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Chaim

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date: Sep 13, 2021, 2:01 PM

subject: Rabbi Sacks on Yom Kippur | Download your inspiration here

Yom Kippur – How It Changes Us

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

To those who fully open themselves to it, Yom Kippur is a life-transforming experience. It tells us that God, who created the universe in love and forgiveness, reaches out to us in love and forgiveness, asking us to love and forgive others. God never asked us not to make mistakes. All He asks is that we acknowledge our mistakes, learn from them, grow through them, and make amends where we can.

No religion has held such a high view of human possibility. The God who created us in His image, gave us freedom. We are not tainted by original sin, destined to fail, caught in the grip of an evil only divine grace can defeat. To the contrary we have within us the power to choose life. Together we have the power to change the world.

Nor are we, as some scientific materialists claim, mere concatenations of chemicals, a bundle of selfish genes blindly replicating themselves into the future. Our souls are more than our minds, our minds are more than our brains, and our brains are more than mere chemical impulses responding to stimuli. Human freedom – the freedom to choose to be better than we were – remains a mystery but it is not a mere given. Freedom is like a muscle and the more we exercise it, the stronger and healthier it becomes.

Judaism constantly asks us to exercise our freedom. To be a Jew is not to go with the flow, to be like everyone else, to follow the path of least resistance, to worship the conventional wisdom of the age. To the contrary, to be a Jew is to have the courage to live in a way that is not the way of everyone. Each time we eat, drink, pray or go to work, we are conscious of the demands our faith makes on us, to live God's will and be one of His ambassadors to the world. Judaism always has been, perhaps always will be, counter-cultural.

In ages of collectivism, Jews emphasized the value of the individual. In ages of individualism, Jews built strong communities. When most of humanity was consigned to ignorance, Jews were highly literate. When others were building monuments and amphitheatres, Jews were building schools. In materialistic times they kept faith with the spiritual. In ages of poverty they practised tzedakah so that none would lack the essentials of a dignified life. The sages said that Abraham was called ha-ivri, "the Hebrew," because all the world was on one side (ever echad) and Abraham on the other. To be a Jew is to swim against the current, challenging the idols of the age whatever the idol, whatever the age.

So, as our ancestors used to say, "Zis schver zu zein a Yid," It is not easy to be a Jew. But if Jews have contributed to the human heritage out of all proportion to our numbers, the explanation lies here. Those of whom great things are asked, become great – not because they are inherently better or more gifted than others but because they feel themselves challenged, summoned, to greatness.

Few religions have asked more of their followers. There are 613 commandments in the Torah. Jewish law applies to every aspect of our being, from the highest aspirations to the most prosaic details of quotidian life. Our library of sacred texts – Tanakh, Mishnah, Gemarra, Midrash, codes and commentaries – is so vast that no lifetime is long enough to master it. Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, sought for a description that would explain to his fellow Greeks what Jews are. The answer he came up with was, "a nation of philosophers."

So high does Judaism set the bar that it is inevitable that we should fall short time and again. Which means that forgiveness was written into the script from the beginning. God, said the sages, sought to create the world under the attribute of strict justice but He saw that it could not stand. What did He do? He added mercy to justice, compassion to retribution, forbearance to the strict rule of law. God forgives. Judaism is a religion, the world's first, of forgiveness.

Not every civilization is as forgiving as Judaism. There were religions that never forgave Jews for refusing to convert. Many of the greatest European intellectuals – among them Voltaire, Fichte, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer,

from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>

Nietzsche, Frege and Heidegger – never quite forgave Jews for staying Jews, different, angular, countercultural, iconoclastic. Yet despite the tragedies of more than twenty centuries, Jews and Judaism still flourish, refusing to grant victory to cultures of contempt or the angel of death.

The majesty and mystery of Judaism is that though at best Jews were a small people in a small land, no match for the circumambient empires that periodically assaulted them, Jews did not give way to self-hate, self-disesteem or despair. Beneath the awe and solemnity of Yom Kippur one fact shines radiant throughout: that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He believes in us more than we believe in ourselves. He never gives up on us, however many times we slip and fall. The story of Judaism from beginning to end is the tale of a love of God for a people who rarely fully reciprocated that love, yet never altogether failed to be moved by it.

Rabbi Akiva put it best in a mere two words: Avinu malkenu. Yes, You are our sovereign, God almighty, maker of the cosmos, king of kings. But You are also our father. You told Moses to say to Pharaoh in Your name: “My child, my firstborn, Israel.” That love continues to make Jews a symbol of hope to humanity, testifying that a nation does not need to be large to be great, nor powerful to have influence. Each of us can, by a single act of kindness or generosity of spirit, cause a ray of the Divine light to shine in the human darkness, allowing the Shekhinah, at least for a moment, to be at home in our world.

More than Yom Kippur expresses our faith in God, it is the expression of God’s faith in us.

From: Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

Date: Tue, Sep 14, 2021 at 7:36 PM

Subject: Yom Kippur 5782

tidbits for Yom Kipur

Kol Gavoah

in memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz z"l

Erev Yom Kippur

An abridged version of Selichos is said. During Shacharis, Mizmor L’soda, Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun and Lamenatzei’ach are all omitted.

The Minhag of Kapporos should be performed with proper concentration and thoughts of Teshuvah. Ma’aser funds should not be used.

One should immerse in the Mikveh. Some say to immerse oneself 3 times, while others say 7. It is best to go to the Mikveh after one hour prior to midday, but before Mincha.

One should Daven Mincha on Erev Yom Kippur before the Seudah Hamafsek, so that the Viduy of Mincha is recited prior to the Seudah Hamafsek. A woman who will not be Davening Mincha should still recite the Viduy independently.

There is a Mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. Rabbeinu Yonah provides three reasons: 1) To display our Simcha over our coming atonement. 2) A Seudah on Erev Yom Kippur substitutes for the Seudas Yom Tov that we obviously cannot have. 3) To give one strength for the fast.

One who isn’t thirsty and drinks water just for hydration should not make a Berachah.

There is no obligation to wash and eat bread at this Seudah.

The Seudah Hamafsek takes place anytime after Mincha. There is a custom to eat Kreplach at this meal. Preferably, one should speak out (or at least have in mind) before saying Birchas Hamazon that he will continue eating after Birchas Hamazon.

The home should be prepared and cleaned as it would be for Shabbos, with a tablecloth set on the table. One should dress in Shabbos clothing, yet the attire should reflect the tone of the day. Some have the minhag to wear white garments and to not wear (yellow) gold items.

Parents should bless their children before setting out to Shul.

A 24-hour candle is lit to be used for the Havdalah flame on Motzaei Yom Kippur. Many have the Minhag to light a Ner Neshama, due to Yizkor. One should remember to fulfill his Yizkor Tzedakah pledges. Some have the Minhag to have a lit candle in their bedroom as well (“Gezunte Lecht”).

One should don his Tallis prior to Shekiah, as the Berachah on the Tallis may not be recited once evening falls. Most wear a Kittel as well. There is Mitzvah D’oraisah to add to the day of Yom Kippur by accepting the day of Yom Kippur upon oneself a bit earlier

Yom Kippur

Restrictions:

Eating and Drinking. Pregnant women, kimpeturin, the elderly etc. must seek the guidance of a competent halachic authority and not be lenient with their health, nor with Yom Kippur. Children, when appropriate, should be trained in this Mitzvah of fasting by not eating at night and delaying breakfast in the morning.

Washing. One may wash until his knuckles: upon awakening, after relieving oneself, touching shoes or a covered part of the body. One need not be overly cautious to keep the water below the knuckles. If an area becomes soiled, one may wash off the area; however, regarding washing away perspiration, one should be stringent. A Kohen prior to Birchas Kohanim and those not fasting who wish to eat bread, should wash their hands entirely.

Anointing. This includes any soap, oil, cream, cosmetics etc. Some include deodorant in this category.

Leather Shoes. The Minhag is to be stringent with children as well.

Marital Relations. Some add that one should practice Harchakos as well.

Yom Kippur has the same status as Shabbos regarding the prohibition of carrying and cooking. No preparations may be done on Yom Kippur for after Yom Kippur, including food preparations.

Viduy, confessing our sins in repentance, is a Mitzvah D’oraisah. A proper Teshuva is completed by regretting one’s sins, confessing sins through Viduy, resolving to move away from sinful behavior, and to avoid sinning in the future. One must seek forgiveness from anyone he may have wronged. There is a practice in many communities to express verbally that one forgives anyone who may have wronged him. This expression is included in many versions of Tefillas Zaka.

Rabbi Zlotowitz z”l would say over that on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, the holy Kohen Kadol would enter the holiest place on earth, the Kodosh Hakodashim and recite a short Tefillah and Daven that Klal Yisroel should have sufficient Parnasah (Yoma 53b). While one may consider some requests mundane, every Tefillah to Hashem is recognition that He is in control. By praying even for the minor things we acknowledge that we must beseech Him for everything, as there exists no other entity or avenue to depend on.

To achieve the daily 100 Berachos, many have the practice of reciting a Beracha on Besamim from time to time. Alternatively, many include Berachos made by the Aliyos to the Torah in the daily count (when one pays attention and answers Amein to them).

Motzei Yom Kippur

Most have the Minhag to recite Kiddush Levana immediately after Maariv. (The final opportunity for Kiddush Levana this year is the first night of Succos.)

As always, one may not eat or drink before Havdalah, with the exception of drinking water. One should recite Baruch Hamavdil before drinking water or doing any other Melachah. Generally, a woman should wait to hear Havdalah from a man, if possible.

Havdalah includes Borei Me’orei Ha’eish, and must be recited over a “Ner She’shavas”, a flame which was kindled before Yom Kippur (The original flame may be used by placing an additional candle and wick inside or by kindling the Havdalah candle from this flame). A Beracha over Besamim is not made.

There is a praiseworthy Minhag of beginning to build the Sukkah after Yom Kippur so as to go immediately from one Mitzvah to the next (obviously, one must take care not to disturb a neighbor’s peace when doing so). Some say that alternatively one can learn Hilchos Sukkah. Helping one’s wife prepare for Yom Tov is, in fact, also considered a Mitzvah.

There is a custom to Daven Shacharis a bit earlier in the morning following Yom Kippur. Tachanun is omitted in the days between Yom Kippur and Succos.

For the Erev Yom Kippur Table

Unlike the rest of the year, on Yom Kippur we recite “Baruch Sheim Kevod Malchuso” aloud. The Yalkut in Parashas Acharei Mos explains that on Yom Kippur, Klal Yisroel are like angels as they go barefoot, without food and drink and other restrictive practices. One may wonder, wouldn’t it be logical to continue reciting Baruch Sheim aloud at Maariv after Yom Kippur, once we have been thoroughly purified from the day?

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin z”l, explains that immediately upon accepting Yom Kippur and all the practices, we attain the lofty levels which in turn enables us immediately to recite Baruch Sheim aloud. On Motzaei Yom Kippur however, when these obligations have already been relaxed, we are no longer fully committed, thus no longer are we on this level. This power of a firm resolve and true commitment to change and improve is immediately effective, even before the desired spiritual goal is reached. Through recommitting ourselves to be better people to others and to Hashem may we merit to attain lofty levels and a G’mar Chasimah Tova.

Please reach out to us with any thoughts or comments at: klalgovoa.org

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subject: Yom Kippur: Complete Teshuvah

Rav Kook Torah

Yom Kippur: Complete Teshuvah

Chanan Morrison

The focus of the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is on teshuvah — return and repentance. We recite the Avinu Malkeinu prayer during this time of introspection and self-examination, asking God:

אָבֵינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ הַיְיָ יְיָנוּ בְּתַשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ!

“Our Father, our King, return us in complete teshuvah before You!”

When is teshuvah full and complete?

Healing the Source

We can understand this phrase better in light of the request that immediately follows: “Our Father, our King! Send complete healing to the sick of Your people.”

What is “complete healing”? Often we are only able to alleviate the patient’s external symptoms. The true source of the illness, however, remains unknown or is untreatable. Such a treatment is only a partial healing. When we plead for complete healing, we are praying that we may succeed in discovering the source of the illness and completely cure the patient. Such a comprehensive treatment will result in full restoration of the patient’s health. The same concept holds true for teshuvah. If we address a particular fault, we are really dealing with a symptom of a much larger problem. Correcting a specific sin is only partial teshuvah. When we ask for God’s help in attaining “complete teshuvah,” we seek a comprehensive teshuvah that corrects the root source of our various sins and character flaws. Such a complete teshuvah will restore our spiritual wholeness.

Elevated Perception

How does one attain complete teshuvah? In his book *Orot HaTeshuvah*, Rav Kook explained that this teshuvah is based on an elevated outlook on life and the world:

“The higher level of teshuvah is based on holy enlightenment and a penetrating perception of the beauty of Divine providence. This [elevated teshuvah] is the source and foundation for the lower teshuvah that corrects deeds and refines traits. The basis for elevated teshuvah is none other than the foundation of Torah, in all of its roots and branches.” (15:6)

“Teshuvah that is truly complete requires a lofty perception — an ascent to the rarified world that is replete with truth and holiness. This is only possible

by delving into the depths of Torah and Divine wisdom, to the mystical secrets of the universe....

Only the higher [mystical] Torah can remove the iron barriers that divide the individual — and society as a whole — from our heavenly Father.” (10:1) (*Silver from the Land of Israel*, pp. 72-73. Adapted from *Mo’adei HaRe’iyah*, p. 66)

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Dvar Torah Yom Kippur:

How can we rejoice when our fate is in the balance?

How can we rejoice at the very moment when our fate is in the balance?

This is exactly what happens on Yom Kippur. At the very time when, on this great Day of Judgment, Hashem is sealing our fate for the coming year, we have simcha!

Yom Kippur is a Yom Tov because we are optimistic that Hashem will respond to our prayers and bless us with a good new year.

The Chatam Sofer highlights how, when we say our confession on Yom Kippur, when we say, “Ashamnu, bagadnu...” — “We have been treacherous against You God, we have sinned...” — we chant these words in all our shuls with a lovely melody! We are happy, even at that moment. The Chatam Sofer explains that this is because we’re confident that Hashem will respond positively to our prayers.

We need to maintain this sense of joy that we experience on Yom Kippur well beyond this holy day. Rabbi Chaim Volshansky z”l very creatively compared the path that we are on at this time of year to the journey of a spiritual space ship: The month of Elul in which we blow the shofar every day – that’s the count down. On Rosh Hashanah we have lift-off, and on Yom Kippur we reach our destination, the greatest possible spiritual heights. But when it comes to the journey of the spaceship, there is one critical factor that still remains, and that is re-entry.

So many things can go wrong as the spacecraft makes its journey back into the earth’s atmosphere towards terra firma here on earth. And similarly, we need to concentrate as well on what’s going to happen after Yom Kippur, our re-entry back into a normal way of life.

So how do we make our re-entry after Yom Kippur? It’s through the festival of Succot. On Succot we express our continued deep trust in Hashem and our wonderful relationship, a spiritual connection with our Creator, to appreciate the privilege we have to carry out mitzvot but most importantly of all, to rejoice. The prime mitzvah of the festival is:

“Vesamachta bechagecha vehayita ach sameach,” — “You shall rejoice on your festival and you shall be exceedingly happy.”

That rejoicing on Yom Kippur is continued through Succot and from Succot hopefully through to the rest of the year.

So we are indeed joyous on Yom Kippur at the very time when our fate is being sealed for the coming year and, through Succot, that joy will be carried on right through the year. For we shall forever be joyous because of the privilege we have to be Jewish and the daily opportunities we have to carry out the extraordinary mitzvot which enhance and beautify our lives so much. I wish you all chatima tova, a good fast and a happy new year.

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

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subject: Weekly Torah Message From Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

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Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message Yom Kippur 5782-2021

“Smashing the Golden Calves”

(updated and revised from Yom Kippur 5764-2003)

Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

Virtually all the holidays and festivals of the Jewish calendar revolve around important events in Jewish history. Passover commemorates the exodus from Egypt, Shavuot marks the day—the 6th of Sivan—when the Torah was given at Sinai, Chanukah and Purim celebrate the salvation of our People from the Syrian Greeks and from Haman, Rosh Hashana marks the creation of the world. But what historical event is associated with Yom Kippur, the 10th of Tishrei?

Our rabbis connect the observance of Yom Kippur with the sin of the Golden Calf.

As you may recall, when G-d appeared at Mt. Sinai the Jewish people in unison roared the historic statement of commitment (Exodus 24:7): נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע, “We will do and we will understand.”

Unfortunately, while Moses was yet on the mountaintop preparing to deliver the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the Jewish people forget their pledge, and fashioned for themselves a Golden Calf before which they sang and danced wantonly, calling out (Exodus 32:8): אֵלֶּהָ אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, “This is your god, O Israel.” On his way down from the mountain, Moses sees what the people have done, and due to great disappointment and anger, casts the tablets to the ground and smashes them. Our rabbis (Talmud Shabbat 87a), maintain that the text implies that G-d even complimented Moses for that act saying: יִישַׁר כִּכְהֵן שִׁשְׁבַּרְתָּ, “Congratulations for breaking the tablets, because they have no value to a nation that worships a Golden Calf.”

According to tradition, the sin of the Golden Calf was recalled once again when the people of Israel sinned when the scouts returned with the evil report about the land of Israel. There, the narrative in the Torah tells of G-d informing Moses of His desire to once-and-for-all “finish off” the Jewish people. Moses, however, pleads successfully before the Al-mighty on the people’s behalf, invoking the special formula of the “13 attributes of G-d’s mercy,” to which G-d responds (Numbers 14:20): סְלַחְתִּי כְּדַבַּרְךָ, “I have forgiven as you have requested.”

Tradition (Midrash Tanchuma, Kee Tee’sah 31), maintains that when G-d had finally yielded to the pleas of Moses and forgiven the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf, He instructed that this day (the tenth of Tishrei) be designated as a “Day of Atonement” for all future generations, and the formula for forgiveness used for the Golden Calf be the formula used through all generations.

Of all the sins of the Jewish people, the sin of the Golden Calf is considered by all to be the most contemptuous in G-d’s eyes, a sin that will always be remembered.

If that’s the case, what was the decisive argument that Moses used to persuade G-d to forgive the people?

Our rabbis in tractate Yoma 86b, state that Moses, in part, blamed G-d for the peoples’ sin, claiming that the Al-mighty had given the Jewish people too much gold and silver, even after the people had said “enough.” This midrash is based on the odd name of a location in the wilderness where the people encamped. The rabbis maintain that the exact place where the Golden Calf was built was called דֵּי זָהָב —“Dee Zahav,” (Deuteronomy 1:1) which is a play on the Hebrew words דַּי —“dai” enough, and זָהָב —gold, enough gold, that is!

It is quite unusual that in Exodus 20, immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments is recorded, G-d tells Moses to warn the Jewish people: (Exodus 20:20) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּ לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּ לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, “You shall not make with Me, gods of silver and gold, you shall not make for yourself.” It seems as if the Al-mighty knows only too well that He must warn the Jewish people not to be seduced by the gold and silver for which they, like many people, have a great propensity.

Unfortunately, we are well aware of the many Jews who were raised in religious homes who were simply unable to resist the seductive powers of the marketplace, and the desire for gold and silver. They consequently abandoned their observance of Shabbat and Jewish rituals in order to make the extra buck. For them, that was their Golden Calf.

Of course, a Golden Calf, need not be gold, it can assume the form of any attraction or distraction from the path of Torah. A Golden Calf can be any “ism” such as communism, socialism, capitalism, or feminism. A Golden Calf may be anything that diverts a Jew from the goal to be (Exodus 19:6), מִמְלִכַת כֹּהֲנִים, וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ, a kingdom of priests and a holy people. Golden calves can even be cloaked in the guise of activities and efforts for achieving universal good or universal redemption. Unfortunately, even these idealistic causes may turn out to be distractions from achieving our sanctified goals. It was in response to Moses pronouncing the 13 attributes of G-d’s mercy that the Al-mighty answered סְלַחְתִּי כְּדַבַּרְךָ, “I have forgiven them, as you [Moses] have requested.”

And so it is entirely appropriate that on Yom Kippur we take stock of those “Golden Calves” that regularly lure us away from our ultimate goal of living righteous lives—lives dedicated to the values of Torah and loving-kindness, lives that radiate love of G-d and love of humanity; lives that will lead us individually to achieve ultimate goodness and peace, and collectively to achieve tranquility and world peace.

G’mar Chatima Tova.

May you be blessed.

Please note: Yom Kippur will be observed this year on Wednesday evening, September 15th through nightfall on Thursday, September 16, 2021. Have an easy and meaningful fast. May we all be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life, and may all our prayers be answered favorably.

The first days of Sukkot will be observed this year on Monday evening and all-day Tuesday and Wednesday, September 20, 21 and 22, 2021. The intermediary days [Chol HaMoed] are observed through Monday, September 27th. On Monday evening, the festival of Shemini Atzeret commences, and is celebrated on Tuesday, September 28th. The final day of the festival, Simchat Torah, begins on Tuesday evening, September 28th and continues through Wednesday, September 29th.

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>

date: Sep 10, 2021, 11:34 AM

subject: Rabbi Reisman’s Chumash Shiur

Rabbi Reisman –

A Thought on the Yemai Hadin

As we prepare for Shabbos Shuva – Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech and the upcoming Yom Hadin. Let me begin by sharing a message which is a Pshat in a Chazal but a very appropriate message for Shabbos Shuva. The Gemara says in a few places – in Bava Metzia 114b (6 lines from the top) among them, (אתם קרויין אדם) that Klal Yisrael is given the title of Adam. Adam literally means man. Adam Harishon was the first man. (אתם קרויין אדם). The Gemara in Yevamos 61a (2nd line from the top) that brings this says that it is a Posuk (ואתן צאני צאן מרעיית אדם אתם). What does that mean that every human being is called Adam, is called a human being. We all are descendants of Adam Harishon. Every human being has a Tzelem Elokim. What does it mean that (אתם) the Jewish people (קרויין אדם), somehow the title (אדם) is more appropriate?

I saw a Yesod in the Pardes Yosef in the beginning of Sefer Vayikra in 1:2. The Pardes Yosef deals with the idea that we find numerous names for a human being. Adam, Ish, we find other names like Gever or Gavra but primarily Adam and Ish. He explains the difference between the two. Ish means a person, a human being, a man. Ish is a language of Adnu, of superiority, of master. (אישי כהן גדול) the Mishna says in Yoma 1:5. my (אישי). Or as Shlomo Hamelech said in Mishlei 22:7 (וְאִישׁ מִלְנָה לְאִישׁ מִלְנָה). Someone who borrows money is something of a servant to the master, the (מְלָנָה). So that Ish is a language of being a master, of being superior.

Adam on the other hand is not an Eved and not an Ish. Adam is somewhere in between. Adam stands on his own. Adam Harishon was alone, the only human being in the world when he was called Adam Harishon. He didn’t have any superiority or inferiority to any other human being. He was the only human being. Once Chava is created, as it says in Beraishis 3:16 (וְיִשְׁלָהּ יְהוָה, יְמִישְׁלָהּ).

בְּ) there are already two creatures in the human race, then we already find the expression Ish or Isha once there are more than one. The point being, that Adam is a sense of independence of a person who lives a life not based on everyone around him, not based on superiority to others or catching up to others, but Adam on being a man sort of free standing with his values as opposed to an Ish who depends on others.

In the physical world in Olam Hazeh all values, all goals, all of the Taivos and desires that people have are dependent on other people. There aren't really objective levels of wealth or pleasure, they are very subjective. What is a big house? What is a nice house? It depends. Big like many rooms? It is relative. It comes a Yom Tov and people go to hotels and they squeeze themselves into a few rooms because somehow that is considered a level of superiority.

Shlomo Hamelech says in Koheles 4:4 (וְאֵת כָּל-בְּשָׂרוֹן (הַמְעֵשֶׂה כִּי הִיא) קִנְיָת-אִישׁ, מְרַעְהוּ) I see all the hard work and all the actions that people take, (כי היא) it is all based on jealousy. If not outright jealousy then at least by comparing. What does it mean that you are wealthy? How much money do you have to have in the bank? What does it mean that you have to have a car or two cars or a new car? It only depends on the people around you. Look around, if you live in a community where people don't have cars you are fine. If you look around and people have cars then you need cars.

I know one young man who came from Eretz Yisrael. He said it is funny. In Eretz Yisrael we don't need a car and when we come to visit the United States by the time we are on the Belt Parkway we need two. Because really the values that people have for the most part when it comes to the physical, when it comes to things, when it comes to style of living, when it comes to what you want to eat it is all relative. It all depends on the people around you, on the community on which you choose to live, the friends you choose to have and the goals that they have.

One young man told me I have to have a summer home. Everybody has a summer home. Well it depends who you choose to have as your friends. It depends on who you associate with. Then it becomes a necessity. That is the world of Eved and Ish. Ish the master and Eved the one who is chasing after him. The world of Adam (אתם קרויין אדם) the world of Torah, the world of Tefilla. We all know having a meaningful and Geshmake Davening has nothing to do with anybody else, it is a value in and of itself. We all know a good Seder, learning with a Geshmake, finishing a Masechta or a Perek of Tanach, that Geshmake has nothing to do with other people. (אתם קרויין אדם). Adam the independent man. A man who stands for something. That (אתם קרויין אדם) is all tied to Ruchnios.

Rav Yaakov once said it says in Beraishis 48:20 (בְּךָ יִבְרַךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאָמֵר, יִשְׁמַךְ) (אֲלֵקִים קָאָפְרִים וְכַמְנֵשָׁה חֲכָב"ה said that Jewish people will bless their children that they should be like Ephraim and Menashe. But it doesn't say what Middah of Ephraim and Menashe is it that singles them out. Do we know much about the Middos of Ephraim and Menashe? Rav Yaakov says yes we know one thing. We know that they grew up in Mitzrayim and they didn't follow the people around them. To judge what is important, what matters in life didn't depend on people around them. Had it depended on it they never would have become Ephraim and Menashe. The other Shevatim had other members of the family to give them Chizuk. Ephraim and Menashe stood on their own two feet. They proudly said this is what I need and this is not what I need. (אתם קרויין אדם). You are called a man. (אתם קרויין אדם). When you stand on your own, when you have your own values. Take a look in English in the secular world you say to someone, "Be a Man." What does that mean, be a man? It means assert yourself. It is a sign of strength, of power, of arrogance. Be a man. That is an Ish.

By us we say to our children, be a Mentsch. What does it mean be a Mentsch? It means have kindness, humility, consideration for others. Be a Mentsch, that is an Adam. (ואתן צאני צאן מרעיתי) חֲכָב"ה says. You are my flock. (אדם אדם). Don't look at the people around you. Strive for greatness, strive for value, based on Ruchnios.

Incidentally that may be why Adam is never found B'lashon Rabim. Ish becomes Anashim. Adam is always Adam, it never changes into a Lashon

Rabim. No matter what it stays only Lashon Yachid. The power is the Yechidus of Adam. That is how we stand on the Yom Hadin in front of the Ribbono Shel Olam (כבני מרון) as individuals. As individuals we have to have our own values.

from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com>

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subject: Aish.com Daily

Book of Jonah

(source: "The Bible for the Clueless But Curious,"

by **Rabbi Nachum Braverman**)

I always loved the story of Jonah and the whale. Why do we read it during the afternoon service of Yom Kippur?

The Aish Rabbi Replies:

Let's recap the story: God tells Jonah to go to Ninveh and to prophesy that in 40 days, God will destroy the city. Instead, Jonah goes to Jaffa, boards a ship, and sails for Tarshish. A great storm arises. Frightened, Jonah goes to sleep in the ship's hold. The sailors somehow recognize that Jonah is responsible for the storm. They throw him overboard, and the sea becomes calm.

A great fish swallows Jonah. Then three days later, God commands the fish to spit Jonah back out upon dry land. God tells Jonah, "Let's try it again. Go to Ninveh and tell them in 40 days I will destroy the city."

The story is a metaphor for our struggle for clarity. Jonah is the soul. The soul is assigned to sanctify the world, and draw it close to God. But we are seduced by the world's beauty. (Jaffa in Hebrew means "beauty.") The ship is the body, the sea is the world, and the storm is life's pains and troubles. God hopes confrontation with mortality will inspire us to examine our lives. But Jonah's is the more common response - we go to sleep (have a beer, turn on the television). The sailors throw Jonah overboard - this is death. The fish that swallows Jonah is the grave. Jonah is spat back upon the land - reincarnation. And the Almighty tells us to try again. "Go sanctify the world and bring it close to God."

Each of us is born with an opportunity and a challenge. We each have unique gifts to offer the world and unique challenges to perfect ourselves. If we leave the task unfinished the first time, we get a second chance. Jonah teaches us that repentance can reverse a harsh decree. If the residents of Ninveh had the ability to correct their mistakes and do teshuva, how much more so do we have the ability to correct our former mistakes and do teshuva.

from: Aish.com Weekly Parsha <newsletterserver@aish.com>

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Kol Yaakov

by **Rabbi Boruch Leff**

Based on and inspired by Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg zt"l

Status as a Symbol

The topics of repentance and Yom Kippur need not be all fire and brimstone. There is much about repentance that is positive, inspiring, and meaningful.

Maimonides writes:

"Each and every person has merits and transgressions. Whoever has more merits than sins is called a tzaddik - a righteous person. Whoever has more sins than merits is called a rasha - a wicked person. If someone has half and half, he is called a bainoni - a person in the middle. This applies to entire countries as well. If the merits of all of a country's inhabitants are more numerous than its sins, the land is called righteous, and if it has more sins than merits, it is called wicked. This applies to the entire world as well." (Laws of Repentance 3:1)

Rambam continues:

"A person who has more sins than merits will "miyad" (normally translated as "immediately," but we will discuss this point later) die as a result of his wickedness, as the verse states, "I have struck you ... because your sins were

so many" (Yirmiyahu 30:14). Similarly, a country who has a majority of sins over merits will be destroyed "miyad" as it says (regarding Sodom), "The outcry against Sodom and Gemmorah is great" (Bereishit 18:20). The same is true regarding the entire world. If the whole world has more sins than merits, it is wiped out "miyad," as it states (regarding the Flood), "God saw that the evils of mankind had increased greatly" (Bereishit 6:5). (Laws of Repentance, 3:)2

There are a number of questions on the Rambam that we must ask:

Why do we need both of these paragraphs? Don't they both say the same thing? The key is whether you have more merits than sins or vice versa and this gives you the status of righteous or wicked? Why the seeming repetition?

The proof from Sodom appears to be a non-proof because if you continue in that verse it says: "I will descend and see if the outcry that has risen to Me has brought destruction and if not, I will know" (Bereishit 18:20). This indicates that Sodom was not wiped out immediately after it had more sins than merits. Rather, God was first evaluating if Sodom would be destroyed even though they had already earned the status of the wicked. What then do we make of this "proof"?

We encounter the same problem regarding the verse of the Flood cited by Rambam. God does see "that the evils of mankind had increased greatly" (Bereishit 6:5) but He doesn't bring the Flood until much later, after Noach is commanded to build the ark which took 120 years (see Rashi 6:14) to build. How is this a proof that God punishes right after the world becomes laden with a majority of sins when it shows the opposite?

There is the famous question asked by many: We know many wicked people that live long lives. If indeed the procedure is that God exacts punishment as soon as a person has more transgressions than merits, how could it be that these wicked people continue to live, year after year? And has there never been, since the time of the Flood or Sodom, a country (or even the whole world) that didn't have more sins than merits? Yet, we have not seen such countries become destroyed.

Finally, Rambam himself writes further on (Laws of Repentance, 3:3) that God evaluates each individual's sins and merits every Rosh Hashanah and whoever is found to be a rasha - wicked - is "sealed for death," but he does not say that a rasha dies immediately. So how could he write differently here?

Due to all our questions, we must understand Rambam as follows. There are two points being made. In 3:1, Rambam is describing a person's status and reality of relationship with God. You are a tzaddik if you have mostly merits, with or without justice being carried out and with or without reward and punishment. You are defined as a rasha, a wicked person, whether God judges you with death and destruction or not.

In 3:2, Rambam describes the evaluation and judgment of those who have earned their individual descriptions in 3:1.

Judgment and the administering of justice do not happen on a constant basis. There are certain set times when God judges. One time of justice is after death, as Rambam describes later in Chapter 3. Another is on Rosh HaShanah. There are specific sins which bring about a judgment (see Talmud Brachot 55a with Rashi). Other times, God is drawn to judge and evaluate a person for reasons known only to Him. But just because a person is wicked by status does not mean he will be judged in the near future. And even if he is judged, he will die, as Rambam says, "miyad" which unlike popular opinion, does not mean immediately, but inevitably or necessarily. The death and destruction will occur when God has decided the proper time. But it does not happen immediately. First, a judgment must arise and then the punishment is determined but that punishment can take a long time to occur.

Concerning the Flood and Sodom, they had been called wicked for a period of time before God judged them and even then it was "an outcry" or specific injustice in Sodom (as with the Flood - see end of Parshat Bereishit for the story of the immoral relations between specific men and women that occurred then) that brought about its judgment. It took some time for the "miyad" and inevitability of the justice and destruction to present itself.

This may very well be the explanation as to why we haven't seen a nation become destroyed very often. God chooses not to sit in judgment against them, albeit they have the status of being wicked. As far as the entire world is concerned, God's promise to Noach (Bereishit 8:31) related this very idea. He made an oath that no matter how wicked the world would become in terms of status, He would never again sit in judgment over the entire world.

So, there are two concepts. There is justice, reward, and punishment and there is the status of being righteous or wicked. But what difference does the status make? We will see that it makes all the difference in the world.

Rambam writes:

"How great is repentance! It brings one close to God's Divine Presence... Yesterday, the sinner was hated by God, dirty, disgusting, abominable, distant, and today he is beloved, close, and a true friend of God's... Yesterday, he was separated from God... He would cry out and pray without being answered... He would perform commandments and they would be ripped up... But today, he is attached to God, he calls out and is answered immediately... He fulfills the commandments and they are accepted with great joy...and God desires his Mitzvot!" (Laws of Repentance 7:6-7)

Repentance not only saves one from punishment but it re-creates a strong bond between God and the one who is repentant. It transforms you from being called wicked, having your prayers ignored and your Mitzvoth deflected, to being called righteous and being a friend of God's. And who can ponder the amount of things one can accomplish if they are God's friend? The amount and power of Divine assistance one receives to accomplish all of one's goals would be immeasurable.

One need not only ponder reward and punishment when struggling with the approach of Yom Kippur and repentance. A main motivating factor should be the relationship and status one has in God's eyes. Does He view you as wicked or righteous? Are you beloved to Him or despised?

Nobody wants to be called wicked, especially by God. Repentance and the atonement of Yom Kippur restore our righteous status, as long as we do our part to repent sincerely.

from: Daily Halacha <return@email.dailyhalacha.com>

date: Sep 13, 2021, 3:01 AM

subject: Learning Torah on Yom Kippur Night

The Rabbi Jacob S. Kassin Memorial Halacha Series

Authored by **Rabbi Eli J. Mansour** (9/13/2021)

Dedicated Today In Memory Of Yona bat Ester A"H

by Friends and Family

Description: **Learning Torah on Yom Kippur Night**

Although one should generally refrain from reading Tehillim or other portions of Tanach at nighttime, this is permissible on the night of Yom Kippur, as the night and the day of Yom Kippur have the same status. This is mentioned by the work Hemdat Yamim.

The Hemdat Yamim further notes that there is a custom among especially pious people to remain awake throughout the night of Yom Kippur learning Torah, because one hour of Torah study on the night of Yom Kippur is more valuable than a year's worth of Torah learning. However, one should not adopt this practice if it will hamper his ability to properly pray the next day. It often happens that people follow stringencies which compromise their ability to observe basic Halacha, and this can happen in regard to Yom Kippur, as well. I know people who decided to stay up all night learning on Yom Kippur, and because of this they were falling asleep during the prayer service and could not pray with any sort of concentration or feeling. If one knows that remaining awake throughout the night will hamper his ability to pray the next day, it is much preferable for him to spend some time learning at night and then go to sleep.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) writes that if one generally keeps a glass of water by his bed at night in case he gets thirsty during the night, he should not do so on Yom Kippur night, as he may mistakenly drink during the night, forgetting it is Yom Kippur.

The Gemara mentions a brief text that one should recite before going to the

restroom, asking the angels to wait for him while he goes into the restroom. Throughout the year, this text should not be recited, because unlike in the times of the Gemara, we are not on the level where we can assume that angels are accompanying us, and it would thus appear arrogant to recite this text. On Yom Kippur, however, when we resemble the angels – and thus we recite "Baruch Shem Kebod Malchuto Le'olam Va'ed" aloud, like the angels – we may, indeed, assume that we are accompanied by angels. Therefore, one should recite this declaration quietly before going into the restroom on Yom Kippur. This is the ruling of the Ben Ish Hai in his work *Od Yosef Hai* (Vayeseh, 4). The text is: "Hitkadebu Mechubadim Kedoshim Mesharteh Elyon Shamruni Shamruni Azruni Hamtinu Li Ad She'ikanas Ve'eseh Shen Darkam Shel Beneh Adam."

Summary: Torah study is especially valuable on Yom Kippur night, and therefore one should spend time learning Torah on this night. It is permissible to read Tehillim and study other parts of Tanach on Yom Kippur. There are those who stay awake the whole night learning, but one should not follow this practice if this will hamper his ability to pray properly the next day. One should recite the "Hitkadebu Mechubadim" text before using the restroom on Yom Kippur, as opposed to the rest of the year, when this text should not be recited.

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>

date: Sep 14, 2021, 11:01 AM

subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 09/14/2021

by **R. Gidon Rothstein**

Mabit's Sha'ar Ha-Teshuvah, Chapters 13-18: Levels of Ease and Efficacy of Teshuvah for Various Population ...

Chapters thirteen and fourteen support a view of Mabit's we could spend a lot more time pondering than we have space: he is certain teshuvah works differently for non-Jews than for Jews, is primarily for Jews, although it helps non-Jews a bit. Midrashic sources say the world was created for the Jewish people to accept the Torah, existed for the twenty-six generations until the Giving of the Torah only by Gd's hessed, unjustified goodness to the world.

To Mabit, if the goal of creation was the Jews' relationship with Torah, there was no need or point in hoping for non-Jews' change. He also assumes only souls of the Jewish people were carved out from under the Throne of Glory, a whole other topic in Jewish thought, whether Jews are essentially different from non-Jews, and not our issue now.

He points out a contrast between how *nevi'im*, prophets, address Jews and non-Jews; they call for Jews to repent, where they just prophecy the future for non-Jews. Even Yonah, sent to Nineveh—twice—does not explicitly call for them to repent, he only announces what is currently planned. The people of Nineveh have no confidence changing their ways will change their fate, as the verse has them say *mi yode-a im yashuv me-haron apo*, who knows if He will relent from His righteous wrath.

With Yom Kippur coming, any reference to the book of Yonah perks up our ears, yet I am going to leave it now, because Chapter Fourteen expresses the dichotomy in a way with more immediate value for understanding teshuvah in a way that helps us get closer to repenting fully. He has taken a position I personally do not, non-Jews are less able to change deeply, and therefore are less expected to change in those ways .

The Mass of Mitzvot Can Be a Help

In chapter fourteen, Mabit gives more teeth to the distinction: repentance helps Jews in this world and the next (remember, he was adamant just the fact of repentance already restored a Jew's full righteousness, although s/he likely had a spiritual debt of sin to repay), where it only helps non-Jews in this world. A Jew who repents has already re-earned his/her place in the World to Come, where a non-Jew who repents will have successfully removed Gd's immediate wrath, but does not thereby earn a place among the *hasidei umot ha-olam*, who do receive a share in the World to Come.

(It took me several readings before I got this: he does accept that non-Jews who are "righteous of the nations" will have a share in the World to Come,

he just doesn't think the bare fact of repentance gets them there, where the bare fact does put a Jew back in the World to Come, as we have seen.)

He offers three reasons for the difference: first, Jews were commanded to repent, so their repentance is itself fulfillment of a mitzvah, merits them a place in the World to Come. Second, and what he spends more time explaining, Jews have so many more mitzvot, the idea of perfection is less plausible. There had to be a way for Jews to rectify when they go wrong, because it was inescapable in such a law-heavy world.

As opposed to non-Jews, to whom Gd commanded only very basic rules (another topic of its own, the nature of the Noahide laws, on which I once spent what I considered a productive few months). Their minimal legislation makes their failures less immediately excusable, so repentance has less of an effect.

The Kindness of Gd, the Teshuvah of the Community

He closes Chapter Fourteen with two more important ideas about teshuvah. First, he defends the fairness of teshuvah earning only Jews a share in the World to Come; the whole institution, the idea a person can change his/her entire spiritual persona with verbal regret and commitment to change, is not intuitive, is a complete favor from Gd. We therefore have no right to expect Gd to accept repentance, and no reason for non-Jews to complain about Gd commanding Jews to repent, and rewarding them for it.

Getting away from the justification of how Jews differ, he closes the chapter with an idea R. Soloveitchik discussed movingly in *On Repentance*, that the repentance of a Jewish community benefits even individuals from that community who do not repent (for those looking ahead to Sukkot, Mabit points out the tradition the four species of the lulav symbolize Jews of all kinds, including those with neither knowledge nor observance, who yet get to be part of the bundle).

The Ten Days of Repentance

With Yom Kippur coming, chapter fifteen has particular resonance. Mabit says—and I am omitting his prooftexts in the name of brevity—repentance at this time of year has greater effect than usual, because Rosh HaShanah is when the world was created. Gd had to embed the idea of repentance in the original creation, of a way back on track after straying, because people clearly could not be perfect all the time. When Rosh HaShanah comes around again, Gd is "reminded," as it were, of the condition included with creation, making Gd—as it were—especially alert to accept repentance.

It would have been inappropriate to make it true of Rosh HaShanah itself, however, because it is a Yom Ha-Din, a day of judgment, so Gd gave us all the days until Yom Kippur to repent and improve our conduct, to then be forgiven.

The Hindrances to Repentance

In the fourth chapter of *Hilchot Teshuvah*, Rambam collects sources to list twenty-four kinds of sinners who will find the way to repentance blocked or hindered. Mabit puzzles over why this should be; if Gd granted the great kindness of accepting repentance, why would some sinners lose the right, or be forced to overcome hurdles to get there? Rambam suggested it is a punishment, a sinner can sin so much, Gd withdraws this right. Mabit doesn't like it, because he knows of no source that lists loss of repentance as the punishment. We know of sins that get lashes, excision, or death, and know Gd will give some similar punishment should a court not do so, but where do we see loss of the right to teshuvah as a punishment?

More, when the Talmud lists the ways to full atonement, with neglect of an obligation at the lowest level, healed fully simply by repentance, and up the ladder of severity, loss of the right to repentance never appears. Finally, he recognizes the possibility that it could be about the weight of many sins, except even the worst sinners, Rambam throws in at the end of the chapter, still have the possibility of repentance effective should they accomplish it. So he thinks the answer must lie elsewhere.

He suggests a metaphor: one who has taken a wrong path and needs to get back to the correct one must retrace his steps. For most sinners, the path had no particular pitfalls, so the road back is not arduous to any noticeable degree. The sinners in Rambam's list of twenty-four, however, have created

a path strewn with barriers and challenges, so the road back for them will be harder.

In addition, these groups of people have stamped themselves as evildoers; ordinary sinners still retain membership in the overall righteous group (remember Mabit thought ordinary righteous people were clearly better than ba'alei teshuvah despite having fallen prey to temptation occasionally). Becoming an evildoer suppresses the desire to be better, and that heightens the degree of difficulty in repentance as well.

Finally, some such people (and others, too) repent only because of fear, because something in their lives right then pushes them to change. For most people, it's still teshuvah, but with great evildoers, Gd will prevent it, since it is not really repentance, it's yielding to force of circumstance. (Someone who quits smoking because s/he has developed shortness of breath and worries about worse consequences has not given up smoking, they've stopped because they can't do anything else. For evildoers, Gd will not let that be sufficient to be considered repentance from a sin).

The Significance of Teshuvah

Chapters seventeen and eighteen make points about the significance of repentance, its encompassing the entirety of Torah and bringing redemption. For the former idea, he notes how Parashiyot Nitzvam and Va-Yelech put three commandments at the very end, repentance, Torah study, and avodah zarah, the prohibition against worshipping any power other than Gd. Their being placed as a sort of summary tells Mabit we are supposed to see their significance, Torah study because it is how we learn all of Torah, worshipping other powers because it inherently counts as rejecting all of Torah, and repentance because it, too, brings us back to keeping all of Torah. The short chapter eighteen says repentance brings redemption, an idea already found in Yoma 86, said by R. Yose Ha-Gelili. Mabit adds that a verse we say daily speaks of the go'el, the redeemer, coming to Zion, the next phrase being u-le-shavei pasha, those who retreat from sin, to Ya'akov, telling Mabit it is teshuvah that brings the redemption.

He offers a reason why: teshuvah redeems the soul, where redemption is physical. If we do the soul redemption, Gd will give us the physical redemption we desire.

May this be a year of teshuvah and redemption for us all!

<https://ohr.edu/this-week/insights-into-halacha/8052>

**Ohr Somayach :: Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur
For the week ending 15 September 2018 / 6 Tishri 5779
Breaking the Yom Kippur Fast Before Havdalah?
Rabbi Yehuda Spitz**

An annual question arises this time of year, usually from a woman who will be waiting for her husband to come home and make Havdalah after Maariv on Motzai Yom Kippur, when the fast was already over a few minutes after Tzeis Hakochovim (nightfall).[1] Is she required to wait for Havdalah to break her fast by taking a drink of water?

Similarly, there are those who wait for a later Zman of Tzeis Hakochovim before performing Melacha on Motzai Yom Kippur, due to Yom Kippur's being called a 'Shabbos Shabboson' in the Torah.[2] Would that chumrah extend to fasting as well; namely, must they wait until the later Zman as well, before breaking their fast?

The question that lies behind these questions is whether the five 'Inuyim', restrictions of affliction obligated on Yom Kippur (abstaining from eating and drinking, washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes, and marital relations), are considered part and parcel of its inherent Kedushas HaYom, holiness, or are they regarded as separate, yet synchronized, halachic mandates?

The Brisker Rav's Safek

Several years ago, one Motzai Yom Kippur, this author discussed and debated this intriguing issue with his former neighbor Rabbi Noach Sosevsky, and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Dovid Schoonmacher, today Roshei Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohr Yerushalayim (OJ) and Yeshivas Darche Noam (Shapell's), respectively. At the time we did not reach a definitive

conclusion; thus we were gratified to learn later on that the renowned Brisker Rav zt"l, in his discussion of the merits of both sides of this topic, did not either.

The Brisker Rav writes[3] that, in principle, the proper ruling should depend on whether the prohibition of performing Melacha prior to making Havdalah on Motzai Shabbos after Shabbos already technically ended is due to Kedushas Shabbos, or to the Chiyuv of Havdalah. He explains that if the former understanding is accurate, then the same should apply on Motzai Yom Kippur, that all related halachos, whether Melachos or Inuyim, are still forbidden until Havdalah is made. Yet, if Melacha on Motzai Shabbos is only forbidden due to the requirement of making Havdalah, then it stands to reason that only Melacha is forbidden until Havdalah is made, and the 'Inuyim' officially end at Tzeis Hakochovim.[4] Although the Brisker Rav himself seemed to find the lenient view more compelling, nonetheless, he concluded 'tzarich iyun'.

Thirst Quenching in Shul or Not a Drop to Drink?

The first mention of an actual psak lemaaseh as a general ruling that one may indeed drink water before Havdalah on Motzai Yom Kippur if needed is by Rav Meshulam Finkelstein zt"l of Warsaw, in the early 1900s, in his essential commentary on issues relating to the Yomim Noraim, the Matteh Efraim, titled 'Elef HaMagen'. [5] He cites precedent to his rule from an earlier psak of Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson zt"l, the eminent 'Shoel U'Meishiv'. [6]

Apparently, in one shul, the Chazzan droned on for over a half-hour past Tzeis Hakochovim (seemingly with no end in sight!) and one of the mispalellim was extremely thirsty. One of the local loquacious 'lamdanim' there reasoned that, although still in the middle of Neilah, since it was after Tzeis Hakochovim, the fast was truly over and his parched partner was allowed to take a drink of water. It seems that he helped himself as well. However, while slaking their thirst, they were 'caught' by another constituent who harangued them, claiming that until Havdalah was made it was still Yom Kippur, and asserting that this thirsty fellow and his 'lamdan' enabler compadre were halachic violators. Post-fast, the no-longer dehydrating gentleman wrote to the great Shoel U'Meishiv to ask who was correct.

Rav Nathanson replied that although technically the formerly thirsty fellow's 'lamdan' companion was halachically correct, yet, due to others' seeing and not realizing that the fast was over, and possibly emulating incorrectly, cautioned that if one needs to take a drink of water on Motzai Yom Kippur after Tzeis Hakochovim and prior to Havdalah, he may do so only B'tzina, in private. Based on this ruling, the Elef HaMagen wrote that one is permitted to drink water on Motzai Yom Kippur before Havdalah, if needed.

The Magen Avraham's Machlokes?

However, and quite interestingly, one of the precedents cited for this ruling is a cryptic comment of the Magen Avraham. In the beginning of the Siman in Shulchan Aruch discussing Motzai Yom Kippur.[7] the Magen Avraham cites a seemingly unrelated discussion of the Levush's, regarding why in several locales they did not allow Havdalah in shul on Motzai Yom Kippur, even with children at hand to drink the wine. The Levush writes that this custom is perhaps based on the notion that since adults cannot drink until they personally make Havdalah at home, the same applies to children as they may come to later make mistakes in the matter.

The Magen Avraham questions the validity of this answer, as, if one had intention to fulfill his obligation with the shul's Havdalah, he was yotzai. Moreover, the same ruling applies to Motzai Shabbos as well. If so, he reasons, what potential mix-up or mistake is possible? As such, he asserts that it is permissible to perform Havdalah in shul on Motzai Yom Kippur. He concludes his passage by stating "v'nireh li d'muttar b'rechitz ah uv'kulam kodem sheyavdil", that in his opinion, washing and the rest of the 'Inuyim' are essentially permitted prior to Havdalah on Motzai Yom Kippur.

Several of the super-commentaries on the Shulchan Aruch, including the Machatzis Hashekel, Pri Megadim, and Levushei Srad,[8] understand this brief discussion as a Machlokes in psak regarding breaking the fast before

Havdalah. They maintain that the Levush was actually paskening that the 'Inuyim' are part and parcel of the Kedushas HaYom. As such one may not break their fast (or perform any of the other 'Inuyim') prior to properly making Havdalah, while the Magen Avraham argued that, although interrelated, they are not essentially connected. As such, once Tzeis Hakochavim arrives, the mandated 'Inuyim' actually end.

Although the Elyah Rabbah rules like the Levush, most other Acharonim, including the Ba'er Heitiv, Shulchan Aruch Harav, Matteh Efraim, and Mishnah Berurah,[9] rule akin to the Magen Avraham's understanding, stating that after Tzeis Hakochavim all other 'Inuyim' are now permitted, even prior to Havdalah, except eating and drinking (which is still prohibited due to Hilchos Havdalah, just like on every Motzai Shabbos). On that, the Elef HaMagen commented that, even so, there is a water dispensation, similar to every Motzai Shabbos.

Water Allowance

As mentioned previously, this pre-Havdalah water hetter is based on a separate issue entirely: Hilchos Havdalah. As the Gemara in Pesachim (105a) explains, and duly codified in halacha,[10] one may not eat or drink anything once Shabbos is over prior to making Havdalah, except for water. In fact, the Gemara cites strong potential ramifications for those who are lax with this halacha.[11] Although there are those who are machmir with drinking water as well before Havdalah on Motzai Shabbos,[12] loosely based on the Rema's comment about the dangers of drinking well water during Bein Hashmashos of Shabbos,[13] nonetheless, the general consensus is that this is truly muttar.[14] Additionally, as the reason for this stringency is only applicable on Motzai Shabbos, it would be irrelevant to our discussion unless Yom Kippur fell out on a Shabbos that year.

Come what may, the many poskim who follow the Magen Avraham's approach regarding most 'Inuyim' ending on Motzai Yom Kippur soon after Tzeis Hakochavim nonetheless would still prohibit eating and drinking until Havdalah is made, with the exception of drinking water, which would be permitted.

Water Challenges

On the other hand, not everyone agreed with this assessment. Rav Meir Arik zt"l, the 'Imrei Yosher', as well as Rav Yoav Yehoshua Weingarten zt"l, the 'Chelkas Yoav', challenged this understanding based on Tosafos in several places, where Tosafos seems to understand that the Yom Kippur fast is mandated throughout davening Maariv on Motzai Yom Kippur.[15] This would imply that he held that the 'Inuyim' and 'Kedushas HaYom' share the same halachic status, seemingly fitting with the Levush and Elyah Rabbah's understanding, and not the Magen Avraham's more lenient view. And, although the Sdei Chemed disputed this interpretation of Tosafos' meaning, maintaining that it would be questionable to cite proof to this from Tosafos' brief comments,[16] nonetheless, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l raised a different issue.

Rav Shlomo Zalman[17] argued that there is an important distinction between Motzai Shabbos and Motzai Yom Kippur. On Motzai Shabbos, water was permitted to be drunk on the entire preceding day, Shabbos. As such, there is no obligation to perform Havdalah simply to allow water's consumption. Conversely, regarding Motzai Yom Kippur, water was forbidden the entire day, along with all other food and drink. As such, he maintains that it would seem tenuous to suggest that water should be considered in a different category than all other food and drink regarding partaking of it prior to making Havdalah. In other words, as drinking water is one of the 'Inuyim', it stands to reason that it is only after one concludes all of the 'Inuyim' that water becomes permitted.

Therefore, he rules that if one is very thirsty and wishes to drink water before Havdalah on Motzai Yom Kippur, he must first end the fast by reciting 'Attah Chonantanu', or by stating 'Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh Lechol'. As such, he would be officially ending the fast for himself, and thus allowing water to be drunk. Yet, the pre-Havdalah rules would now be in effect, and all other food and drink (but none of the other 'Inuyim') are still prohibited until Havdalah is performed.

A Watery Finish?

However, there does not seem to be a clear-cut contemporary consensus on this topic. Many authorities, including the Steipler Gaon, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, and Rav Ovadiah Yosef, zichronam l'vracha, maintain that since most Acharonim pasken lemaaseh like the Magen Avraham's understanding, and the Elef HaMagen expressly permitted it, based on precedent from the Shoel U'Meishiv and Sdei Chemed, as well as due to the Brisker Rav's inclination to this shittah, practically, one does not need to end Yom Kippur itself simply to take a drink of water, once it is after Tzeis Hakochavim.[18]

Yet, other authorities, including Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, the Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchaso, and the Mishnas Yosef, follow the more stringent view, and agreeing with Rav Shlomo Zalman's assessment, that drinking water is only permitted after reciting 'Baruch HaMavdil', and thus effectively ending Yom Kippur.[19]

There is also a middle-ground shittah, maintaining that, although me'ikar hadin, drinking water is essentially permitted after Tzeis Hakochavim, nonetheless it would be preferable to first recite 'Baruch HaMavdil' before drinking.[20] This might very well be the preferred option for a thirsty woman waiting for her husband to come home and make Havdalah.

In conclusion, although it turns out that there is no clear psak, one thing is certain. If one finds himself very thirsty during Neilah, it would be prudent to ask a Rav what to do, and ascertain which halachic opinion to follow in his specific situation, and not simply rely on the assurances of a local 'lamdan'.

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[1] This is because there is a special rule regarding Motzai Yom Kippur, that there needs to be an additional Tosefes from 'Chol al Hakodesh' after Tzeis Hakochavim. See Gemara Yoma (81b), Rosh (ad loc. Ch. 8: 8), Tur and Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 624: 2), Shulchan Aruch Harav (ad loc. 2), Matteh Efraim (ad loc. 2), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 1), and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 3). The Elef HaMagen (ad loc. 3) cites the Alshich (Vayikra Ch. 23: 32) who explains that the Tosefes of 'Inuyim' after Tzeis Hakochavim serves in lieu of the Yom Kippur Korbanos.

[2] Parashas Acharei Mos (Ch. 16: 31).

[3] Chiddushei Maran Ri"z Halevi al Kiddush Hachodesh, Yoma, and Sukka (pg. 23b or 44 s.v. tzarich iyun).

[4] See also Chiddushei Maran Ri"z Halevi al HaRambam (Hilchos Shabbos, Ch. 29: 5), where he discusses this at length, explaining that this debate in havana regarding Melacha prior to Havdalah on Motzai Shabbos, is the core essence of the machlokes Rishonim on the topic.

[5] Elef HaMagen (O.C. 624: 4).

[6] Shu"t Shoel U'Meishiv (Mahadura Tlita'ei, vol. 1: 129).

[7] Magen Avraham (beg. O.C. 624), also citing the Levush (ad loc. 2).

[8] Machatzis Hashekel (beg. O.C. 624), Pri Megadim (ad loc. s.v. yeish), and Levushei Srad (ad loc. s.v. vn"l).

[9] Elyah Rabbah (O.C. 624: 1), Ba'er Heitiv (ad loc. 1), Shulchan Aruch Harav (ad loc. 15), Matteh Efraim (ad loc. 2), and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 3).

[10] See Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos Ch. 29, Halacha 5), Rif, Rosh, and Nemukey Yosef (Pesachim ad loc.), Tur and Shulchan Aruch and main commentaries (O.C. 299: 1), and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (96: 4).

[11] Pesachim 105a. The Gemara says that it may bring on a terrible death via 'askira'. Tosafos (ad loc. s.v. loto) notes that nowadays this may include death by choking or drowning. The conclusion of the Gemara, as per the Chachamim, is that this does not include water, and not like Rav Huna originally held.

[12] See Kaf Hachaim (O.C. 291: 17 and 299: 6), citing the 'Gaonim in Shaarei Teshuva at the end of sefer Naharos Damesek', as well as the Arizal, who exhorted not to drink even water before Havdalah, as aside for the chashash of 'askira' (and apparently not like the Gemara's seeming conclusion), there is a separate potential issue. See next footnote. Similarly, the Minchas Shabbos (96: 11), also cites the Shevet Mussar's Midrash Talpiyos (Anaf Havdalah, pg. 118b), that it is proper to be machmir with drinking water. See also Shu"t Mishnah Halachos (vol. 4: 159, 3) who asserts that 'vaday lechatchilla' one should not drink water before Havdalah.

[13] Rema (O.C. 291: 2). See Shulchan Aruch Harav (O.C. 291: 2) and Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 5) for an explanation regarding souls returning to Gehinnom during this time period. This minhag is based on a Midrash (Shochar Tov on Tehillim Ch. 11) and is cited by several Rishonim including Tosafos (Pesachim 105a s.v. v'h'n), Rosh (ad loc. Ch. 10: 13), Mordechai (ad loc. 36b, end 2nd column), Agudah (ad loc. 81) and Tur (O.C. 291). As the Rema himself mentions quoting Rabbeinu Meshulam, there is also some debate whether this is really referring to Bein Hashmashos of Shabbos turning into Motzai Shabbos or actually on Erev Shabbos turning into Shabbos. See Hagahos Maimoniyos (Hilchos Shabbos Ch. 30, 10: 2), Beis Yosef (O.C. 291 s.v. v'R"t) and Bach (ad loc. s.v. v'R"t). See also Shemiras Haguf V'Hanefesh (vol. 2, Ch. 130) and Shu"t Divrei Moshe (O.C. 13) at length, elucidating how this custom of not drinking water at all during this time period can be sourced in the Rema's enigmatic and seemingly unrelated ruling regarding drinking well water. The Debreciner Rav (Shu"t Ba'er Moshe vol. 4: 34) maintains that as this Midrash-based minhag is not cited lemaaseh by the Shulchan Aruch, and the Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos Ch.

30: 10) seemingly directly argues on it, and there are opinions that it only applies on Erev Shabbos, rules that certainly one need not be concerned regarding water that was already in the house. He adds that one who wishes to be stringent may simply add some 'orange soda' or something else that will change the water's taste, as then it would be considered 'shaar mashkim'. The Steipler Gaon was known to be very machmir with this (Orchos Rabbeinu, new edition; vol. 1, pg. 238 - 239: 13 and 14).

[14]As noted by the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 299: 1) that although 'anachnu nizharim gam mimayim, b'emes lav m'dina hu', as drinking water before Havdalah is 'muttar m'dina'. The Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parashas Vayeitzei 19) expresses similar sentiment, that mayim is essentially muttar, yet 'yeish machmirin b'mayim m'taam acher'.

[15]Minchas Pitim (O.C. 624), and Chelkas Yoav (Kuntress Kava D'Kushyeisa, Kushya 86; appending to the 5757 version of Shu"t Chelkas Yoav vol. 1), based on Tosafos in Yoma (87b s.v. mispallel) and Brachos (29a s.v. tichlala). Additionally, they question citing precedent from the Magen Avraham at all, as in Hilchos Pesach (O.C. 291 s.v. u'mi) regarding partaking of Chometz prior to Havdalah on Motzai Pesach, he seems to contradict this psak, as he does not mattir, but rather concludes inconclusively. However, it should be noted that several authorities, including the Machatzis Hashekel, Shoel U'Meishiv, and Sdei Chemed (ibid.) offer solutions to this seeming contradiction.

[16]Sdei Chemed (vol. 6, Asifas Dinim, Maareches Yom Kippur, 4: 2). He maintains that Tosafos was referring to the need for davening Maariv after Tzeis Hakochavim on Motzai Yom Kippur, as opposed to just simply ending the fast. He explains the need to state this: if the tzibbur would first go home in order to make Havdalah for their families and break their fast, there is a fair chance that they may not return for Maarivb'tzibbur. He therefore holds that Tosafos's brief comments cannot be cited as proof to the propriety of the Levush's shittah over the Magen Avraham's.

[17]Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchaso (vol. 2, Ch. 62, footnote 59) and Halichos Shlomo (Moadim vol. 1, Ch. 5, Dvar Halacha 41).

[18]Steipler Gaon (Igros U'Reshimos Kehillas Yaakov vol. 5, pg. 26, 12; he opines without having the sefarim in front of him to be me'ayen properly, that the Acharonim who are machmir must have been referring to drinking other drinks, whereas the Brisker Rav who was lenient must have been referring to water), Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul (Shu"t Ohr L'Tzion vol. 2, Ch. 22: 7; interestingly, he writes that he is disagreeing with the Sdei Chemed who argued on the Shoel U'Meishiv; however, it should be noted that the Sdei Chemed ultimately defended the Shoel U'Meishiv's psak), and Rav Ovadiah Yosef (Chazon Ovadiah on Yomim Noraim pg. 387). Others who rule this way include the Moadei Yisrael (Yomim Noraim 245; he is metzaref the minority opinion of the Baal Halachos Ketanos, vol. 2: 282 - 283 and 284 - 285, who posits that one is not chayev kareis for drinking water on Yom Kippur as it is not 'zayni', satiating; although the halacha does not follow this opinion, he asserts that certainly one may metzaref this to allow drinking water on Motzai Yom Kippur prior to Havdalah), Rav Elyahu Chaim Sternbuch (in his recent maamar in Kovetz Eitz Chaim vol. 30, Tishrei 5779, 'B'Inyan Shityas Mayim Kodem Havdalah B'Motzai Yom Hakippurim', pg. 257 s.v. u'lchein), and the Yalkut Yosef (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 624: 8). This author finds it interesting that many of the authorities who rule this way cite this as 'the Magen Avraham's psak', although he never actually explicitly addressed this exact issue.

[19]Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (Ashrei HaIsh, O.C. vol. 3, Ch. 21: 28; adding that only one who is in a 'matzav dachuk' can drink water, and only after Havdalah), Rav Chaim Kanievsky (Shu"t Siach HaTorah, pg. 312, Teshuvah 1234 and Moadei HaGra"ch vol. 2, pg. 260, Teshuvah 536), Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchaso (vol. 2, Ch. 62: 25), and Shu"t Mishnas Yosef (vol. 10: 102).

[20]See Shu"t Avnei Derech (vol. 10: 71) and Shu"t Aderes Tiferes (vol. 6: 53).

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