MA'ALOT FOOTSTEPS THROUGH THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

Limmud

There is a parable of a king's son who had gone astray from his father – a hundred days' journey. His friends said to him: "Return to your father." He replied: "I cannot, I have not the strength." Then his father, the king, sent messengers to say to him: "Come back as far as you can, according to your strength, and I will go the rest of the way to meet you." God is the king who says to Israel: "*Return to Me, and I will return to you*" (Malachi 3:7).

***Pesikta Rabbati* A, 44:16**

Apologies are not pass/fail. I always told my students: when giving an apology, any performance lower than an A really doesn't cut it. Half-hearted or insincere apologies are often worse than not apologising at all because recipients find them insulting. If you've done something wrong in your dealings with another person, it's as if there's an infection in your relationship. A good apology is like an antibiotic; a bad apology is like rubbing salt in the wound.

Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow, *The Last Lecture* (2007)

Source 2.9
We have sinned

מחזור לימים נוראים וימי צום, אבינו מלכנו

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, חָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אָתָּה.
[...]
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, סְלַח וּמְחַל לְכָל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, מְחֵה וְהַעֲבֵר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, מְחוֹק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ כָּל־שִׁטְרֵי חוֹבוֹתֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, הַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
[...]
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, קַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, פְּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי שָׁמַיִם לִתְפִלָּתֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, נָא אַל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ רֵיקָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, זְכוֹר כִּי עָפָר אֲנָחְנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, תְּהֵא הַשָּׁעָה הַזֹּאת שְׁעַת רַחֲמִים,
וְעֵת רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
[...]
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא
שֶׁנִּקְרָא עָלֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, חָנֵּנוּ וַעֲנֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וָחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

High holyday and fast day liturgy, Avinu Malkenu

Our Father, our King, we have sinned against You.

Our Father, our King, we have no king but You.

[...]

Our Father, our King, forgive and pardon all our iniquities.

Our Father, our King, blot out and remove our transgressions and sins from Your sight.

Our Father, our King, erase in Your abundant mercy all records of our sins.

Our Father, our King, bring us back in perfect repentance to You.

[...]

Our Father, our King, hear our voice, spare us, and have mercy on us.

Our Father, our King, receive our prayer with mercy and favour.

Our Father, our King, open the gates of heaven to our prayer.

Our Father, our King, please do not turn us away empty-handed from Your presence.

Our Father, our King, remember that we are but dust.

Our Father, our King, may this hour be an hour of mercy, and a time of favour with You.

[...]

Our Father, our King, act for the sake of Your great, mighty and revered name by which we are called.

Our Father, our King, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no worthy deeds of our own; deal with us in charity and lovingkindness, and save us.

Translation: Immanuel Jakobovits, *Authorised Prayerbook*

Points to consider

Does Avinu Malkenu ask God to forgive our sins or to forget them? Does it inspire us to improve our future behaviour?

Which extracts from Avinu Malkenu might you use in an apology to another person?

Is no apology sometimes better than a bad apology? Can the same be said of repentance?