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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON YOM KIPUR - 5785

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Thanks  
Chaim Shulman

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from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <[iraz@klalgovoah.org](mailto:iraz@klalgovoah.org)>  
date: Oct 10, 2024, 11:04 AM

subject: Tidbits - Yom Kippur 5785 in memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ZTL  
Yom Kippur 5784

An abridged version of Selichos is said • During Shacharis, Mizmor L'sodah, Tachanun, and Lamenatzei'ach are omitted. Avinu Malkeinu is recited this year (as Yom Kippur coincides with Shabbos) • The minhag of Kapparos should be performed with proper concentration and thoughts of teshuvah. Ma'aser funds should not be used • There is a mitzvah to immerse in the mikvah on Erev Yom Kippur. Some say to immerse oneself three times, while others say seven times. It is best to go to the mikvah no earlier than one hour prior to chatzos, but before one davens Mincha • One should daven Mincha on Erev Yom Kippur before the Seudah Hamafsekas, so that Mincha's Viduy is recited prior to the Seudah Hamafsekas. A woman who will not be davening Mincha should still recite the Viduy • There is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. Rabbeinu Yonah cites three reasons: 1) To display our simchah over our upcoming atonement. 2) A seudah on Erev Yom Kippur substitutes for the Seudas Yom Tov that we obviously cannot have on Yom Kippur. 3) To give one strength for the fast • Note, one who isn't thirsty and is drinking water solely for hydration does not make a berachah • The Seudah Hamafsekas may be eaten any time after Mincha. There is no obligation to wash and eat bread at this seudah, but there is a custom to eat kreplach at this meal. Preferably, one should verbally state (or at least have in mind) before saying bircas hamazon that he does not intend to begin fasting at this point and will continue eating and drinking • The home should be prepared and cleaned for Yom Kippur 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 jewelry • 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 Tzedakah pledges from the Yizkor. Some have the minhag to have a lit candle in their bedroom as well ("gezunte lecht") • The tallis is worn during all tefillos throughout Yom Kippur. One should don his tallis on Erev Yom Kippur prior to shekiya, as the berachah on the tallis may not be recited at night. Most wear a kittel as well • There is mitzvah d'oraysah (mentioned in Tefillas Zakkah) to add to the day of Yom Kippur by accepting the arrival of Yom Kippur upon oneself a bit earlier • Since Yom Kippur is also Shabbos this year, the berachah on candle lighting is "I'hadlik ner shel Sahabbos v'shel Yom hakippurim".

There are restrictions against the following activities: Eating and Drinking. Pregnant women, kimpeturin, the elderly etc. must seek the guidance of a competent halachic authority and not be lenient - neither with their health, nor with the laws of Yom Kippur. Children, when appropriate, should be trained

to some degree in the mitzvah of fasting by not eating at night or even delaying breakfast in the morning, etc.

**Washing.** One may wash until his knuckles upon awakening, after relieving himself, and after 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 Bircas Kohanim and those not fasting who are eating 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. Many poskim do not allow slippers without a back to be worn outside an Eruv.

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

No preparations may be done on Yom Kippur for after Yom Kippur, including food preparations.

Following Kol Nidrei, an abridged Kabbalas Shabbos is said • The additions for Shabbos are recited in Shemoneh Esrei • Avinu Malkeinu is omitted on Shabbos from all tefillos aside from Ne'ilah • The special supplications usually said by the tzibbur during Bircas Kohanim are omitted.

**Viduy,** confessing our sins in repentance, is a mitzvah d'oraysa. Teshuva is performed by regretting one's sins, confessing sins through Viduy, and resolving 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 Zakah.

Rabbi Zlotowitz z"l would say that on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, the holy Kohen Kadol would enter the holiest place on earth, the Kodesh Hakodashim and recite a short tefillah that Klal Yisroel should have sufficient parnassah (Yoma 53b). While one may consider certain requests to be more mundane, in essence, every tefillah to Hashem is recognition that He is in control. By praying even for minor things, we acknowledge that we must beseech Him for everything, as He is the source of it all.

To achieve the daily 100 berachos, some have the practice of reciting a berachah on besamim periodically. One should have in mind for this blessing to apply only to this occurrence of smelling besamim. One should wait at least a half hour before reciting another berachah. Alternatively, many include berachos made by the Aliyos to the Torah in the daily count (when one pays attention and answers amen to them).

Most have the minhag to recite Kiddush Levana immediately after Maariv (the final opportunity this year is Wednesday night, October 16th.)

As always, one may not eat or drink before Havdalah, with the exception of 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. Since it is also Motzaei Shabbos Havdalah includes Besamim. Additionally, in this case one is not required to recite the Borei Me'orei Ha'eishover a "Ner She'shavas" - a flame which was kindled before Yom Kippur - however it is most preferably to do so (if this flame only has one wick, an additional candle should be adjoined to the flame as a second wick for Havdalah; alternatively, a standard Havdalah candle can be lit from this flame).

There is a praiseworthy minhag to begin building the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur so as to go from one mitzvah to the next (one should be careful not to disturb neighbors while doing so). Some say that as an alternative one can learn the halachos of sukkah. Helping one's wife prepare for Yom Tov is, in fact, also 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.

**SHACHARIS:** The leining (Vayikra 16) is divided into seven aliyos (since it is Shabbos) and discusses the Yom Kippur Avodah as performed in the Beis Hamikdash. The Maftir (Bamidbar 29:7-11) reviews the Korban Mussaf offerings brought on Yom Kippur. In the haftarah, Yeshayah Hanavi (57:14-58:14) encourages the nation to teshuvah, cautioning them that fasting and other afflictions are only effective when performed with a sincere heart seeking to repent.

**MINCHAH:** The laws of forbidden relations are leined (Vayikra 18) in three aliyos. The gravity of these sins are recounted to encourage one to overcome the strong temptation in these areas (Rashi, Megillah 31a). The Maftir is Sefer Yonah. The story of Yonah teaches us the power of teshuvah. In addition, Yonah's inability to circumvent the divine plan demonstrates that no man can escape Hashem and His decrees. Many regard the aliyah of Maftir Yonah as a significant segulah.

Unlike the rest of the year, on Yom Kippur we recite "Baruch Sheim Kevod Malchuso" aloud. The Yalkut Shimoni (Parashas Acharei Mos) explains that on Yom Kippur, Klal Yisrael are like angels as they go without shoes, without food and drink and practice other restrictions. However, once Maariv arrives on Motzaei Yom Kippur we resume saying Baruch Sheim in an undertone. One may question, 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 zt"l, explains that immediately upon accepting Yom Kippur and all its practices, we achieve lofty heights which enable us immediately to recite Baruch Sheim aloud. On Motzaei Yom Kippur, however, when these obligations have already been relaxed, we are no longer committed to these levels, thus no longer are we on this high 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 Tovah. Please reach out to us with any thoughts or comments at: klalgovoah.org Ira Zlotowitz - Founder | iraz@gpagency.com | 917.597.2197 Ahron Dicker - Editor | adicker@klalgovoah.org | 732.581.5830 Instagram Instagram Website Website Forward Forward Copyright © 2022 Klal Govoah, All rights reserved. You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website. Our mailing address is: Klal Govoah 481 Oak Glen Road Howell, NJ 07731 Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

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date: Oct 10, 2024, 1:14 PM  
subject: Torah Tidbits - Yom Kippur - Sukkot - Bereshit - Issue 1584

**Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah: Two Days Joined by Jewish History**

**BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN RAM, YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

On the surface, these two days appear to have little connection. They fall within the same month, but present as completely unrelated, and even oppositional. Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah come across as polar opposites. Yom Kippur is divinely designated, delivered to Moshe at Sinai as an eternal day of forgiveness and atonement. Simchat Torah, on the other hand, emerged as a minhag, probably around 1,000 years ago. Yom Kippur carries a somber, solemn tone, filled with gravitas and the looming reminder of human frailty. Simchat Torah bursts with joy, energy, and festive celebration. Yom Kippur invites quiet solitude, personal confession, and deep moral introspection. Simchat Torah is vibrant, collective, and communal. They are also distinct historically. Yom Kippur lost much of its grandeur after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Our current observance pales in comparison to its original form. Without the Kohen Gadol, the Mikdash and the special avoda of the Kodosh Hakodoshim, Yom Kippur remains a shadow of its past. In contrast, Simchat Torah is a product of galut. The second day of Shemini Atzeret or “Yom Tov sheni shel galiyut”- birthed Simchat Torah. This second day of Shmini Atzeret, devoid of specific mitzvot, transformed into a joyous celebration, marking the conclusion of the Torah-reading cycle. Yom Kippur suffered the effects of galut whereas Simchat Torah evolved from galut.

**JOINED IN JEWISH HISTORY**

Yet despite their contrasting nature, these days share a tragic bond. In 1973, on Yom Kippur, we were brutally attacked by enemies seeking to exploit our vulnerability during this holy day. Once again in 2023, savage attackers attempted the same, striking us on Simchat Torah, when we least expected it. Both assaults occurred on Shabbat, a day when we affirm Hashem

as the sole Creator. The experiences were hauntingly similar: cars rushing from shuls to the frontlines, parents bidding farewell to children without knowing if they would return, sirens shattering the peace of our sacred days, and silent radios suddenly crackling to life with devastating news.

**THE HEAVENLY COURT**

The eerie parallels between these two days separated by fifty years, are undeniable. Not only did these two days begin with similar tragedy, but they will conclude in the same way. In 1973, we were caught off guard by a dual assault, facing an existential crisis over the survival of the State of Israel.

However, the idea that Yom Kippur could be weaponized against our people is unfathomable. The Heavenly Court or the Beit Din Shel Ma'aleh would never permit such a desecration of Yom Kippur, nor would it allow Shabbat to be turned into a weapon. With Hashem's help, and through the brave and swift response of our army, we repelled the surprise attack and ultimately achieved remarkable military victories. Our resilience in that war, and the triumph we snatched from the jaws of defeat, led to a stabilization of relations with two of our major adversaries. While we don't enjoy a warm peace with Egypt and Jordan, open hostilities have ceased.

The same outcome awaits us now. Though no one can predict when this war will end, one thing is certain: we will overcome the enemies of Hashem. The Heavenly Court will, once again, refuse to allow the day we celebrate Torah to be used as a weapon against us. Despite our current suffering and trauma, we will triumph, and one day we will grasp how this war is woven into the unstoppable process of redemption.

Jewish history has, curiously, bound these two seemingly dissimilar days together. An unusual pairing—Yom Kippur and its war and Simchat Torah and its war. Apparently, history beckons us to contemplate the deeper connection between these chagim, which, on the surface, appear so different.

Apparently, contemplating Simchat Torah enriches our appreciation of Yom Kippur, while reflecting on Yom Kippur deepens our celebration of Simchat Torah. How do these two days, joined by Jewish history, cross-pollinate?

**SPIRITUAL RESTORATION FOR A CHOSEN NATION**

As the people chosen to represent Hashem in this world, we challenge humanity towards morality and monotheism. We alone accepted Hashem's Torah and, with it, the mission of living a life shaped by 613 mitzvot. We embody a life of 613 mitzvot to inspire the world towards the 7 universal mandates. However, the demanding and all-encompassing nature of taryag mitzvot renders us vulnerable to failure. There are many mitzvot and, unfortunately, many opportunities to fail. It is no coincidence that our first national sin—the egel—occurred at the very mountain where we received the Torah. A nation tasked with such lofty expectations requires a day of atonement. While sin is not inevitable, for a people expected to carry such a demanding burden, it is highly likely. Teshuvah is universally accessible to all humanity, as illustrated by the

sparing of Nineveh. Yet, Yom Kippur and its distinctive process of teshuvah serve as a remarkable gift to the Jewish people—a day when Hashem extends an extraordinary opportunity for atonement. On Simchat Torah, we joyfully celebrate our chosenness, and recognize that the system of mitzvot we embrace grants us the need and the privilege of Yom Kippur.

**SPIRITUAL REPLENISHMENT** Yom Kippur transcends mere atonement and the cleansing of sin. It offers a glimpse into eternity, a purely spiritual existence unburdened by physical needs. On this sacred day, we strive to reach the heavens, fully immersed in the presence of Hashem and experiencing a heightened spiritual consciousness. Yom Kippur provides an opportunity to reset our relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Simchat Torah celebrates our divine selection, while Yom Kippur is the day our nation stands alone before Hashem, and only before Him. By deepening our awareness of being עַם הַנִּבְחָר on Simchat Torah, we better appreciate the profound spiritual replenishment which Yom Kippur enables.

#### **PREPARING TORAH FOR GALUT**

Just as Simchat Torah accentuates Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur should also enrich Simchat Torah. As the Rambam emphasizes, Yom Kippur is not only a time for personal repentance but also a day for collective and national teshuvah. On the very first Yom Kippur, in the aftermath of the devastating sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem forgave us not as individuals but as a people. On that day, He also granted us Torah a second time, upon the same mountain that had witnessed both our glory and our shame. By reissuing the Torah, Hashem did more than merely forgive us; He endowed a Torah with the power to endure sin and human failure. He reassured us that despite our transgressions and betrayals, His word and His mitzvot would always be with us. On the first Yom Kippur Hashem equipped Torah for a nation that would sin.

#### **A TORAH FOR GALUT**

The Beit HaLevi suggests that the Torah itself was altered in its second version. Originally, Torah Shebichtav (the Written Torah) and Torah Sheba'al Peh (the Oral Torah) were unified, indivisible. In a supernatural manner, the reading of a pasuk immediately yielded its related interpretations and halachic derivations. However, following our sin and the impending reality of galut, it became essential to distinguish between these two dimensions of Torah. The Oral Law became distinct from Torah Shebichtav, adaptable, and portable—a key to our survival in galut. Without a homeland, a common language, or common flag, we maintained our identity through the study and practice of Torah Sheba'al Peh—our secret unifying “language”. On the first Yom Kippur we received Torah Sheba'al peh, and were assured that not only would we survive exile, but we would thrive within it. Simchat Torah embodies our thriving through the odyssey of galut. It emerged as a

product of exile, born from the additional day of Shemini Atzeret and celebrated by generations far removed from the Mikdash and from Jewish sovereignty. In distant lands, we realized that the Torah was eternal, transcending the boundaries of time and place. Yom Kippur was Hashem's original gift to us, while Simchat Torah was our gift to Him. The seeds of our success in galut were planted on that first Yom Kippur when Hashem forgave us and endowed us with the Torah in a form that would sustain us even in the depths of galut. Simchat Torah is the icon of our success in galut  
**MERGE THE TWO** This year, more than ever, we should merge the experiences of Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah, blending the themes of these two days which have been fused together by Jewish history. Yom Kippur is a day of eternity, a glimpse into the life beyond—free from physical needs, time, and the distractions of human frailty, where we exist in purity, like angels. But eternity is not reserved for a single day. We encounter it daily in our relationship with the eternal word of Hashem and in our dedication to His enduring will. Simchat Torah celebrates our daily encounter with eternity, while Yom Kippur intensifies the experience of eternity in its most holistic and transformative form..

#### **TORAH IS MERCY**

Likewise, on Simchat Torah, remember that one of the names for the Torah is Rachmana, rooted in the word for mercy, because Torah was given by Hashem, the merciful One. When we study Torah, we aspire to shape our character in the image of a compassionate Creator. His greatest display of divine mercy was the gift of Yom Kippur. We study Torah to become merciful like Him and on Yom Kippur we recall His greatest act of Mercy. Especially now, after a year in which religious charlatans distorted the image of G-d from merciful to wrathful, we must remind ourselves on both Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah that Hashem is compassionate. Hopefully this year's hybrid of Yom Kippur's purity and Simchat Torah's joy will serve as a merit for our people and will help alleviate the pain we continue to endure. History joined these days in tragedy. They will ultimately be joined in triumph.

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from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net>

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date: Oct 10, 2024, 9:39 PM

subject: **How Can I Experience a Blissful Yom Kippur?** -  
Classes & Essay by Rabbi YY

A Small Step for Man; A Giant Step for G-d

It's Never All or Nothing

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

Teshuvah

Relativity

An Odessa Jew meets another one. "Have you heard, Einstein won the Noble Prize?"

"Oh, what for?"

"He developed this Relativity theory."

"Yeah, what's that?"

"Well, you know, five hairs on your head is relatively few. Five hairs in your soup is relatively many."

"And for that, he wins the Noble Prize?!"

Today we will discuss this "theory of relativity" in Jewish spirituality. What may seem small on one plane is seen quite differently on another.

What's the Novelty?

Teshuvah, or repentance, one of the greatest gifts that Judaism and the Torah have given humanity, is the idea that G-d gives second chances. This is a fundamental part of the Jewish experience and is written in innumerable places in Torah -- and it is the focus during this time of the year, as we welcome Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Which is why it comes as a surprise that Rabbi Akiva, the famed Jewish leader and Talmudic scholar living in the second century CE, some 1500 years after Sinai and the writing of the Torah, seems to have been surprised, inspired, and even astounded by the idea that G-d gives a second chance to the sinner who repents.

I refer to a statement Rabbi Akiva made which has since gained fame in Jewish songs, chants, and liturgy, and it is recorded in the Mishna.1

אמר רבי עקיבא, אשריכם ישראל! לפני מי אתם מטהרין ומי מטהר אתכם?  
אביכם שבשמים! שנאמר (יחזקאל לו) וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם,  
ואומר (ירמיהו יז) מקוה ישראל ה'. מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים, אף הקב"ה  
מטהר את ישראל.

Rabbi Akiva said: How lucky are you, O Israel! Before whom are you purifying yourself, and who purifies you? Our father in Heaven! As it is written (Ezekiel 36), "I will sprinkle upon you purifying waters, and you will become purified," and it is said (Jeremiah 17), "Hashem is the mikva of Israel," just as the Mikvah purifies the impure, so too does G-d purify Israel.2

What innovation, what revolutionary idea is Rabbi Akiva teaching that has not been taught for over a thousand years?

That G-d purifies the impure, forgives the penitents, and absolves the sinner? This is an axiom of Jewish thought dating back to Abraham! This idea is fundamental to Judaism itself. It is as old as Moses and the Jews of the Golden Calf, as Joseph forgiving his brothers, as G-d giving Adam a second chance after eating from the tree of knowledge. The entire concept and institution of Yom Kippur—discussed at length in the Book of Leviticus—is that G-d cleanses the people of Israel!

Comes Rabbi Akiva 1500 years after Yom Kippur was created, and declares a novelty! How fortunate are you Israel. Why?

Because your father in heaven cleanses you from your blemishes. It seems that Rabbi Akiva has suddenly "discovered America," when in essence he is repeating an ancient axiom of all of Tanach!

The question is stronger: To support this thought, Rabbi Akiva quotes verses that were transcribed some 500 years earlier which clearly state this very truth! Yet even the verses he

quotes are from Ezekiel and Jeremiah, rather than from the Five Books of Moses, which clearly state the same truth.3 Even if you can find some reason why Rabbi Akiva repeated this ancient idea, why did the Mishna have to record it? The Mishna is a collection of original Jewish Law, and not the place to record inspirational sentiments that do not teach us anything new and innovative.

Two Extra Words

Many times, when studying Torah we will find, that if there are two questions on the same text, one question will be answered by resolving the other. Here too, there is another problem on the concluding words of Rabbi Akiva:

מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקב"ה מטהר את ישראל

"Just as the Mikvah purifies the impure, so too does G-d purify Israel."

Every word in Mishna is precise. There is not an extra word used, not even for esthetical beauty. Every word of the Mishna was carefully edited by Rabbi Judah the Prince and is exact and necessary. Rabbi Judah chose from thousands of collected records of teachings and manuscripts and redacted in the Mishna only the best and most exact wordings.

In this statement of Rabbi Akiva, it seems, we have two superfluous words. It should have written simply, "Just as a Mikvah purifies, so too does G-d purify Israel." Why add the extra words, "purify the impure"? We all know that a mikvah is designated to purify someone who is impure! Who else would be going to the Mikvah but someone who is impure? Why state the obvious?

Yet, in these seemingly superfluous two words lies a wondrous secret. But first, we have to understand a little about the functioning of a Mikvah.

Two Types of Impurity

There are different degrees of impurity, and there are different methods of purification from these various states of impurity. [These were mostly relevant in biblical times and during the days of the Temple, when people had to be very careful to maintain their ritual purity in order to enter the Temple, or eat the sacred food of sacrifices. Today, we don't pay much attention to these ritual patterns; which is why most Jews would not tour the Temple Mount, since you may not enter the space of the Temple if ritually impure.]

For example, if one touches a dead rodent, he becomes impure for a day and can become pure simply by immersing in a mikva and waiting for nightfall. On the other hand, if he touches a human corpse he becomes impure for a week and needs a lengthy process of immersing in a mikvah, as well as being sprinkled with a mixture of water and ashes of the red heifer.

Now imagine if someone has become impure, on both accounts, he both touched a rodent, and a human corpse. He is inevitably impure due to the corpse for a week regardless of whether he goes to the mikva or not for the rodent-tumah. The mikvah, usually potent for purification from rodent-impurity,

seems now meaningless and impotent due to the stricter corpse—impurity that remains inevitably for a week. Is there any benefit of him going to the mikvah? It would seem not. He will anyway remain impure because he has also touched a corpse.

However, that is not the case. And here we discover something fascinating. The law is that a mikvah will purify and remove the lesser impurity even if the stricter degree of impurity remains!<sup>4</sup>

This then is the profound innovation of Rabbi Akiva. "Just as a Mikvah will purify the impure person" who is destined to remain impure, even after going to the mikvah, so too does G-d purify the penitent who still remains, in some ways, distant and separate from G-d!

A person who is not prepared to repent and to return to G-d fully, he is not ready to take the plunge and surrender away all of his sins and pet peeves, this person might think that G-d accepts all or nothing. He might think: Either I truly repent for everything, or I do nothing. Either I entirely change my life, or not bother at all. Since I know that I cannot make so many changes in my life, let me not even begin.

Imagine if someone—a borrower, an investor, a partner—owes you \$50,000, but really has neither the desire nor intention to pay you now. It's not that he denies that he borrowed the money, it's just that he cannot be bothered, and maybe does not have the money.

Then one fine morning, perhaps the day before Yom Kippur, your dear ungrateful and audacious borrower or partner shows up at your door announcing proudly: "I want to pay you \$5,000!"

"\$5,000?? What's that for? You owe me 50,000!!"

"I know, but seriously, I only feel like paying you back 5,000.

For now, let's forget about the rest. We will deal with that another time. Ok? Deal, or no deal?"

How would you react? Chances are you would throw this man out head first, with his measly \$5,000. And rightfully so. The sheer chutzpah! What is he thinking?

How Lucky!

This is what Rabbi Akiva is talking about. As Jews we turn to G-d each year, and all of us, to some degree or another, feel some sense of remorse or regret for one or two or three things in our life that need to be mended. Not that we are ready to turn over a new leaf, not that we are ready to make the serious changes in our life, not that we are ready for a complete transformation, but there is that one little aveira, that one little sin, that one little lie or cheat, that is nagging me. And I really want to get it off my chest.

I may have hurt someone in a dramatic way and it sits on me; I may have done something wrong that is really perturbing me; I may have insulted someone in a nasty way and I am upset at myself; I may have been involved in something that is eating up on my conscience.

So I repent for just that one thing. I ask G-d, or whoever it was that I wronged, to forgive me for that one act. What is going to be with the rest of my issues I cannot be bothered, and I neither know nor care too much at the moment. I don't have time or energy to deal with all my sins. But this one thing I am ready to deal with.

Is this worth anything? Does G-d care for this type of repentance?

Comes Rabbi Akiva and says:

מה מקוה מטוהר את הטמאים.

Just as a Mikvah purifies the impure, the one who will remain impure even after the mikvah, the one who either way has contracted a much more severe and serious impurity which he is not dealing with right now, yet, the mikva works and will purify him at that moment for the lesser impurity, exactly so does G-d purify Israel!

Why? Why doesn't G-d act as any normal person would, and throw our measly attempt at reconciliation back in our faces?

To this Rabbi Akiva tells us:

מי מטוהר אתכם? אביכם שבשמים!

Because G-d is our "Father in heaven," father who is anxiously waiting for the merest sign of positive movement from us, his child. A good father will embrace and appreciate the tiniest effort his son makes to connect with him, regardless and oblivious to the fact that the son has done wrong in so many more areas.

Today, all psychologists and educators agree that the way to educate is by focusing and drawing attention to even the smallest positive successes of our children and building on them. Education through criticism has been debunked and proven to be futile at best, and destructive at worst.

But Rabbi Akiva said this almost 2000 years ago. G-d is the ultimate loving parent. When he sees that a Jew makes even the slightest movement of Teshuva, regardless of how much he has left to go, G-d immediately embraces this movement with the deepest love, and purifies him just as the mikvah does.<sup>5</sup>

### Fix One Thing

How many of us have not attempted something because we are afraid of failure? How many of us give up on our dreams because we know we will never fulfill them perfectly? How many of us remain paralyzed by perfectionism? How many of us look at things as all or nothing, and therefore do not begin jobs that we know we can never fully complete?

How many of us deprive ourselves of this gift of a mitzvah that is so dear to us, just because we are scared to become "completely religious?" We feel that if we do not get it all right, we will get nothing right, and it is not worth the effort? Rabbi Akiva is telling us that a Jew must know, that G-d values and cherishes every single mitzvah a Jew does. G-d embraced and cherished every act of change. Even if I regret one mistake in my life and change that, G-d accepts it fully and purifies me. Whatever you manage to accomplish, any step you manage to take forward, towards a better more inspired,

G-dly life, is infinitely treasured by G-d who can purify even the one who still remains impure. It may be one small step for man; but a giant step for G-d.6

1. Mishna end of Yuma 2. In the original verse, mikva means hope. G-d is the hope of Israel. Rabbi Akiva interprets it as a "mikvah," a gathering of natural water. 3. He could have quoted for example the verse in Leviticus quoted earlier in this very Mishnah: For on this day He will forgive you, to cleanse you from all your sins..." You can't get much clearer than this. 4. See for example end of Ch. 3 of Mishna Berachos. זב משה זב שראה קרי ונדה שפלטה שכבת זרע והמשמשת שראתה נדה צריכין טבילה 5. This is an innovation revealed and espoused quite fittingly by Rabbi Akiva, the great lover of Jews, and a man who himself made a long and arduous journey from being an illiterate shepherd who actually hated Torah and Scholars, to becoming the pre-eminent Sage and leader of the Jewish people through one of the most difficult moments in their history. 6. This novel interpretation in the Mishna was shared by the Lubavitcher Rebbe during a public address ("farbrenge"), as he concluded the study of Tractate Yuma on his mother's yartziet, 6 Tishrei 5730, 1969. Part of it was published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 17 Parshas Acharei.

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[https://jewishaction.com/web-exclusive/yom-kippur-tips-for-a-focused-energized-day/?utm\\_source=SilverpopMailing&utm\\_medium=Yom Kippur: Tips for a Focused, Energized Day](https://jewishaction.com/web-exclusive/yom-kippur-tips-for-a-focused-energized-day/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=Yom Kippur: Tips for a Focused, Energized Day)  
**Chaim Loeb**

As we approach Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, many of us are already reflecting on how we can best prepare ourselves spiritually for this holy day. But in addition to our spiritual preparation, there's a physical aspect that requires our attention—namely, the twenty-five-hour fast. The fast is a significant part of Yom Kippur, meant to elevate our focus on davening, introspection and connection with Hashem. However, the physical discomfort that can accompany fasting, such as headaches, fatigue and irritability, can often detract from our ability to fully engage in the day's spiritual practices. For those who will also be balancing their spiritual commitments with the demands of caring for young children, it's even more essential to approach the fast with a well-prepared body. This way, you can have the energy to focus on davening and be present for your family. The good news is that with some intentional preparation, you can minimize discomfort and enhance your ability to immerse yourself in the holiness of the day.

**Begin Your Preparation Three to Five Days Before the Fast**  
One of the key strategies for a successful fast is to begin your preparation at least three days before Yom Kippur. This may seem like a small detail, but giving your body time to adjust can make a significant difference in how you feel during the fast. This preparation is not just about easing the physical

burden; it's a way to help you daven with more energy and focus, free from the distractions of headaches or other discomforts.

#### Gradually Reduce Caffeine Intake

Caffeine withdrawal is one of the most common culprits behind the headaches that people experience during Yom Kippur. If you're accustomed to having coffee or other caffeinated beverages daily, it's important to start reducing your intake several days before the fast. Begin by delaying your morning coffee a bit each day. For example, if you normally have coffee at 7 am, try pushing it to 9 am on the first day, then 10 am the next and so on. Ideally, you should aim to avoid caffeine altogether by the day before Yom Kippur. This gradual reduction helps your body adjust without the shock of sudden withdrawal, which can lead to those dreaded caffeine headaches.

#### Increase Your Fruit Intake

Fruits are an excellent source of natural sugars, vitamins and hydration—exactly what your body needs leading up to a fast. In the days leading up to Yom Kippur, try to incorporate more fruits into your diet. Fruits like watermelon, oranges and grapes are particularly beneficial as they not only nourish but also help keep you hydrated. The natural sugars and fiber in fruit provide a steady energy source, which can help sustain you during the fast.

#### Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate

Proper hydration is crucial for a comfortable fast. Begin increasing your water intake at least three days before Yom Kippur. Aim to drink more water than usual and consider adding electrolytes to your drinks. Electrolytes help your body retain fluids and maintain balance, which is especially important when you won't be consuming anything for twenty-five hours. Drinks that can dehydrate you are those high in sugar and caffeine.

#### Prioritize Sleep

Sleep is another important factor in preparing for Yom Kippur. A well-rested body is better equipped to handle the challenges of fasting. In the days leading up to Yom Kippur, try to get more and better-quality sleep. This might mean going to bed a bit earlier, reducing screen time before bed or creating a more restful sleep environment. The more rested you are, the more energy you'll have to focus on prayer and family during the fast.

#### Breaking the Fast: Rehydrate and Nourish

When it's time to break the fast, the focus should be on rehydrating and providing your body with the nutrients it needs to recover. Start with some water and a piece of fruit to gently wake up your digestive system. Water-rich fruits, like watermelon, are ideal. Follow this with a balanced meal that includes a mix of proteins, fiber-rich carbohydrates, such as whole grains and veggies, and supportive fats. This approach will help replenish your energy stores and set you up for a smooth transition back to your routine.



Yom Kippur is a day of profound spiritual significance, and by taking care of your physical needs in the days leading up to it, you can enter the fast with greater focus, energy and peace of mind. This preparation allows you to daven with more kavanah (intention) and be present for your loved ones. It's a way to honor the day, not just with your soul, but with your whole being.

Chaim Loeb, a health and fitness coach, coaches driven Jewish men who desire sustainable change and want to develop the needed tools to prioritize their health and fitness. He can be reached at [Chaim@thefityid.com](mailto:Chaim@thefityid.com).

We'd like to hear what you think about this article. Post a comment or email us at [ja@ou.org](mailto:ja@ou.org).

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[https://thelehrhaus.com/timely-thoughts/what-is-Neilah/?utm\\_source=Lehrhaus](https://thelehrhaus.com/timely-thoughts/what-is-Neilah/?utm_source=Lehrhaus)

### What is Ne'ilah?

**Alan Jotkowitz**

In memory of all our holy soldiers and brethren who fell al kiddush Hashem, and with the fervent hope and prayer that the hostages will return safely and the injured will have a speedy recovery.

Ne'ilah is a singular and unique time of the year. For many Jews, it is when they feel closest to Hashem. And, for thousands of years, Jews of all denominations and beliefs have gathered in their synagogues, sometimes at great personal danger, to pray (and cry) this final prayer of Yom Kippur together.

What exactly are we praying for during Ne'ilah, and what should one think about at this auspicious time of year? Of course, there is no right answer to this question. But I would like to share what I have learned from my teachers over the course of a lifetime.

#### The Ne'ilah of Teshuvah

For over 40 years, Rav Yehuda Amital led the Ne'ilah prayers in the yeshiva he founded, Yeshivat Har Etzion. And before he walked up to the amud to lead, he gave a short hortatory lecture in a singsong voice. The theme of the lecture each year was usually the same, and he would invariably quote the same two midrashim that illustrated his points:

In order to merit the opening of the gates of heaven, we have to open the gates of our heart. With the words of the prayer "Open us a gate...", we request divine assistance that will allow us to open our hearts – even just the tiniest opening: "My Beloved is knocking, saying, 'Open for me'" - R. Yissa said "The Holy One, blessed be He, says to Israel, 'My children, open for Me just one opening of repentance, be it as tiny as the point of a needle, and I will open for you openings (so wide) that wagons and carriages could pass through (Song of Songs Rabba 5:2).[1]

Rav Amital thereby taught that Ne'ilah is an auspicious time for teshuvah: Use this opportunity to repent and return to Him. And God promises that He will help.

He continued by referencing a question from the Yerushalmi (Berakhot 4:1): "What is the source of Neilah? R. Levi says: 'Even if you make many prayers' (Isaiah 1:15)—from here we learn that one who prays at length is answered." And the midrash on Song of Songs teaches:

"I rose up to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with flowing myrrh, upon the handles of the lock" (Song of Songs 5:5). "I rose up to open for my beloved"—this alludes to Shaharit. "And my hands dripped with myrrh"—this alludes to Musaf. "And my fingers with flowing myrrh"—this alludes to Minhah. "Upon the handles of the lock"—this alludes to the Ne'ilah prayer.

Ne'ilah is the culmination of all our Yom Kippur prayers and the end of a process that began on Rosh Hodesh Elul with the blowing of the shofar as a call to repentance. It is our final chance to return to God before the gates of heaven close and our fate is determined. As Rav Amital stressed, Ne'ilah is the time to take advantage of this opportunity and gift from God. "Open us a gate..."

#### The Ne'ilah of Tefillah

Rav Amital's longtime partner Rav Aharon Lichtenstein listened to this sermon for decades and commented: "In these words [of Rav Amital] there is certainly an element of truth... and nonetheless, from my perspective, this is not the main message of the Ne'ilah prayer." [2]

What, then, is the essence of Ne'ilah according to Rav Lichtenstein? The same Yerushalmi provides another basis for Ne'ilah:

R. Hiyya taught in the name of R. Yohanan, R. Shimon ben Halafta in the name of R. Me'ir, "As she [Hannah] was praying at length before the Lord" (I Samuel 1:12)—from this we learn that all who pray at length are answered. Ne'ilah is fundamentally different from all the other prayers of Yom Kippur, not only on a theological level but from a practical perspective as well; for example, unlike the other prayers, we omit the long vidui and say selihot. And its model is the prayer of Hannah. Her prayer was a plea for mercy from Hashem and so, too, should be our Ne'ilah. At this time, all we can do is cry out to our Father in Heaven and ask for His mercy. The time for teshuvah is over, and all we have left is to place our fate at the mercy of Hashem. Rav Lichtenstein writes:

However, as dusk approaches, when the conclusion of the day and its Atonement is on the horizon, we turn to God and say: Master of the Universe, we have been working on ourselves all year and especially since the beginning of Elul, weighing and measuring our sins, and all of Yom Kippur we have been striving and groping and hoping. But now at the end of the day, we have only one thing left, and that is to cast our hopes and prayers upon You.[3]



This motif is expressed in the unique liturgy of Ne'ilah. As discussed in Yoma 87b, the centerpiece of Ne'ilah is the Mah Anu poem, translated as:

What are we? What is our life? What are our acts of kindness?  
What is our righteousness? What is our deliverance?  
What is our strength? What is our might? What can we say  
before You,

Adonoy, our God and God of our fathers? Are not all the  
mighty men  
as nothing before You? Famous men as though they had never  
been?

The wise as if they were without knowledge? And men of  
understanding  
as if they were devoid of intelligence? For most of their actions  
are a waste and the days of their life are trivial in Your  
presence.

The superiority of man over the beast is nil for all is futile.  
As the sun is setting on the Day of Atonement, we  
acknowledge our human limitations and worthlessness before  
God and put our faith in His goodness and grace. If we are  
truly worthless and condemned to a life of sin, on what basis  
can we expect forgiveness? Perhaps the answer to this question  
is best expressed in the short tefillah we say after the blowing  
of the shofar on Rosh Ha-Shanah:

On this day, the world came into being... all the creatures of  
the worlds—whether as children, or as servants; if as children,  
have compassion on us as a father has compassion on his  
children!

Just as a parent will always forgive their child, we hope and  
pray that God will forgive His children.

The Ne'ilah of Love

It has been stated: "R. Yosei ben R. Hanina said: 'The prayers  
were instituted by the Patriarchs.' R. Yehoshua ben Levi says:  
'The prayers were instituted to replace the daily sacrifices'"  
(Berakhot 26b).

If Avraham instituted Shacharit, Yitzhak instituted Minhah, and  
Ya'akov instituted Arvit, one can argue that Hannah is the  
originator of Ne'ilah. Alternatively, if the three prayer services  
parallel elements of the Temple service, Ne'ilah must also be a  
reminder of a particular Temple service.

R. Menahem Azariah of Pano ("Rama Mi-Pano"), in his Sefer  
Avodah U-Musafin, maintains that Ne'ilah was instituted in  
remembrance of the removal of the spoon and shovel from the  
Kodesh Ha-Kodashim (Holy of Holies), which was the fourth  
and last time the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh Ha-  
Kodashim on Yom Kippur.[4]

Hizkuni (on Leviticus 16:23, s.v. u-va Aharon) questions why  
this "service" was necessary. Why did the Kohen Gadol have  
to enter the Kodesh Ha-Kodashim again? Why couldn't he  
have simply left the spoon and shovel there until next year, or  
alternately dragged it out without entering? It seems that this  
"entering" is an integral part of the service of the day, entailing  
immersion and a changing of clothes.

Furthermore, what is the need for this extra encounter with the  
Divine Presence? The children of Israel were already forgiven  
with the acceptance of the offering of the goat and the bullock,  
which were intended to serve as conduits for the atonement of  
Israel. According to R. Ya'akov Medan,[5] the reason the  
Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh Ha-Kodashim one final time  
was to give him one last opportunity to pour out his heart and  
soul to God and speak directly to Him without an intermediary,  
about his hopes, fears, and aspirations for the coming year. The  
Kohen Gadol enters the Kodesh Ha-Kodashim this last time,  
not to beg for forgiveness but simply to talk to God.

For 40 days we have been busy with the hard work of teshuvah  
and changing ourselves. But have we taken the time to talk to  
Hashem, to express our deepest thoughts, feelings, and fears,  
and to pray for what is truly important to us? As of Ne'ilah, we  
have already been cleansed of our sins and have a special time  
to be with God.

Rav Medan even identifies the exact time of the day when the  
Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh Ha-Kodashim this final time,  
when the congregation chanted:

[Nevertheless], You have set man apart from the beginning,  
and recognized him [as worthy] to stand before You.

God has given man the unique opportunity to stand before  
Him, if not as an equal then as a partner.

Indeed, Rav Amital and Rav Lichtenstein similarly  
emphasized this relationship aspect of Ne'ilah. Rav Amital  
writes: "Prayer can also express the second aspect mentioned  
above – seeking closeness to God... Ne'ila is a new prayer, a  
prayer of repentance, a sincere seeking of closeness to  
God." [6] And Rav Lichtenstein: "At the time of Ne'ilah, our  
connection to Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu isn't an abstract one but  
rather a direct and emotional relationship with Him." [7]

The Ne'ilah of Tears

Notwithstanding the closing of the gates at the time of Ne'ilah,  
Berakhot 32b teaches that the gates of heaven are never closed  
to tears:

R. Eliezer also said: From the day on which the Temple was  
destroyed, the gates of prayer have been closed, as the verse  
states, "When I cry and call for help He shuts out my prayer."  
But though the gates of prayer are closed, the gates of weeping  
are never closed, as the verse states, "Hear my prayer, O Lord,  
and give ear unto my cry; keep not silence at my tears."

The gates of heaven are never closed to our tears. But what are  
these tears? They may be the tears of teshuvah, as Rambam  
writes (Hilkhos Teshuvah 2:4) "Among the paths of repentance  
is for the penitent to constantly call out before God, crying and  
entreaty."

Alternatively, they are the tears of supplication and beseeching  
of Hashem, as in the prayer of Hannah: "And she was bitter in  
spirit, and she prayed to the Lord, and wept" (I Samuel 1:10).  
But this Yom Kippur, our tears at Ne'ilah will have another  
dimension, tears of avelut. We all mourn the hundreds of  
soldiers and civilians who died in sanctification of God's name

this year and will be crying together as a people this Ne'ilah. And we will also be praying together as a people that our Father in Heaven hears the final blast of the shofar which heralds our ultimate redemption.

[1] Yehuda Amital, When God Is Near: On the High Holidays (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, 2015), 251.

[2] Aharon Lichtenstein, Seek Those Who Seek You [Hebrew] (Rishon Le-Tzion: Yediot Aharonot, 2023), 142. My translation.

[3] Aharon Lichtenstein, Return and Renewal: Reflections on Teshuva and Spiritual Growth (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, 2018), 94.

[4] I thank R. Yair Kahn for pointing out this source to me.

[5] I heard this directly from Rav Medan in a 2019 shi'ur at Yeshivat Har Etzion.

[6] Yehuda Amital, When God Is Near, 256.

[7] Aharon Lichtenstein, Seek Those Who Seek You, 148.

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from: **Michal Horowitz** <contact@michalhorowitz.com>

subject: Yom Kippur 5785: A Sabbath of Sabbaths

**Yom Kippur 5785: A Sabbath of Sabbaths**

By Michal Horowitz on Oct 10, 2024 08:01 am

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is a day of teshuva, tefilah, and tzedaka (with the giving of tzedaka in advance of this day). It is our heartfelt and fervent prayer that our avodah in these three all-encompassing realms – repentance, prayer and charity – will erase any evil decree against our nation and our Land, and ensure a shana that is both tova (good) and mesuka (sweet) for Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.

In regard to Yom Kippur, the Torah commands us: אָף בְּעֵשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם, וְעִנִּיתֶם, אֶת-לֵב-מִלְאָכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם - לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם, וְעִנִּיתֶם, אֶת-לֵב-מִלְאָכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם - You shall not perform any work on that very day, for it is a day of atonement, for you to gain atonement before Hashem, your G-d (Vayikra 23:27-28); וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם, וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם - it is a Sabbath of Sabbaths for you, and you shall afflict your souls... (ibid, v.32).

Just as the weekly seventh day is called Shabbos, so too, Yom Kippur is called a Shabbos day. The root word ת.ב.ש. does not mean 'rest'; it means 'to cease, cessation' (see for example Vayikra 26:6 and Eichah 5:15). When we cease our involvement with the world – with business, with shopping, with our devices, with the news (which is fed to us 24/6) with meetings, school, appointments, cooking, cleaning, and errands – we cease from the world, so to speak, and hence, we suddenly find that we have the time, mind and heart for the RS"O.

If this is true of a regular weekly Shabbos, how much more so is it true of Yom Ha'Kippurim, which is called a Shabbat

Shabbaton – a Sabbath of Sabbaths – with a double lashon of the root word ת.ב.ש.

The Haftorah that is read on Yom Kippur morning, after the Keriyas ha'Torah, is from the book of Yeshayahu (beginning in Yeshayahu 57:14, through 58:14). The last two verses of this Yom Kippur haftorah read: אַם-תָּשִׁיב מִשְׁבַּת רַגְלֶךָ, עֲשׂוֹת הַפִּצּוּךְ בַּיּוֹם קָדְשִׁי; וְקִרְאתָ לַשְּׁבַת עֲנִי, לַקְדוֹשׁ ה' מִכְבֵּד, וְכַבַּדְתוּ מַעֲשׂוֹת דְרָבְכֶם, מִמִּצְוֵי הַפִּצּוּךְ וְדַבַּר דְבַר - If you restrain (lit. 'cease') your foot because of the Sabbath, from performing your affairs on My holy day, and you call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Hashem honored, and you honor it by not doing your ways, by not pursuing your affairs and speaking words; אֲזֻ תִתְעַנֵּג עַל-ה' - וְהִרְבַּחְתִּיךָ עַל-בְּרַחְמֵי אֲרָץ וְהִאֲכַלְתִּיךָ גְּחִלֵּת עֵקֶב אֲבִיךָ כִּי פִי ה' דַּבָּר - Then, you shall delight with Hashem, and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the land, and I will give you to eat the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken (Yeshayahu 58:13-14).

In regard to the words of the navi (prophet), Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav zt'l, teaches, "לַקְדוֹשׁ ה' מִכְבֵּד" - [If you proclaim] the holy one of Hashem, 'honored one.' The Rambam states that the mitzvah of kibbud, honor, as it applies to Shabbos, requires that one wash one's face, hands, and feet in hot water on erev Shabbos in order to honor Shabbos, and then wrap himself in a tallis and sit with his head covered, anxiously awaiting the arrival of Shabbos as if he were waiting to greet a king. Kibbud is thus manifested in the obligation to wear special clothes in honor of the day, as well as to await its arrival in eager anticipation. This idea is based on the fact that the Gemara in Shabbos (119a), citing the above phrase (from the verse in Yeshayahu) and understanding that it refers to Yom Kippur when there is no eating and drinking, explains that the way to honor the day is by donning fresh clothing...

"Since there is no reason to think that Y"K would not carry the same obligation as Shabbos or any other festival regarding the mitzvah of kibbud, why would the Torah go out of its way to stress that kibbud is somehow specifically applicable on Y"K? "The Meiri answers that the renewed emphasis regarding kibbud on Y"K suggests that the kibbud imperative on Y"K is even greater than it is on Shabbos. The honor that one accords Y"K should be even more than that displayed on a normal Shabbos; one must wear his absolute best clothes on Y"K" (Machzor Masores HaRav, l' Y"K, p.487).

Rav Soloveitchik expanded on the Meiri's point. "Y"K possesses two aspects of Shabbos, as implied by the Biblical appellation Shabbat Shabbason, literally, a Sabbath of the ultimate Sabbath. Shabbos refers to the injunction to withdraw from work, while Shabbason refers to withdrawal from eating.

The magnified kibbud obligation on Y"K reflects this duality; a double Sabbath engenders a double kibbud.

"In contrast to the preparation for Shabbos, when simply washing one's face, hands and feet is sufficient, the augmented kibbud for Y"K is expressed by total immersion in a mikvah. Regarding Shabbos, the purpose of washing is to remove dirt,

so that one enters the day in a state of physical cleanliness. Regarding Y”K however, the purpose of immersion in a mikvah goes beyond simple cleanliness; the intent is to achieve spiritual purity. The Vilna Gaon, quoting earlier sources, explicitly states that the purpose of immersion in the mikvah prior to Y”K is to be spiritually cleansed.

“As stated by the Rambam regarding Shabbos, there is a nervous tension, a yearning, a panting expectancy, as we prepare for our encounter with G-d on Y”K. One waits with breathless anticipation for Y”K to arrive. One yearns impatiently, as if continually running to a window, excitedly counting the minutes before Hashem’s arrival” (ibid, p.488-489).

As we prepare for Y”K 5785, let us give utmost honor to the holy day. Let us prepare both spiritually and physically for the arrival of HKB”H on this day. Let us appreciate the gift of atonement (teshuva), the power of our prayers (tefillah), and the selflessness through which charity (tzedaka) is given. Let Hashem see the holiness and sincerity of our avodah, and may His Divine Mercy be aroused to save us from our enemies all around.

And then we put our faith and trust in G-d, Avinu Malkeinu, so that all of klal Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael, will be zocheh to a gmar v’chasima tova, b’karov mamash, bi’mi’heirah b’yameinu, amen v’amen.

בברכת שנה טובה ומתוקה

Michal

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### **The Seder Avodah of Yom Kippur By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Rav Goldberg was discussing the tefilos of Yom Kippur with the shul’s chazan, Reb Hershel.

“Probably the least understood part of the Yom Kippur davening is the Seder Avodah recited in the repetition of Musaf,” the rav began. “Although it is one of the most important parts of the Yom Kippur davening, I have seen many shuls race through it at a pace too fast for comprehension.”

“Let me quote you the Me’am Loez,” continued Rav Goldberg, pulling a sefer off the shelf. “He writes, ‘Many people doze off during the recital of the Avodah. They don’t realize that the most important part of Yom Kippur is during the repetition of the Sh’moneh Esrei, when the Seder Avodah is recited.’”

“I didn’t realize it was that important,” admitted Reb Hershel, “but it is very hard to understand.”

“Dozens of piyutim (liturgical pieces) have been written describing the Seder Avodah,” explained Rav Goldberg. “Most shuls that daven Nusach Ashkenaz recite the piyut that begins with the words Amitz Koach, which is indeed a very difficult, poetically-written piyut. The piyut used in Nusach S’fard, Atah Konanta, is much easier to comprehend.”

“So why do we recite Amitz Koach?”

“That is an excellent question that I cannot answer fully. Already in the time of the Gemara, we see that the Seder

Avodah was recited, presumably from some type of piyut, although the text they used is long lost. The Geonim and Rishonim refer to many different piyutim that they had in their times. Amitz Koach was authored by Rabbeinu Meshulam ben Klonymos, who is quoted by Rashi with the greatest respect (see Rashi, Bava Metzia 69b s.v. Mafrin; Zevachim 45b s.v. h”g). In the course of time, Minhag Ashkenaz accepted the use of Amitz Koach, presumably out of respect for the author.”

“Why is it so important to recite the Seder Avodah? Is it a Takanas Chachomim?”

“There is no specific takanah requiring the recital of the Seder Avodah. However, reciting it fulfills the concept of ‘U’neshalma parim sefaseinu,’ ‘And let our lips replace the (sacrificial) bulls’ (Hoshea 14:3). The Midrash teaches that when we are unable to offer korbanos, our recital of the Avodah is accepted by Hashem as a replacement for the korbanos (Midrash Rabbah, Shir HaShirim 4:3). This implies that we accomplish kaparah (atonement) by reciting the Seder Avodah with kavanah. Therefore, a person who recites the viduy of the Seder Avodah and truly regrets his sins can accomplish atonement; this would be similar to the viduy recited by the Cohen Gadol.”

### **THE ATONEMENT OF YOM KIPPUR**

Reb Hershel was curious. “What did the viduy of the Cohen Gadol accomplish?”

“Different korbanos offered by the Cohen Gadol atoned for different sins (see Gemara Yoma 61a). However, the greatest atonement was accomplished by the goat sent to Azazel, which atoned for all the sins of the Jewish people (Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah 1:2; Mishnah Shevuos 2b).”

“Do you mean that a person could achieve atonement, even if he did not do Teshuvah?”

“Although there is such an opinion in the Gemara, the halacha is that Yom Kippur’s kaparah is effective only for those who do Teshuvah (Shevuos 13a). A person who does complete Teshuvah -- which means that he regrets his sins, makes a decision that he will never commit this sin again, and recites viduy -- is forgiven for his sins.”

“Does this mean that he will never be punished for them?”

“Not always. For very serious sins, including Chilul Hashem (desecrating Hashem’s name), he may still be punished in this world. But someone who completely repented his sins in this world is guaranteed that he will suffer no punishment in the next world (Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah 1:3-4).”

“At the time of the Beis HaMikdash, did people know when their sins were forgiven?”

“When the Cohen Gadol was a tzadik, part of the Yom Kippur Avodah included a procedure that showed Klal Yisrael whether or not they were forgiven. Let me provide some background. The Beis HaMikdash treasurers purchased two goats at the same time that were identical in height, appearance and value (Mishnah Yoma 62a). One of these goats was a Yom

Kippur korban, offered in the Beis HaMikdash, and the other was the Azazel goat.”

#### CHOOSING THE GOAT FOR AZAZEL

“The Cohen Gadol drew lots to determine which goat would be the korban for Hashem and which would be the Azazel. This was an elaborate procedure. The Cohen Gadol stood in the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, near the courtyard’s entrance, facing the two goats, one opposite his right hand, and the other opposite his left. The S’gan, the Associate Cohen Gadol, stood on the Cohen Gadol’s right, and the Rosh Beis Av, the head of the family unit of Cohanim on duty that week, stood on the Cohen Gadol’s left.

“The Cohen Gadol thrust his hands into a small wooden box containing two gold lots, one marked ‘for Hashem’ and the other ‘for Azazel,’ and removed the lots, one in each hand. He then raised his hands, exposing the lots to the S’gan and Rosh Beis Av. If the lot saying ‘for Hashem’ was in his right hand, the S’gan announced, ‘Master Cohen Gadol, raise your right hand.’ If it was in his left hand, the Rosh Beis Av announced, ‘Master Cohen Gadol, raise your left hand.’

“The Cohen Gadol then placed each lot on the head of the goat nearest that hand, and decreed, ‘For Hashem, a Chatos offering.’ The Cohen Gadol used the Ineffable Name of Hashem in this declaration, and everyone assembled responded by shouting ‘Baruch Shem K’vod Malchuso L’Olam Vo’ed’ (Mishnah Yoma 37a and 39a).”

#### THE RED THREAD

“The Cohen Gadol then tied a red thread to the horn of the Azazel goat, and another red thread around the neck of the Chatos goat (Mishnah Yoma 41b). Much later in the procedure, the Cohen Gadol rested his hands and full weight on the head of the Azazel goat, and recited aloud a viduy on behalf of the entire Jewish people. He concluded his viduy by stating, ‘Because on this day He will atone and purify you from all your sins. Before Hashem shall you become pure (Vayikra 16:30),’ once again using the Ineffable Name of Hashem. When the assembled people heard the Name uttered in purity and holiness by the Cohen Gadol, they all bowed and prostrated themselves, until their faces were pressed to the ground. They then recited again, ‘Baruch Shem K’vod Malchuso L’Olam Vo’ed’ (Mishnah Yoma 66a). “At one point in the procedure, the red thread tied to the Azazel goat was removed, torn in half, and one part tied again onto the Azazel goat’s horns. At the exact moment that the Jews were forgiven, both halves of the thread turned white” (Yoma 67a).

“You mentioned that the red thread was torn in half,” Hershel asked. “What happened to the other half?”

“This depends on the period of Jewish history. When the Cohen Gadol was a great tzadik, the Jews were forgiven on Yom Kippur, and the red thread turned white. During those years, the thread was left displayed in a prominent place in the Beis HaMikdash for everyone to see the miracle. However, in the later years of the Second Beis HaMikdash, when the

Cohanim Gedolim were often not suitable for the position, the thread did not turn white. To save themselves embarrassment, the thread was placed where it would not be seen (Yoma 67a).

“How frequently did the thread turn white?”

“Apparently, during the period of the Bayis Rishon and the early period of the Bayis Sheni, the thread always turned white. In this period, the position of Cohen Gadol was awarded on the basis of merit. However, after the Cohanim Gedolim in the Bayis Sheni began purchasing the position, often, the thread did not turn white.”

#### THE COHANIM GEDOLIM OF THE SECOND BEIS HAMIKDASH

“You mentioned that there was a vast difference between the Cohanim Gedolim of the First Beis HaMikdash and those of the Second. Could you explain this more fully?”

“Yes, gladly. The Cohanim Gedolim of the First Beis HaMikdash were all great tzadikim who were worthy of their exalted position. Most of them had a long tenure as Cohen Gadol. In contrast, most of the Cohanim Gedolim of the Second Beis HaMikdash bribed the government for the position. Because they lacked the kedusha the position required, they died within a year of securing the appointment (Yoma 8b; 9a).”

“And yet they were eager to bribe the government for the job?”

“People do very strange things for kavod. As Chazal teach us, it is one of the three things that remove a person from this world.”

#### MUST BE DONE BY THE COHEN GADOL

Reb Hershel had many other questions. “What part of the Avodah of Yom Kippur was the Cohen Gadol obligated to perform himself?”

“Certain procedures took place in the Beis HaMikdash every day, such as clearing the two mizbeichos (altars); bringing the daily offerings (Korban Tamid); burning k’tores (incense) twice a day; and cleaning, setting up and lighting the Menorah. In addition, on Shabbos and Yom Tov, there were special korbanos called Korban Musaf, the origins of our Musaf prayers. The Torah mentions these korbanos in Parshas Pinchas. All these could be performed by any cohen.

“On Yom Kippur, in addition to the daily and Musaf korbanos, there was a special procedure unique to Yom Kippur, which is called the Seder Avodah, or the Seder Avodas Yom Kippur. This Avodah, involving the offering of several special korbanos and a unique offering of incense, is described in Parshas Acharei, the Keri’as HaTorah for Yom Kippur morning, and in great length in Mesechta Yoma. For this Avodah, the Cohen Gadol wore special white garments that were worn no other time. Although it was preferred that the Cohen Gadol perform everything in the Beis HaMikdash on Yom Kippur himself, the only part absolutely mandatory for him to perform was the special Yom Kippur Avodah.”

WERE LOTS USED ON YOM KIPPUR?

“I am confused,” admitted Hershel. “The Piyutim of Seder Avodah mention a lottery to determine which cohanim will bring korbanos on Yom Kippur. But why such a procedure, if the Cohen Gadol was doing everything anyway?”

“A lottery system was used each day to determine which cohanim would perform the different tasks in the Beis HaMikdash. Most poskim contend that the Cohen Gadol performed ALL the service in the Beis HaMikdash by himself on Yom Kippur (even though he was only required to perform the special Yom Kippur Avodah). In their opinion, there was no lottery on Yom Kippur to determine who performed any tasks. Other poskim contend that although the Cohen Gadol was to perform all the tasks in the Beis HaMikdash himself, if he was unable to perform the entire Avodah himself, other cohanim could do some parts of it, in his place. When this happened, the lottery system would determine which cohen was appointed to perform the avodah.”

#### CHANGING CLOTHES

“It is interesting to note,” continued the Rav, “that to perform every part of the special Seder Avodah of Yom Kippur, the Cohen Gadol was required to wear his special Yom Kippur vestments (described in Parshas Acharei). However, for every part of the service that was not part of the Yom Kippur Avodah, he wore the eight vestments described in Parshas Te’tzaveh. Thus, the Cohen Gadol changed his clothes five times during Yom Kippur. According to a special commandment received by Moshe Rabbeinu (Halacha l’Moshe mi’Sinai), he immersed himself in a mikveh each time he changed his clothes and also performed a special procedure involving washing his hands and feet twice each time.”

“I understand that when the Cohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim (The Holy of Holies), no one was allowed to be inside the entire Beis HaMikdash building, even the Kodesh (Vayikra 16:17),” interjected Hershel.

“Not only were no humans allowed in, even angels could not enter (Yerushalmi Yoma 1:5, cited by Tosafos Yeshanim, Yoma 19b).”

#### THE COHEN GADOL SWEARING

“I remember learning that the Cohen Gadol had to swear an oath before Yom Kippur,” queried Hershel. “Why was that?”

“The first time the Cohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim, he did so with a ladle of specially refined k’tores (incense) and a censer, a type of coal pan for burning incense. According to Halacha L’Moshe M’Sinai, he had to enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim first and then burn the k’tores inside. However, the Tzedukim, who did not accept Torah she’be’al peh, believed that he should kindle the k’tores first and then enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim. In the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash, when the position of Cohen Gadol was often purchased, there was concern that the Cohen Gadol might be a clandestine Tzeduki. Since no one could enter the Beis HaMikdash building while the k’tores was offered, there was no way of knowing what the Cohen Gadol actually did while

inside. Therefore, he was required to swear before Yom Kippur that he would perform the service as instructed by the Gedolei Yisrael.”

“Were there any recorded instances of a Cohen Gadol who was a Tzeduki?”

“The Gemara records two such instances. In one case, the Cohen Gadol proudly told his father, who was also a Tzeduki, that he had offered the k’tores according to their practices. The Gemara records that this Cohen Gadol soon died a very ignominious death.”

“What happened in the other instance?”

“The Gemara records that the cohanim heard a loud sound in the Beis HaMikdash. They raced in to find the Cohen Gadol dead, with obvious signs that he had been killed by an angel (Yoma 19b).”

“But I thought even angels could not enter the Beis HaMikdash while the Cohen Gadol offered the k’tores?”

“This is an excellent question, and it is asked by the Gemara Yerushalmi. The Gemara answers that since the Cohen Gadol had performed the service incorrectly, the angels were permitted to enter.”

#### MULTIPLE ENTRIES INTO THE KODESH HAKODOSHIM

“How many times did the Cohen Gadol enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim on Yom Kippur?” asked Hershel.

“Most people don’t realize that the Cohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim four times on Yom Kippur. The first time was with the special Yom Kippur k’tores, the second time to begin the kaparah of his special Yom Kippur bull offering, and the third time to attend to the kaparah of the goat offering. During each of these last two visits he sprinkled eight times. These sprinklings have a significant place in the piyutim. These are the places when the chazan, followed by the congregation, shouts out, ‘Achas, achas v’achas, achas u’shtayim,’ until ‘achas va’sheva’ to commemorate this part of the Avodah.”

“You said that the Cohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim four times, but we mentioned only three.”

“Much later in the day, the Cohen Gadol changed into a different set of special Yom Kippur white garments and entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim to pick up the censer and the ladle that he had brought in earlier. This was a required part of the Yom Kippur service.”

“I reviewed the description of the Avodah mentioned in Parshas Acharei,” continued Hershel. “I notice that the Torah does not mention Yom Kippur until the twenty-ninth pasuk of the discussion. Why is this?”

“Although Aaron and the later Cohanim Gedolim never entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim, except on Yom Kippur, the Midrash says that Aaron was permitted to enter it at other times, provided he followed the procedure described in Parshas Acharei. On Yom Kippur, he was obligated to offer these korbanos and enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim. Thus, the

beginning of the reading explains how Aaron could enter the Kodesh HaKodoshim, whereas the end teaches that this procedure must be performed on Yom Kippur.” (Note that Rashi, in his commentary on these verses in Chumash, seems to have a different approach to this question.)

“Is it true that a rope was tied around the Cohen Gadol’s waist before he entered, so that they could pull him out if he died?”

“In actuality, the source, which is a quotation in the Zohar, mentions that a rope was tied around his foot,” responded Rav Goldberg.

“Thanks a lot for all your time,” Reb Hershel concluded. “I now understand the importance of reciting the Seder Avodah carefully, and why some people study the mishnayos of Meseches Yoma before Yom Kippur.”

“You are absolutely correct. Indeed, the Mateh Efrayim maintains that one’s main learning during the entire month of Elul should be devoted to understanding the Seder Avodah properly. So, don’t forget to study the mishnayos and gemaros we’ve just been discussing.”

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