

Vechol Maaminim

"A Weekly Leaflet From 'Bnei Emunim



IN THE PATHWAYS OF FAITH

Divrei Torah About Amen and Tefillah in the Parashah

The Poor Man Sacrifices a Rich Korban with an Oral Declaration

"זאת תורת היולדת לזכר או לנקבה; ואם לא תמצא ידה די שה..." (ב ז-ח)

These words of "Zos toras hayoledes" seem to be concluding the parashah of korbanos hayoledes, and we need to understand why the Torah wrote them before explaining the halachos of the yoledes who is unable to afford to bring a korban beheimah.

Harav Pinchas Horowitz, the Hafla'ah, answered:

From the earlier passuk (6:18): "Zos toras hachatas" the Gemara explained (Menachos 110a): "Anyone who engages in the toras chatas is considered to have sacrificed a chatas." Based on this we can explain the passuk "Zos toras hayoledes," that one who studies the parashah of the korban yoledes is considered to have sacrificed the korban.

Hence, just like in these times it was established to recite the parshiyos of the korbanos and their recital is considered as though we actually sacrificed them, likewise it is worthy that the yoledes in this time should say the parashah of korban yoledes on the 41st day after giving birth to a boy or eighty days after giving birth to a girl, instead of her obligation to bring a korban yoledes. But in contrast to the times of the Mikdash, in this time, even a poor new mother says the parashah of a rich korban, because Chazal said (Negaim 14 12): "A poor metzora who brings a rich korban has fulfilled his obligation" [And see in the commentary of the Ra"sh (ibid): 'Even lechatchilah, he brings it and he should be blessed'], while regarding saying it, she is also considered someone who can afford it."

In light of this explanation, we can understand why the Torah preceded, "Zos toras hayoledes" before

The Gates of Amen Open with the Purification of the Metzora

"זאת תהיה תורת המצרע..." (יד ב)

Harav Noach Mindes, the mechutan of the Gra, explained:

The holy Zohar (Vayeilech 285 2) explains from the passuk (Yeshayah 26:2): "Pischu she'arim vayavo goy tzaddik shomer emunim," that in the merit of answering amen with kavanah the Gates of Blessing from which good is bestowed upon Am Yisrael are opened. The Zohar calls the metzora (Yisro 80 1, and similarly in Onkelos here) 'sagira.' Based on this we can explain that the sin of lashon hara affects the tikkun that is done by answering amen, and causes the gates of abundance that are opened in the merit of answering amen to close - lisgor.

This is also alluded to by the fact that the acronym of the three partners in the sin of lashon hara - the מקבל, נאמר, אומר - the one who said it, the one it's about and the one who heard it, is amen.

Therefore, the metzora is purified by bringing birds and an eizov plant, צפורים, as the acronym is צא which is numerically equivalent to 91 - and amen, because with the purification of the metzora with these, the gates of amen that were locked are opened.

Parparaos Lechochmah; see also Magen Avraham [Trisker Maggid]

explaining the korban yoledes who cannot afford it. It is to teach us that when we fulfill the obligation only by saying "Toras Hayoledes" one should say only the earlier parashah, of the new mother who can afford more.

The Maggid Harav Yaakov Galinsky explained our request each morning before saying Eizehu Mekoman: "And you said (Hoshea 14:3): 'Uneshalmah parim

sefaseinu', therefore, may it be Hashem's Will...that the words of our lips should be as important... as if we sacrificed." Why do we mention 'parim,' cows and not rams or lambs? But as stated, because at this time we do not actively sacrifice, and only say it by mouth, then it is fitting that we should mention the more valuable korban.

Panim Yafos Vayikra 6:7; Dvir Kodsho

Lashon Hara Precludes the Tefillah from Being Accepted

"וּטְמָא טְמָא יִקְרָא" (יג מוה)

"Tanya: "וּטְמָא טְמָא יִקְרָא" - we have to announce his pain in public, and many ask for mercy for him." (Shabbos 67a)

Why is the metzora different from other sick people? Is he the only one who needs the tefillos of others? Moreover, didn't Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 53 14): "The tefillah of the sick person for himself is nicest of all"?

Harav Yonasan Eibeshitz explained:

The Zohar (Metzora 53:1) explained that when someone sins with lashon hara, a ruach tumah comes upon him that prevents his tefillah from rising on High. Therefore, in contrast to other sick people, for whom their tefillah for themselves is preferable, the tefillah of the metzora who sinned with lashon hara is not quickly accepted, and therefore he must ask others to daven for him.

Harav Yaakov Rekach of Tripoli brought a remez to the words of the Zohar from the request of Dovid Hamelech in Tehillim (17:1): "Tefillah leDovid shimah Hashem tzedek hakshivah rinasi ha'azinah tefilasi belo sifsei mirmah": Listen to my tefillah because I am 'belo sifsei mirmah' - without lashon hara.

Midrash Yehonasan; Ma'ateh Tehillah, Tehillim 17:1

Everything Follows the Conclusion

Monday, 7 Iyar, will mark 402 years since the passing of Rabbeinu Shlomo Ephraim ben Rabi Aharon Ish Luntchitz - the author of Kli Yakar, who served as the Rav of Prague.

In his sefer, Olelos Ephraim, (Vol. III, 460) he explains that this is why Chazal say (Brachos 53b): "The one who answers is greater than the mevarech." It is because the mevarech is compared to one who writes a note, while the one who answers amen is like the one who signs on it, "and everything follows the conclusion."

Bney Emunim - Concluding every brachah with amen.



Yigdal (1)

The Foundation of Torah – The Foundation of the Day

Emunah is the foundation and basis for the observance of all the mitzvos of the Torah. Only someone who believes in the existence of Hashem and His exclusive and absolute Kingship feels an obligation to accept upon himself the yoke of His mitzvos. Chazal say (Mechilta Yisro Maseches De'bechadash Parashah 6): "It can be compared to a human king who entered the country. His servants said to him: decree upon us decrees. He said: When they will accept my kingship I will decree upon them, because if they do not accept my kingship, they will not accept my decrees. Likewise, Hashem said to Am Yisrael (Shemos 20:2): "Anochi Hashem Elokecha" – I am He Whose kingship you accepted...and as you accepted My Kingship, accept My decrees."

Emunah is also the basic fundamental upon which the avodah of tefillah is based, and that is why it is so important to delve into it before davening. As the Mesilas Yesharim says (Ch. 19): "If someone who has wisdom, with a bit of deeper perusal and attention, he can determine in his heart the truthfulness of it, how he literally negotiates with Hashem Yisbarach, and pleads before Him and asks from Him, and Hashem listens to his words, as a person speaks to his friend, and his friend listens to him."

Due to the importance of emunah in the building of a Jewish life, the sages instituted that we say the lofty piyut of Yigdal Elokim Chai at the beginning of the day. It includes the 13 Principles of Faith that the Rambam listed in Peirush Hamishnayos, in the introduction to Perek Chelek. (Tosafos Yom Tov in Ma'amar Hahoda'ah Vehaskanah, printed at the beginning of sefer Orchos Chaim)

Some communities had a practice to say this piyut only on Shabbos, and not during the week. Seder Hayom (Tefillas Mussaf of Shabbos) writes that it was customary to say it each Shabbos after Mussaf. The sefer Yafeh Lalev (Vol. V, 268, 2) writes that it was customary to say it each Friday night. Harav Pinchas of Koritz also only recited this piyut on Shabbos. (Midrash Pinchas Hashalem, Shaar Seder Hayom, Nuschaos Hatefillah 65)

Who Authored This Piyut

There are a number of opinions as to who authored Yigdal. Some attribute it to the songster Rabi Shlomo Ibn Gvirol. However, others claim that this is not possible, because it is based on the 13 Principles of Faith, established by the Rambam, who lived in a later period. Others attribute it to the Rambam, and yet another opinion is that the writer is a sage named Rabi Yechiel bar Rabi Baruch. They write that it is possible that this sage alluded to his name at the end of the piyut: "מתים יהיה אל ברוב חסדו ברוך". Yet another widespread opinion, cited in ancient siddurim, attribute this piyut to the early sage named Rabi Daniel bar Rabi Yehuda Dayan. (Siddur Hayaavetz, before Yigdal and in the introduction to Shir Hayichud; Siddur Avodas Yisrael, p. 154; Tikkun Tefillah in Siddur Otzar Hatefillah p. 52; Mavo Lamachzor Bnei Roma, p. 44)

This piyut was included in the siddurim many hundreds of years ago, and Rabi Chaim Vital wrote (Sha'ar Hakavanos, Aleinu Leshabeiach and Nusach Hatefillah) that the Ari Hakadosh did not recite it because it is not based on Kabbalah. The Yaavetz, in his siddur (ibid) writes that the sages did not say this piyut because there are new descriptions included in it.

In contrast, the Shelah Hakadosh (Sha'ar Ha'osiyos, Os Aleph, Emes V'emunah) calls it "Hashir Hameshubach," and expounds on it at length. Harav Avraham Dovid of Buczacz

wrote (Eshel Avraham, 492) that he began to say it after the Shelah Hakadosh, who was proficient in the secrets of Torah, and had extensive knowledge of Kabbalah, printed it in his siddur, Siddur Sha'ar Hashamayim and explained it at length. The sefer Eleph Hamagen on Mateh Ephraim (584, 13) wrote that each person should conduct himself as is accepted in his place.

It is interesting to note that the declaration of connection that the Mekubalim of Yerushalayim signed between themselves in 5514 states that if one of the members should become very ill, they should say with him, among all the tefillos and Viduy, also this piyut "because it is very mesugal to lose those who come to sway him with evil faiths, chalilah." (Igros Vehaskamos Hachida, p. 124)

13 Principles in 13 Verses

The special essence of this piyut is in the fact that its 13 verses allude to the 13 Principles of Faith – which are the fundamentals of emunah, established by the Rambam. They are:

1. Metzius Hashem
2. Achdus Hashem
3. Eino Guf [He is not a body]
4. Hashem is first and last
5. Only Hashem is worthy of serving
6. All the words of the Nevi'im are true
7. Moshe Rabbeinu was a human being of the highest caliber
8. Torah is from Shamayim
9. Torah will never have a replacement
10. Hashgachah
11. Reward and punishment
12. The coming of Mashaich
13. Tchiyas Hameisim

One who believes in these fundamentals is included as a "Yisrael", and it is a mitzvah to love him and treat him in accordance with all the mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro, between man and his fellow man, even if he sins a lot. But someone who does not believe one of these fundamentals is not included in Klal Yisrael, and he is called a min and an apikores, a heretic. (Peirush Hamishnayos L'Rambam, Sanhedrin, Introduction to Perek Chelek)

It should be noted that most siddurim today have the 13 Principles of Faith clearly listed at the end of Shacharis, but perusal of ancient siddurim shows that the takanah of reciting Yigdal preceded reciting the 13 Principles. (See Menuchas Shalom, Vol. III, 16)

'It's a Mitzvah to Pursue Knowledge of Them'

The Ramchal, at the beginning of his sefer Da'as Tevunos, writes regarding the 13 Principles of Faith: "Every person must pursue knowledge of them, as much as he can understand." Indeed, knowledge of the principles is very important, especially in light of the well-known words of Harav Chaim of Brisk. He says that in contrast to the other mitzvos of the Torah, if a person does not know one of the mitzvos, even if this brings about a void in his knowledge, he is not called a heretic and he is considered part of Klal Yisrael. In contrast, every single person must know the 13 Principles of Faith, and one who does not know one of the principles is considered a min who is excluded from Yisrael, and even if he does not openly deny them chalilah. (Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBeis Levi, p. 190)

In the coming segments we will try, b'eizras Hashem, to touch on just a little bit of the deep lessons of this piyut, and they will hopefully provide some insights to help us understand its meaning and connect to it. Understanding the meaning of words are very important in reaching the objective of the piyut, as the sefer Yosef Ometz states (Dinei Tefillah 60): "It is customary to say Yigdal after every tefillah in the lands of Ashkenaz, because it is a praiseworthy song based on the 13 principles of our faith. Therefore, it is good to learn its explanation carefully and to say it with kavanah."

Mesirus Nefesh for Bentching that Saved Lives

A trip from Monsey, New York to Baltimore, Maryland, is quite an undertaking. On normal days it takes between three and a half to four hours. But it is an easy drive, with wide, smooth highways and frequent rest areas where travelers pull over, find something to eat, fill their cars with gas and even have some recreation in the public parks that are usually part of the rest areas.

Early one afternoon, Reb Dovid and his family, residents of Monsey, set out on the trip to Baltimore. They had a lot of relatives in Baltimore, and they made the trip relatively often.

A wedding of a cousin was scheduled for that evening in Baltimore, and they wanted to be there early, for the chuppah, so that they could leave early and head for home. As a result, they left Monsey at around midday.

In retrospect, this turned out to be a wise decision, because for some reason the traffic was unusually heavy for that hour of the day. After two and a half hours of driving, the Waze reported that they still had another hour and forty minutes to go, so they had no choice but to stop at the nearest rest area for a break and some fresh air.

They pulled out a bag from the trunk with sandwiches and personal drink bottles for each member of the family. One of the children volunteered to go and find a sink with a cup so they could wash. Things took time, and it got so late that Reb Dovid suggested to his family that when they washed and made Hamotzi they should have in mind to finish their meal in the car, and to be able to bentch as they continued traveling.

After washing and eating a kezayis, they family got back into the car, and Reb Dovid began to drive quickly. In the meantime, his family finished their meal.

A few minutes later, when they wanted to bentch, they realized that they had forgotten to take with them a siddur or bencher in order to be able to bentch inside from the text. Reb Dovid urged them to look in every possible place, because he was generally strict that they should bentch inside. But their search turned up nothing.

Quite some time before, Reb Dovid and his family had committed to saying Birchas Hamazon from the written text. Would they have to change their longstanding practice?! I turned out that they did not! One of the family members remembered that it is brought down in the name of gedolim that when a person finds himself in a place without a siddur that he can bentch from, he should make the effort to write down the whole nusach of Birchas Hamazon on a paper, and then to bentch from that. This is to ensure that he does not miss out on meeting his commitment even once.

Reb Dovid stopped on the shoulder and took out pens and papers from the glove compartment. The older children volunteered to each write down part of Birchas Hamazon.

Within a few minutes, they had the entire nusach written in full. They then passed the sheaf of papers from hand to hand, one after another, and each one was able to bentch from the text they had written.

By the time they all finished, they could already see the city of Baltimore in the distance. The family smiled at one another with satisfaction. It was not every day that they had the opportunity to be moser nefesh for such an important practice, and to recite Birchas Hamazon from the text.

The hour for the chuppah was fast approaching, and Reb Dovid tried to speed up a bit, hitting the speed limit. There was fast paced music playing in the background, but suddenly, the pleasant atmosphere was cut off with a jolt, a loud boom and the noise of shattering glass.

It took the passengers in the car less than a second to realize that they had been involved in a serious car accident – a multi-car crash. Reb Dovid and his wife looked back in alarm, and bechadsei Shamayim were happy to see that at first glance, everyone seemed alright. Somehow, they managed to extricate themselves from the car, and when they were standing on the sidewalk, they were amazed to see that, miraculously, they had all emerged unscathed. The car had sustained a few bad dents.

Only then could they look around and grasp the tremendous miracle they had experienced. Indeed, five vehicles had been involved in the collision, two in front of them and two behind. By nature, their car should have sustained the worse of the impact – which it had – but unbelievably enough, the passengers and driver had emerged unscathed.

If that was not enough, the cars in front and behind them looked totaled, in contrast to their car, which was even drivable. Rescue forces began arriving on the scene, and started extracting the passengers from the other cars. There were ten casualties, with various injuries, two of whom were taken to the hospital in serious condition. Reb Dovid and his family were astonished as they huddled on the shoulder of the road and began to recite Mizmor Lesodah for their wondrous salvation.

It was clear to them all why they merited this miracle: it was in the merit of their extra effort just a few minutes earlier to adhere to their practice of saying Birchas Hamazon inside the text. But after they recovered from their trauma, Reb Dovid remembered the explicit promise of the Ateres Zekeimim: "One who says Birchas Hamazon from the written text, with kavanah and care, wards off many troubles and calamities, lo aleinu."

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