

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From "Bnei Emunim



Pearls of Emunim

Pearls of Amen and Tefillah on the Parashah

The Ways of a Tzaddik Make an Impression

"וילך משה וידבר את הדברים האלה אל כל ישראל" (לא א)

Harav Moshe Zev Friedman, the Rav of Yaffo, said that the Rebbe Harav Dovid Moshe of Kretchnif would often say that just from seeing his father, the Rebbe Rav Eliezer Zev, when he davened the tefillah of Nishmas with great enthusiasm, one could acquire more Yiras Shamayim than from hearing drashos and words of mussar.

In this context, Rav Moshe Zev added that he heard from the Rebbe Rav Yaakov Elimelech Paneth of Dej, Hy"d, that this passuk teaches us that the conduct of a tzaddik influences the tzibbur as if he would be speaking to them. "Vayeilech Moshe" – the way that Moshe went and conducted himself had the same influence as "Vayedaber es hadevarim", the words he spoke to Am Yisrael.

Korban Moshe, Vol. I, p. 281

Knowledge of Torah Is Vital to Teshuvah

"ובניהם אשר לא ידעו ישמעו ולמדו ליראה את ה' אלקיכם כל הימים" (לא ג)

Harav Yitzchak Majalad, one of the sages of Baghdad, explained:

There is a well-known question: Why do we open Birchas Hateshuvah with the request: "Hashiveinu Avinu lesorasecha" and only after that do we ask, "Vehachazireinu b'teshuvah sheleimah lefanecha." It would seem that we need to begin with the request that we merit to repent for our many sins, and only afterwards, can we ask to merit to come close to Torah and avodas Hashem.

However, in order for us to be able to repent for the sins, we first have to know the laws of the Torah and the order of

The Severity of Being Lax About Amen

"וחרה אפי בו ביום ההוא ועזבתים והסתרת פני מהם והיה לאכל ומצאהו רעות רבות וצרות ואמר ביום ההוא הלא על כי אין אלקי בקרבי מצאוני הרעות האלה" (לא ז)

Harav Avraham Kessler, shlita, author of Notrei Amen, explained:

When Bnei Yisrael will see the many troubles that are afflicting them, they will surely reflect on their deeds and check what caused this to happen. Their conclusion will be: they were punished because "al – ki ein." The reason is "ki ein" there is no "על" [numerically equivalent to 100] brachos that we had to make each day as per the institution of Chazal. Aside for that, the words "כי אין" are numerically equivalent to 91, which is the same value as אמן. From here we learn that being lax about saying one hundred brachos and answering amen is what causes the "bad things to find me," R"l. (See Rokeach 320; Zohar Vayeilech 285 2)

Notrei Amen, Vol. II p. 295

avodas Hashem. If we don't, we will sin again, time after time, without knowing. Only once a person knows the path he needs to follow can he completely repent for his sins, and then set out for a new path in Yiras Shamayim and fear of sin.

The passuk alludes to this by saying: "Yishme'u velamdu – leyirah es Hashem Elokeichem." In order to be Yirei Hashem, a person must first hear and learn the divrei Torah, because if not, how will he know what is good and what is bad, what is permitted and what is not?

Tzelach Rechav

The Reason for 'Hester Panim' That Follows the Regret

"הסתרת פני מהם והיה לאכל ומצאהו רעות רבות וצרות 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-יח)

Many wonder about the order of this passuk: After Am Yisrael recognized their sins, and regretted them, why did Hashem punish them with "V'Anochi haster astir, and I will hide My Face from them?"

The Gidulei Terumah explained:

The first hasterah mentioned at the beginning of the passuk is written as "vehistarti Panai meihem," I will hide My Face from them. Regarding the hasterah that follows the regret, it says only "V'Anochi haster astir Panai" – because this hasterah is not from Bnei Yisrael, but rather from their sins. Because they regretted the bad that they did, Hashem will turn His Eyes from "all the bad that he did," as Dovid Hamelech asked (51:11): "Haster Panecha mi'chata ai."

Harav Bunim of Peshischa explained:

By uttering "al ki ein Elokaei bekirbi" one commits a sin. Am Yisrael must believe that even when they sin, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is with them, despite them being mired in impurity. As Chazal say (Sifri Masei 161): "Am Yisrael are beloved that even though they are impure the Shechinah dwells among them, as it says (Vayikra 16:16): 'HaShocheh itam besoch tumasam.' That is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu is telling them: 'V'Anochi haster astir Panai...' – even in your impurity, I am amidst you, but because of your sins, I conceal My Face and do not reveal Myself."

Binah L'Itim, Eis Mishpat, 5; Shem MiShmuel 5677

"שִׁחַר אֲבִיךָ שָׂדֵה צוּרֵי וּמְשֻׁנְבֵי"



"אבינו מלכנו פתח שערי שמים לתפלתנו" By answering amen, the gates of tefillah are opened and the tefillos are accepted. (Zohar Hakaodsh Vayeilech 285 2)



"אבינו מלכנו מלא אסמינו שבע" By answering amen, the Higher Source is opened and an abundance of good is showered on all the worlds. (Shelah, Maseches Tamid, 80)

Fellow Yid! Try very hard to come early to shul to recite Birchos Hashachar bechavrusa, and this way, you will merit to have the gates of tefillah opened and the words of the brachah "Veharikosi lachem brachah ad bli dai" will be fulfilled.



A collection of insights about the greatness of answering amen in the context of the Yamim Noraim

Only He Alone is the Melech V'Elokim B'Emes

Chazal say (Shabbos 119b): "What is amen? Rabi Chanina said: 'K-l Melech Ne'eman.'" The three letters of the word 'amen' are an acronym for א-ל-מלך נאמן. Rashi explains (ibid) that one who answers amen testifies of his Creator that He is a K-l Melech Ne'eman." Tosafos adds (ibid ad loc. Amar Rebbi) that one should concentrate on these words when answering amen.

The Maharsha explains the depth of this praise, in which HaKadosh Baruch Hu is described with two descriptions: "K-l" and "Melech." Throughout the year, we conclude the brachah with "HaK-l HaKadosh" while during the Yamim Noraim we say "HaMelech HaKadosh." When we answer amen we declare that only regarding HaKadosh Baruch Hu are the Names K-l and Melech faithful and true, as there is no other true kingship or godliness besides Hashem. That is in contrast, l'havdil elef havdalos, avodah zarah which is referred to as "el" as it says (Shemos 34:14): "Lo tistachaveh l'el acher," and a human king who is called a "melech" as these are borrowed terms and are not true and genuine.

Maharsha Shabbos 119b

Angels Are Sent to Those Who Yearn to Make Brachos With Completion

Some time before his passing, Harav Shmelke of Nikolsburg told those around him:

"As you know, my habit was always to make sure to to make a brachah from the Birchos Hamitzvos or Birchos Hanehenin only when there was someone there who could listen and answer amen after me. This is because a brachah creates an angel, but that angel will not be complete unless amen is recited to the brachah.

"Once, I was invited by a wealthy man to a certain town. He wanted to honor me as sandak at a bris milah for his son, and toward that end, he sent me a horse-drawn carriage driven by a wagon-driver who was Jewish, yet extremely wild and empty of all depth. On the journey, when I wanted to make the brachah of Asher Yatzar, I understood, to my dismay, that there was no one who could answer amen after me, because this wagon-driver was so coarse and uncouth that there was no way to include him on any matter of holiness.

"I did not know what to do, until suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, two noble-looking people emerged from the forest and stood next to me. After I made the brachah, they answered amen with sweetness and enthusiasm that I had never seen, and then they disappeared. I stood there, stunned and afraid, until I realized that

Heavenly angels had been sent to me from Above to answer amen to my brachos."

At that same time, Rav Shmelke explained the passuk in Ivov (23:13): "Vehu b'echad umi yeshivenu venafsho osah vaya'as," which we say in the tefillos of Rosh Hashanah, and conclude with the words "Nora VeKadosh."

As is known, answering amen completes the words of the mevarach. If so, what should a person do if he must be home alone or is traveling alone, and there is no one to answer amen after him? That is what the passuk says: "Vehu b'echad" – when a person makes a brachah alone, "umi yeshivenu" – and there is no one to answer amen, then if "venafsho osah" if he deeply desires to have his brachah completed by answering amen, then "vaya'as – nora vekadosh" – then he has the power to generate such awe that an angel will be sent to him from Above to answer amen to his brachah.

Ohel Yitzchak, p. 35

Answering Amen Tears the Decree

It says in Maseches Shabbos (119b): "Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Whoever answers amen, yehei Shemei Rabba mevarach with all his might – has his decree torn up." But the Zohar HaKadosh promises that the decree is torn up for anyone who answers amen, not necessarily one who answers "amen, yehei Shemei Rabba", as it says (Tikkunei Zohar 40 1): "One who answers amen with all his might has a decree of seventy years torn up." (Shomer Emunim, Ma'amar Pischu Shearim Ch. 1)

The Abir Yaakov explains regarding the promise of the decree being torn up that Dovid Hamelech expressed gratitude for this when he said (Tehillim 118:21): "Odcha ki anisani vatehi li l'yeshuah." Anisani is from the root of oneh, to answer. I thank You Hashem for sparing me and tearing up my decree because I answered amen.

The mashgiach, Harav Eliyahu Lopian, wrote deeply moving words on this subject:

"...He has an answer that the Torah Ba'al Peh gives him, and if he believes in Torah Sheba'al Peh, why should he not do it?! Especially in this time when we live, when there is din over the whole world, and black clouds chalilah hang over the future, a person should be afraid if he does not do this easy idea that does not cost him time or money or too much effort. He should just listen to hear well and answer properly..."

Shaarei Teshuvah [Rav Y. Abuchatzzeira] Ofen 32; Kuntress Shomer Emunim (New York 5713) p. 42

Kol Nidrei for a Congregation of One

Each year, a few days before Rosh Hashanah, the renowned chazzan, Reb T.G. travels from Eretz Yisrael to Germany. Reb T. is a chazzan at a large shul in Frankfurt, and he has to stay in the city until the day after Yom Kippur. The local community arranges accommodations in a luxury hotel that is walking distance from the shul, and for mehadrin meals for him and anyone accompanying him.

Reb T. has been granted a double gift – a clear, loud pleasant voice, and deep emotions. As such, it is no wonder that his tefillos are both pleasant deeply moving. The tefillos draw a large crowd to the shul, some more observant and some less, which also brings them one step closer to their Father in heaven.

It happened a few years ago on Motzaei Yom Kippur: After a long day of standing on his feet almost continuously as he davened the tefillos of the holy day, while fasting and singing the pleasant and moving tunes to draw his two thousand listeners in, Reb T. was drained.

After Ma'ariv, Reb T. felt so exhausted that he could not even walk to the nearby hotel to break his fast. After Havdalah, which was recited in shul, all the mispallelim went home to fulfill the dictum of 'lech echol besimchah lachmecha.' However, Reb T. sat down to rest on a bench near the back door of the shul, thinking that after a short rest, he would find the energy he needed to get back to the hotel and eat something filling. The lights were off, the gabbai locked the main entrance, and closed the front gates of the courtyard. After a short rest, Reb T. stepped out of the side door, and was surprised to see an elderly, unfamiliar man with an old, white woolen yarmulke resting askew on his mane of white hair.

Reb T. discerned with his sharpened senses that something about the man's expression conveyed distress. He tried to enter the shul, and when he wasn't able to, he appeared lost. Sympathetically, Reb T. went over to the man, put his hand on his shoulder, and asked gently, "Can I help you?"

The man looked frustrated and confused, and instead of an answer, he shot out a rapid fire burst of questions: "What's going on here? Where are all the people? Why are the gates to the shul locked? Isn't it Kol Nidrei tonight?"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but it's not! Kol Nidrei was last night," Reb T. informed the man regretfully. "We finished Maariv of Motzaei Yom Kippur about half an hour ago."

Upon hearing the reply, the man literally crumpled. "I don't understand how this happened to me!" he cried with deep disappointment. "How did I make such a mistake? How could I have missed Kol Nidrei?"

Reb T. tried to calm him down

and console him but the man was unwilling to listen. "I don't understand," he said. "Since I was a little boy I haven't missed Kol Nidrei in shul even once. For decades, I would accompany my father, and twenty years ago, before his passing, he requested that I promise that I would continue to go until the end of my days. My father knew that it would be my only connection to Jewish heritage. I promised him, and until now I kept my promise. And this time, I don't know why, I missed it."

Reb T. could not bear the man's pain. He thought for a moment and said, "My friend, you are lucky. I happen to be the chazzan in this shul. I'm inviting you to come inside the shul with me, and together we will say Kol Nidrei."

The man was stunned at the offer, but Reb T. did not let him refuse. He gripped his hand and ushered him into the side entrance of the shul. They walked into the nearly-dark heichal.

Reb T. went up to the amud and the man sat down on the bench behind him. Reb T. opened the Machzor to Kol Nidrei, and then put on his chazzan hat and special tallis. It was important to him that the tefillah be as authentic as possible.

A night earlier, Reb T. had trilled Kol Nidrei for two thousand people. Now, he was about to repeat it, but his congregation consisted of just one person – a Jewish soul yearning to hear Kol Nidrei.

"Al daas hamakom v'al da'as hakahal....ubeyhsivha shel matah..." The moment Reb T. opened his mouth, he felt infused with renewed strength. He completely forgot about his gnawing hunger, and his clear voice filled the shul.

Despite serving in this capacity for many years, he did not recall another time when he had been able to concentrate so deeply on the holy words and to express such deep emotions as that time. On Motzaei Yom Kippur in an empty shul at the 'congregation' of one.

Reb T. felt like he was davening for millions of holy pure souls of Yidden who gave their lives al Kiddush Hashem. With his mesirus nefesh for one Jew, he felt the deep sense of mutual responsibility for Klal Yisrael in all its intensity, and this feeling gave him strength to continue.

When the davening ended, the man came over to him. His eyes, like Reb T.'s, were filled with tears, and he could hardly express his gratitude. "You have no idea what you have done for me...You saved my life..." he said.

Heard firshand