz explained:

Chazal say (*Brachos* 7a) that every single day, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is angry for one '*rega*'. Therefore, HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded Moshe and Aharon to hurry "*leimor*" meaning, if you want to daven for Klal Yisrael, do so immediately, because that moment when Hashem is angry is going to occur imminently, and if you don't daven during that moment then "*v'achaleh osam k'rega*," *chalilah*. Indeed, Moshe and Aharon heard Hashem's Voice and immediately they fell on their faces and davened, and because they prayed at that moment of anger, Am Yisrael was spared from annihilation.

Melo HaOmer

"The World Needs to Awaken More"

Wednesday, 7 Tammuz (5754) is the *yahrtzeit* of the Lev Simchah of Ger, zy" a. In his *sefer Lev Simchah* (*Parashas Ki Savo*) he urges people to strengthen themselves in answering amen. He wrote:

"The *Midrash* says (*Devarim Rabbah* 7 1): 'There is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Yisrael answer.' Perhaps the world needs to awaken more, and to become aware of the great importance and virtue of answering amen. We don't know what we merited [*vos m'farmugt*], this great matter of answering amen..."

Bney Emunim. Awakening to answer amen.



Yigdal (9): The Eighth Principle – Torah from Shamayim

The Torah Was Given in its Entirety from Hashem

The eighth principle relates to the Torah that Moshe commanded us, and it is a continuation of the previous principle that addressed the loftiness of the level of Moshe Rabbeinu's *nevuah*. The reason that HaKadosh Baruch Hu elevated Moshe to his high status was in order to give the Torah to Bnei Yisrael through him. As the *Gemara* states (*Shabbos* 88b), when Moshe rose On High, the angels asked: "What is this human doing among us?" In other words, what did this human being do to merit this level? And HaKadosh Baruch Hu replied to them, "He has come to receive the Torah." (*Siddur Dover Shalom* p. 20)

The eighth principle teaches us our obligation to believe that the entire holy Torah that we have in our hands was given to us by Moshe Rabbeinu, and it was told to him by HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the same language that we have in our hands. Moshe Rabbeinu did not alter a single word or letter of what he heard from Hashem. Likewise, we must believe that Moshe Rabbeinu gave us not only the *pesukim* of Torah that are commanded to us regarding the 613 *mitzvos* that he conveyed exactly as he heard them, he also conveyed the *pesukim* that do not have practical directives, and rather are recounting and descriptions of various events. All of these were given over exactly as they were said by HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Moshe did not make even the slightest change. The *Rambam* explains (*Peirush Hamishnayos, Sanhedrin*, Introduction to Chapter 10): "He [Moshe Rabbeinu] was like a scribe, that is summoned, and he writes down the events of the days, the stories and the *mitzvos*."

We must also believe that not only the words of the Torah were given to Moshe at Sinai, but so was the *'mesorah'* – meaning the exact way they were written – whether they are *malei* or *chaser*. Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 99a) regarding one who believes that the entire Torah is from Above, but claims that one letter should be deleted or added, the *passuk* (*Bamidbar* 15:31): "Ki *devar Hashem bazah v'es mitzvaso hefer*, for he has denigrated the mitzvah of Hashem and he has violated His commandment; the soul of that person shall certainly be cut off, its iniquity upon it." The *Maharal* (*Chiddushei Aggados* ibid) explains that because a *Sefer Torah* that is lacking one letter or contains one extra letter is rendered invalid, we find that a person who adds or removes a letter of the Torah is considered to have denigrated the entire Torah.

Torah Sheba'al Peh Was Also Given Over by Hashem

It is not only the Written Torah that was given to Moshe at Sinai; the *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, the Oral Torah, which explains the Written Torah, was given at the same time. Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Peah* 2 4): "Mikra, Mishnah, Talmud, Aggadah, even what a longtime *talmid* is destined to instruct before his *rebbe* – it has already been told to Moshe at Sinai." The Oral Torah is an inseparable part of the written Torah, because without it, it is impossible to know how to fulfill the *mitzvos*.

This is what the one who organized the principles of faith in *Ani Ma'amin* writes about this principle: "Ani *ma'amin*... *shekol haTorah hametzuyah*, that the entire Torah that we have in our hands is what was given to Moshe Rabbeinu *alav hashalom*." With the words "*kol haTorah*"

he sought to stress that the entire Torah was given to Moshe at Sinai, both the part given in writing and the part given over orally. (*Maggid Tzedek* in *Siddur Shaar Harachamim*)

The reason why the Torah was given to us partly in writing and partly orally is explained by Chazal as follows (*Shemos Rabbah* 47 1): "When HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared at Sinai to give the Torah to Am Yisrael, He said it to Moshe in order: *Mikra*, *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, *Aggadah*... He said to Hashem: *Ribbono She Olam*, I will write it for them. Hashem said I do not ask to give it to them in writing because it is known to Me that the idol worshippers are destined to rule over them, and to take it from them... Rather, I am giving them the *Mikra* in writing, and the *Mishnah*, *Talmud* and *Aggadah* I am giving orally, so that if the idol worshippers come and rule over them they should be separated from them."

The fulfillment of the words of Chazal is evident in our day, when the Written Torah is also found among the nations of the world. But the possibility to understand it properly is exclusively reserved for Am Yisrael, through the Oral Torah that is passed from generation to generation. This is what the poet alludes to when he says "*Toras Emes*" – the Written Torah, and with it the Torah given orally, so that the words "*nasan l'amo Kel*" should be fulfilled, and that the nations of the world should have no share in it (ibid).

The Source of This Principle

This principle is derived from the *passuk* that Moshe said to Korach when he came to dispute his prophecy (*Bamidbar* 16:28): "And Moshe said this is how you will know that Hashem has sent me to perform all of these deeds, for I did not devise them myself." (*Rambam* ibid).

Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveichik of Brisk explained: Korach denied the seventh principle of the Yud Gimmel Ikrei Emunah, that Moshe Rabbeinu was the father of all *Nevi'im*, those who preceded him and those who came after him, when he said (*Bamidbar* 16:3): "Since the entire congregation are all holy, and Hashem is in their midst, why do you raise yourselves above the assembly of Hashem." Yet, he also denied the eighth principle, that the Torah that we have was given to Moshe Rabbeinu. As Chazal describe (*Yerushalmi Sanhedrin* 10a): "Korach was an *apikoros*. What did he do? He stood and made a *tallis* that was entirely *techeiles*, and he asked, Moshe Rabbeinu, should a *tallis* that is all *techeiles* be obligated in *tzitzis*? He said to him: It is obligated... A house that is full of *sefarim*, why is it obligated with a *mezuzah*? He said to him, It is obligated to have a *mezuzah*.... At the same time, Korach said, there is no Torah from *Shamayim* and Moshe is not a *Navi* and Aharon is not a *Kohein Gadol*."

Moshe, in his response to Korach, had in mind these two denials. With regard to Korach's denial of the *nevuah* of Moshe he said, "Ki *Hashem shelachani*," because Hashem sent me. With regard to his denial of *Torah min HaShamayim*, he added, "*Ki lo milibi*," I have not devised this on my own.

This also explains the words of Chazal (*Bava Basra* 74a) that each day, the ones of Korach who were swallowed stand at the entrance to Gehinnom and announce: "*Moshe emes veSoraso emes*." Because with this declaration they admit to the truth of the two principles that their forbears denied. (*Yeshurun* Vol. 10 p. 298)

Toras emes – the Written Torah, and with it the Oral Torah that He *nasan* [only to] *amo* and the nations of the world have no relation to or knowledge of it, were all given from *Kel* to His nation Yisrael, *al yad nevio ne'eman beiso* – Moshe Rabbeinu, who did not add anything to it of his own initiative.

A Tefillah That Altered the Results

This story was publicized by a Jewish mother, who merited to experience the special power of *tefillah* to 'tear up' decrees and to transform them to Divine compassion. This is her story:

It was in the middle of Elul. My son, Gavriel, known as Gabi, a vibrant, exuberant child, came home from *cheder* and complained that his stomach was hurting.

"What did you eat?" I asked automatically. "Nothing special," he replied.

"Did something happen in *cheder*?" I asked. He was almost offended, and said nothing had happened, just that his stomach hurt.

"You must be stressed out!" I decided. The day before, they'd begun to speak about the subject of *yeshivos* in class; perhaps that was stressing him out. But this time, Gabi was really hurt: "Ima, it's not stress, or anything, I don't remember my stomach ever hurting like this!" And as he spoke, he slumped down on the couch helplessly. Only then did I turn to look at him. He was very pale and breathing heavily. The boy was right, something was wrong; he looked awful. Gabi fell asleep on the couch, and I reassured myself that it must be a virus that would quickly pass. But at night he woke up burning with fever. I offered him some painkillers; the pain eased a bit, but it soon returned full force.

We continued this way for about two days, during which time Gabi could not eat, and hardly drank. On the third day, he began to vomit blood, and that's when we got nervous. I ran to the local clinic with him, and the doctor on shift needed just two minutes to print out a referral to get to the emergency room immediately.

By the time we left the clinic, Gabi had to lean on me in order to remain upright. We stopped a taxi and sped to the hospital; on the way, I called the *yeshiva* where my husband teaches and told him to come as well.

When we arrived at the hospital, Gabi staggered over to the nearest available bed, and without asking anyone, just collapsed onto it, drained. As anyone who has been there knows, time stands still in the emergency room. For the first three quarters of an hour we were busy filling out papers, and doing bureaucracy, and no one looked at us. Only about an hour later, when Gabi began to scream in pain, did one of the doctors take a look at him.

After an external exam, Gabi was sent for a series of tests and xrays. We spent an exhausting day, but by evening, the doctors could not give us a clear diagnosis. Gabi was admitted to the internal medicine department to wait for more testing the next day. We had to spend the night at his side. In the morning the tests were done, but we had to wait a few days for the results, and Gabi had to be hospitalized during that time.

It was the days of *Selichos*. My husband traveled to Bnei Brak to ask for a *brachah* from his *rebbe*, one of the *gedolei hador*. At Gabi's *cheder*, they began to daven for his recovery. I could not even think about preparing for the upcoming Yom Tov. I was focused on one thing – trying to ease my child's suffering.

On the third night, my husband volunteered to stay with Gabi. After four days out of the house, I returned home to refresh myself a bit. The next morning, after I sent the children out to school, I began to straighten up the house and cook for Yom Tov. Only then was I able to do what every Jew has to do during such a time – daven. I prayed as I worked. I prayed as I washed the floors, and peeled vegetables and cooked. I kept repeating the *pirkei Tehillim* that I remembered by heart, and added personal words of *tefillah* in between.

In the afternoon, I returned to the hospital to hear the results of the tests. They didn't come back with anything conclusive, and the doctors were left with no choice but to order a biopsy of the intestines. I shuddered at the word. A biopsy is an invasive and painful test during which tissue is extracted from the body and then tested. In our case, it was clear that we'd been sent for this test because the doctors feared the worst.

On the morning that the test was supposed to take place, I rose early and went down to the ladies' section of the shul to say *Selichos*. The *minyán* was comprised of sick people, doctors and family members, each one with their own problems. The

atmosphere was commensurate. I cried during that *tefillah* like I'd never cried in my life.

When davening was over, we went to take Gabi to the test. He was put to sleep, and the doctor extracted a tissue sample using special equipment. Now we could only wait impatiently for the results.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah we were summoned to the doctor's room. He tried to keep his expression inscrutable, but in my heart that I knew that he did not have good news. "Gabi has a growth in the large intestine," the doctor said with lowered eyes. I felt the room begin to spin. I couldn't even hear the rest of what the doctor said; my world had just crumbled around me.

We somehow stumbled out of the office. There, my husband tried to give me strength and infuse me with *emunah*, and added some details that I hadn't heard: "The doctor said that fortunately, the growth was discovered early, and his chances of recovery are high."

This did not calm me down. I was ready to fall apart at the thought of the long, difficult path we would have to traverse to prevail in this battle, with *siyata diShmaya*. I could not stop crying.

"Tomorrow is the Yom Hadin," my husband reminded me. "Tomorrow HaKadosh Baruch Hu determines the fate of all those living beings, Gabi among them. What He decides, the greatest doctor in the world does not know. We must daven and at the same time, trust our compassionate Father to do what is best for us."

We spent Rosh Hashanah in the hospital; our children were staying with family members. We decided that until after Yom Tov, we would not share our difficult news with anyone. Our suffering was enough; why should we mar the joy of others?

During *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, I literally felt like the *beinonim*, those mediocre people whose lives hang in the balance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I used every minute for davening and *chizuk*. I asked the rest of the family to daven, and taken upon themselves *kabbalos* as a *zechus* for Gabi's recovery.

On Motzaei Shabbos Shuvah we were called to the doctor's office again. First, he told us about the treatment plan he had prepared for the coming months, and then he shared his thoughts: "I've had some doubts about the test your son had. On rare occasions, it happens that because of technical problems, the test does not reflect the reality. Before we actually start treatment, I'd like to do the test again, to either affirm, or negate, the findings of the previous test."

My husband called his *rebbe*, who agreed with the doctor. The test was scheduled for the day after Yom Kippur, and we felt like we had been given another chance. Again, we put all our efforts into our *tefillah*. We cried and prayed that Hashem should tear up this decree.

Between Yom Kippur and Succos, I sensed that something good was happening. Gabi's fever went down and his stomach pain eased. The doctors did not see that as a particular reason for optimism. They waited for the test results.

Two days after Yom Kippur, I was dozing in the armchair next to Gabi's bed. The doctor suddenly walked into the room and asked me to call my husband urgently. At the time, my husband was learning in the nearby shul; I quickly called him and we joined the doctor in his office.

The doctor, noticing our alarm, did not wait, and his words came out in a long stream: "Already two days ago we realized that this was the answer, but we did not want to tell you before we had the final, clear results. This doesn't happen often in our profession but it has happened now: the repeat test shows that there's no growth. We have no idea what caused the error, and what he really has, but in this test, the growth disappeared. You have your child back, as a gift..."

The doctor continued explaining all kinds of reasons why the mistake could have happened, but we didn't hear him. We left the doctor's room feeling like a ton-weight had rolled off our shoulders. We felt that Hashem had called us to come closer to Him, and when we heeded that call, and cleaved to Him with *tefillos* and good deeds, the decree was lifted."

Divrei Yeshuah V'Nechamah p. 36