



עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

**מרדכי מלכא**

**רב ואב"ד עיה"ק אלעד ת"ו**

**יו"ר ועדת סת"ם העולמית**

**הרבנות הראשית לישראל**

**לשכת הרבנות הראשית אלעד. ראש העין. הרצליה**

**בד"צ אלעד\*בתי הוראה\*שרותי דת\*רישום נישואין\*כשרות\*מקואות\*עירובין**

**The office of Rabanoot Eled – in hesd of Rabbi MORDECHAI MALKA**

### **Parashat Vayeilech – Shabbat Shuvah**

#### **Overlooking Transgression Has a Special Effect on the Day of Judgment**

In the *haftara* for Shabbat Shuvah, Hoshea says (*Hoshea perek 14*), "Return Israel, to Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled in your sin; Take words with you and return to Hashem; say to Him, 'May you pardon all sin and take good, and let our lips be in place of bulls.'"

What is the Navi's intention, "take words with you and return" and "say to Him, 'May you pardon all sin'" and "take good, and let our lips be in place of bulls." How can words atone for transgression?

#### **The Prayers of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva**

We will begin by quoting the words of the Gemara in *Masechet Taanit 25b*, "The Rabbis taught: There was an incident with Rabbi Eliezer who decreed 13 fasts on the congregation but rain still did not fall. The final time, the people started to leave. He therefore said to them, 'Have you set up graves for yourselves?' All the people started to cry, and rain fell. There was another incident with Rabbi Eliezer who went to lead the prayers. He recited 24 blessings but was not answered. Rabbi Akiva went to lead the prayers after him, and said, 'Our Father our King, we have no other King besides for You. Our Father our King, for Your sake take mercy upon us.' And the rain fell... A Heavenly Voice rang out and said, 'It is not because this one is greater than that one; rather, it is because this one overlooks what was done to him and this one does not.'" One could ask that our Sages state in *Sanhedrin 68a* that, in fact, Rabbi Eliezer **was** greater than his disciple Rabbi Akiva in Torah. Additionally, in *Bava Metzia 59b*, our Sages relate that it was in Rabbi Eliezer's power to decree that supernatural events occur, and that Hashem actually fulfilled that which he decreed! If so, once we have seen the greatness of Rabbi Eliezer in Torah and his prowess in miracle working, how could it be that the prayers of his student were accepted more readily than his? [See *Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer*, 17:41 who asks this question in the name of the *Kohelet Yitzchak*.]

#### **Explanation of R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l**

R' Yisrael Salanter answers that we actually find a similar discrepancy between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel*. It is known that Shammai was strict in his approach, while Hillel was patient and lenient. Shammai, in his holiness, felt that the Will of Hashem was for him to act strictly and not to pardon any slight to the honor of the Torah. However, *Beit Hillel* thought differently. They also disagreed when it came to overlooking wrongdoings. However, our Sages have stated that "Both these and these are the words of the Living G-d." Certainly *Beit Shammai* will receive the same Heavenly reward for acting strictly as *Beit Hillel* will for acting leniently. Rabbi Eliezer who, as is known, was a student of *Beit Shammai*, upheld this path completely. His teacher had taught that strictness was the proper path, and this was adhered to by Rabbi Eliezer. However, Rabbi Akiva was from the disciples of *Beit Hillel*. He therefore upheld their path of overlooking wrongdoings. Therefore, is it possible to say that Rabbi Akiva was a greater *tzaddik* than Rabbi Eliezer, since he exemplified the trait of leniency? Heaven forbid. It was just that in this specific case, there was a need to overlook the sins of the Jewish people in order for rain to fall. Therefore, Rabbi Akiva's prayer was accepted more readily, because anyone who overlooks others' wrongdoings, has his own sins overlooked. This was the intention of the Heavenly Voice, "It is not because this one is greater than that one; rather, it is because this one overlooks what was done to him and this one does not." So explained R' Yisrael Salanter.



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#### The Benefit of Overlooking Wrongdoing

We could add an explanation of our Sages' words (*Rosh Hashanah* 17a), "Said Rava: Anyone who overlooks wrongdoing, all of his sins are overlooked..." It is furthermore stated (ibid. 17b), "And Hashem passed over his face, and he called out." Said Rabbi Yochanan: If the *pasuk* was not written, it would be impossible to say it; this teaches that Hashem wrapped Himself like a *shaliach tzibbur*, and He showed Moshe the order to prayer. He said to him, 'Any time that the Jews sin, they should do before me like this order of prayer, and I will forgive them. [- The Gemara continues,] 'Hashem, Hashem – I am He before man sins, and I am He after man sins and repents. 'Kel Rachum ve'Chanun, A Merciful and Sympathetic G-d.' – Said R' Yehudah: There is a covenant forged for the 13 Attributes of Mercy that they do not return empty..." Rashi explains that the explanation of "One who overlooks" is one who does not exact vengeance against those who distress him. Rather, he simply leaves. Rashi explains that when the Gemara states that such an individual's sins are overlooked, it means that the Attribute of Strict Judgment is not exacting with him. Rather, it leaves him be. We can also point out that the words of our Sages are "they should **do** before me like this order of prayer, and I will forgive them." Why do our Sages not say "they should **say** before me"? After all, we are speaking here about the 13 Attributes of Mercy which are recited!

#### Measure for Measure Has the Most Special Effect

I therefore think that the Sages' intention is not that the recital of the Attributes is the main thing; rather, they must **do** it, by overlooking what was done to them. By doing so, they merit having Hashem overlook their sins. This is because Hashem wants us to imitate His attributes, as our Sages teach, "[Hashem says,] Just as I am merciful, so too, you should be merciful..." Therefore, when an individual forgives and pardons another, as opposed to seeking revenge, the mouths of the prosecuting angels are sealed. After all, he, himself, has overlooked all the distress that they have caused him. How then can Hashem, as it were, claim anything from him and not overlook his sins? Therefore, we see that this is the greatest way to be meritorious in judgment. The words of R' Yisrael Salanter are thereby understood, for even though Rabbi Eliezer was greater than Rabbi Akiva, however, when an individual overlooks what was done to him, Hashem does not refuse him. This is not because he is greater; rather, it is so that it does not appear as if the individual overlooks what others have done to him, but Hashem does not act similarly, Heaven forbid. Therefore the prayer of Rabbi Akiva was accepted.

I found that this idea was similarly stated in the *Rokeach* (*Hilchot Yom HaKippurim*, siman 214), *Rabbeinu Yonah's Shaarei Teshuvah*, as well as in the *Mishnah Berurah* (606:8) who writes, "An individual should not be cruel and refuse to forgive. For all those who overlook wrongdoing have their transgressions overlooked. However, if he does not wish to forgive, they will also not forgive him." The *Shaar Hatziyun* explains that this is even if someone intentionally wronged him. If he nevertheless forgives him, he will be forgiven even for intentional transgressions. This is as the Gemara states, "Whose sins are overlooked? The one who overlooks wrongs that were perpetrated against him."

#### The Sefer Chareidim on Overlooking Wrongdoings

The *pasuk* states (*Michah* 7:18), "Who is a G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression." The *Sefer Chareidim* writes that when he hears all those who disgrace him publicly, he pictures a scale before him. On one side are his sins, on the other side, the disgraces and insults. He imagines that the side with the sins is quite low, and he therefore remains quiet, accepting and affirming his suffering. He similarly does so for every form of misfortune, whether it be perpetrated



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by word or deed. He writes that we see that it is easy for an individual to accept upon himself every disgrace, if he knows that he is preventing himself property loss, for example, by fire or other ways. How much more so does this apply if he knows that this will prevent him from experiencing bodily suffering which is more severe? From here he can learn to be patient when he stands opposite another who is disgracing him. He will not find it difficult. He continues to write that how much more so does this apply when he knows that because of this they will forgive him for all of his sins, and even for those that are called "*pesha*." Our Sages say in Yoma 36, that "*pesha*" refers to sins that were committed rebelliously. This, then, is what our Sages mean when they say that Hashem forgives one who overlooks wrongdoings [*pesha*]. In other words, Hashem will, in turn, forgive him even if he committed *pesha'im*, rebellious sins. This is as the *pasuk* states, "*ma'avirin lo al kol pesha'av*, they overlook all of his *pesha'im*."

#### Navi's Advice to "Take Words With You"

According to this, we can understand the Navi Hoshea's words, "Take words with you and return to Hashem, for you have stumbled in your sin." His intention is to advise man to make use of the greatest means available after he has sinned and needs atonement. The advice is to overlook other's wrongdoings and say that you forgive all those who hurt you. Hashem will act measure for measure and forgive him. Therefore specifically during the *Neilah* prayer, each person should sincerely say that he totally forgives everyone who hurt him, whether physically, monetarily, or if he slighted his honor. By doing so, we will all merit a *gmar chatima tovah*. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom

Rav Mordechai Malka