

פרשת אמר

"you shall not defile my holy name and I shall be sanctified among the children of Israel. I am Hashem who sanctifies you".

From this Pasuk we learn the obligation to sacrifice one's life to sanctify the name of Hashem. Our Rabbis teach us that whoever is killed because he is Jewish goes straight to Gan Eden.

We also learn from this Pasuk the obligation for one to pray with a Minyan of ten people (how this is learnt from this Pasuk will be explained shortly).

What is the connection between dying על קידוש ה' to sanctify Hashem's name, and praying with a Minyan that they are derived from the same Pasuk?? The Shulhan Aruch says that a person is supposed to pray with such intense devotion that his physical body practically leaves him! Praying must be an "out of body" experience, where a person connects himself with his creator to the point where he does not even feel his physical being! The Baal Shem Tov explains this from the Pasuk that says "תפילה לא-ל חיי" - "Tefilah to Hashem is my life". The prayer to Hashem should be so strong that it literally takes your life! "תפילה לא-ל חיי"!

This is called "stripping oneself of his physicality". Through our prayer we become like a Korban-sacrifice, which is totally sanctified to Hashem and is sacrificed on the altar. A Korban is first stripped of its hide in a process called הפשטה. This is comparable to the stripping of our physicality that we are supposed to strive for as we pray. This is another meaning of the statement in the Gemarah that says: "תפילות כנגד תמידין תקנום" - "the prayers were established to reflect the sacrifices". The intent is that just like a sacrifice, we are to sanctify ourselves and remove our physicality at the time of prayer.

This was personified by Yishak Avinu. He was a human sacrifice to sanctify Hashem, and embodied all the holy intentions that come with it. This explains why we recited the נקדישך in the middle of the Berachah of מחיה המתים. Why was this Berachah specifically chosen to insert the Kedusha?? We now understand that, Kiddush Hashem and sanctifying Hashem's name through giving one's life, is personified by Yishak Avinu. At the time that he was bound on the alter he was so connected to Hashem that he literally lost connection with his body, and was in the Shamayim! When Hashem told Avraham *not* to sacrifice his son, Yishak had to come back down to his body and this was a case of תחית המתים. Yishak was brought back from the dead! For this reason, we recite נקדישך which stands for sanctifying Hashem's name during the Berachah of תחית המתים, to commemorate Yishak's sanctifying Hashem's name by leaving this world then coming back to life!

One of the Kavanot we should have in mind during the נקדישך is that we are fulfilling the positive commandment to sanctify Hashem's name "ונקדישך בתוך בני ישראל".

The Importance of Praying With a Minyan

"אמר ר' יוחנן בשעה שהק"ב בא בבית הכנסת ולא מצא עשרה מיד הוא כועס, "R' Yochanan says: at the time when Hashem enters a synagogue and does not find ten men he immediately becomes angry. As it says; why I have come and there is not a man?! I have called but no one answered!"

We see from this statement the severity of praying with a Minyan. Hashem immediately gets angry with us if there is no Minyan!

What is it about a Minyan that causes Hashem to get so angry when there isn't one?!

One explanation is based upon the connection between the 13 attributes of mercy of Hashem, and the 13 principles of Rabbi Yishmael

through which the Torah is expounded. We have learnt that each one of the 13 Midot corresponds with each one of the 13 principles of Rabbi Yishmael.

For example, the first attribute of mercy is א-ל. The first principle is קל וחומר. This means that whenever we come across a קל וחומר (a fortiori logical argument) in the Gemarah we are accessing the attribute of א-ל, which stands for דון of Hashem, as it says; "חסד א-ל כל היום".

This is illustrated in the story of Miriam when she spoke about Moshe Rabeinu. Hashem told Moshe: "had she been scolded by her father, wouldn't she have been banned to appear for seven days?! All the more so she should be banned for seven days since she is being scolded by me!" This constituted a קל וחומר. When Moshe heard this, he prayed א-ל נא רפא "א-ל נא. He asked that Hashem, in the name of א-ל should heal her. Once Hashem "tipped him off" through the קל וחומר, he knew which name of Hashem to address in his prayer.

Another example of this connection is through the 13th principle and attribute. The 13th attribute is ונקא (and will be absolved). This is connected with the 13th principle שני כתובים המכחשים זה את זה עד שיבא הכתוב השלישי "two contradictory Pesukim that a third Pasuk comes and clarifies between them".

What is the connection between ונקא and the 13th principle of Rabbi Yishmael??

The Pasuk says "ונקה לא ונקא"(literally; he will be absolved he will not be absolved). The question is, which one is it?! Will he be absolved or not be absolved?! The Gemarah explains that for one who *does* Teshuvah he will be absolved, for one who does *not* do Teshuvah he will not be absolved. This Pasuk of ונקא לא ונקא is an example of "2 conflicting Pesukim" and is the 13th principle of Rabbi Yishmael. This is the connection between ונקא and the 13th principle of Rabbi Yishmael of "2 conflicting Pesukim".

In this case, the obligation to pray with a Minyan is learnt from this Pasuk through a שוה גזרה, a common word found in several Pesukim. The word תוך in "ונקדישך בתוך בני ישראל" and the word "מתוך העדה" written by Korah connects our Pasuk to that one. The word עדה from the Pasuk of

Korah and the word עדה in a Pasuk by the spies connect those two Pesukim, and through this “double connection” we learn that just like the evil spies consisted of ten men, so too the obligation of a Minyan to sanctify Hashem’s name consists of ten men. This is a גזירה שוה, and is the second principle of Rabbi Yishmael. What is the second attribute of mercy of Hashem? רחום (merciful). We say "והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית והרבה להשיב" "אפו" - “the merciful one will forgive iniquity and not destroy, he will *frequently turn away his anger*” we see from here that the aspect of רחום-mercy is what “turns away” the anger of Hashem.

We now understand that when we do not form a Minyan- and thereby utilize the גזרה שוה that is the source of praying with a Minyan- we thereby forfeit the corresponding Middah of רחום-mercy. Once we do not have the mercy of Hashem ח"ו, this causes the anger of Hashem to be unleashed ח"ו, and this is why when Hashem comes to shul and does not find a Minyan "מיד הוא כועס"-he immediately becomes angry!

We also see in another respect, “רחום” representing the mercy of Hashem overtaking the judgment of Hashem, from a line in the song אדיר "רחום כהלכה" sung at the end of the Hagadah Shel Pesah. It says "רחום כהלכה" Hashem is merciful “like the Halacha”. What is the meaning of being merciful “like the Halacha”? The explanation is that the “right” of Hashem represents Kindness (חסד), the “left” of Hashem represents judgment (דין), and the “middle” represents a combination of the two (תפארת). The mixing of kindness and judgment creates an even greater level of kindness. When it comes time for a decision, it comes out that there are two factors in favor of the kindness of Hashem (חסד and תפארת), and only one in favor of strict judgment (דין). The Halacha states יחיד ורבים הלכה כרבים (majority wins) so Hashem judges us favorably in accordance with the Halacha. This is the meaning of he is “רחום (merciful) like the Halacha”. This is another example of the word רחום being used to represent avoiding Hashem’s anger and enjoying Hashem’s kindness, and when the גזרה שוה is not utilized by not having a Minyan, we lose this protection of רחום that a גזרה שוה represents.

The Benefit of Praying With a Minyan and the Power of Kaddish

The Gemarah (Berachot 3a) brings a story of R' Yossi once entered a ruin. Eliyahu Hanavi waited for him at the entrance of the ruin. When R' Yossi emerged, Eliyahu asked him; "what did you hear"? I heard a heavenly voice saying "woe to the sons because of whose sins I destroyed my house, burned my temple and exiled them to the nations" answered R' Yossi. Eliyahu responded "by your life, and the life of your head! It is not only at this moment that Hashem says this, but on each and every day he says this three times! Not only this, but when the Jewish people are in synagogue and answer "Amen Yehe Sheme Raba" in Kaddish, Hashem shakes his head and says; "אשר המלך שמקלסין אותו בביתו כך" – "fortunate is the king who is praised this way in his house. What is there for the father who has exiled his sons?! Woe to the sons who have been exiled from their fathers table".

Let us analyze this incident of the Gemarah. Three times daily Hashem bemoans the fact that his children forced him to exile them, but when the Jews answer Amen Yehe Sheme Raba, Hashem rejoices in his children's praise, and feels anguish over the fact that he had to exile us. What is it about Amen Yehe Sheme Raba that makes Hashem say this?? Why is precisely when the Jews answer "Amen Yehe Sheme Raba" the time when Hashem feels anguish over our exile?!

Tosafot quotes a commentary of Machzor Vitri which explains that the Amen Yehe Sheme Raba is a prayer that Hashem's name should be lengthened to its full form. In exile Hashem's name is "shortened" and it is only יה- (as the Pasuk says regarding Amalek [which represents the exile] כי יד על כס-יה). We pray that his name יה- should be lengthened (שמ-יה רבה, the name יה- should be; רבה- lengthened) and increased to be in its full form of יה-וה. This entails the addition of ו-ה to the current name in the Galut of יה-. We also see this hinted in the first few words of Kaddish. "יתגדל ויתקדש שמיה רבה" the words ויתגדל ויתקדש contain 11 letters alluding to the ו-ה (which equals 11) that we pray should be added to the יה-, the

current name of Hashem. The word שם-י-ה comprises the words ש-י-ה. We pray that the name י-ה should be "be increased" to incorporate the ו-ה, and complete the name of Hashem.

It is now clear why Hashem says "אשרי המלך" - "praised is the king who is praised like this" when the Jews answer Amen Yehe Sheme Raba. The word אשרי comprises the first letters of רבה שמייה יהא. It is at that moment when Hashem feels sorrow over the fact that his name is incomplete due to the exile. When we answer Amen Yehe Sheme Raba, and pray that Hashem's name becomes increased to its full form, it triggers this reaction of Hashem, and Hashem then desires to fulfill the wishes of his children and increase his name by ending the exile!

With this we have another understanding of why we need ten men to form a Minyan. In reality a Minyan consists of eleven, not ten. Who is the eleventh?? It is Hashem himself! As mentioned, Hashem himself comes down and joins the Minyan, and if there is no Minyan Hashem asks "מדוע" "why have I come and there is no man?!" The ten men plus Hashem total eleven, and eleven is the numerical value of ו-ה. The Ramban in Bereshit explains; that sometimes an action is required in this world in order to trigger a miracle that will happen in Shamayim, and will manifest itself on earth at a later time (this is why Avraham stopped in the city of Shechem, he knew that Shechem would be the first city the Jews would encounter when they were going to conquer the land of Israel. He did an action to cause a miracle for the Jews at a later time). Like this idea of the Ramban we too do an action on this world- we gather ten men plus Hashem to form eleven - in order to trigger a miracle from above that the eleven (ו-ה) should be brought back down to Hashem's name!

This answers a question that is asked about the Ketoret (incense offering). One of the eleven spices used in the Ketoret is the חלבונה (galbanum). It is a foul smelling spice but is still an integral ingredient. From here the Rabbis learn that even a Rasha- a Jew with no good deeds that is "foul smelling" can still be a part of a Minyan.

to recite Kaddish, and request that Hashem's name be increased by answering the Amen Yehe Sheme Raba!

This is why David Hamelech began Tehilim with the words אשרי האיש - "fortunate is the man". David was alluding to this power that we have through answering Amen Yehe Sheme Raba. The word אשרי stands for אמן יהא שמיה רבה and איש stands for יהא שמיה רבה. By answering Amen Yehe Sheme Raba with the proper concentration and longing for the name of Hashem to be complete through the redemption, we cause a reaction in the Shamayim and bring closer the גאולה!

May we merit having this focus, and appreciating how special it is to pray with a Minyan, and how powerful it is to answer "Amen Yehe Sheme Raba". With this we will have the proper concentration in our prayers, and connect to Hashem thereby bringing the ultimate redemption. Amen.