



BASED ON THE OHR HACHAYYIM HAKKADOSH

They said, one to another, "But—*aval*—we are guilty..." (42:21)

"But" What?

FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS, YOSEF'S BROTHERS had lived in a reality where they had not only been justified in selling Yosef, but had actually been *obligated* to do so!

For twenty-two years, they had batted away any guilty feelings they might have had with the excuse, "But he deserved it!"

For twenty-two years, any notion of repentance had been suppressed by the thought, "But we had to do it!"

However, explains Targum Onkelos, the Hebrew word *aval*—which definitely can be translated as "but"—has another definition: "Indeed."

That is to say, when all their excuses fell away, when all the dust had settled and the all the smoke had cleared, all that remained was the unvarnished truth. And once the truth was made abundantly clear to the perpetrators of the crime, and they recognized the *midah k'neged midah*, the poetic justice, in the way they were now being treated by the Egyptian Viceroy, they were ready to do a complete repentance.

And so, while they were being psychologically tortured by *Tzofnas Pa'aneiach* (Pharaoh's chosen title for Yosef), as every rationale melted away, and as every justification in their mind was halted in its tracks, they were forced to shift the *aval* from the middle of their thoughts ("It may not have been pleasant to rid ourselves of our brother, but

we had to do it..." to the beginning ("Indeed, we are guilty!"). They finally came to do *t'shuva* (repentance). Their eyes had been opened and they were ready to repent.

However, essential to the *t'shuva* process is verbally admitting one's sin.

So what stark, naked truth were they now admitting to?

...We saw his sincere anguish as he beseeched us, but we didn't listen! That's why this distress has come upon us." (42:22)

That's what their mistake had been? Is there not perhaps a more obvious problem here—namely, that they had sought to kill him? Or that they had sold him into slavery? Granted, not having mercy as they heard their brother's cries was bad, but that certainly pales in comparison to what they actually did!

By how far did they miss the boat!

However, interestingly enough, the thought never crossed their minds. They still did not feel that they had done anything wrong!

How so?

S'forno, in explaining the confounding story of the sale of Yosef by his holy brothers, uses this very question to prove that this wasn't merely a silly sibling squabble that had gotten blown out of proportion; this was a battle for the future of the Jewish Nation itself! Would

the brothers have any part to play in the building of the Jewish People, or would history continue as it had until then, specifically, that of illustrious fathers figuratively winnowing the grain from the chaff?

Avraham had begotten two sons; Yishmael had been thrown out, while Avraham's mission had been passed down to Yitzchok. Yitzchok in turn had begotten two sons; Eisav hadn't measured up, while Yaakov had been entrusted with carrying out his father's and grandfather's holy work. And now it seemed that history was about to repeat itself! The rest of the *Sh'vatim* (the progenitors of the Twelve Tribes) were in danger of being cut out of Yaakov's precious inheritance, leaving only Yosef!

Nor did Yosef endear himself to his brothers when he seemed to attempt to cement this vision in Yaakov's eyes by bearing evil tales about them. Yosef was pursuing them—trying to spiritually strangle them!

There was but one choice! Yosef was immediately judged and sentenced to death. Or, rather, sold into slavery.

However, in this moment, twenty-two years later, the brothers asked themselves: Did they have to be so cruel about it? After all, he was their brother! They could have at least taken a page from Yosef's mother's book, she had

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No Problem... CONTINUED

been willing to give up a future with the Jewish People in order to spare her sibling (Leah) from suffering in shame! And while they were deciding what to do with him, did they really need to leave him in a hot, dusty pit filled with venomous creatures? And to sit down to lunch while he was still crying out to them?

Never had it crossed their minds that what they ended up doing was wrong. In fact, they knew it could not be so—after all, Reuven wasn't associated with the sale, and yet here he was, being punished alongside the rest of them!

But this was precisely the problem, and Yosef found himself in a dilemma: They had not yet achieved complete recognition of their sin, so his dreams could not yet be fully fulfilled.

So Yosef let his charade play itself out, over many more months. Although his brothers had bowed to him, they still needed to fully grasp what they had done and do complete *t'shuva*. They needed to say "Indeed, we are guilty," for what their sin had actually been. 🕊

At the Kollel

Chavrusos are available

for private and group learning—
speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!

weekdays: noon–1
Sunday–Thursday: 8–9:45

Minyanim for Standard Time

Shacharis

Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM

Mincha

Sunday *thru January*1:15 PM
Mon.–Thurs. *thru January*2:35 PM
Sunday–Thurs., *Feb.–Mar.*5:45 PM
Shabbos2:45 PM

Ma'ariv

In the Beis Midrash:

Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM

Chanukah
at
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Every Day

🕊 "Dirshu" Gemara Shiur

(Maseches B'choros)

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....

Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM

Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🕊🕊 Kollel Yisgaber K'ari

(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....

Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🕊🕊 Kitzur Shuchan Aruch

Live video conference!

Rabbi Dani Schon.....

Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🕊 Daf Yomi

Rabbi Meir Minster.....

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Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🕊🕊 Nightly Halacha Chabura

Rabbi Dani Schon

& Binyamin Teitelbaum.....

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Rabbi Dani Schon

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Grand Deluxe breakfast served

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Tuesday

🕊🕊 Partners in Torah

at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🕊🕊 Torah Treasures for

Seniors at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🕊🕊 Downtown Lunch-n-

Learn at Strauss & Troy

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Thursday

🕊🕊 Halacha based on the parasha

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM

Homemade refreshments served.

KEY: 🕊 Beginners

🕊 Intermediate

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🕊 for men and women