TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry







לעילוי נשמת



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Eating on Erev Yom Kippur

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 9a-b; Yoma 81b) teaches: We read (Vayikra 23:32), "You shall afflict yourselves on the ninth of the month [of Tishrei]." Do we fast on the ninth? We fast on the tenth! Rather, this teaches you that if one eats and drinks on the ninth, the verse considers it as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth. [Until here from the Gemara]

Why, in fact, is there a mitzah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur– a mitzvah which, according to some, has the status of a Torah commandment?

(1) Rashi z"l (France; 1040-1105) writes in his commentary to Tractate Yoma (81b): The verse means the following: "Prepare yourself for fasting on the tenth by eating on the ninth."

(2) Elsewhere (commentary to Rosh Hashanah 9a), Rashi writes: The above verse refers to eating as "afflicting" oneself. The more one eats and drinks on Erev Yom Kippur, the better [just as, the more one afflicts himself on Yom Kippur, the better].

(3) R' Zidkiyah ben Avraham Ha'rofeh z"l (Rome; died 1275) writes: The more one eats before a fast, the more difficult the fast will be. Therefore, eating on the ninth directly contributes to the feeling of

affliction on the tenth. [Ed. Note: Perhaps this is what Rashi means as well.]

(4) Alternatively, R' Zidkiyah writes in the name of his brother R' Binyamin z"l, eating all day on the ninth and beginning the fast a few minutes before sunset entering the tenth is a rabbinic mitzvah intended to publicize our opposition to the false interpretation of the Tzedukim (Saducees), who interpret the Torah literally and assert that there is a mitzvah to fast all day on the ninth. (Shibbolei Ha'lekket ch.307)

(5) Rabbeinu Yonah z"l (Spain; died 1263) writes: Eating on the ninth is an expression of our joy at the opportunity to be forgiven. The fact that one rejoices at being forgiven is itself an expression of remorse for one's sins.

(6) Additionally, R' Yonah writes: Yom Kippur is a yom tov and we are obligated to eat a yom tov seudah / feast. Since we are unable to do so on Yom Kippur itself, a fast day, we have a seudah on Erev Yom Kippur instead. (Sha'rei Teshuvah IV nos. 8-9)

(7) R' Yaakov Yokel Ettlinger z"l (Germany; 1798-1871) writes: If the Torah wants us to eat on Erev Yom Kippur, why not say so; why call it "afflicting" oneself?

He explains: The purpose of eating on the ninth of the month is not to express joy. Rather, we are each comprised of a body and a soul, each of which needs an atonement. Each of them must afflict itself to achieve atonement, but each one's affliction is different because one is physical and the other is spiritual.

The body afflicts itself on the tenth through an act against its nature –fasting. The soul, on the other hand, afflicts itself on the ninth by an act against its nature –eating. (Aruch La'ner: Rosh Hashanah)

Davening with a Minyan

It is well known that a person who davens with the **צבור**, his tefillos as well as everybody else's have much greater potency and are much more likely to be accepted and answered. **The *Zohar*** said, 'I dwell in the midst of my people.'" Put yourself into the *tzibbur*. Don't be concerned about your private issues and needs. Worry about the Klal.

The word **צבור** can be read as **צַדיק בֵּינוני וְרשע** - whatever level we are at, daven with a minyan where all tefillos have much more power.



How does one avoid getting ill?

Every day one should do what the Gemara says: **לְעוֹלָם יְבַקֵּשׁ אָדָם רַחֲמִים שֶׁלֹּא יֵחָלֶה** – 'A person should always plead for mercy from Hashem that he shouldn't get sick' (Shabbos 32a). Which means that every day you should pray for good health. I know you won't do it but listen to me anyhow.

Every single day of your life! Don't rely on shemonah esrei – you don't even think what you're saying. It can be done outside of shemonah esrei, or if you wish, you can add it when you finish shemonah esrei, before you take three steps back. Beg Hakodosh Boruch Hu! Although you've prayed all your prayers by rote, by stereotype, like a record; but when you've finished, at least one little thing say with kavanah.



Late To the Meeting

Young Elazar Tzadok was a *masmid* with a so-called "average head," and one day, all that changed. He came into yeshiva, and he suddenly was retaining everything he learned. He could learn thirty *blatt* of Gemara every day, in-depth, and not forget a thing.

What's the story behind this success?

One Erev Yom Kippur, he was rushing to the *beis midrash* to say *Tefillas Zakkah* in preparation for the approaching day. As he was passing the **Tepliker Rav's** home, the Rav called to him, "*Bachur'l*! *Bachur'l*! I need assistance." Elazar Tzadok knew that he couldn't turn down the Rav's request, so he came inside and aided him.

When he completed the *chessed*, the Tepliker Rav told him, "I know you have many things to do on Erev Yom Kippur, and yet you helped me with *mesirus nefesh*. Therefore, Hashem will certainly help you beyond the rules of nature this year."

From then on, Hashem granted him with astonishing *kochos*, and he grew to be none other than **Reb Elazar Tzadok Turchin**, *zt"l*, the devoted *chavrusa* of **R' Chaim Kaneivsky**.

To inspire *bachurim* to study Torah, he would tell them, "Recite any line of Gemara." They would tell him a few words, and he would say the rest without looking inside. And he did more than that. They would read a few words of *Rashi*, and he would tell them, by heart, the words of the Gemara that is printed next to *Rashi*'s words, and then he would tell them *Tosafos*'s words and the Rabbeinu Chananel's words, as they are printed on that line in the Gemara.

Rav Eliezer Marberger שליט״א related a story about a friend, who on Yom Kippur, in middle of Neilah, ran to the shelf and learned two halachos of shmiras halashon.

They asked him for an explanation, and he said that he got a flash of inspiration to learn these Halachos and he knew if he doesn't act on it **מיד** he will not end up doing it. He said that it is years later, and he finished Sefer Chofetz Chaim over 60 times!

The Weekly Vort

● The Scarecrow



There are people who absentmindedly beat their chests when saying the *Viduy* without internalizing what they are saying. Their *tefillah* may be compared to a scarecrow that is meant to chase away harmful birds. Once the birds realize that the scarecrow is lifeless, they swoop down to feast on the growths in the garden.

Reciting the *Viduy* is meant to drive away the *yetzer hara*. Thinking that a person is sincerely remorseful when saying the *Viduy*, the *yetzer hara* backs off. But when it sees that the chest-beating is only an empty gesture, it comes back to strongly entice the person to stray and transgress. This may be the intent of the confession, "For the sin we have sinned before You through speaking with the mouth," referring to the sin of saying *Viduy* only with our mouths, but not with our hearts. (**Yismach Moshe**)

● A Simple Remedy

In the *Viduy* (confession) we ask forgiveness "for the sin that we have sinned through evil talk."

The Chofetz Chaim remarked, "With the approach of the Yomim Noraim, people resort to all kinds of practices to be inscribed for a good year. They go to *Tashlich*, they perform the *kapparos* ritual and so on. Why don't they also think of the simple remedy of not listening to *lashon hara*? For in return, the Heavenly Judge will turn a deaf ear to Satan's accusations and grant them a good year."

● In The Final Hour

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 8a) describes how Adam reacted when he first saw the setting sun, on the day he was created. "Woe is me!" he exclaimed. "Perhaps because of my sin the world is growing dark and returning to its primordial emptiness and formlessness. This must be the death I have been sentenced to!" He stayed up all night fasting, crying and doing *teshuvah* - and his *teshuvah* was accepted.

This was a portent for all future generations. We close the *Neilah* service with the *Viduy* confession, because on Yom Kippur, atonement is granted in the final hour of the day. (**Machzor Chasam Sofer**)

● Faith In Forgiveness

Immediately following *Neilah* we daven *Maariv*. As always during the weekday *Maariv*, we say in *Shemoneh Esrei*, "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned."

But we have just been forgiven for all our sins! Why are we again asking for forgiveness?

It is of paramount importance that we firmly believe that Hashem has pardoned all our sins. Harboring the slightest doubt about Hashem's forgiveness is a grave transgression. - It is because of this lack of unconditional faith that we pray, "Forgive us, our Father, for

we have sinned" – for not firmly and irrevocably believing that You have pardoned our sins. (**Chiddushei HaRim**)

● **A Great Shofar Will Be Blown**

It is customary to blow the *shofar* immediately after *Neilah*. Throughout Yom Kippur, the *yetzer hara* was powerless. Now that Yom Kippur is over, he is returning full force. So, we confuse him with the *shofar* blast, reminding him of the coming final Redemption when "a great *shofar* will be sounded" (Yeshayah 27:13) - and the *yetzer hara* will die. (**Levush**)

● When a person says the lines of the *Viduy* that begin with the words "*Al Cheit,*" he who strikes his heart with his fist at each line cannot yet be certain that Hashem forgives him. If, however, a person's heart strikes *him* over every sin, he will attain forgiveness from Hashem. (**Chofetz Chaim on Days of Awe**)

The Last Arrow

A hunter became lost in the forest. He walked along with trepidation, his bow readied in his hand, lest he have to defend himself. Suddenly, he saw something among the trees. Was it a lion? A leopard?

He sent an arrow flying but soon discovered it was a false alarm. Then he heard a sound behind him! He whirled around and shot another arrow, only to discover that it was the rustling of leaves. Then another scare, and another arrow shot – but it was only a falling rock. - The hunter now had only one arrow left. Then he heard the distinct, unmistakable roar of a lion – a real lion. His heart pounding, he held his bow tightly. He knew how much his life depended upon this one arrow!

The Maggid of Lublin would relay this parable and explain: The Books of Life and Death are open. We have already shot most of our best arrows throughout Yom Kippur. We have cried out and pleaded,

but we do not know if we hit the mark, if our *tefillos* have had any effect. Now we have only one arrow left – Ne'ilah! How our lives depend upon this one arrow! How careful we must be to aim! (The Palace Gates)

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger - עַל חֵטְא

עַל חֵטְא שֶׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיֵצֶר הָרָע – 'For the sin we committed before You with the Evil Inclination.'



"Are not all sins committed because of the temptations of the Yetzer Hara?

The answer is that it does not mean 'because' of the Evil Inclination, but 'in collaboration' with it.

The Evil Inclination convinces a person that a particular sin is in fact a mitzvah. But by doing so, it oversteps its role – which is to convince people to sin – not to dupe them!

The Yetzer Hara therefore becomes an actual accomplice to the sin – a partner in crime." ~ Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk.

"We should accustom ourselves to express gratitude for the benefits we have enjoyed, thanking and praising Hashem to the best of our ability." ~ Rambam, Hilchot Berachot 10:26.

The True Story

Rabbi Berel Wein relates how he was once waiting for a late Maariv in a small shteible in an old cranny in the Shaarei Chesed section of Jerusalem. Joining the minyan was none other than Jerusalem's foremost Posek **Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach**, one of the most beloved Torah Scholars of our generation, whose Halachic rulings guided thousands world over.

The hour was late, and Rabbi Wein noticed an American tourist agitated at the delay of services. Looking at his watch, Rabbi Wein noticed it was 9:35. Maariv was to have started five minutes ago. The tourist approached a few of the men with a look on his face that spelled, "Nu?!" Rabbi Auerbach held up his hand and said, "Reb Yissachar the street cleaner has not arrived."

"Rebbe," the man approached, "who are we waiting for? It is already five minutes late and I have to get back to my hotel? Why are we waiting for a mere street cleaner?"

"You don't understand," came the reply. "Did you ever see him pick up the refuse? His sole intent is to beautify the streets of Jerusalem. When he removes obstructions, he does it only to make sure the pedestrians do not get hurt. He is no ordinary street cleaner -- he cleans the streets l'shaim shamayim, for the sake of heaven."

Rabbi Auerbach paused. "I wish I would have the same l'shaim shamayim in my job as he has in his."

"Hashgacha Pratis means that Hashem is actively involved in every single detail of every person's life – Nothing is random; Everything is precisely orchestrated by Him." ~ Rabbi Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin.

All About Yom Kippur (Adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)

● Wearing White Clothes

The Levush gives two reasons as to why we wear clean white clothes on Yom Kipur: 1. Because that is what the angels wear (and the Medrash compares us to angels on this holy day); 2. Because it is reminiscent of the shrouds in which one buries the dead, making us humble and breaking us to the point that we do Teshuvah on our sins.

The Panim Chadashos, gives a third reason. He bases it on the Pasuk in Yeshayah (1:18) "If your sins will be like red threads, they will become white like snow".

● Reciting 'Baruch Shem' Aloud

The reason that we recite 'Baruch Shem' out loud on Yom Kippur, says the **Tur**, is because the whole year round we only recite it quietly since Moshe 'stole' it from the Angels. - Consequently, on Yom Kipur, when we are considered like angels, it is not necessary to do so.

● When Yom Kipur Falls on Shabbos, No 'Tzidkoscho Tzedek'

The reason that we do not say Tzidkoscho Tzedek at Minchah, when Yom Kipur falls on Shabbos, is because it contains the words "Your Judgement is like the great depths', and on Yom Kippur it is mercy that we pray for, not judgement. (**Levush**). **The Maharil** adds that for the same reason, we do not say it on Shabbos Shuvah. **The R'mo** however, rules that we do.

● A Light that Rested

Even when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbos, says the Magen Avraham, for Havdalah, we use a light that rested on Shabbos, rather than create a new flame, as we do on a regular Motza'ei Shabbos.

The reason for this is because the light on Motza'ei Yom-Kippur (unlike the light on Motza'ei Shabbos, which is to commemorate Adam's discovery of fire [which occurred on Motza'ei Shabbos]), is

to demonstrate the sanctity of Yom Kippur, on which lighting a fire is forbidden.

● **No Besamim After the Fast**

There is no obligation to smell Besamim on Motza'ei Yom Kippur, even when it falls on Motza'ei Shabbos, says the **Kol Bo**, because, due to the fast, there is no Neshamah Yeseirah on Yom Kipur (and it is due to the Neshamah's departure after Shabbos that we smell them).

However, both the **Magen Avraham** and the **Taz** write that when Yom Kippur coincides with Shabbos, one should smell Besamim, seeing as, in any event, it is not a B'rachah in vain (since one anyway derives benefit from the pleasant aroma).

Inscribed for life

Our first request is to be inscribed for life. In Tehillim (34:14-16) King David states what to do if one wants life, as he says: "***Who is the man that desires life, who loves days to see good."*** King David answers with the following piece of advice: ***"Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil, and do good, seek peace and pursue it."***

On a simple level, this teaches us that to enjoy a good life we must live in peace and harmony with our fellow beings. Someone who gossips and slanders will be disliked by others. In the same way, someone who is deceitful or harms others will not be accepted in the business world or social circles.

On the other hand, a person who seeks to live in peace with his fellow beings, speaks positively about others and deals with them honestly, such a person will be popular and accepted into any circle.

On a deeper level, the **Chofetz Chaim** quotes from our sages how the gossipmonger is despised and punished by G'd, both in this world

and the World to Come. This person brings upon himself the wrath of G'd that will spoil his life both here and in the thereafter.

So, when we ask for life, we must at the same time make a real effort to control our talk and not slander anyone. When people came to the late **Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yehuda Segal**, with their problems, he would advise them to study the laws of controlling one's speech by the Chofetz Chaim.

He would often relate how he had seen people's lives improve in various ways, when they took upon themselves to be careful about gossip and slander.

Tefilah Zakkah

Because Yom Kippur does not atone until one appeased his neighbor. One should be certain to recite the following declaration and prayer (part of tefilah zakkah) which is printed in many machzirom:

'I extend complete forgiveness to everyone who has sinned against me, whether physically or monetarily, or who has gossiped about me or even slandered me; so, too, anyone who has injured me, whether physically or financially, and for any human sins between man and his neighbor – except for money that I wish to claim and that I can recover in accordance with halachah, and except for someone who sins against me and says, `I will sin against him and he will forgive me' -- except for these, I grant complete forgiveness, and may no person be punished on my account.'

"And just as I forgive everyone, so may You grant me favor in every person's eyes, so that he will grant me complete forgiveness."

"Teshuvah is like rain – It causes that which has withered to bloom again." ~ Midrash Tanchumah.



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVERT TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

● Vidui

On Yom Kippur we recite ten *viduim*. In each of the five *tefilos* of Yom Kippur we recite *vidui* in the silent prayer and again in *chazaras hashatz*. (In *Maariv* we recite it after the silent prayer.)

Why do we say *vidui* so many times, over and over again?

The answer is simple. It may be compared to a boy who learned *Bava Kama* in fifth grade. Now he goes to *mesivta*, and he learns *Bava Kama* again. But this time, his learning of the *masechta* is something else altogether. He hardly remembers that he once learned it. And so it is when he gets to *beis midrash*. Again he learns the same *masechta*, yet he doesn't see it as a review of something old that he learned before. It is a different *Bava Kama*!

It is said that **Rav Saadia Gaon** would do *teshuvah* every day, crying bitterly over his sins. He was asked, "What sins could you possibly have done, over which you do such *teshuvah*?"

Rav Saadia recounted to them that he once stayed by an innkeeper who didn't recognize him and thus treated him without due respect, as if he was a simple traveler. After some time passed, the innkeeper found out what an eminent personage was staying by him. - He

immediately threw himself down at Rav Saadia's feet and begged for forgiveness over not treating him as befits his honor.

Rav Saadia said, "I learned a lesson from him. - If he was moved to prostrate himself in tears and supplications, begging for forgiveness over his lack of respect, surely it is so regarding our relationship with our Creator, may He be blessed. Every day I realize more and more how great He is. So, I need to plead and cry in penitence that He should forgive me for the lackings in my *avodah* of days past."

Let's say a stranger shows up our local *shul* to *daven*. Someone carelessly bumps into him and knocks him down. He immediately apologizes and asks for forgiveness. After a few moments he notices that the stranger is speaking in Torah with the local *talmidei chachamim*. He realizes that this is not just a simple Jew who happened to drop in for a *minyan;* this is a real *talmid chacham*. He again goes to ask for his forgiveness, and apologizes for not recognizing that he is a *talmid chacham*.

Later on, he finds out that this person is not just a run-of-the-mill *talmid chacham*. He knows *Shas* backwards and forwards. And then he finds out that he has mastered all areas of Torah, *nigleh* and *nistar*… He goes once again and tearfully asks for forgiveness, because now he realizes that his careless act was very serious.

When we prayed *Maariv* and said *ashamnu*, we had a certain understanding of *yichud Hashem*. In *Shacharis* we now see things in a completely different light. Our level of understanding is much loftier. And so it is with *Musaf, Minchah* and *Ne'ilah*.

Each time we attain a new level of understanding in *yichud Hashem*, we go up a rung in the ladder, and we need to recite *ashamnu* all over again.

We start off with *Maariv* on Yom Kippur night and recite *ashamnu bagadnu*. If *Hashem* rules over all, and "Everything the Merciful One does is for the good," then how could we have sinned against Him?!

Then we come to *shul* again on Yom Kippur morning and *daven* another prayer. We gain new understandings and insights. Our awareness takes on another dimension. Not only what *Hashem* does is for the good, but *Hashem* is the One Who supplies all our needs. He feeds and supports us.

This is a deeper understanding of *yichud Hashem*, and the accompanying *ashamnu* is completely different. - How could we have acted so insolently to the One Who grants us so much goodness?

Then we come to *chazaras hashatz* and realize that not only does *Hashem* give us food and clothing, He also causes life to flow in our bodies. He makes our blood circulate. He even gives us the ability to open our mouths and swallow food.

Since *Hashem* places the life force within us and makes our limbs move, how did we dare to use them against His will? How could we have used the tongue to speak improper words at the very moment that *Hashem* was enlivening it? - Now again, "*Ashamnu, bagdnu…*"

And when we get to *Musaf* we grasp another point: not only does *Hashem* give us strength and keep us alive, but our whole self, including the body that *Hashem* enlivens, is not ours. That, too, belongs to *Hashem*. There really is no such thing as "self." *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* encompasses everything. If so, how could we have dared to use the "self" against its owner, against *Hashem*? - Once again we recite *vidui*.

This is how the *tefilos* are on Yom Kippur. The *baruch Attah* that we are about to say in the morning is not the *baruch Attah* that we said last night. *Minchah,* for instance, is a prayer in which it is difficult to have *kavanah*, since we have already been davening since early morning. But if we will realize that we have never before recited the words of this *tefilah*, so to speak, then our tiredness will evaporate.

And at *Ne'ilah* we are standing in the innermost place of holiness. Here we come to the consciousness of the highest *yichud Hashem*,

as *Nefesh HaChayim* elucidates on the first *pasuk* of *Krias Shema*: *Hashem* is One in all the worlds, all created beings are as if they don't exist, and there is absolutely nothing else besides *Hashem*.

On this day we don't just become purer and more refined. We keep ascending to ever higher levels. With every *tefilah* we ascend once again, and we come to completely new understandings that are much loftier than our previous level of comprehension.

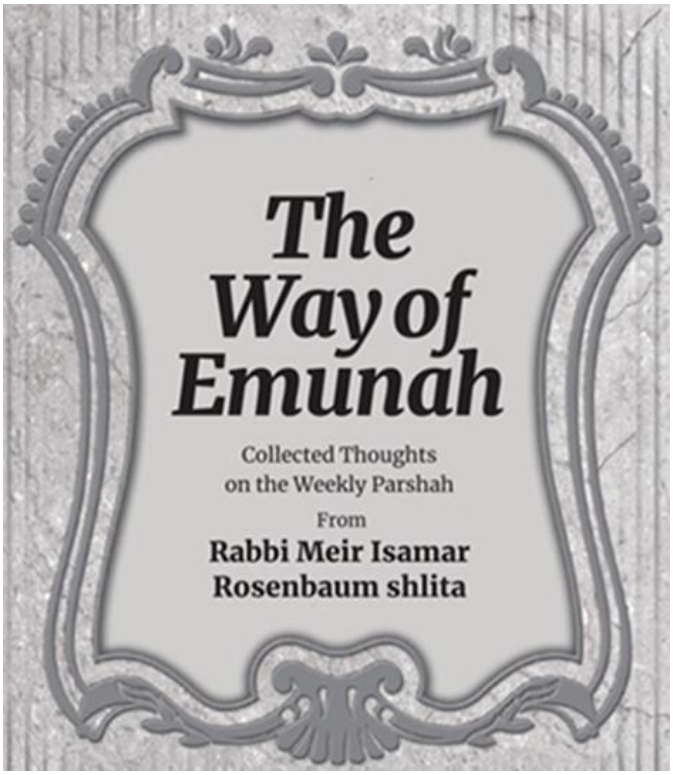
● Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is a day like none other. It is a day of *tefilah* and *teshuvah*, a day on which the Jewish people's sins are forgiven and atoned.

The very fast of Yom Kippur is different from all others. This is because other fasts are days of self-affliction and *teshuvah* in remembrance of tragic events that happened at that time. Whereas Yom Kippur is "*Shabbos shabbason*," - a day of total cessation. It is a day on which we simply cease from eating and drinking.

The point of this cessation is not to cause ourselves discomfort. Just as cessation from work on *Shabbos* is not a discomfort – rather, on this day we involve ourselves in matters loftier than working in the field, and our cessation brings us a much more exalted happiness – so it is on Yom Kippur. A person ceases from eating and drinking, and is uplifted to a much higher spiritual level.





Tzedakah

● Giving Tzedakah Grants One a Good Judgment

There is an important practice to give tzedakah generously on Erev Yom Kippur in order to gain merits for the judgment.

The source of this is the story of Mar Ukva (Kesuvos 67B), who would send 400 coins to a certain man every Erev Yom Kippur.

The Maharsha explains that he gave a lot of tzedakah on Erev Yom Kippur either in order to acquire merits before the judgment or because he knew that poor people need money to make a seudah on this day so that they should be able to fast on Yom Kippur.

● The Shaking Money Destroys the Klipos

Sefer Ohalei Tzadikim relates that in the city of Mezhibuzh, the minhag on Erev Yom Kippur was for people to sit with Tzedakah pushkas in the bais medrash and collect money for tzedakah. - The residents of the city wanted to stop this custom because the sound of the shaking and rattling coins disturbed their davening.

When the Baal Shemo Tov zy"a was told about this, he did not allow this minhag to be stopped. He said that one year before Yom Kippur, all of the "klipos" (destructive forces) gathered together to obstruct the tefillos of the Jewish people from ascending to Heaven. But when the people began to shake their tzedakah boxes on Erev Yom Kippur, it made such a loud noise that it scared away and scattered all of the klipos.

Erev Yom Kippur

● The Blessing of a Tzadik Rectifies the Soul

There is a common minhag for people to go to the homes of tzadikim on Erev Yom Kippur to receive a bracha for a g'mar chasima tova. It is certain that the blessings of tzadikim have a strong effect, and Hashem fulfills their decrees that the people should be sealed for a good year.

The Sanzer Rov zy"a even said about himself, "If people knew the power of my brachos on Erev Yom Kippur, they would literally risk their lives to get one."

It is related that a young man once arrived in Sanz on Erev Yom Kippur and went to the Rov's home to obtain a bracha. He was disappointed to see that the room was jam-packed, and he couldn't even push his way inside. He looked for a way to get in and saw that high up on the wall, there were a few small windows. He went outside, opened one of the windows and contorted himself to make it through the opening. He then walked on the heads of the gathered men to get to the Rov, which caused a big uproar.

One man got so upset that he yelled at him that it was "mamash sakanas nefashos." – The Rov heard this and said, "It is not sakanas nefashos. It is takanas nefashos!"

● Appeasing Enemies

The Shlah Hakadosh writes regarding the minhag to ask one's enemies for forgiveness before Yom Kippur: "This should not be like what I have seen people do on Erev Yom Kippur right before the chazan starts Kol Nidrei, where friends go over to each other in the shul to ask forgiveness, even though they never hated each other or sought to the other's harm, as these friends never even tried to do anything negative to each other. - Since they anyway want the best for their friend, they grant forgiveness when none is needed.

"But enemies remain in their places and do not approach each other. Neither one is willing to be the first to initiate contact. Each one thinks that he is in the right… But the truth is that these are the very people who need to ask forgiveness of each other. – One should go to his enemy and appease him until he says that he forgives him."

● Uplifting Every Meal of the Year

The Karliner Rov zy"a (quoted in Sefer Bais Aharon for Erev Yom Kippur) said that eating and drinking on Erev Yom Kippur uplifts a person and allows him to rectify all of his eating and drinking that he did throughout the year.

● Entering the Tainis Properly

Sefer Daas Zekeinim (Ois 13) quotes **Rav Yehoshua of Belz zy"a** as asking why the Gemara says that one who eats on the ninth day "is considered like he fasted on the ninth and 10th days." Why does it say that "it is considered" like he fasted on the 10th day, when he did, in fact, fast on that day? It seemingly should say that it is considered "like he also fasted on the ninth day."

He answers by citing the words we recite in the tefillah at the end of the fast day: "May it be your will that the lessening of my fat and blood that was decreased today should be considered like the fat of animals offered on the Mizbeach, and it should find favor for us."

Korbanos are only brought from fat and blood from a kosher, pure animal. Therefore, if one does not eat l'sheim shomayim, rather he eats to satisfy his desires, his fat and blood are not pure and cannot be considered like a korban.

Since Hashem is merciful and desires our benefit, he wants our fast to find favor by Him. Therefore, He commands us to eat and drink on Erev Yom Kippur, knowing that the fat and blood we gain from

this eating will be pure as each bite is a mitzvah. Therefore, the fat and blood we lose on Yom Kippur will be pure and fitting to serve as a korban. Thus, the eating on the ninth day is what uplifts the fasting on the 10th day and makes it desirable to Hashem.

● Kreplach



There is a widespread minhag to ear kreplach on Erev Yom Kippur.

It is said that we eat kreplach on days when we "bang" – on Purim when we bang for Haman's name, on Hoshana Rabbah when we bang the Hoshanos, and on Erev Yim Kippur when we bang ourselves as we recite Al Chet.

As an aside Sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh quotes **Rav Yechiel Meir of Gustinin zy"a** as asking why we eat kreplach on Shavuos, which is a day when we don't "bang."?

He answers that Chazal say (Kiddushin 30B) that Hashem created the yeitzer hara and He created the Torah as its antidote. Thus, we bang the yeitzer hara on this day with the Torah.

"Every soul, no matter how distant from G-d, has a spark of purity that is always waiting to be ignited. Teshuva is the process of rekindling that divine light." ~ Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809)

● The Seudas Hamafsekes is Our Advocate

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov zy"a considered the eating on the ninth day to be a defence of Klal Yisroel. He said that if the commandment to eat and drink on a specific day had been given to any other nation, they certainly would overeat and get drunk, and they wouldn't even show up to pray the next day. - However, Klal Yisroel are able to fulfil the command to eat and drink and still come to shul the next day and daven with devotion. - This is a great advocacy for us.

● Seeking the Physical Good of Others

The great mussar personality, **Rav Yisroel Salanter zt"l**, was wont to say that he could not understand why some people don't see it as an obligation to help others. He especially couldn't understand the type of people who tried to get others to do mitzvos but were not concerned with their physical welfare.

He would say, "I often see people standing outside a shul calling out, 'Kedusha! Come in for Kedusha!" They want to benefit others by getting them to answer Kedusha. However, I rarely see anyone calling out to people in the street and saying, "Seudah! Seudah! Please come to my house for a nice meal!"

We can learn from this that when one notices a guest from out-of-town, he should first concern himself with the man's physical needs before worrying about his spiritual needs. - He should first give a "gashmius shalom aleichem" before giving a "ruchnius shalom aleichem." - One shouldn't first ask someone if he learned or davened yet today; rather, one should first ask him if he ate yet today or if he needs help in any way.

Rav Yisroel himself always worried about the physical welfare of his fellow Jews. He traveled often, and there was a certain villager in whose home he always stayed when he came to his village. One time,

the man told him that he could use a lot of water to wash his hands, as he had plenty. He explained that he employed an orphan girl who did all the household chores, and she would get as much water as he wanted from the well. Rav Yisroel immediately replied, "I don't want to become wealthy off of the back of a poor orphan."

His intent was that while it is true that Chazal say that one who uses a lot of water to wash his hands before eating will become rich, he didn't want to do this if it meant that the orphan girl would have to work harder to draw more water from the well.

● A Kabalah to be a Yid

The pasuk states (Devarim 10:12): **וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקיךָ שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ** - "***And now, Yisroel, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you?*** Only to fear Hashem."

Rav Boruch of Mezhibozh zy"a explains that Hashem tells a Yid that what was done in the past is over and one with. - "*And now Yisroel*" – He only looks at how things are now and tells us to accept to be a Yisroel from now on!

● Yom Kippur Atones for Those Who Don't Repent

The Gemara (Yoma 85B) says that Rebbi holds that the day of Yom Kippur atones both for those who do teshuva and those who do not.

The Me'or Einayim (Parshas Ha'azinu) asks how the day itself could possibly atone for those who don't do teshuva?

He answers by citing the words of the **Zohar Hakadosh** that no teshuva could atone for the "pegam hayesod". Accordingly, he explains the Gemara to mean that Yom Kippur atones even for those sins that one usually cannot do teshuva for.

The Rebbe of Vilednik zy"a related that when he heard the Me'or Einayim say this, he heard a Heavenly voice announce that the Bais

Din Shel Mailoh ruled that "the halacha is like Nochum (the Me'or Einayim)!"

The Pri Tzadik (Erev Yom Kippur, Ois 1) writes that although the fast of Yom Kippur is only for one day, it atones for the entire year. In addition to what the day itself atones for; the fasting atones for deliberate sins as well.

The Chasam Sofer writes (Drashon, Chelek 1, page 19) that, as Chazal say, when one does teshuva out of love, his intentional sins are transformed into merit, and every olive-sized piece of non-kosher food one ate is now considered to have been like he ate a Korban Pesach in Yerushalaim!

Yom Kippur Droshos [Transcribed by Goldie Grant Elul 5784]

The following Yom Kippur droshos were written by my father **ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה** during the years 1965-1968 while he was the minister in the North Manchester Synagogue (Central Shul) [under the leadership of the then Rav, **Rabbi Yitzchok Golditch Z'l**]. The new Ohel Torah Shul is now situated on this site on the corner of Roston Road and Leicester Road.

There is a lot of food for thought, and I hope that you will enjoy reading them, discussing them and be inspired by them, like I was. Wishing you all a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה** and a **שנה טובה ומתוקה**.

● Yom Kippur September 1965

We have just davened **מנחה** – this **מנחה** is the most important of the year, for according to some opinions- it was in the afternoon of **יום כפור** that **יצחק** was found on the altar by his father **אברהם**- G-d remembers the self-sacrifice of **יצחק** and through that forgives us- his children. It was of course **יצחק** who instituted the prayer of **מנחה**.

You may have wondered why the "Confession" "**על חטא**" is in the plural **שחטאנו**- We have sinned- instead of I have sinned. It is because all the Jewish people are like one body and every Jew is like a part of that body- that is why all Jews are mutually responsible for one another and the sin of one is like the sin of all. Even if a person has not committed a particular sin mentioned in the **על חטא** he nevertheless must say it- for if a fellow Jew has committed it- it is reckoned as his sin.

The **הפטרה** we read at **מנחה** was the story of **יונה**- how he tried to run away when commanded by G-d to go and tell the wicked people of **נינוה**, that unless they repented, they would be destroyed.

You all know how the boat was in danger of being shipwrecked and **יונה** was thrown overboard- where a large fish- sent by G-d, swallowed him up. After spending 3 days and nights in its stomach, **יונה** realised that G-d had purposely kept him alive and if he prayed to G-d and repented of his sins- whereupon the fish spat him out near **נינוה** and **יונה** completed his mission.

When the King and people of **נינוה** heard of the evil decree, they put on sackcloth, fasted and prayed and they repented of their evil ways whereupon G-d saved the city.

We see from this how prayer and repentance can work miracles.

I would like to tell you a true story- in which we also find 'the great power of **תשובה**".

In Italy there once lived a very rich man. He had a most unusual custom of inviting guests for **שבת** and asking them to tell stories of the Baal Shem Tov. After **שבת** he would pay a gold coin for every story told.

A well-known disciple of the Baal Shem Tov called Rabbi Jacob arrived in that town and was invited for **שבת**. Rabbi Jacob was delighted at having the opportunity of telling episodes that he had seen with his own eyes.

A large gathering assembled in the rich man's home that Friday night, and everybody waited impatiently to hear the visitor tell his first-hand stories about the Baal Shem Tov. There was absolute silence as everybody waited.

"The story I am about to tell you"- began Rabbi Jacob…. Then he suddenly stopped- he rubbed his forehead as if trying to remember something- not a word came out- Rabbi Jacob had forgotten everything!

"Gentlemen! For many years I have travelled from town to town talking about the life and work of the Baal Shem Tov- every story was always fresh in my mind when I told it- as when I saw it- never before has it happened that I should forget a story- but now I must confess- my mind is a complete blank."

There was a lot of murmuring amongst the guests and many thought that the visitor was a swindler and imposter. The rich man himself, however, was not disturbed in the least by all this- in fact he sympathetically told Rabbi Jacob to rest and perhaps at the next meal he would remember his story.

That whole night Rabbi Jacob could not sleep- he prayed to G-d to give him back his memory. The next day, at the second **שבת** meal, his host asked him whether he had remembered the story, but all he received in reply was a sad shake of the head.

At **שלש סעודות** (the 3rd Shabbos meal), the host asked the same question and received the same reply as before.

Rabbi Jacob stayed on for another few days and finally decided to leave town. He went to take leave of his host and ask his forgiveness- the rich man comforted him and gave him a handsome gift.

Rabbi Jacob was already at the door, when he suddenly turned and ran to the rich man in great excitement. "I have just remembered an episode which I must tell you immediately" he called out. The rich man seemed very pleased and said eagerly- "Please tell it to me."

"This happened 10 years ago," Rabbi Jacob began, "It was just before a non-Jewish religious holiday. That Shabbos, the Baal Shem Tov, deep in his thoughts, paced up and down his room. Immediately after the Evening Prayers, he ordered the horse and wagon for a journey. He took 3 of his disciples with him- myself included, and we journeyed the whole night through, arriving before dawn at an unknown city. The streets were quiet and deserted, all doors and shutters were locked. The Baal Shem Tov told me to knock on a door- which was cautiously opened by a terrified looking, aged Jew. Seeing the visitors he said "Fellow Jews, run for your lives! Any Jew found on the streets today (their holiday) will surely be murdered- for we fear a pogrom."

We were afraid but the Baal Shem Tov calmly told us to go inside. Outside could be heard the chimes of bells and all the people from the surrounding towns and villages began to assemble in the main square of the city.

The Baal Shem Tov then said to me "Jacob, go and tell the bishop to come to me." Everyone in the house was thunderstruck at these words- but I immediately went off to carry out the Baal Shem Tov's request. When I reached the marketplace, the bishop was getting ready to deliver a fiery speech against the Jews- as was his custom. I went to him and gave him the Baal Shem Tov's message. The bishop replied that he was aware of the Baal Shem Tov's presence in the city and as soon as he had delivered his speech, he would go and see him. When I brought the bishop's reply to the Baal Shem Tov he said, "Go and tell him to come immediately!"- this time the bishop obeyed. He came with me and went into the house. The Baal Shem Tov then took him into a separate room and talked to him for some time. When the Baal Shem Tov came out, we left at once for home but what happened to the bishop remained a mystery to me."

This story made a deep impression on the rich man- who called out "Praised be G-d who has forgiven my sins!" turning to Rabbi Jacob

he said, "You have spoken the truth my friend, for the 'bishop' in your story – was me." Before Rabbi Jacob could recover from his astonishment, the rich man continued; "I was born into a fine Jewish family, and in my youth, I studied Torah. I then came under bad influence, to such an extent that I 'hated' my own people and even turned away from my religion. The Baal Shem Tov, however, took it upon himself to save my soul. He used to appear every night in my dreams- calling on me to give up my bad deeds and return to my Jewish heritage- the religion of my forefathers. I used to laugh off these dreams and even tried to get the gentiles to make a pogrom against the Jews to prove to myself that I had no fear of dreams.

The night before that Christian holiday, the Baal Shem Tov again appeared to me and told me that he would be coming to my city to help me return to my people. It was difficult for me to give up my riches and all the honour that had been showered upon me and to return to Judaism. However, when you came to me with the Baal Shem Tov's message once and a second time, a feeling of repentance took hold of me and I followed you.

The Baal Shem Tov then told me how I could atone for my past wrongdoing concluding "When a person will come to you, and tell you, your own life story, you will then take it as a sign that you have been fully pardoned by the Almighty- those were the Baal Shem Tov's last words to me.

I naturally did not deliver my prepared Jew-hating speech, and thus prevented the expected pogrom. Later I left for Italy, where I settled in this city and lived according to the way I was directed by the Baal Shem Tov.

I made it my custom to invite people who knew the Baal Shem Tov and could relate stories of his life and work, hoping that one day, I would hear my own story and thus receive the sign, that my atonement has been complete.

When you arrived at my house, I recognised you immediately but when you forgot all the stories about the Baal Shem Tov, I knew that my repentance was not yet sufficient. For the past 3 days, I prayed with all my soul and poured out my heart to the Almighty. I begged Him to have mercy on me and accept my repentance and atonement. Now I know, that I am like a new-born child, with a pure Jewish soul…."

We are about to say **נעילה** - the closing prayer of **יום כפור**. The **נעילה** service offers the last opportunity of a direct appeal to the Almighty.

At this time, we pray not only 'Inscribe us in the book of life", but "Seal us in the book of life"- for the fate of all people is sealed during the last moment of **יום כפור**.

We stand before **הקב"ה** truly repentant and recite **אתה נותן יד לפושעים וימינך פשוטה לקבל שבים** - You extend a hand to transgressors and Your right hand is stretched forth to receive the penitent. The Ark is kept open throughout because of the solemnity of the occasion. The service is concluded with the well-known prayer **אבינו מלכנו** and then with the exclamation of **שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד** - because there is only One G-d. Then **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד** 3 times; because G-d's kingdom extends over 3 times (past, present and future) and the verse **ה' הוא האלקים** is said 7 times- symbolic of the 7 heavens which G-d opened to us, at the time of giving us the **תורה** and which our prayers penetrate, in order to reach the very throne of G-d.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!

"When you see something beautiful in someone, tell them. - What takes a moment for you, could last a lifetime for them." ~ Based on the teachings of Rabbi Avigdor Miller (1908-2001)

● Yom Kippur September 1966

Let us take a look at some of the events that have taken place since I last spoke to you on **ראש השנה**.

We had the **עשרת ימי תשובה** - the 10 days of Repentance, of which the Rabbis say, every person should 'improve' in his conduct towards man and G-d. Of these 10 days, 3 are taken up with **ראש השנה** and **יום כפור**, of the remaining 7 days, 1 is **שבת** - to make amends for all the sins committed during other **שבתות** in the year and the other 6 days- to atone for the 6 days of each week of the year.

About the **כל נדרי** service- we recite it at night because **יום כפור** is a day of forgiveness- like the **תורה** mentions in **ויקרא** (16:30) **כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתכם לפני ה' תטהרו** - For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord- so it is necessary for a man to purify himself of his sins.

כל נדרי is a public annulment of vows that were not remembered- for one has to fulfil his vows if he remembers them. The **כל נדרי** service had a special meaning for the 'Marranos'- the Jews who, during the Spanish Inquisition took an 'oath' to embrace Christianity- not out of sincerity, but to save their lives- but who secretly and in hiding, kept all the Jewish laws, customs and traditions- so that when they recited the **כל נדרי** prayer- they knew that their 'oaths' had been annulled and that they were accepted as fully fledged Jews.

In the **מוסף** we had the description of the Temple Service performed by the **כהן גדול**, the high priest on this holy day. May <u>our</u> prayers help in the Temple being speedily rebuilt in our days.

This is followed by the poem **אלה אזכרה** in memory of the 10 Rabbis who were martyred by the Romans, for when the Temple stood, sacrifices were offered in atonement but now, after the destruction of the temple, the souls of the righteous are offered. The **מדרש** tells us that these 10 Rabbis died, to atone for the sin of the 10

brothers of Joseph, for having sold him into slavery. For in the **תורה** (**שמות** 21:16) we find 'And he who steals a man and sells him, he shall surely be put to death'- and the 'sale' of Joseph took place on **יום כפור**, the 10th of **תשרי**.

No poems have been made to commemorate the 6 million Jews, whose souls were offered in the Holocaust of Nazi Germany- but we, who were fortunate to have been spared, should strengthen our own obligations towards G-d and man- to commemorate their sacrifice.

The **תורה** reading at **מנחה** was about forbidden marriages and a warning to observe purity and be free of sin. One reason put forward for the selection of this particular portion, is, that it used to be the custom to make breaks between the Services, and so that when the boys and girls went outside, they should learn to control themselves and not set eyes on one another- this passage was chosen as a deterrent.

From the **מפטיר יונה**, which talks about the town of **נינוה**, we can learn that 1) G-d pardons and forgives those who turn in **תשובה** – repentance, like the people of **נינוה** and that 2) no man can escape from G-d.

The **נעילה** - the closing prayer, which we are about to say, was added, in order to awaken G-d's compassion during the time of the closing of the gates. What the 'closing of the gates' means is explained in the **תלמוד**. **רב** says it refers to the Gates of Heaven, and **רב יוחנן** says it refers to the Gates of the Temple. Now that our Temple is in ruins, we direct our **תפילות** and hearts to Heaven, praying that before the Heavenly Temple Gates are closed, our prayers may enter in on high, and be accepted with compassion and favour. At the end of the day **שמע ישראל** is said once, for everyone should know that he must be prepared to offer himself up for the sanctification of G-d's name.

…**ברוך שם** which is the equivalent of **אמן** is said three times, because of the passage **ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלך לעולם ועד**. Which means that G-

d reigned before the world was created, G-d is reigning in this world and G-d will reign in the world to come.

ה' הוא האלקים is then said seven times corresponding to the 7 Heavens and it is a symbol of the departure of the **שכינה** (Divine Presence) which rested in our midst from evening to evening. Now we are accompanying it through the seven heavens. May the prayers of all of Israel be accepted before their Father in Heaven.

The concluding words **לשנה הבאה בירושלים** are said twice during the year- once during the **סדר** on **פסח** and once at the end of **יום כפור**. For there is a difference of opinion in the **תלמוד ראש השנה** between

ר' אליעזר- בניסן נגאלו ובניסן עתידין להגאל

ר' יהושע- בניסן נגאלו ובתשרי עתידין להגאל

Reb Eliezer says 'Israel were first redeemed in **ניסן** and are destined to be redeemed in **ניסן** and Reb Yehoshuah says they were redeemed in **ניסן** and are destined to be redeemed in **תשרי**. Therefore, both in **ניסן** and **תשרי** we say next year in Jerusalem!

In conclusion, I would like to tell you about **תפילה בצבור** - congregational prayer, prayer with a **מנין**. Prayer with a **מנין** is always heeded, G-d does not reject the prayer of the **מנין**, therefore a man should join a congregation and not pray alone if he can pray with a **מנין**. This was said of the other days during the year. How much more is it true of **יום כפור**, which is a day when we ask forgiveness for all our sins.

It is said that 'Two men carrying a load would not be able to carry it as well separately as together, two men raising their voices are more apt to be heard than if they pray separately.' So it is with **יום כפור**, because all kinds of people, great and small pray together- their prayers are answered. From this we can learn the importance of supporting a **מנין**, and on a personal note, I would like to ask you all to remember this- Shul all the year round, and make an effort to come when you are able- in the morning and on **שבת**- even if it is

possible a few times in the year- it will do much to strengthen the **מנין** of this Shul.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!

● Yom Kippur October 1967

The Yomim Noroim (**ראש השנה** and **יום כפור**) are days when we try to come into closer touch with spiritual things and to regain the sense of wonder and reverence which we are only too often in danger of losing in a materialistic world.

Yet important that such an experience is, it must not remain in the abstract but must be translated into concrete action.

יום כפור is a day of fasting, praying and repenting. We confess our sins before the Almighty and pray to Him for forgiveness. The famous preacher of Dubno (the Dubno Maggid) told this parable called 'The Princess'.

Once upon a time there lived a great king who had an only daughter. The time came for the king to look for suitor- many dukes and princes wooed her, but she turned them down, one after another. The king became impatient and swore that the next young man to come- would become her husband. It so happened that the next man to come was a simple peasant- but true to his word, the king took him.

The **חתן** took his **כלה** to his village where he set up his home. To the peasant a wife was just a wife and he made her work hard and the villagers often made fun of her. The poor princess was very unhappy. She wrote to her father, bitterly complaining about her lot. The king felt sorry for his beloved daughter and wrote back, that on a certain day he would come to visit her.

The news of the king's visit to the village caused a sensation. Everybody came to the house of the king's son in law to help clean

up and decorate it. The princess was now treated with great respect. She was given a beauty treatment and dressed up in find clothes. Everybody turned out to greet the king. "Long live the king, long live the princess" they shouted, as they accompanied the king and his daughter through the decorated and illuminated village.

The king found the house of his son in law clean and spotless-he saw the great honour given to his daughter and he was pleased. He wondered at his daughter's alarming letters. Father and daughter spent a happy day together and when the king prepared to leave, the princess cried bitterly.

"Dear father-don't leave me here, take me with you! Please take me back home!"

"But my dear daughter," the king replied "You seem to be happy here, look at how they treat you!"

"Dear father," the princess cried "All this honour they showed me today is for your benefit- when they heard that you were coming, they made a big fuss of me, but the moment you leave, they will treat me as before and make me very unhappy."

The king called his son in law to his side and asked him "Is this the way to treat my daughter- don't you know she is a princess?"

The husband's eyes were filled with tears as he replied "Your majesty, I know she is a princess, but what can I do? I am a poor man; I must work hard for a living. I am unable to give her the kind of life she really deserves. Besides, I live in a village among wicked and envious people- they do not appreciate your daughter's qualities. But you are a great king- take me away from here, give me an estate worthy of your daughter and of the king's son in law and I will then be able to give your daughter the kind of life she really deserves."

The King is G-d// The Princess is the **תורה**

G-d wanted to give the **תורה** to other people, but finally she was given to **בני ישראל** whom He had just brought out of Egyptian bondage. All

the year round, the **תורה** is often neglected. The **תורה** sends messages to the King complaining about her treatment. Then come the King's messengers to announce the arrival of the King- they are the days of **אלול** heralding the coming of **ראש השנה**. We then wake up and begin feverish preparations, we pray and learn as never before. **ראש השנה** does not find us unprepared; we sound the **שופר** and hail the King of Kings- G-d is among us and our hearts are filled with reverence and love for His Divine Majesty.

יום כפור comes and G-d finds all Jews repenting like angels. But after **נעילה** is over and the **שופר** is sounded to announce the departure of the **שכינה**, the **תורה** begins to cry, "Father, Father, don't leave me! Take me with you- for soon they will forget who I am and mistreat me again!"

Then G-d says to His people, "Is this the way to treat My daughter? Don't you know that the **תורה** is a Divine Princess?" and the Jewish people answer "**רבונו של עולם**, indeed! We know the greatness of the **תורה**. But what can we do? We live in poverty, we have no proper home, we live among the nations of the world, who do not want to know about the **תורה**, so PLEASE take us away from here- take us back to our holy land, - for all the world is yours; give us back our holy land as an inheritance and we shall be able to keep the **תורה** in glory!"

That is why we pray, immediately after the **שופר** is sounded on the night of **יום כפור** - Next year in Jerusalem, and there we shall serve you as in days of old.

At this moment, before the closing of the Heavenly gates of prayer- when thoughts of **תשובה** - improvement flash through our minds- we might ask ourselves.

1. Do we keep the **שבת** in the true spirit and tradition?
2. Do we wear **תפילין** every working day?
3. Do we come to Shul as often as we can?

Let us put these thoughts into action!

Let each of us make a resolution to improve at least in one thing throughout this coming year, with the idea of the saying of the Rabbis in mind, that **מצוה גוררת מצוה** - this means that the pleasure and satisfaction that one gets from fulfilling a **מצוה** draws one to performing another **מצוה**. Then we can sincerely rejoice in saying 'Next year in Jerusalem,' we all hope to be able to serve You truly in the rebuilt Temple, in Jerusalem.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!

● Yom Kippur September 1968

יום כפור is the completion of the penitential period which began on **ראש השנה**.

The Mishnah states, 'Three books are opened on **ראש השנה** - one for the thoroughly wicked, another for the thoroughly pious, and a third for the intermediate class.' The thoroughly wicked, as well as the thoroughly pious, are not dependent on **יום כפור**. The former can have no atonement for he does not seek it (his fate is determined on the spot, to be condemned to death) though physically alive, his soul is cut off from among his people, his own way of life condemns him to eternal death. The thoroughly pious, also is independent of **יום כפור** because every day of his life is a day of atonement; he is destined to life eternal. The destiny of the intermediate class is suspended until the day of atonement (AT ONE MENT) we are given time to prepare ourselves before our sentence is pronounced. Our fate lies entirely in our own hands- depending on the efforts we make 'to improve' especially during the 10 days of Penitence and also afterwards. Yet the means for securing a favourable verdict are indicated:

ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רע הגזרה

Repentance, Prayer and Charity can avert any evil decree. These are indeed the three mighty pillars upon which the human structure exists.

תשובה means a feeling of shame at the follies we have committed, and an earnest resolution to sin no more. And **תשובה**, sincere and honest penitence creates the desire for-

תפילה- Prayer- not mere articulation of the lips, which we choose to call service, will avert any evil decree. Prayer means **כל עצמותי תאמרנה** – the whole of our being- every fibre in our body, shall pour out its yearning towards its Maker. Such prayer softens the heart, implants in us love and sympathy for our fellow man, it renders us susceptible to charitable inclinations.

צדקה-charity, is the natural consequence of **תשובה** and **תפילה**- Penitence and Prayer.

The person who is truly repentant will readily help his poor brother. The person who is able to pray wholeheartedly and sincerely, will not have to be asked twice to help an unfortunate fellow man. These three elements, - Penitence, Prayer and Charity are inseparable and can and should be acquired by everyone. They avert any evil decree and equipped with these fortifications, we can implore G-d's forgiveness, mercy and loving kindness.

With regard to **תשובה**, the following parable is given:

A ship lost its way during a storm and landed next to an island. The island was covered with tall trees bearing luscious fruits, it looked wonderful! The passengers were divided into three groups.

One group were of the opinion not to leave the ship, in case the storm would abate- the captain would set sail immediately- or a strong wind might carry the ship away from the island.

The second group spent a short while on the island enjoying some it fruits, but then returned to the ship; also, in good time.

The third group enjoyed life on the island so much. They forgot all about the ship- they intended staying on the island forever! In the meantime, the ship left without them. The summertime also came to an end, the fruit fell of the trees, the weather turned cold, and with nothing to eat and no warm clothing for protection, they cried; bitterly regretting their decision to stay. But it was too late and they all died of cold and starvation.

Man too, is like a ship on the seas of life, and this world is like that beautiful island.

The first group are those who do not wish to benefit from worldly pleasures, but only to serve G-d- they are the righteous, the **אמת צדיקים**. The second group are those who have sinned, but immediately regretted their actions and repented. The third group are those who thought they will live a life ONLY of worldly enjoyments- they realised their mistake when it was 'too late'.

At the end of the **נעילה** service, we recite seven times **ה' הוא האלקים** - the Lord, He is the G-d- but He is G-d outside the Synagogue also, He is G-d not only on **יום כפור** but every day, every moment. The heavenly fire, which this day kindled in your hearts, must not be allowed to be extinguished- carry it with you. Let it accompany you to your house, to your workshops to your business.

The whole of your life must proclaim that the Lord is G-d.

And, as the day closes and disappears, so may all your troubles end and vanish.

May the coming year be to you; and to all Israel, a year of life, health, a year of peace, joy and everlasting happiness- a year in which we hope to serve G-d in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!



Now You Know!

Understanding the beginning of the downfall is helpful because it can prevent us from sinning in the future. We don't bang on our heads, because if we actually thought rationally before acting, most sins would never happen. It should be noted that we beat our chests on the word, "shechatanu, that we sinned," because we lament the fact that we did the aveira.



We do NOT bang on the word "chait, sin" because we aren't upset the sin exists. On the contrary, being faced with the opportunity to sin, and refraining from doing so, is a tremendous mitzva.

This theme is repeated frequently on Yom Kippur. We are faced with challenges constantly, but Hashem knows we are capable of standing up to them. When we don't, that is what we regret. We beat ourselves up, symbolically, for not rising to the challenges, and to remind ourselves that we can do it in the future.

"The path to true humility begins with one ignoring insults or wrongdoings that were done to him." ~ R' Moshe Feinstein.

Kol Nidrei



Kol Nidrei is a strange service. It is the emotional beginning to the holiest day of the year, and there are so many stories of people clinging to Judaism only through Kol Nidrei. Yet, if we look at the text it is essentially nothing more than a dry legal text annulling our vows and oaths.

Rabbi Moshe Shapiro answers that Kol Nidrei has a much deeper element to it. We are not merely releasing ourselves from our previous commitments, but we are asking Hashem to release us from everything that is stopping our growth and limiting us in some way.

Perhaps that was the real catalyst for so many hearts to warm from Kol Nidrei. For Hashem accepted our prayers and unbound us from the obstacles that had slowed us down for so long.

As we stand before Hashem this evening to recite the Kol Nidrei, we too should ask Hashem that He not only annuls us from our oaths, but that He unties us from our healthy tendencies and negative thoughts and behaviors. Yom Kippur is a day of cleansing, let us start the process by reciting Kol Nidrei with this in mind.

"Teshuva is not just about returning to Hashem; it is discovering that Hashem never left you." ~ Alter of Novardok, Rabbi Yosef Yozel Horowitz (1847-1919).



The day of Yom Kippur ends with the ritual of the blowing of the shofar, but let's go back in history for just a moment.

Who was the first person to have a Neshama (soul)? It was given to Adam HaRishon. Adam was created from earth - עָפָר֙ מִן־הָאֲדָמָ֔ה. And then the pasuk says - וַיִּפַּ֤ח בְּאַפָּיו֙ נִשְׁמַ֣ת חַיִּ֔ים – 'And He blew into his nostrils the soul of life.' – Hashem blew the Neshama into Adam, and He told Adam, "Now you have a piece of Me inside of you." – And the protoplasm of every soul, is a piece of G-d with all the merits of our Avos as a part of it.

And now we come to the conclusion of Yom Kippur, after we told Hashem that we are thieves and criminals. We didn't value our soul and use it to the best of our advantage, it's unworked and undernourished. - So, Hashem says, "Ok, I will give you another chance." – The Rabbi picks up the shofar, and he blows.

Says **Rav Tzadok Hakohen**, "Do you know what's happening at that moment? Hashem is blowing into all of us a new Neshama!" – We are re-creating the original וַיִּפַּ֤ח בְּאַפָּיו֙ נִשְׁמַ֣ת חַיִּ֔ים, and when the Baal Tokeah blows into the shofar, you will feel a jolt. This is your new soul. You are given another chance.

Now take the new soul that Hashem put into us, and go and develop it, add spirituality to it and succeed. – This is our calling!

And the holiday of Succos follows right after Yom Kippur. And I always said that the Jewish calendar is top-heavy. There is a whole bunch of chaggim bunched back-to-back right after Yom Kippur – Why not spread them throughout the year?

The explanation is simple based on what we have said. – Now that Hashem has given us a new soul, that he blew into us on Motzei Yom Kippur - He wants to jump-start the new Neshama. He wants to get it working straight away in the correct manner. He wants to start filling up the nuclear reactor that we all have inside of us. Lulav, Succah, seudah, simchas Yom Tov, Hakafot, Simchat Torah.

Now we come out of the holiday season and our new Neshama is bursting – it's on fire! This is intended to carry us forward for the rest of the year.



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita – *Connecting to Yom Kippur*

On Yom Kippur, everybody stands like *malochim*. In the selichah that we say at the end of Musaf, it says **יוֹם שִׂימַת אַהֲבָה וְרֵעוּת. יוֹם עֲזִיבַת קִנְאָה וְתַחֲרוּת**. – '***A day for restoring love and brotherhood, a day of abandoning envy and strife***.'- It is a day where there is no jealousy and division amongst Klal Yisrael.

It's possible that one of the reasons that Klal Yisrael come together to be like malochim on Yom Kippur, is not simply that they don't eat or drink, or are detached from any worldly physical connections, but that malochim have a great deal of sholom amongst each other - **עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו** – There is no jealousy. There is a very strong sense of unity. Together they are **מקדש שם שמים** and bring glory to Hakadosh Boruch Hu with their achdus.

The reason why malochim have this sense of sholom, is as chazal tell us - that each malach has a designated mission and purpose for which they were created. There are no two malachim that have the same job. – That being the case, there is no division or jealousy, there is only sholom.

Ordinarily, people have a tendency to be jealous of each other. But, when Klal Yisrael stand in shul on Yom Kippur with this same sentiment, it's with a great sense of achdus – just like the malochim.

Every person has his own unique tachlis for which he was created. Everybody has their own set of pressures and tests in life –This is the **כבוד שמים** that Hashem wants from us. No-ones job overlaps anyone's else, and therefore there should be no jealousy – Only Shalom! – And that's how we stand before Hashem – As a unified body – Just like malachim.

I want to share with you a thought that once occurred to me regarding the inyan of Maftir Yonah. - Why do we relate the story of Yonah just before Neilah? - The Mishna Berurah brings the reason that a person can't run away from Hakadosh Boruch Hu. There is no escape from the calling of teshuvah. - I want to tell you a different machshava:

Picture Yonah's situation. He has been swallowed up into the stomach of a massive fish in the depths of the ocean. He was in a totally hopeless situation, with the despair of the greatest order. There was no way in the world that he could be helped. – No plan, no communication, no hope. Survival was impossible. - But he davened an ehrlicher tefilla to Hashem. This tefilla was answered and he was saved as the pesukim tell us.

This is what we need to know – At the time of Neilah on Yom Kippur it is an opportune time that however low a person has fallen to – there is always hope with the right tefillos – it's never too late!

If one doesn't pray for his gashmiyos needs (worldly possessions), that means he thinks he can manage those matters on his own. But, of course, he can't. One can't do anything without Hashem. Therefore, one should pray for his gashmiyos needs too. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita



There is a mashal of a king who had three of his most trusted citizens summoned to his palace. He said, "I have three jars of the most delectable jelly. A jelly that I had made from the most exotic fruit. An exquisite fruit that took 3 weeks travel to retrieve from a tropical island. And they turned it into the most delicious jelly. I have the three jars, and I'm going to entrust one jar to each of you. But I'm only giving it to you on one condition – I want you to return it to me in exactly the same condition… unopened, and I don't want you to tamper with it, I don't want you open it, I don't want you to try it. I'm going on vacation for thirty days, and when I come back, I hope that you will return it to me in exactly the same condition that I'm giving it to you now.

The men understood the message and instructions of the king. They took the jelly, and they took it home.

The first man comes home, and his wife says, "What is this?"

The husband says, "Hey, don't even look at this jelly, the king entrusted me with his precious jelly, and I have to watch over it and protect it." – He takes his jelly and locks it into a cupboard. He then takes the key and throws it into the ocean.

The second guy was a little bit more casual, and he takes his jar of jelly, and he places it on a shelf at home.

The third guy was the most cavalier of them all, and takes his jar of jelly, and places it on the living room table.

30 days pass, and the king summons his three most trusted citizens, and he says, "Nu, where's my jelly?"

The first man comes into the courtroom in the palace of the king, and he brings in his cupboard. The king says, "I don't want the cupboard, I want the jelly, where is it?"

The man says, "As a man of my word, I have brought you back the jelly just as you requested – it's inside the cupboard. I didn't want to be tempted, so I locked it up and threw away the key. You can summon your royal locksmith and have them pick the lock, and you will see that the jelly is there, just as you gave it to me." - And sure enough, they opened the lock of the cupboard and saw that the jelly was there. And the king said, "For you, 50,000 Rubles."

Then they brought in the second guy who was looking extremely ashamed. They saw that his jar was completely empty! They said, "What happened?"

He said, "I can't lie, it was so tempting that I thought that if I skimmed a little bit off the top, it would not be noticed, and nobody would find out. But it was so delicious, that I kept skimming off some, and before I knew it, I downed the whole thing and the whole jar of jelly was finished."

The king says, "For you, you will be punished – a whole year in jail."

They brought in the third guy, who also looked ashamed. He brought out his jar of jelly, but it was half empty! They said, "What happened to the rest of the jelly?"

He says, "Well, I must admit, that I found it so tempting, that I thought that I would skim a little bit off the top, it would not be noticed, and nobody would find out. But it was so delicious, that I kept skimming off some, and before I knew it, I downed half the jar of jelly. At this stage, I realized what I had done, and I fought with all my resolve to be loyal to my king and hold myself back from eating any more. Even though it was very difficult, I managed to withhold myself, and here is the rest of that jelly."

The king says, "For you, 100,000 Rubles."

So, the first guy pipes up and says, "I don't get it, for me who returned the jar of jelly intact, you only gave 50,000 Rubles, but to him who only returned half the jar of jelly, you give him 100,000 Rubles? You should punish him because he ate half the jelly! And if you don't want to punish him, at least you should only pay him half of what you gave me! Instead, you give him double what I got?"

The king said, "You don't understand – You can't even imagine what this jelly tastes like. If you would have tried it and know just how amazing this jelly is, you would have been like the second guy, and you would have eaten the whole thing. But he knows what it tastes like, and he was able to restrain himself from finishing the whole lot off because of his loyalty to me. And I find that to be noble and praiseworthy. And for that, I will reward him, because he knows what it tastes like."

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The Gemara says (Berachos 34b) : — **מָקוֹם שֶׁבַּעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין צַדִּיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵינָם עוֹמְדִין** - In the place where **בַּעֲלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה** stand, and they have returned to Hashem, even the full-fledged righteous who have never sinned, do not stand.

A person who has sinned, and has found his way back to Hashem, becomes even closer to Hashem than before. They are on a much higher level now than before.

This world where everything is so exposed, and we have tasted many of the things that the world has to offer – we know what the jelly tastes like – we have been exposed and know what it means and feels like. We are all Baalei Teshuva, no one is perfect, and we have all sinned. And as such, we are much greater than a person who has never sinned. And now, we can reach even higher and re-connect to Hashem.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

A World that Needs Us



At the end of the Yom Kippur Shemoneh Esrei we say, **עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי** – '***before I was formed, I was unworthy***.' A deeper understanding of these words is that each of us enters the world at the precise moment when we are needed.

Before we were formed, there was no need for us. Hashem sends us into His world at the exact moment when we are worthy, that our skills, talents and abilities and even our challenges are uniquely needed by the world, by our neighbors, family and friends. We are perfectly suited to the time and place we inhabit, fulfilling a specific role in the grand tapestry of creation.

It has been said that a birthday marks the day that Hashem decided the world can't continue without you. You, as an individual, are unique and irreplaceable. No one else, past, present, or future, can fulfil the unique mission entrusted to you.

This concept underscores the profound value of each individual. We are not merely cogs in a machine; we are essential components of a vibrant and interconnected world. Our presence is a testament to the divine plan and the intricate balance of existence.

[Fascinatingly, in Samoa (Samoa is a small island country in the central South Pacific Ocean, and is about halfway between New Zealand and Hawaii), for forgetting a wife's birthday, a husband could face up to five-year prison sentence, according to the law of

the country. Husbands in Samoa are warned the first time when they forget their wife's birthday. If he repeats the mistake for a second time, then he is fined or could face a jail sentence of up to five years. There is a special team at the police level to ensure that this law is enforced and followed!]

HaGaon HaRav Zev Leff שליט"א told over the following story: A woman called me up and desperately told me, "Rabbi, I need you to save my husband." She explained, "The fast of Yom Kippur is in another week and my husband's health is not the best. We just went to the doctor, and the doctor told us that it is forbidden and dangerous for my husband to fast. The doctor told us that he must eat, otherwise he is endangering his life.

After we left the doctor's office my husband turned to me and said, "Since my Bar Mitzvah, I have fasted on Yom Kippur and I don't plan on doing any different this year." "Therefore, Rabbi, I need you to speak to my husband and save him." I called up the doctor, who was irreligious, to find out why he felt that the man shouldn't fast. Then I spoke to a religious doctor to receive his opinion as well. The religious doctor confirmed that the fellow was obligated to eat. I then called the fellow and told him, "I spoke to your wife and your doctor as well as another religious doctor and they were all in agreement that you are forbidden to fast."

I was a relatively young Rov at the time and the fellow replied, "I really appreciate your concern Rabbi, but you are a third of my age and you are not going to tell me what to do or not to do. You will not control my life.

Thank you for your effort, but as I told my wife, just like I fasted until now I plan on fasting this year too."

I responded to the fellow as follows, "You are absolutely correct that I am incapable of telling you what to do in your life, however, I

do have the power to tell the **גבאי** of the shul what to do, or not to do. And if you disobey what I am telling you, I will make it my business to tell the **גבאים** that they are forbidden to give you any Aliya or other kibbud in the shul. Period."

"But Rabbi, why am I deserving of this?" I answered, "In the shul we sometimes rely on a leniency to give a kibbud even to mechalelei Shabbos. However, for idol worshipers we have no leniency."

"What do you mean?" he asked. I explained to him as follows, "The same Hashem that obligated you to fast all these years, now obligates you to eat. As it says **וחי בהם**. The fact that you want to fast anyhow shows that are serving a different religion, since it has nothing to do with Ratzon Hashem. This is called "idol worship" and the name of your Avodah Zora is called 'Yom Kippur'."

A Kiss

The Heiligeh Bardichiver Rebbe was once standing on Yom Kippur and he suddenly turned to Hashem and he said. "Master of the universe when a pair of tefillin falls, nobody picks it up and gives it a potch for falling on the floor. Rather the tefillin is picked up from the floor and is given ah kush! - So too, Master of the world there are so many neshamos that have fallen from the path of Torah and yiddishkeit. Please Hashem I beg of You, pick up these neshamos off of the floor and don't give them a potch, rather please Hashem GIVE THEM AH KUSH. - Help them return to Yidishkeit."

"After one repents, his sins are erased and Hashem's love for him increases to an even higher level than before he sinned - regardless of how severe his sins were. Now the repentant is beloved and desirable, close and dear." ~ The Rambam.

L'Maaseh



Rav Shlomo Heiman once said that one of the most important things to do on *Erev Yom Kippur* is an act of *Chessed* for someone else, and we learn that from the following story.

One year, right after the Holocaust, the ***Klausenberger Rebbe*** was preparing himself on *Erev Yom Kippur*. One can only imagine the preparations that the *Rebbe* would be involved with just before the holiest day of the year, when suddenly, there was a knock on his door. A young girl came to him and said, "Rebbe, I do not have a father anymore. No one will be able to *Bentch* me before Yom Kippur. Can you please give me a *Brachah*?"

The *Rebbe* took a cloth, placed it upon her head, and *Bentched* her the way a father blesses his daughter on *Erev Yom Kippur*. Five minutes later there was another knock on the door. It was another girl, again without a father, again with no one to *Bentch* her before Yom Kippur, and had the same request. The Rebbe went through the same routine. He took the cloth, he placed it upon her head, and he *Bentched* her the way a father blesses his daughter.

This continued the entire *Erev Yom Kippur* until he *Bentched* over eighty orphaned girls. He said that this was the best preparation for Yom Kippur. What could be a way to prepare than to do a *Chesed* for another Yid?

זה חליפתנו

It was Erev Yom Kippur 1944, in the Buchenwald concentration camp. A Jew was standing around with a few other men when a Nazi guard came over and asked what they were doing. All were silent until the man spoke up and said, "Why, we were just thinking how good you'd be!"

With that, he grabbed hold of the Nazi's arms and started spinning him around the men, all the while chanting, "Zeh chalifoseinu, Zeh HaNazi yelech l'misa v'anachnu l'chaim tovim." ("This [man] is in exchange for us; this Nazi will go to his death, and we will go to good life.")



Outraged, the Nazi broke free and smashed the man in the mouth. Somehow, the man and the rest of the group got away and were never apprehended.

The next day, on Yom Kippur, that very Nazi was shipped out and sent to the war front to fight - basically a death warrant. On the other hand, the entire group of Jewish men survived!

"If we could understand how much Hashem loves us, we would realize that Yom Kippur is not a burden but a gift." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.

The Bar Mitzvah Present

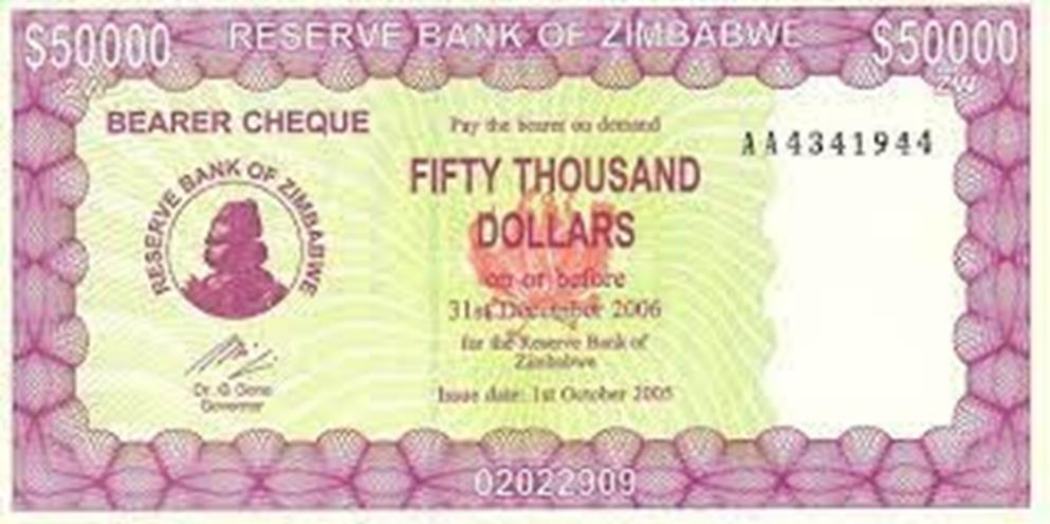
At his Shabbos HaGadol drasha this past year, 5771, the Kossoner Rebbe of Forshay, R' Chaim Leibish Rottenburg Shlit'a related an impressive tale.

There was a wealthy Parisian Jew who lived in an exclusive and luxurious high-rise apartment building. Some of the wealthiest people in all of Paris lived in this building, and the Jewish man and his family lived on the top floor, in the penthouse. Although there were only two apartments on the top floor, the man did not know his neighbour very well. The man was a wealthy Parisian, but he was also a bit secretive.

One day, when the two neighbours met in the hall, he found out why. In the midst of a passing conversation, the neighbour confided that he is currently married to the previous Queen of Morocco, and that the present king, Mohammed VI, is his stepson! In fact, the man said, the king comes on occasion to Paris and stops in to visit his mother. Of course, security is paramount, and the entire visit is usually conducted with the utmost discretion, so not many people even know that the king was there.

The Jewish man found this quite interesting and wondered if it would be possible to meet the king if and when he came the next time. The neighbour thought about this for a moment and then said he'd see what he could do. Sometime later, the Jewish man received a phone call at home. It was his neighbour informing him that his stepson, the king, was in his house at this very time and if he wished to come over, he can meet the king. The Jewish man was intrigued and brought his 13-year-old son along to meet the monarch. After undergoing routine security measures, they were allowed inside where the king was very cordial and friendly. He shook the man's hand and even engaged the boy in conversation. "How old are you?" he asked the boy. The boy replied that he had just turned thirteen a few days ago. "That is a milestone in the Jewish faith, is it not?"

asked the king. The boy explained that when a boy turns thirteen, he is called a "Bar Mitzvah." The king was impressed. "Tell me, what does it mean to be a 'Bar Mitzvah'?" he asked. "What must you do to celebrate this milestone?" The boy explained that a Bar Mitzvah meant that he was now responsible for his actions by Jewish law and that he is required to fulfil the commandments as outlined in the Torah. It is usually celebrated with a party, said the boy, amidst festive music, food, guests and presents from his family, friends and well-wishers.



The King of Morocco was visibly impressed with the young boy and his mature words. They conversed on the topic a bit longer. Then the audience concluded, and the Jewish man and his son were led out of the apartment. The next day, the man received another phone call from his neighbour down the hall informing him that the king requested that he come over once again with his son. The two arrived just as the day before, and this time, the king took out an envelope with the royal seal of Morocco emblazoned on it, and he handed it to the boy. "Congratulations on your Bar Mitzvah," said the king. "Here is a little gift for you to celebrate your achievement. Go ahead, open it." The boy was hesitant. His hand quavered slightly as he opened the envelope handed to him by the actual King of Morocco. His surprise turned to disbelief when he looked inside to find a chequ made out to his name in the amount of $50,000! He showed it to his father, who registered a look of absolute shock. "Your ..... your highness," stammered the father. "You are too kind! A cheque of this amount

is ... is ... far beyond what is normally presented as a gift! My son surely does not require a gift of this magnitude - it is far too extravagant for such a young boy. Perhaps a lesser amount would be more appropriate for a thirteen-year-old?"

The King of Morocco smiled at the man's words. "Sir, I understand your concerns completely and in truth, a boy of thirteen does not need such a large amount. He understands that, you understand that - and even I understand that as well. However," the king looked at the man with the authoritarian look of a monarch, "the reason I gave your son such a cheque is because the 'King of Morocco' cannot possibly give less! As befits the honour of my station, I am unable to present a gift of a lesser amount. Doing so, is beneath the honour of my office and beneath the stature of my position as a king!"

R' Rottenburg relates that this French Jew was visiting Eretz Yisroel not long after, and he told over this story to none other than **R' Chaim Kanievsky Shlit'a**. Rather than be amused, R' Chaim used this incident to explain the words we say on Rosh Hashana and during Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, in "Avinu Malkeinu": "**אבינו מלכינו עשה למענך ולא למעננו**" - "*Our Father, our King, Do for Your own sake, and not for our sake.*" He explained that when we beseech the Almighty to have pity on us during this serious time of year, we cannot rely on our own merits for mercy. We are so unworthy that we do not even know what we need. Rather, we beg Hashem to have mercy for His sake, to take care of us in His own way.

As befitting the King of all Kings, we require that He deal with us in a royal manner, with an overabundance of mercy, kindness and goodness, so we can serve Him properly in the coming year with true Malchus.

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ד׳ תטהרו (ויקרא 16:30) Yom Kippur is commonly translated as "Day of Atonement." However, **Rav Yisroel Reisman** points out that when we discuss forgiveness in our prayers, we almost always ask for mechilah or selichah. The blessing in Shemoneh Esrei in which we request forgiveness begins: **סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלכנו כי פשענו, כי מוחל וסולח אתה**– ***Forgive us, our Father, for we have erred; pardon us, our King, for we have sinned; for You pardon and forgive.*** Similarly, in the Avinu Malkeinu prayer, we beseech Hashem to write us in the book of selichah u'mechilah, with no mention of kapparah. If Yom Kippur is the day on which Hashem forgives us for our transgressions, wouldn't it be more appropriate to call it "Yom Selichah" or "Yom Mechilah?" What is the specific connotation of the term "kapparah," and what does it teach us about the fundamental nature of the day?



In Parshas Vayishlach (Bereishis 32:21), Yaakov sends messengers to deliver an elaborate gift to his irate brother. He instructed them to tell Eisav that his intention in sending the tribute was **אכפרה פניו**. In this case, the word **אכפרה** cannot mean "forgive," as it would not make sense for Yaakov to talk about forgiving Eisav's anger. Therefore, Rashi explains that wherever the concept of "kapparah" appears in conjunction with sin or anger, it refers to cleaning and removing, not atonement.

With this insight, we can now understand that when asking people we have harmed for forgiveness, we always ask for "mechilah," never

for "kapparah," which can only be given by Hashem. We can also now appreciate that our focus on Yom Kippur should not solely be on getting pardoned by Hashem for our transgressions, but on wiping them away so that we emerge cleansed and purified. When a person sins repeatedly, he becomes habituated to acting improperly to the point that it no longer bothers him and he forgets that it is even forbidden (Kiddushin 20a).

On Yom Kippur, the accumulated bad habits and negative influences of our misdeeds are wiped away, and we emerge cleansed with a fresh slate and a new opportunity to make better choices in the year ahead.

Parsha Points to Ponder



The Gemora (Rosh Hashana 16b) teaches that three books are opened on Rosh Hashana: one for tzaddikim, one for reshaim , and one for beinonim . Tzaddikim are immediately written and sealed for life, while reshaim are written and sealed for death. The judgment of beinonim is suspended until Yom Kippur, at which time they are written for life if they are found meritorious, and for death if they are not. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:3) explains the last line of the Gemora to mean that if he repents his sins before Yom Kippur he will be sealed for life, but if he does not do teshuvah, he will be sealed for death. Why does the Rambam require a beinoni to do the mitzvah of teshuvah to tip the scales in his favor more than any other mitzvah that could also create a merit for him?

The Gemora (Yevamos 49b) teaches that during the 10-day period from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur, Hashem is near to us and more readily accessible.

Rav Yitzchok Blazer explains that although doing any mitzvah would indeed generate additional merit, the failure to take advantage of the unparalleled opportunity to draw close to Hashem is so egregious that it outweighs any mitzvah we could possibly do. Others answer that once Rosh Hashana has passed, any mitzvos we do will be credited to our account for the new year and are thus unable to improve our judgment for the previous year. Therefore, the only option is to do teshuvah, which has the unique ability to expunge sins from our ledger for the year before.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner posits that the term "beinoni" doesn't refer to a person whose mitzvos and transgressions are equal. Rather, a tzaddik is someone who normally makes the right decision, and a rasha is a person who usually chooses incorrectly. In between them is a beinoni, who fluctuates between doing what is right and what is wrong. When the Rambam writes that such people must do teshuvah during these 10 days, he is not referring to repenting their prior misdeeds, but to doing teshuvah for being a beinoni, transforming himself into a tzaddik who no longer struggles to do what is right and makes that his default approach. Thus, doing one additional mitzvah will not suffice to tip the scales for a beinoni, for the Gemora's focus is not on weighing our actions, but on what type of Jews we are at the core.

The greatness of a single hour of Shabbos outweighs the greatness of all the Holidays and Festivals combined. ~ Chasam Sofer, Rabbi Moshe Schreiber [Sofer] (1762–1839)

I Want To Come Home, But I Don't Know If Dad Will Let Me In, by Rav Yissochor Frand

I would like to share a thought about Yom Kippur. As Rav Dovid Kronglass used to say, this is the most important week of the year. We have a tremendous task in front of us and that is the work of repenting. We should always bear in mind one very important fact: how desperately the Ribono shel Olam wants us back.

Every day in Shmone Esrei, we recite a blessing about Teshuva. The blessing begins with the words "Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our King, to Your service, and influence us to return in perfect repentance before You." The blessing ends with the words "Blessed are You, Hashem, WHO DESIRES REPENTANCE (haRotzeh b'Tshuva)."

We recite these words so many times during the year that perhaps they lose their impact. However, haRotzeh b'Tshuva does not merely mean that the Almighty will accept our repentance. It means He WANTS our repentance. His desire for us to come back is so enormous that as long as we make even a minimal effort, He will be waiting there to take us back.

There was a boy who finished high school and, as is quite typical of youth that age, he told his parents he wanted to discover and see the world. His father told him, "No, I want you to start college." The boy would not accept his father's advice: "I need to spread my wings a little and see what the rest of the world is like. I want to travel and see the rest of America." The father told his son "If you leave, do not bother ever coming back. You can start college now or you can leave this house and keep on going because you will never be welcome in my house again." The boy decided to leave anyway.

He left his home in Maryland and began hitchhiking across America. He picked grapes in California, and he did odd jobs here and odd jobs there just to keep himself going. As is often the case, after some

time, the boy became home sick. He missed his parents. He missed home. He missed having a permanent roof over his head. He missed knowing where his next meal would come from. He started hitchhiking back to the east coast, which was his point of departure.



He got as far as Iowa, sat down on a curb somewhere and wrote a letter home: Dear Mom, I'm tired. I'm hungry. I'm lonely. I want to come home. But I don't know if Dad will let me home. Mom, you know the train track crosses our farm and near the farm is an apple tree. If Dad will let me in, I want you to tie a white towel around a branch of that tree. I will get on the train, and I will look for the apple tree and check to see if there is a white towel wrapped around one of its branches. If dad still feels the same way he did the day I left when he told me not to ever come home again, I understand that there will be no white towel there and I will know that I can't come home. The boy made it back to the east coast, near Maryland, boarded a passenger train, and started heading towards home. As the train approached the farm, he became terribly nervous. Would there be a towel there or would there not be a towel?

As the train came closer and closer, he turned to the fellow sitting next to him on the train and said, "I want you to do me a favour. We are going to pass a farm with an apple tree right near the tracks. I am going to close my eyes. Just tell me if there is a white towel wrapped around a branch on that tree. I am too nervous to look myself." He was so scared that the towel would not be there, he was afraid to even look directly at the tree!

He sat on the train with his eyes tightly shut and the train passed the farm and passed the tree. The boy said to the man sitting next to him, "What happened?" He said, "Son, there is a white towel around every branch on that tree." This said, in effect, that the father could not wait for the son to come home.

This, l'havdil (distinguishing between a trivial story and a weighty spiritual lesson), is a parable of what it means "HE DESIRES REPENTANCE". The Ribono shel Olam wants us back, passionately. Just like any father who may have had disagreements with his son, at the end of the day, "as a father has mercy on his children," how much more so in the case of the Mercy of our Father in Heaven, which knows no bounds. He certainly wants us back as much as any flesh and blood father would ever want his son back. May we all merit to do a complete repentance and be sealed for a long, good life of shalom, a year of redemption and salvation, and peace upon Israel.

Torah Anytime- Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

הטה אלקי אזנך ושמע פקח עיניך וראה Incline Your ear, my G-d, and listen; open Your eyes and see…

Four years after opening Ohr Naava, a woman's Torah centre in Brooklyn, I began looking into opening a high school for girls. And indeed, we went on to create Bnot Chaya. Aimed at providing girls who had undergone difficult times throughout their years of childhood and young adolescence, it was hoped that such an environment would enable them to thrive spiritually, emotionally and physically.

The first year the school opened, I partnered with the Jewish Board of Family and Child's Services located on Coney Island Avenue in New York. Granting me a free floor in their building and ensuring me that they would provide free therapists, I was quite thrilled to know that we would have a building to place the students and run the school.

However, there was one very significant catch. They only permitted there to be fifteen students in the school.

As we went about interviewing various girls and seeing who would best fit the school, we eventually enrolled fourteen girls. With just one spot remaining, the principal, Rabbi Ezra Max and myself decided that we would go about selecting the last girl who would be admitted into the school. And so, we set a date for three girls to come for interviews.

When the day we scheduled to meet the girls arrived, we all sat together in an office, waiting for the first girl to walk in. Her name was Faiga. As she entered inside together with her parents, we were all surprised by what we saw. Quite surprised. She pretty much wobbled in, took a seat and her head hit the desk. She was out cold. She had just spent three days in the mountains with a bunch of kids partying and was, as it seemed to be, incoherent. Knowing that we couldn't run an interview with Faiga's head on the table, I turned to her parents and said, "Would you be able to wake your daughter up? This is an interview for high school."

Shaking Faiga, after a few moments, she came to her senses. "Faiga!" I called out, "why do you want to come to my school?" "Looking back at me with starry eyes, she said, "Uh? I don't know…" And then there was a boom. Her head hit the table again. She was not with it. At all. Under these circumstances, I knew that we could not accept her. Looking at Rabbi Ezra Max, I tried getting across that by judging the way she was now, there was no way we could let her into the school.

I wanted to be polite and not immediately dismiss Faiga from the interview, so I continued asking her parents some very basic questions. After we finished speaking, I told them that we would get back to them soon with our decision. I knew that there were another two girls waiting, and I assumed that they would be better candidates.

The parents then stood up and literally picked Faiga up from her chair. Helping her towards the door, I remained silent. And then I very nonchalantly asked them one last question. "By the way, how are your other kids doing?" Although we ideally wished to accept Faiga, she didn't seem to be doing too well at the moment. As soon as I said that Faige's father, a tall, respectable man, turned around and said, "Rabbi Wallerstein, Faiga is our only child. We had her late in life. She is all that we have."

As he said those words, I sunk into my chair. And then, without a second thought, I said to Faiga's parents, "You don't have to wait until tomorrow. She is accepted right now."



While even Rabbi Ezra Max was surprised by my hasty decision, I was not in any way doubtful that this was the right move. I then realized quite clearly what it means to take a second look at someone. The first look at Faiga showed someone who would not get too far in life. "What did I need her for?" I thought. But the second look yielded a completely different picture. She was an only child, and she represented the future of her family. If she didn't make it, who would? I then knew that we had to take her. We would work with her, and she would become not only a source of *nachas* to herself, but to her parents and family as well.

Looking back at her parents once again, I said, "Just try to clean Faiga up. Let her sleep for two weeks and then be ready for when school starts." As Faiga's parents genuinely thanked me, I knew I had made the right decision. And let me tell you, today, Faiga is one of the funniest kids I have ever met. With a pleasant and vibrant personality, she is healthy, growing and thriving.

In life, it is essential to take that second look and give others that second chance. It is what we ask of Hashem to do for us, and what we ought to do when looking at our fellow Jews. The people who make changes in others are those who see beyond the external facade of a person and peer into who they are deep down. And for Faiga, deep within her laid a beautiful neshama. All that needed to be done was peel away the outside layer and let her beauty shine. And today, that beauty is a wonderful role model and source of inspiration to us all.



Thoughts About Prayer Before Yom Kippur

We believe with complete faith that all which will transpire during the coming year – both on a personal level and on a national level – is determined during the period of the Ten Days of Repentance. We are all familiar with the concept דִּרְשׁוּ ה' בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ קְרָאֻהוּ בְּהְיוֹתוֹ קָרוֹב ***"Seek out G-d when He is to be found, call out to Him when he is near"*** [Yeshaya 55:6].

This is the time of year when the Master of the World is particularly close and therefore the normal obstacles that might exist to making our prayers effective are removed so that our sincere prayers to Him will certainly be heard.

We must take advantage of this time of year. Particularly, regarding prayer and asking for all that we need, this is the time to do it. We cannot waste these golden opportunities.

Rabbi Aryeh Lev Ginsberg, a Rav in New York, had a congregant, who had a son, who went to learn in Eretz Yisrael in a Hesder Yeshiva which combines Torah study with military service. He became a member of the Israeli army and in fact rose to a position of leadership in the Israeli Defense Forces. In the summer of 2005, the Israeli government decided to give back Gaza to the Arabs. The army had to forcibly remove the Jewish settlers who refused to voluntarily abandon their settlements.

He was very distraught about the assignment. He felt it was the wrong thing to do; but as a solider he followed orders and participated in the forced evacuation. His unit came to a certain settlement in Gaza. It was his job to see to it that the settlers boarded the buses to be evacuated. He worked with the Rabbi of the settlement. All the settlers gathered in the town's synagogue. The Rabbi spoke, the soldier spoke, they all cried and finally they all filed out of the shul and boarded the bus. After everyone had evacuated the building, this soldier took out a siddur from his backpack. He kneeled down on the ground, dug a hole, and buried his siddur. The Rav of the settlement asked him why he did that. The soldier replied that maybe a year from now or 5 years from now or 50 years from now, we will come back to this place, people will rebuild here and maybe they will find this siddur and will realize that we left or hearts and prayers behind in this place.

Fast forward 11 months. It is now the summer of 2006. Gilaad Shalit was captured by Hamas militants in Gaza. Israel decided to reinvade Gaza in an attempt to find him. The unit of this American soldier was sent back into Gaza to set up a camp as a base of operations. They entered Gaza under the cover of darkness. They did not know exactly where they were, but they stopped at a certain deserted place to set up camp. The next morning, the soldier looked around. He was totally disoriented. He did not recognize anything. All he saw was rubble from the buildings that were destroyed. He did not really know where he was. He got a feeling that he should look for his siddur. He knelt down on the ground and started digging. Lo and behold, he found the siddur.

There were overwhelming odds against this happening, and he was literally shaken by his find. Rabbi Ginsberg himself was astounded and could not bring himself to interpret the meaning of the story. However, he arranged a meeting between the soldier and **Rav Chaim Kanievsky** to allow the soldier to hear the opinion of a great and holy man in Israel regarding the meaning of this incident.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky asked him, "What did you do when you knew you were going to need to evict the settlers from Gaza?" The soldier replied, "I went to my commanding officer, and I went up the chain of command trying to convince everyone that it was a mistake and that we should not go ahead with the operation."

"What else did you do?" persisted Rav Kanievsky.

The soldier added that he prayed to the Master of the World that it should not happen and that He should please show Mercy. Rav Chaim then asked, "So when it happened, and you had to evict them, so what did you do then?"

The soldier responded, "At that point I stopped davening for it to not happen."



Rav Chaim Kanievsky said, the Master of the World is telling you: Never stop praying for something! This is why you found your siddur. You buried the siddur because you felt it was futile to daven anymore. G-d caused you to find it so that you will realize that it is never too late to daven for something! "All is lost?" G-d tells you: "No. All is not lost. Get the siddur and start davening again."

This is the lesson we must bear in mind as we approach the High Holidays. קַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה חֲזַק וְיַאֲמֵץ לִבֶּךָ וְקַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה ***"Hope to G-d. Strengthen your heart. And hope to G-d."*** [Tehillim 27:14].

The Talmud interprets this pasuk to mean that if a person prays and sees that his prayers are not answered, he should pray further.

[Brachos 32b] This is one of the great mistakes we make. We think we pray for so many sick individuals who do not get better. We pray for so many miserable situations that do not improve. We pray for so many things and our prayers are apparently not answered. This is a mistake. No prayer ever goes "wasted". It may not help us for a particular time or a particular place, but all prayers go up to heaven and at some time and in some place they have an effect.

Yom Kippur Number 13



The number 13 expresses oneness as is shown in the numerical value of the word **אחד**. The following are some illustrations of this:

1) Upon the Shechina departing from Yaakov when he wanted to reveal the **קץ** to his sons, they said **שמע ישראל...אחד**. They said this so that he shouldn't think there was a blemish among his children like by Avraham (Yishmael) and Yitzchok (Esav). The word **אחד** represents Yaakov and his 12 sons totalling 13, the same as **אחד**

2) We recite 13 Ani Maamins after Shacharis.

3) The term **אהבה** yields the same Gematria as 13- **אחד**- since true love is becoming one.

4) The number of letters in the names of the Avos- **אברהם, יצחק, יעקב** - is 13. The same applies with the Imahos- **שרה, רבקה, רחל, לאה**. This is because they expressed the oneness of Hashem. Indeed, 13 and 13 is 26- the gematria of **י- ה- ו- ה**.

5) A boy gets his Bar-Mitzva at 13.

6) In the end of the Haggada we sing **אחד מי יודע** which goes until the number 13.

7) There are 13 ways to expound the Torah as we are taught in the Braisa of R' Yishmael.

8) In light of this we now can comprehend why there are specifically **יג מדות של רחמים** 13 attributes of Rachamim.

There was a Chassidish Rebbe many years ago that had a son of who veered off the path of Judaism. He would even come to his father's Tisch dressed improperly. In spite of this, his father would always treat him with respect as he gave him a seat at the Tisch and the like. The Chassidim were appalled since they felt his son was undeserving. As the Yamim Noraim approached, they chose 3 Chassidim to go to the Rebbe to ask if this could be stopped. As they came close to the door of the Rebbe, they heard him asking Hashem for forgiveness. He cried: "Hashem please forgive my Chassidim- I know that not everything that goes on in the community is right. But look, I also have a son who doesn't act the way I like him to act. Yet, I don't distance him rather I bring him close and overlook his sins. Please Hashem, can't you do the same."

The 3 Chassidim got the divinely sent message and left the premises. May we all merit to be judged favourably.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein -Building Walls, Building Bridges

For two brothers who were known to be best friends, life on their familial farmland was pleasant. They got along very well and shared much in common. Yet, one day, the unfortunate news was broken to them. Their beloved father had passed away. While saddened by his untimely passing, they were now left with acres and acres of land. After talking it over between themselves, each brother decided to build houses for their families on opposite sides of the field.

As for the remaining land between them, that is where the problems began. One brother wanted to plant corn, arguing that it would bring in much profit. The other brother, however, begged to differ. "I think we should plant cucumbers," he suggested. As it happened, this small quarrel developed into a heated debate and drove a rift between them. The fighting, in fact, became so hostile and intense that they could barely speak to one another. Taking their argument to the local rabbi, it was suggested that they plant half the property with corn and half the property with cucumbers. But the brother who wished to plant cucumbers was less than compliant. "If that's what we have to do," the brother thought to himself, "I will build a wall between us!" Not telling his brother of his plans, they both returned home intent on planting their respective vegetables.

The following morning, the brother who intended on planting the cucumbers called a carpenter. "Can you build me a wall?" the brother asked. "My brother and I have been arguing as what to plant on our field, and I can no longer stand to look at him. Build me a wall so high that nowhere along my field will I see him and will he see me."

Without further delay, the carpenter got to work, measuring the field and determining how much wood would be needed to build a tall and lengthy wall. Within a few hours, the carpenter returned with the price estimate. "To build a wall along your entire property as high as you want will cost you $50,000 worth of wood." "How long will it take you to build?" asked the brother. "I cannot stand to look at my brother's corn!" "I can do it in a month," replied the carpenter. "Great," the brother confirmed.

"While you build the wall, I will go away with my family elsewhere. By the time I return in a month, you'll be done."
A month later, there was the brother and his family walking back into their home. The brother put down his bags and headed outside. And then he saw. A bridge was nicely built extending from his property to his brother's property.

Shocked, he immediately called over the carpenter. "What happened! I told you to build a wall! I gave you $50,000 worth of wood to build a wall, and you built a bridge!" The carpenter stood there calmly, taking in a deep breath. "I thought about it, and I've known the two of you since you were little kids. What I did is take the same wood you provided to build a wall and built a bridge instead."



Meanwhile, the brother on the other side of the field who had planted corn, took a look outside. He hadn't done so in a while. And lo and behold, what did he see? A beautiful bridge extending from his property to his brother's property. He was taken aback. He was sure that his brother hated him and wanted nothing to do with him. But apparently, that wasn't the case.

As he ran across the bridge as quickly as he could, all he could think about was how much his brother loved him. Eventually, he met his brother standing next to the carpenter. Rushing over, he gave his brother a big hug. "I can't believe it! Even though you seemed so angry at me, you actually loved me and even built a bridge to bring us closer together!"

As the other brother stood there next to the carpenter, he was even more surprised. He had no intention of building a bridge and no intention of making amends with his brother. Quite to the contrary, he wanted to build a wall and separate even further from him. But what could he say now? His brother had forgotten and forgiven whatever had happened in the past; couldn't he do the same?

And so, in a moment of love and compassion, the brother continued embracing his brother. "I love you too," he whispered. All that emotion and energy which had gone into building a wall of hatred and hostility had now turned into building a bridge of friendship and forgiveness.

Throughout life, we may find ourselves enmeshed in a situation where we are at odds with someone. Feelings of hurt and resentment swell up and we can almost guarantee that we will never make up with them. But then remember, with that same passion and effort used to build walls and create distance, you can build bridges and create closeness. There is nothing more precious and beautiful than that.



Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע"ה]

What makes Yom Kippur unique in that it is the only day of the year we daven five Tefilos ? **נעילה ,מנחה, מוסף, שחרית, מעריב** The letter **ה** represents Teshuva. Here are some allusions to this:

The 5th Bracha in Shemoneh Esrei is **השיבנו** , Teshuva. This Bracha begins (**השיבנו**) and ends with a **ה (בתשובה).** **ה** is the numerical value of 5. 5 and 5 gives us a total of 10, alluding to the **עשרת ימי תשובה** . Rashi tells us Avraham converted men while Sarah converted women. Is it any wonder that Avrohom and Sarah both had their names changed with the letter **ה**.

The Gemara says that this world was created with the letter **ה** as it says **בהבראם**. This word can be divided into **בה בראם** - with the letter **ה** this world was created.

A **ה** has an opening at the bottom hinting to us that people can fall to evil. However, there is an opening on the side of the **ה** telling us Teshuva can be done. It therefore comes as no surprise that on Yom Kippur- the most climactic day of Teshuva- we daven five Tefilos.

The Gemara on Yom Kippur- **יומא** - is a contraction of **יום א** – the unique day that is **יום אחד** refers to Yom Kippur. Additionally, if we multiply 52 (number of weeks in a year) by 7 (days in a week), we get 364. This is because the 365th day is Yom Kippur which is unique. Moreover, **השטן** has a sum of 364, since Yom Kippur is the only day of the year that the Satan isn't in effect. Rearranging the letters of **יומא** we get the word **איום**; awesome, since that is what type of day it is.

Penetrating Tears



Chazal tells us that although the heavenly gates of Tefila are locked, the heavenly gates of tears are not locked- **שערי דמעות לא ננעלו**

R' Dessler explains that Hashem never locks the gates of heaven. The Gemara refers to the gates and locks that are on one's heart which prevents us from pouring our heart out to Hashem. With tears one can always pray properly. we can now comprehend why the first letters of **בשמך יגילון כל היום**; ***in your name they rejoice all day***, spell **בכיה**, since through tears one gets close to Hashem, bringing him joy.

With this we can grasp why **כי ביום הזה יכפר**; *on this day he shall provide atonement*, which is written in regard to Yom Kippur, contain the initials **בכיה**, since **ויהי** should be recited with tears. This extinguishes the fire of the sins committed.

Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lieff -The Most Potent Prayer

Do our *tefillos* actually accomplish anything? As far as we can see, our request was not granted, and we are in no better place than before we poured our hearts out to Hashem. But, in truth, much more underlies the focus of *tefillah* than simply having our requests fulfilled.



Dovid Hamelech writes, " **עזרי מעם ד' עשה שמים וארץ**" - ***"My salvation is with Hashem, Creator of heaven and earth"*** (*Tehillim* 121:2). Most interesting is the expression Dovid Hamelech employs here. Considering that in Hebrew, the word "**עם**" literally means "with," it would seem to have been more appropriate for Dovid to say, "My salvation is from Hashem." Why then does Dovid Hamelech express himself otherwise?

But that is the very point. The true salvation to our troubles is when we are with Hashem. When we connect with our Father and recognize that He with us at every point of our lives, whether we are up or down, we have achieved the ultimate goal of *tefillah*. No prayer ever goes to waste, for in its wake, our relationship with Hashem deepens and develops.

All that we yearn for and desire – health, *shidduchim, parnassah, shalom bayit* – are all catalysts for us to connect with Hashem. That is the true meaning of "My salvation is with Hashem." It is when we become one with our prayer and realize that we have our beloved Father at our side that we begin to live with Him. Picking up a *sefer Tehillim* and pouring our hearts out to Him is the greatest achievement of prayer. It is at that point that we are living with

Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the most intimate of ways. And indeed, this is how we actually make our prayers most effective. By placing our complete dependence on Hashem, we prove ourselves most fitting to receive that which we yearn for.

Imagine the scenario of an individual in dire straits collecting *tzedakah*. He travels from town to town, hoping to procure a few dollars here and there. While he may not feel despondent if each person only hands over a few coins, that is because he relies on multiple individuals and organizations for assistance.

But what would happen were he to come to one man, and one man only, and plead his pitiful case. "You are the only person who can help me!" he cries. "With you, I live, and without you, I die; with you, I succeed and without you, I fail."

When such dependence is thrust upon the benefactor, his heart goes out for the poor man's cause. He will then not simply offer him a few dollars, but a considerable sum. And that is because he became the one and only provider for this needy man.

The same is true of *tefillah*. The most potent form of prayer is achieved when we express our complete dependence on Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When we turn to our Father in Heaven and say, "It is all in Your hands; there is no one else who can help me but You," our prayers take on an entirely new depth of meaning. When we open our Siddurim and Tehillim and cry out to the Ribono Shel Olam, telling Him that everything is on the line, He will most certainly respond in kind. And that is because if He doesn't help us, no one else will. And when a person is told that he is the only one who can help, it is not merely a few dollars which he hands over, but a generous sum.

That is how we ought to approach tefillah: complete dependency on our Father. It is the key to building the greatest relationship with Hashem and having our prayers shake the heavens.

Rabbi Lazer Brody -Your Blemish, Your Beauty

אָדם משוּל כְּחֶרֶס הַנִשבָּר... Man is likened to a broken shard



For one elderly Jew who served as the local watercarrier, every day he would walk down to the nearby river, fill up two buckets, and head back up with them thrust upon his shoulders. And on one occasion, one of the conversations a bucket had with another bucket led to a remarkable realization. One bucket was brand new with a nice and sturdy surrounding rim, encased in iron and decorative polished wooden slats. The other bucket, however, was old and rusty, aside from which it had a hole, which caused it to leak. Every morning, by the time the poor watercarrier would reach the top of the mountain, the old bucket would only be one-third full. And so, one day, the new bucket struck up conversation with the old bucket. "I don't wish to insult you, but you look like you could use a long-term retirement. Besides, you have a hole and leak every time you're filled up. I only imagine our boss will want to get rid of you soon.

The old bucket was discernibly upset and taken aback by this realization. "Look," replied the old bucket, "I've been working for our owner for thirty years. Although I may be old, I have much experience. Despite me not being perfect, who says our owner will throw me away?" As the new bucket took in the words of the old bucket, he realized that he had misspoken. But, in the back of the old bucket's mind, he remained worried about his job's security. "Just maybe," he thought to himself, "this young bucket is on to something. Perhaps my owner really wants to get rid of me even

after so many years of loyal service…" And so, the old bucket decided he would approach his owner with his concerns.

One day, as the owner made his way to the top of the hill with his two buckets, he set the young bucket down, allowing for the rare occasion of spending a few moments alone with the old bucket. The old bucket, having waited for this opportunity, quickly realized that now or never was the time to ask his question. "My dear owner," began the bucket, "are you going to get rid of me? Do you not like me anymore? We have been together for so many years…" The elderly man, caught off guard by the bucket's comment, did not hesitant to reply. "Get rid of you? You're my beloved bucket who I've been using for thirty years! You and I are going to the Next World together. I'm never going to give you up!" "Well," continued the bucket, "I just wanted to make sure, because the young bucket did mention that I am quite old and imperfect and have a hole. I myself have begun to wonder, why in fact do you continue to use me if I have a hole? Why don't you buy another bucket?"

The owner, looking down at the bucket, let out a smile. "Let me tell you something, my dear bucket. I am an old man myself, and it is difficult for me to walk up and down the hill and fill up water. But you know where I gain the strength to do so every day? Just look down at the path leading up and down the hill. You see those beautiful flowers blossoming along the path? You know who made that path of flowers? That little hole of yours. Every time I carry you up the hill, by the time I reach the top, there is only one-third of water left. But where has the rest of the water gone? One little drop of water falls here and another little drop falls there. Sooner than later, a seed begins to sprout, then a flower begins to blossom, and then another flower and another. "Whenever I see those beautiful flowers you produced all along the path, I forget how my back is aching and legs are tiring, and I continue walking forward with renewed vigour and optimism. By virtue of your hole, I gain the strength to continue with my job every day. What you consider to

be your blemish is your beauty. And so, you are not something I would ever sell, but something I will always cherish."

In our own lives, we often look at our flaws and failures as imperfections and deficiencies we wish we never had. We feel that we do not measure up to the benchmark of perfection we ought to. But then, one day, we come to realize that in fact our blemish is our greatest source of beauty and blessing. Our "hole" is not our problem, but our perfection. All that goes into who we are as a person is precisely what we need to fulfil our mission in life. We need not wish we were someone or something else. Exactly the way we are is exactly the way we need to be. And there is nothing more beautiful and precious than that.

A Short Message from Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lieff



As a father living in Williamsburg, New York, began readying himself to walk to shul for an all-night learning program on Shavuos, his little eight-year-old son approached him. "Tatty, can I come with you?" Looking back at his son all dressed up, the father smiled. He knew that his son would probably not last learning the entire night and would likely be better off staying home. "I think you should stay here for the night," replied the father. "Maybe next year." And with that, the father gave his son a hug and a kiss and gently closed the door.

The father proceeded to make his way to shul, around and about the streets of his neighbourhood. Finally arriving at the doorstep before

the shul, he began to think, "What did I do? My little boy wants to learn Torah tonight. So what if he learns for only a few minutes? Why should I deprive him of this opportunity?"

And with that, the father turned around and retraced his steps all the way home. Opening the door to his house, there he saw his son standing in front of him, dressed in his suit and tie, ready to go. "How did you know I was coming back?" asked the father. "Tatty," replied the little boy, "I davened to Hashem. I knew you would come back."

That little boy was **Shimshon Pincus**. The same R' Shimshon Pincus who went on to inspire thousands of Jews and spread Torah to the far corners of the world knew as a little boy that his Father in Heaven truly listened to his prayers.

Chazal tell us: אֵין הָעוֹלָם מִתְקַיֵּים אֶלָּא בִּשְׁבִיל הֶבֶל תִּינוֹקוֹת שֶׁל בֵּית רַבָּן *"The world continues to exist only in the merit of the breath of schoolchildren."* (Shabbos 119b).

The Gemara continues: Rav Papa asked Abaye, "Why only the breath of schoolchildren - what about us? What about our Torah and prayers?" Abaye responded: "One cannot compare breath filled with sin, with that which is free of sin." We see that even the Amoraim felt that they do not compare to the young schoolchildren who study Torah and daven to Hashem with total purity and innocence. Adults who no longer fit into the category of schoolchildren must nevertheless do their utmost to ensure that the Torah they study remains as "clean" as possible. Indeed, we must clean our eyes and our thoughts from that which is improper in order that our Torah and our prayers remain pure!

Rabbi Naphtali Carlebach zt"l served as the chief rabbi of Baden, Austria, near Vienna (Baden bei Wien), from 1931-1938. Hailing originally from Berlin, Rabbi Carlebach was forced to leave Germany

in 1931 with his wife Paula, twin sons, Eliyahu Chaim and Shloime, and their sister Shulamith, but not before he took a heavy beating at the hands of the Nazi SS. By the time he managed to leave Germany, he was bruised and beaten and looked like a man much older than his age. Eventually, he made his way to Austria where he served his community faithfully for seven difficult years.

After the Anschluss (annexation) and with the ominous Nazi rise to power in Austria, the Carlebach family travelled to Lithuania, and eventually managed to emigrate to New York city, arriving on March 23, 1939. Eliyahu Chaim Carlebach relates that when he and his brother Shloime were very young, they would walk to school in the morning. They would have to pass a certain large intersection in one of the main town squares, which did not have a typical streetlight to direct traffic. Instead, an SS officer would stand on a box in the middle of the street and point in every direction, telling vehicles, wagons, carts and even people when it was their time to cross. As women and girls would pass him, he would politely say, "This way Ma'am," or "Good Morning, Fraulein," and lead them across the street. However, when the two Carlebach boys would wait their turn to cross, the Nazi would heap menacing insults upon their unfortunate heads and call them all sorts of terrible names.



This went on day after day, and it made their daily trek to school extremely unpleasant. There was not much anyone could do - or so they thought. One day, right after the Rosh Hashana holiday, the

two boys were standing at the street corner listening to the harassing message from the Nazi crossing guard. Suddenly, the older brother motioned for his brother to follow his lead. Striding purposefully into the middle of the intersection, Eliyahu Chaim began to walk around the makeshift platform upon which the Nazi stood and in a loud voice, started reciting the following words: **זה חליפתי זה ילך למיתה ואני אלך לחיים טובים ארוכים ולשלום .. – *"This is instead of me, this is replacing me, this is my atonement, this will go to his death while I will go on to a long and blissful life."***

The familiar words of the Kapparos rang out from the mouths of the two young children and it caused quite a scene. People stopped and stared, and the German guard became apoplectic at the sight of two Jewish boys poking fun at him. He began yelling at them and pointing in all different directions, screaming that they are not permitted to cross the street until he allows them to. His continued to point at the boys and at the streets on both sides and while he was doing this, he did not realize that the vehicles he was supposed to be directing believed he was still directing them! Well, the inevitable happened and two automobiles attempted to drive across the avenue at the very same time. This caused a terrible collision and one vehicle spun out of control, smashing directly into the soapbox upon which the Nazi guard stood. The impact sent him flying in the air, landing with a sickening thud on the pavement nearby.

The Nazi was killed instantly and the two Jewish boys ran away as fast as their little legs could carry them! Indeed, the tefillos of the Tinokos shel bais Raban have a tremendous impact – sometimes that impact is instantaneous!

"To strengthen the muscles of your heart, the best exercise is lifting someone else's spirit whenever you can"

A Short Message from Mrs. Fayge Loewi



I remember my mother a"h once relating a beautiful thought. Imagine a large room full of people, yet it is freezing cold inside. With no heat available, everyone stands around shivering. One man, seeking to warm himself up, puts on his fur coat. Yet another man, also looking to relieve himself of discomfort, prepares a fire in the fireplace. What is the difference between these two people? The former warms himself, while the latter warms himself along with everyone else.

In life overall, we are often given opportunities where we can focus on our own needs and help ourselves. Yet then again, those very same opportunities can be turned around to help others. Instead of merely thinking of ourselves, within the very same act, we bring light and warmth to so many others.

On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol pronounces Hashem's name of י-ה-ו-ה (pronouncing the name as it is written) ten times. That is: 26 x 10 = 260. עין , eye, is gematriya 130. There are two eyes, which add up to 260.

This indicates that when one guards his eyes, he is compared to the Cohen Gadol, who does the service on Yom Kippur. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman Shlita.

A Short Message From Rabbi Asher Sinclair

A car wash is a great business. Within a short while of driving out of the wash, you need another cleaning. Your car has already lost much of its gleam and within a week or two it starts looking like any other car. That being so, why would anyone ever bother spending the time and money to clean it in the first place?



Sometimes, Yom Kippur feels a lot like a car wash. Is there a person in the world who repented for their sins last Yom Kippur and hasn't sinned again? Isn't it then all a waste of time? Who are we fooling? Certainly not G-d, and if we are honest, not even ourselves. But think again. Have you ever tried cleaning a car that has not seen water in two years? It is not easy, to say the least. Dirt and grime have eaten into the paint, and it is very difficult to make the car shine again. That is the importance of a frequent car wash. It is true that the gleam of our car when we leave the wash may be short-lived, but there is a more important reason that we make our regular pilgrimage to the car wash. It gives us the possibility of returning to the shine of the original paintwork.

Yom Kippur is the same. The shine with which we leave shul after Yom Kippur may wear off quickly. Yet were we never to experience a Yom Kippur, we would soon become so spiritually dull that we would never be able to get back the lustre of our original spiritual paintwork. Yom Kippur provides that ever-important opportunity when we can clean and reclaim our inner and pristine spiritual lustre. That indeed is the role of Yom Kippur and its true beauty.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

On the eve of Yom Kippur, the entire Tzibbur comes to shul to hear the awe-inspiring words of Kol Nidrei. At the end, the Chazan recites the beracha of "Shehechayanu" and everyone answers Amen. Why is this beracha situated right here?



I once heard a story which can be used to answer this question. A Jew committed a crime and was placed in jail for a length of time. During this period, he developed a friendship with the local Jewish chaplain and spoke to him about various matters of Judaism. When the man was released from prison, he met the chaplain while walking in New York. The chaplain was happy to see his old friend and commented on the fact that he retained his Jewishness and observance of mitzvos even while incarcerated. The chaplain told him that he was going to Israel and would be happy to take a kvittel with him to be placed in the Kosel HaMaaravi. The man took out a pen and a napkin and wrote a few words. The chaplain was surprised that his kvittel was so short and asked if he can read it. When he looked at the napkin, it stated simply, "Thank you." The man explained that before he can ask Hashem for blessings and good things in life, he needed to first thank Him properly! He wouldn't ask for something new until he properly thanked Hashem. Now is not the time to ask, he said, rather the time to thank.

R' Avigdor Miller zt"l said that instead of looking at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as the beginning of a new year, we should look at it as the siyum of the past year and thank the Ribono shel Olam for all the berachos we received of health and nachas, because without

hakaras hatov we cannot expect another year of the same. Every year, every day, every minute is a gift from Hashem. For this reason, the shehecheyanu we say on Yom Kippur at night is not only a beracha to usher in the Yom Tov; it is a thank you to the Ribono shel Olam for everything He has done for us this past year. - May Hashem grant us a gmar chasima tova together with all of Klal Yisroel. After this, we can now ask Hashem to forgive us!

One overcast and cloudy day, a little girl and her father went for a walk.

At one point, they came to a raging river which appeared ominous and dangerous. The only way across was to go over a flimsy makeshift bridge. At first, the father wanted to turn around, but his little girl insisted that they continue across the bridge. Of course, the father was concerned for his daughter's welfare and told his little girl, "Sweetheart, we can only cross if you hold my hand so that you don't fall into the river." The little girl shook her head and said quite firmly to her father, "No, Daddy. You must hold my hand!"



The father stopped walking and looked at her. "What's the difference?" asked the puzzled father. "There is a big difference," said the little girl, wise beyond her years. "Daddy, if I hold your hand and something happens to me, chances are that I may let your hand go. But, if you hold my hand, I know for sure that no matter what happens, you will never let my hand go!":

On Yom Kippur we must remember that Hashem loves us with an infinite love and is waiting to hear our prayers and give us what we

need. No matter how dark our sins will stain us, He will never let us go. He is holding onto us as tightly as ever.

Even if our sins are black as night, Hashem is waiting with open arms to lovingly receive us, just as a parent will always yearn for a child to return. May we pour our hearts out to Hashem on Yom Kippur with purity and deep sincerity and may Hashem grant us a happy, healthy and sweet new year.

It happened once, on the evening before Yom Kippur



One of the chassidim of the **Rebbe, R' Elimelech of Lizhensk ZT"L** asked his Rebbe to allow him to watch how he, R' Elimelech, performs the custom of kaparos. "How I do kaparos?" asked R' Elimelech. "I take a rooster in one hand, a siddur in the other, and recite the text. There's nothing special about the way I do kaparos." But the chasid persisted that surely the special act of his Rebbe's kaparos was no ordinary event. He had been coming to Lizhensk to daven at the Rebbe's side every Yom Kippur for more than twenty years now and had always wanted to observe his Rebbe at this most solemn moment.

"You want to see an extraordinary kaparos?" said R' Elimelech. "Go observe how Moshe the tavern-keeper does kaparos. Now, there you'll see something far more inspiring than my own, ordinary kaparos."

The chasid located Moshe's tavern at a crossroads several miles outside of Lizhensk and asked to stay the night. The tavern was full and bustling, but Moshe agreed to find his guest a place where he can stay and get some sleep. Later, after a full day tending to his unruly and often drunken patrons, it was time to close and with much shouting, cajoling and threatening, Moshe succeeded in herding his boorish clientele out the door. Then, the chairs and tables were stacked in a corner, and the room, which also served as Moshe's family's living quarters, readied for the night.

The chasid, wrapped in his blanket under a table, feigned sleep, but kept watch all night, determined not to miss a thing. Before dawn, Moshe rose from his bed, washed his hands and recited the morning blessings. "Time for kaparos," he called softly to his wife, taking care not to wake his guest. "Please bring me the notebook sitting above the cupboard."

Moshe sat himself on a small stool, lit a candle, and began reading from the notebook, unaware that his "sleeping" guest was wide awake and straining to hear every word. The notebook was a diary of all the misdeeds and transgressions the tavern-keeper had committed in the course of the year; the date, time and circumstance of each scrupulously noted. His "sins" were quite benign - a word of gossip one day, oversleeping the time for prayer on another. However, Moshe read each word slowly and by the time he had read through the first few pages, his face was bathed in tears. For more than an hour Moshe read and wept, until the last page had been turned.

When he was done, he called his wife and asked her to bring him the second notebook. This was a diary of all the troubles and misfortunes that had befallen him in the course of the year; on this day Moshe was beaten by a gang of peasants; on that day his child fell ill; once, in the dead of winter, the family had frozen for several nights for lack of firewood; another time their cow had died and there was no milk until enough rubles had been saved to buy another.

When he had finished reading the second notebook, the tavern-keeper lifted his eyes heavenward and sighed mightily: "My dear Father in Heaven, it is true that I have sinned against You. It is also true that last year I repented and promised to fulfil Your commandments, but I repeatedly succumbed to my evil inclination. But at the same time, I also prayed and begged You for a year of health and prosperity, and I trusted in You that it would indeed be this way. "Dear Father, today is the eve of Yom Kippur, when everyone forgives, and all is forgiven. Let us put the past behind us. I'll accept my troubles as atonement for my sins, and You, in Your great mercy, shall accept my repentance."

Moshe took the notebooks in his hands, raised them aloft, circled them three times above his head, and recited: **זה חליפתי.. - *"This is my exchange, this is my atonement, this is in my stead."*** He then threw the two notebooks into the fireplace, where the smouldering coals soon turned the tear-stained pages into ashes.

R' Yerucham Levovitz ZT"L (Daas Chochma U'Mussar)

"Our Sages have taught that in the same manner in which one works to perfect his middos, this is how he must work to perfect his teshuvah - repentance. For example, if one is lacking in 'Ahavas Habrios' - his love for all fellow beings, the way to remedy this is by picking out one single individual and working hard to truly love that person. Of course, one cannot be expected to suddenly love everybody, but if he tries to love one person at a time, he will ultimately succeed.

The same is true with teshuvah. It seems overwhelming to attempt to repent for all our sins at one time, but if we take it slow and pick one specific sin to work on, ultimately, we can do teshuvah for all our sins."

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שָׂאוּנִי וַהֲטִילֻנִי אֶל־הַיָּם

In the final year of his life, the Mashgiach of Chevron Yeshivah, **R' Leib Chasman ZT"L**, was greatly weakened from fasting on Yom Kippur, and immediately upon the conclusion of Neilah, he left the yeshivah to walk home. There were still a few minutes left until the fast would end, and a minyan of talmidim accompanied him to his home. His joy at having been able to complete the fast was evident to all, and his face shone with delight.



As they sat together in his home waiting until the time to daven Maariv, the Mashgiach said over the following: "In the Haftorah we read today by Mincha, Maftir Yonah, we find that the Navi Yonah told the sailors on the ship, 'Lift me up, and cast me into the sea.' One might ask: why did Yonah have to say, 'Lift me up' - it would have sufficed for him to simply say, 'Cast me into the sea.'?

As we sit here now, I realize that Yonah wanted to accentuate the moment they lifted him up, to emphasize the importance of even one final second of life. So too, we should take note of the fact that we have but a few minutes left of this holiest of all days, Yom Kippur. Let us not waste them!"

Every soul, no matter how distant from G-d, has a spark of purity that is always waiting to be ignited. - Teshuva is the process of rekindling that divine light. ~ Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809)

R' Avraham Yehoshua Heschel ZT"L (Ohev Yisroel) would say:



"A person who has sunk to the lowest levels of depravity and sin could understandably believe that there is no hope for him. Nobody wants to have anything to do with him; why would Hashem wish to retain any sort of bond with him?

The answer is: **השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה** - ***'Return us to You, Hashem, and we will return'*** - we have a guarantee that our repentance will work. Because **חדש ימינו כקדם** - ***'Renew our days like of old.'*** The letters of **קדם** spell out the names of three people who transgressed the three severe transgressions: Kayin (**ק**), murder; Dovid (**ד**), illicit relations; Menashe (**מ**), idol-worship. And yet, Hashem never sealed the gates of repentance from them. So too, there is no person in the world from whom the Gates of Teshuva are closed off forever."

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

The holiday of Yom Kippur is actually compared to the holiday of Purim, as we say, it is "Yom K'Purim." Although the two Yamim Tovim seem to be polar opposites, in truth they are both great and holy days that share the same essence.

On Purim, we have a mitzvah to drink wine. What is the nature of wine? - Wine goes in and secrets come out. Do you want to know who you really are? Drink some WINE! The intoxicating liquid numbs your cognitive senses so that you cannot pretend to be someone you are

not. All year long, we do a lot of "play-acting." We smile when we feel like crying and we cry when we really should be smiling. We often try to be who we are not. On Purim, though, the wine gives us away.



Yom Kippur is a day of great holiness. We don't eat or drink, we pray to Hashem and stand in shul like white, unblemished angels. It seems like we are really putting on a good "show." We seem to be "acting" - trying to be someone we are not. But that is not true. Every one of us is really pure in our essence. Our souls are pure as we say each day in our tefillos, - ***our souls can never be tainted or stained***.

Unfortunately, there are times when we layer our souls with veils of sins; but they can easily be removed with Teshuvah. Yom Kippur is the day we remove all the coverings, all the partitions that separate us from our beloved Father in Heaven. We become the great and holy people we really are deep down in our souls. We are not "play-acting" or putting on a show. We are simply allowing our true selves to shine! Let us strive to portray our true image, not only this Yom Kippur, but the rest of the year as well. So, be yourself ....!

The Ropschitzer Rebbe, R' Naftali Tzvi Hurvitz ZT"L (Zera Kodesh) would say:

תן פחדך - The word **פחדך** has the same gematria as **געלט** (money). Instead of thinking of money all day, fear Hashem!"

The ancient Zilcha Beit HaMidrash, located in the centre of Baghdad, was where the cream of Iraqi and Kurdistan Torah scholars would gather to study under their master, the Gaon and Tzaddik, **Chacham Abdallah Somech ZT"L**. Notable among his disciples was the **Ben Ish Chai, Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim ZT"L**, **Rabbeinu Eliyahu Mani ZT"L, Rabbeinu Yaakov Chaim Sofer ZT"L (Kaf HaChaim) and Rabbeinu Nissim HaLevi ZT"L**.



Halachic questions were addressed to Chacham Abdallah from every country in the Middle East and North Africa, and even from Ashkenazi rabbis in Europe. They asked him for approbations for their books, as well as for his opinion on various halachic questions.

In the year 1871, a businessman from the Baghdad Jewish community was ensnared in a sinister plot, meant to ruin his business and imprison him. The case dragged on for some time, until the matter finally reached the desk of the Wali, the governor of Baghdad. The governor reviewed the entire case and recognized that it was the Jew's word against his antagonist. He decided that the accused must therefore swear in court to prove his innocence. The Jew took an oath, and as a result the case was decided in his favour.

The Jews of Baghdad celebrated that their friend had foiled the plot hatched against him. However, their joy did not please a well-known Imam by the name of Moussa. This Moussa, none other than an apostate Jew by the name of Moshe who had converted to Islam, never missed an opportunity to harass his former brothers. He went to see the Wali of Baghdad, to whom he secretly revealed the

"deception" of the Jews. "Your excellency," said Moussa, "know that oaths taken by Jews are completely meaningless. At the beginning of each year, they gather in their synagogues on the day known as Yom Kippur and publicly proclaim that they are annulling in advance all the vows and oaths which they will be taking in the coming year. This method is especially known to trick people of other religions, among whom they live."

These devious words wormed their way into the heart of the Wali, who felt that he had been deceived and ridiculed by a Jewish trick, a feeling that quickly turned into anger. He demanded an explanation for this Jewish custom from the Chief Rabbi of Baghdad himself.

He dispatched three officers to the Zilcha Beit HaMidrash with orders to bring Chacham Abdallah to the governor's office. But when these officers saw the impressive sight of the Rav sitting and learning surrounded by his avid disciples, they became afraid.

They ran back to the Wali and told him what they saw, but he threatened them with their lives. Their heads lowered, the policemen went back to the Chacham and conveyed the governor's message to him. The Rav got up and went to see the governor. Immediately, all the disciples rose and followed their master. Numerous other Jews who were passing by also joined this honourable group, at the head of which was the Rav.

The governor, who was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the Jewish rabbi, was stunned to see the large swarm of people approaching his office. Hundreds of members of the Baghdad Jewish community had gathered in respect to accompany their leader.

Signs of embarrassment appeared on the Wali's face as he went out to greet the Rav. He politely led him into his office, and in as pleasant a voice he could muster, he asked if it were true that Jews annul their oaths in advance, thereby allowing themselves to make false oaths.

Chacham Abdallah, who fully understood what was lurking behind the entire conversation, asked for a Yom Kippur machzor and when it was brought, opened it to the page containing the Kol Nidrei prayer. Reading the words aloud, the Rav explained, "The first stanza of this prayer begins with the words: (All vows, obligations, oaths...) and ends with the words **על נפשתנא** (regarding ourselves) by which this formula is limited to annulling vows that affect ourselves but not any other person.

It is restricted to vows between man and G-d alone with no effect on vows made between one man and another. No vow, promise, or oath that concerns another person or a court of justice, is implied in Kol Nidrei. It does not matter if a vow was made to one or more Jews or non-Jews....."

The governor immediately excused himself for his embarrassing mistake. From then on, the Wali became a personal friend of the Rav and would often go to see him for advice and guidance on delicate state matters. During this time, Jews experienced a relative period of calm in Baghdad.

When R' Shneur Zalman of Liady ZT"L was imprisoned by the Czar for his religious activities, one of the guards asked him, "If your G-d knows everything, why did He call out to Adam in Paradise, 'Where are you?' Did He not know where Adam was?'

The Baal HaTanya answered. "Torah is not just a storybook. It is filled with timeless lessons that apply to every generation. Hashem calls out to every person, 'Where are you' - in this world? What have you accomplished, what are your goals? Adam symbolizes mankind and everyone must always be prepared to answer G-d when He asks the question." Let us answer Hashem' call with the sincere cry of, "HINENI - Hashem Here I am! As close to You as I can possibly be!"

Chacham Rabbeinu Elazar Abuchatzeira ZT"L (Divrei Elazar) would say:

"The reason why we do not say **ברוך שם כבוד...** out loud throughout the entire year, is because when Moshe Rabbeinu went up to Heaven to receive the Torah, he heard the angels saying it and out of respect for their holiness, he did not say it out loud.



On Yom Kippur, though, we say these special words loudly, to signify that on this day we are like the angels. Why, then, do we say them on the first night, when our stomachs are full and our bodies are still grounded in gashmius, and not the next night, after a full day of emulating the angels?

The answer is that a Jew must always look forward. On Kol Nidrei night, every Jew WANTS to be an angel; that is his ultimate goal. Thus, he says the words that the angels say.

The next night, however, he is looking ahead to being himself, a human being again, so he does not say them. The important thing is not so much where you were but where you are going!"

A Yid must believe in Hashem's salvation, not solely when he understands how it can happen. Even if he doesn't have any plan, and he doesn't see any possibility (within the rules of nature), he still believes and trusts in Hashem's salvation.

~ R' Klonymus Kalman Shapira of Piaseczna hy'd (The Aish Kodesh)

The following is an excerpt from the memoir of Rabbi Moshe Segal, a Lubavitcher chasid who was active in the struggle to free the Holy Land from British rule.



In those years, the area in front of the Western Wall did not look as it does today. Only a narrow alley separated the Kosel and the Arab houses on its other side. The British Government forbade Jews to place an Aron Kodesh, tables or benches in the alley; even a small stool could not be brought to the Kosel.

The British also instituted the following ordinances, designed to humble the Jews at the holiest place of their faith: it is forbidden to pray out loud lest one upset the Arab residents; it is forbidden to read from the Torah (those praying at the Wall had to go to one of the synagogues in the Jewish quarter to conduct the Torah reading); it is forbidden to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

The British Government placed policemen at the Kosel to enforce these rules. Rabbi Segal writes: On Yom Kippur of the year 5690 (1930), I was praying at the Kosel Hamaaravi. During the brief intermission between the musaf and mincha prayers, I overheard people whispering to each other, "Where will we go to hear the shofar? It'll be impossible to blow here. There are as many policemen as people praying." The British Police Commander himself was there, to make sure that the Jews will not, G-d forbid, sound the single blast that closes the fast. I listened to these whisperings, and

thought to myself: Can we possibly forgo the sounding of the shofar that accompanies our proclamation of the sovereignty of Hashem? Can we possibly forgo the sounding of the shofar, which symbolizes the redemption of Israel? True, the sounding of the shofar at the close of Yom Kippur is only a custom, but as we know, "A Jewish custom is Din (law)"



I approached Rabbi Yitzchak Horenstein, who served as the Rabbi of our minyan and said to him, "Rabbi, give me a shofar - I will blow!" The Rabbi abruptly turned away from me, but not before he cast a glance at the prayer stand at the left end of the alley. I understood that the shofar was in the stand. When the hour of the blowing approached, I walked over to the stand and leaned against it. I opened the drawer and slipped the shofar into my shirt. I had the shofar, but what if they saw me before I had a chance to blow it? I was still unmarried at the time, and following the Ashkenazic custom, did not wear a talis. I turned to the person praying at my side and asked him if I could borrow his talis. My request must have seemed strange to him, but the Jews are a kind people, especially at the holiest moments of the holiest day, and he handed me his talis without a word. I quickly wrapped myself in the talis.

All around me, a foreign government prevails, ruling over the people of Israel even on their holiest day at their holiest place, and we are not free to serve our G-d; but under this talis is another domain. Here I am under no dominion save that of my Father in Heaven; here I do as He commands me, and no force on earth will stop me. When the closing words of the Neilah prayer - "Shema Yisroel ..." "Boruch

Shem ..." and "Hashem Hu HaElokim..." were proclaimed, I took out the shofar and blew a long, resounding blast.

Everything happened very quickly. Many hands grabbed me. The talis was thrown off my head, and before me stood the Police Commander who ordered my arrest. I was taken to the kishla, the prison in the Old City and a guard was posted. Many hours passed; I was given no food or water to break my fast.

Finally at midnight, the police received an order to release me, and I was let out without a word. I then learned that when the chief rabbi of the Holy Land, **R' Avraham Yitzchok Kook ZT"L**, heard of my arrest, he immediately contacted the secretary of the High Commissioner of Palestine, and asked that I be released. When his request was refused, he stated that he would not break his fast until I was freed. The High Commissioner resisted for many hours, but finally, out of respect for the rabbi, he had no choice but to set me free.

From then on, the shofar was sounded at the Kosel every Yom Kippur. The British well understood the significance of this blast; they knew that it will ultimately demolish their reign over our land and they did everything in their power to prevent it. But every Yom Kippur, the shofar was sounded by men who knew they would be arrested for their part in staking our claim on the holiest of our possessions.

Butterflies rest when it rains to protect their wings; so too Shabbos is our rest – the shelter where our weary wings find refuge from the storms of life. It is the canopy that shields us, the calm that restores us, the gentle pause that gives us the strength to carry on. ~ Based on the teachings of the Sefas Emes, Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter (1847-1905)

Clean Yourselves Up And Do Teshuvah

An African tribesman once travelled by ship in search of bounty to trade, and by chance the ship docked in a European port. The African man alighted from the ship and began walking through the streets. It didn't take long for him to realize that everyone he passed was staring at him: he was the only black man they had ever seen, and he stuck out like a sore thumb! Panicking, he looked around to see if there was anybody he could associate himself with. Of course, there was no one like him; everyone was white as snow! He became afraid that the white people would become hostile to him.



Suddenly, he saw a young boy walking his way. The boy was pitch black - just like him! He ran over and said, "Oh, finally, I have found another who is like me!" But the boy just brushed him by. "I am not like you," he said. "I have just come from the playground, where I was playing in the mud for the past hour. When I get home, I will wash off all the black mud that is on me and I will be clean. But you, "will always remain black!"

When the nations of the world see the Jewish people sinning, they become happy and excited. "You are no different than us. We sin as we please, and so do you. You are no different in the eyes of G-d than we are!" But we can answer them right back, "Of course, we are different. Sinning is part of your nature; it is who you are. But we are pure deep down; we just became a bit soiled through our actions. When we clean ourselves up and do teshuvah, we will once again be as pure and white as snow!"

R' Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam ZT"L



The dominant figure in the Feldafing DP camp after the conclusion of WWII, was the Klausenberger Rebbe. What he did for the broken survivors was immeasurable. Although he himself had lost a wife and eleven children, he was a constant source of strength and inspiration to his fellow survivors. On the first Yom Kippur after the war, the Rebbe held a minyan for the survivors and after Kol Nidrei, he delivered a tremendously powerful speech. When he had finished, more than two hours later, there was not a dry eye in the shul.

The Rebbe stood by the amud, Talis over his head and looking for all the world like an angel. He held a machzor in his hand, flipping through its pages. Periodically, he would look up and ask, "Vehr hut dos geshriben - Who wrote this? Does this apply to us? Are we guilty of the sins enumerated here?"

One by one, he went through each of the sins listed in the Ashamnu prayer and then the Al Chait and concluded that those sins had little to do with those who had survived the camps. "'Ashamnu' (We have become guilty): Does this apply to us? Have we sinned against Hashem or man? How could we? Let's go on. 'Bagadnu' (We have betrayed): Are we disloyal to Hashem? Have we betrayed our loved ones? No. Bagadnu does not apply to us. 'Gazalnu' (We have stolen): From whom could we have stolen? There was nothing to steal in the

camps. Definitely this does not apply to us. 'Dibarnu Dofi' (We have spoken slander): Impossible. "'He'evinu, V'hirshanu' (We have caused wickedness), 'Zadnu' (We have sinned willfully), 'Chamasnu' (We have extorted), 'Tafalnu Sheker' (We have accused falsely): No, these don't apply to us. 'Latznu' (We have scoffed): Who wrote this machzor? Who put it together? We were so serious in the camps. There was no such thing as smiling or making a joke."

When the Klausenberger Rebbe had finished the entire Ashamnu prayer in this fashion, he continued with Al Chait. "'Al chait shechatanu l'fanecha b'ones uveratzon' (For the sin we have sinned before You under duress and willingly): In the camps, did we have a ratzon (will)? We were way beyond the category of ones (by compulsion). "'B'maachal U'mishteh' (with food and drink): Food and drink? What food and drink? We starved for years! "'B'yetzer hara (with the evil urge): To sin with the yetzer hara you must first have possession of your physical senses; a desire to touch or see or hear or taste something forbidden. We had none of these nor the ability to achieve them."

One by one, he eliminated every Al Chait. The Rebbe then closed his machzor and it seemed he had finally finished. But then he asked again, "Who wrote this machzor? These sins don't apply to us." He paused. "What I don't see anywhere is the sin that does apply to us. What is that sin? The sin of having lost our emunah and bitachon in Hashem. "What is the proof that we sinned in this fashion? How many times did we recite Krias Shema on our wood slats at night and think to ourselves: 'Ribbono Shel Olam, let this be my last Hamapil. I can't carry on any longer. I'm so weak. I have no reason to carry on any more. Is there no end to our suffering? Ribono Shel Olam, please take my neshamah so that I do not have to repeat once again in the morning, 'Modeh Ani L'fanecha' - I'm thankful before You, the living King, who has returned my soul to me. I don't need my soul. I don't want this wretched existence. You can keep it.' "How many of us went to sleep thinking that we couldn't exist another day, with all our

bitachon lost? And yet when the dawn broke in the morning, we once again recited Modeh Ani and thanked Hashem for having returned our souls. "Yes, we did survive, but none of us expected to. Every morning, we saw this one didn't move and that one didn't move, and as we carried the dead out, we looked upon them with envy. Is that emunah in Hashem? Is that bitachon in Hashem?

"Rabbosai, we have sinned. We have sinned and now we must klop 'Al Chait.' We must pray to get back the emunah and bitachon we once had, the emunah and bitachon that went to sleep these last few years in the camps. Now that we are freed, Ribono Shel Olam, we beg You to forgive us. Forgive everyone here. Forgive every Jew in the world, Ribono Shel Olam!"

R' Shloime Ephraim Luntzitz ZT"L (Kli Yakar) says:

"The Torah states: (וַיִּקְרָא 23:27) **אַךְ בֶּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים הוּא**.



The Sifri tells us that the word אַךְ indicates a limitation. What is the limitation? The gemara (Yuma 81) states that 'whoever eats and drinks on the ninth, is considered as if he fasted on the ninth and tenth.' Because eating on Erev Yom Kippur is considered like a fast on the holy day itself, one might think that this day, too, atones for his sins. Thus, the Torah writes אַךְ to limit the time period when Hashem accepts teshuvah and forgives. This happens only on the day of Yom Kippur."

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo



The day of Yom Kippur day conjures up feelings of awe, fear and nervousness. However, in truth, Yom Kippur is a day of great joy. All of the workings of the Satan halt as our minds and hearts are focusing on atoning for our past sins, cleansing our souls and perfecting our character. All of the distortions, excuses and justifications for sinning are completely removed from our consciousness, and we truly raise ourselves up to the levels of angels! For this reason, we begin this great day with the beracha of "Shehecheyanu" – thanking Hashem for giving us this extraordinary opportunity to become pure.

The Sharei Teshuva tells us that the mitzvah to eat a festive meal before Yom Kippur is to celebrate the great joy of this day! Since we cannot do this on Yom Kippur itself, we celebrate this great holiday before it even begins!

Rabbeinu Menachem ben Shlomo ZT"L (Meiri) also explains that since the purpose of the fast is to raise ourselves up spiritually, Hashem commands us to eat so that we will not be hungry and thus distracted from the purpose of the fast itself! Yom Kippur is a day to feel Hashem's love and when we actually feel it, we experience tremendous joy!

Rabbi Zev Leff Shlit'a says: "If Yom Kippur represents Olam Haba then Erev Yom Kippur represents Olam Hazeh. Our urgent eating on Erev Yom Kippur demonstrates that we must consume as much Torah

and Mitzvos as we can in this world because in Olam Haba they are unavailable!"

Indeed, this is our ultimate goal. May we be zoche to experience the other-worldly bliss of Yom Kippur and may that spiritual joy spill over and fill the entire year with true simcha!

Children of Hashem

One year, the Chief Rabbi of Moscow, **R' Chaim Berlin ZT"L**, walked into the great synagogue on the morning of Yom Kippur and it was empty. Not one person showed up to daven. In the "Proletariat Utopia," missing work was a crime that earned the offender a hefty punishment and no one was willing to take that chance. R' Chaim davened alone all day but as soon as darkness began to fall and the work-day was done, the people came streaming into the shul in droves. In a very short time, there was not an empty seat in the building. The Rov watched in fascination. Then, he quickly walked up to the front, opened the Aron Kodesh and began to speak.



"Two neighbours once got into an argument over a chicken. Each one claimed the chicken was his. They went to the Rov and he advised that they put the chicken on the ground, each man should stand on different sides and observe to which man the chicken went. That would be a sign it was his."

R' Chaim raised his voice, "Master of the World, Your People are worked to the bone and don't have a moment to rest all day. But the minute they are released from their work in what direction do their feet carry

them? Home? To the pubs? No! Directly to You! To Your home! Why? Because we are Your sheep, and You are our Shepherd!"

The Jewish People have a special ability to evoke mercy from the Almighty. Not due to our righteousness but because we are His children, and He is our Father. With this knowledge in mind, let us take advantage of our standing to beg for forgiveness even when we don't truly deserve it!

It's never too late to return to the proper fold of Torah and mitzvos.



Even a wicked person, is bestowed with an extended period of time to do teshuvah. The medrash gives a moshol. *A band of robbers who had been imprisoned by the king managed to dig a tunnel for their escape. They broke through and fled - except for one man who chose to remain behind. When the prison warden discovered the tunnel and saw that this man had stayed behind, he began to beat him with his stick. "Hapless one!" he screamed. "The tunnel was open in front of you! Why did you not save yourself?"*

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, R' Yehudah Zev Segal ZT"L, illuminates the parable as follows: The man who remained behind did not need to expend great effort at creating an avenue of escape - it was there before him, waiting to be used. All he needed to do was crawl through the tunnel and he would have found himself in the open air of freedom. His inaction conveys more than mere foolishness.

The fact that he did not make use of a golden opportunity to escape indicates that he is unafraid of the impending judgment against him.

With regard to our sins, we need not feel overwhelmed by the task of transforming ourselves from bad to good. The path to full repentance is already paved before us. All that is required of us is that we embark on the path and demonstrate a sincere desire to change. Then, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will lead us by the hand along the road of return. However, failure to engage in teshuvah indicates a lack of fear of Divine retribution. The "tunnel" is open before us - why don't we save ourselves?



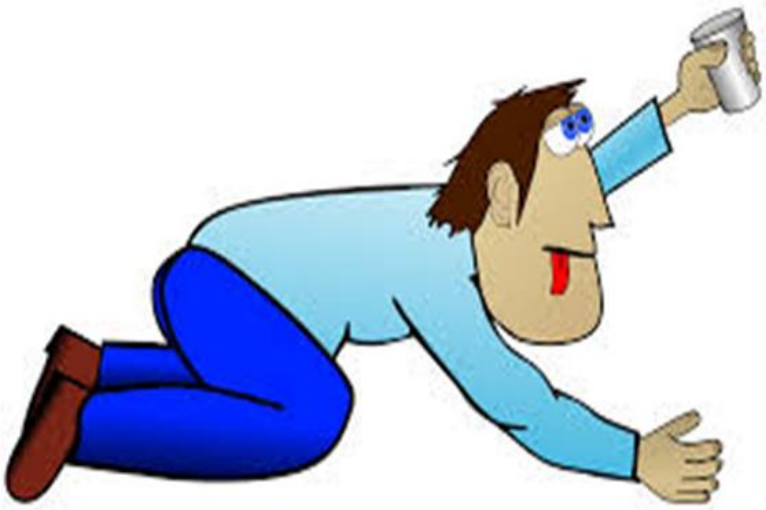
R' Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai ZT"L (Chid'ah) would say: "There are so many people who do good in this world; kind, merciful individuals who support the poor and downtrodden, who look after the widows and orphans, who are involved in every communal act of chessed. Why then, don't they look after those who need their attention most, the ones to whom they have the greatest responsibility? Why don't they do Teshuvah and take care of their own souls?"



R' Nathan Bulman ZT"L (Sefer HaToda'ah) would say: "'***Allow us to pray with the transgressors.***' (Kol Nidre) This prayer was added by the Marranos, Jews who converted to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition, but continued to cling to their Jewish faith and practices in secret. In public, however, they had to act as Christians, or risk torture and death. On Yom Kippur they gathered in secret and prayed to G-d to forgive them for what they transgressed in order to deceive their neighbours. So they assembled, and asked permission to pray in the company of their fellow transgressors."



Each year, thousands of chassidim would make their way to Rizhin to spend the Yomim Noraim with their revered Rebbe R' Yisroel Friedman ZT"L.



Among them, was an elderly chasid by the name of R' Asher, who made the journey from his hometown each year, even with a weak heart that made it difficult for him to fast on Yom Kippur. His Rebbe, R' Yisroel, would require him each year to break his fast during the break after Shachris, and although at first R' Asher was hesitant, the Rizhiner would make sure to call him into his private room where he would eat and drink a small amount, without anyone seeing.

As it happened, one year the Rizhiner was totally engrossed in his meditation, and he forgot to send for R' Asher after Shachris. The elderly man continued to fast throughout the day and became weaker and weaker as the day went on. Towards nightfall, his heart finally gave out and he collapsed. He died the next morning.

When R' Yisroel was told what happened, he turned pale. **"תחת נפש נפש,"** (soul for a soul) was all he said.

The following year, in the midst of the Yom Kippur davening, R' Yisroel suddenly felt a tremendous thirst come over him. He motioned to his gabbaim that he felt faint, but they didn't know how to help him and none of the Rabbonim or Dayanim present understood the gravity of the Rebbe's thirst to permit him to take a drink. The Rizhiner held out until the end of the fast, but right after Yom Kippur, developed a serious heart condition which

sickened and weakened him until he passed away a little over a week after Sukkos.

A similar incident took place in the Beis Medrash of the holy **Sanzer Rebbe R' Chaim Halberstam ZT"L**. One year, as the chassidim were steeped in silent devotion during the Neilah prayer, a terrible cry came from one of the rows. One of the wealthiest men in town was in the throes of a fainting spell. "Water, I need water," was all he could scream in a hoarse voice, before collapsing on the floor in obvious anguish and pain.

The rich man unfortunately maintained a reputation as a miser, never parting with his riches and never giving to others in their time of need. "Why should we help this man now when he needs water, when he never helps others with charity?" called out one of the worshipers. Others present nodded their agreement. However, the chief Dayan, R' Beirish, could not bear to watch another Jew in obvious pain, and ordered that the rich man be brought a tiny amount of water - less than a shiur - just to moisten his palette. A drop of water was poured down his throat but rather than feel refreshed, the man screamed louder, "I need more water! More water! Give me more before I die from thirst." Another small amount was brought to the man's lips but this too did not seem to quench his thirst.

At this point, R' Beirish was unsure how to continue with the man and decided to bring the question before the holy Sanzer Rov. Tepidly, he approached the Rebber's chair and explained the problem to him.

R' Chaim never looked up from his machzor. "Tell the man, that for every drop of water that he is given, he must donate one hundred zlotys to tzedakah. If he agrees to these terms, give him as much water as he wants!" Amazingly, as soon as the offer was made, the rich man suddenly began to feel much better!

Even if we fail in our Teshuvah – because the yetzer hara is very strong, and it is hard to change old habits, Heaven will ask the person, "Why didn't you try to do Teshuvah. You should have at least tried." Yaakov Avinu saw shepherds with their flock gathered around a well. He asked them why they aren't giving water to their animals. They told him that they have to wait until all the shepherds arrive and together remove the heavy rock covering the well.

Why did Yaakov ask them why they weren't giving water to the sheep? He saw the heavy stone. He should have realized on his own that they couldn't remove it on their own. The answer is, Yaakov Avinu was telling them, "Why didn't you try."

Because even when things seem impossible, that isn't an excuse for not trying. If it is important for you, try, and perhaps you will succeed. Even if you won't succeed in the Teshuvah nevertheless, this isn't an excuse for not feeling remorse for your sins and trying to improve.



On the eve of Yom Kippur, a poor man named Hirshel hoped to have a small bite to eat before the fast, but with no money and no food, how could he have a meal? Instead, Hirshel received a tongue lashing from his frustrated wife, and set out early for shul, hungry and depressed. Then a thought entered his head. It was certain that he wasn't going to get anything to eat, but just maybe R' Boruch, the wealthy businessman who sat upfront on the eastern wall, would give him a little smell of his snuff. That would, perhaps, revive his spirits enough to allow him to pray.

Hirshel cautiously approached the front of the shul and tapped R' Boruch on the back. "R' Boruch? Maybe I could have a little sniff of your tabak?" R' Boruch turned with an incredulous look on his face. With an unmistakable tone of disgust, he said only one word: "Now?!" Hirshel turned stiffly and made his way back to his seat, totally

humiliated. No one in the shul had witnessed the little episode, but on High, the ministering angels were in an uproar. How could the wealthy man have humiliated his poverty-stricken brother like that?



It was decreed that in the upcoming year, things would be radically different. And so, right after Yom Kippur, Hirshel received an unexpected inheritance and invested in some merchandise. Hirshel made an enormous profit and from that time on, whatever he set his hand to was successful. At the same time, R' Boruch began losing money at every turn.

Many years passed and R' Boruch was unable to extricate himself from his crushing poverty. R' Hirshel, however, continued to prosper. He was now a respected member of the community and when his daughter became engaged to the son of the Rabbi of Zhitomir, the whole town looked forward to celebrating this great event. R' Boruch's anticipation was perhaps greater than most, for he had a plan to recoup his wealth. As the young couple stood under the wedding canopy surrounded by their happy parents, R' Boruch quietly came up to R' Hirsh and said, "A shmeck tabak, R' Hirsh?" Without a thought, R' Hirsh removed his snuff box and handed it to R' Boruch. R' Boruch immediately fell to the ground in a dead faint. When he regained consciousness, R' Hirsh asked him, "Was it something I did which caused you to faint?" When the entire story was recounted, R' Hirsh, under the advice of **R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev ZT"L** decided to divide his great wealth with R' Boruch and the two lived as close as brothers, in prosperity and health for the rest of their lives.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt -Interesting Yom Kippur Facts

1. **The Yaavatz** reports the testimony of a Roman that on Motzai Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol didn't arrive home before Chatzos because of the many people that wanted to kiss his hands before going home.

2. The Yaavetz there also writes that the day following Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol would make a big Seuda and invite his friends and relatives. He made it a festive day because he exited in peace from the **קודש** .

3. **The Chassam Sofer** writes that to eat on Yom Kippur for the sake of a Mitzva is permitted if one is able to direct all his thoughts for the honour of Hashem without any intent of having bodily pleasure. Then it is like **צורך גבוה** , offerings for Hashem just like the Karbonos of the Nesiim… But who can do this besides the **גדולי ישראל** ? For this reason, they ate and drank at the **חנוכת בית המקדש** , dedication of the Temple in the time of Shlomo Hamelech although it was on Yom Kippur because of the great presence of the Shechina.

4. **R' Yehuda Hachasid** writes that Aharon's face changed to that of the face of a Malach when he entered the Kodesh Hakadashim.

5. **The Yalkut Shimoni** tells us that in each of the summer months, Hashem wanted to place a Yom Tov for us. Nissan had Pesach, Iyar Pesach Sheini and Sivan Shavuos. In Tamuz, Hashem thought, so to speak, to put a big Yom Tov but once the sin of the **עגל** was committed in this month it was cancelled and there was no Yom Tov for Tamuz, Av and Elul. In Tishrei it was all paid back with all its Yomim Tovim. If we didn't sin with the **עגל** , Rosh Hashana would be in Tamuz and Yom Kippur on the 10th of Av. The Sefer **זרע ברך** tells us that until Matan Torah Hashem judged the world in Tamuz and Av.

Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov as well as Shem and Eiver observed Rosh Hashana in Tamuz and Yom Kippur on the 10th of Av.

6. The Sefer **מקרי דרדקי** writes that in the future Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur will be in Nissan. Nevertheless, Succos and the Mitzva of Lulav will remain in Tishrei

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Fast For Two

The Gemara tells us that one who eats and drinks on the 9th of Tishrei, it is as if he fasted on the 9th and 10th (Yom Kippur). Why is that?

The Shelah writes since Mitzvos need to be done with Simcha, Teshuva also must be done with Simcha. On Yom Kippur we lack Simcha because of worrying over our sins and what the judgement will be.

As a result, we have Simcha prior to this. It is because of this that eating and drinking on Erev Yom Kippur is like fasting on the 9th and 10th since the fast is not pleasing to Hashem because of worry. That is, unless we are happy on the 9th. So, the Simcha of the 9th is part of the fast and Teshuva of the 10th.

The Noam Elimelech gives a different explanation. He says from just thinking about how holy and awe-inspiring Yom Kippur is, it makes it hard for one to eat. If, however, despite this natural reflex one manages to get food down, then this is also affliction!

"If you love life, don't waste time, for time is what life is made up of."

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

If **Rebbe Shalom of Belz** was ill and needed to eat he wouldn't hesitate. We know this from the following letter:- *"To my beloved mechutan, the holy tzaddik, the pride of the Jewish nation, Rebbe Mendel shlita: The reason I'm writing this letter is because I was shocked when I heard that your chassidim are worried you may choose to fast on the holy day, Yom Kippur. But who can believe that a holy man like yourself would do such a thing? Hashem Who told us to fast on Yom Kippur also warned us to guard our lives.*

I remember that when my father, Rebbe Shalom of Belz, was ill, we were worried that he might want to fast on Yom Kippur. But he was righteous and immediately after Kol Nidrei, he asked us to bring him food. Before eating he said "hareinu muchan… I am prepared to do the mitzvah of my Creator to preserve my life" and he ate his food joyfully, with the same joy we only saw when he ate matzah at the Seder or when he shook the lulav… Certainly, you will also be cautious with this mitzvah and follow the doctors' counsel. Especially since you are a great person, and many people watch what you do. If you will be stringent and not eat, others will learn from you, and this could be dangerous for them. "Believe me; I didn't want to write this letter to advise you how to act. I am writing this letter against my will because I care for you so much. Hashem should bless your bread and water and remove your illness and send you a complete refuah, quickly. "These are the words of your mechutan, who truly loves you, who hopes and trusts to hear good news about your good health."

R' Nachman of Breslov ZT"L (Sichos HaRan) would say: "The lesson of Teshuvah is that nothing is beyond Hashem's power. Even sins can be transformed into virtue!"

THE Torah Wellsprings

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman - Eating on Erev Yom Kippur

The Shulchan Aruch writes: "There's a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur and to eat large meals."

מצוה לאכל בערב יום הכפורים ולהרבות בסעודה ועניתם את נפשותיכם בתשעה לחודש (*Vayikra* 23:32), , ***"You shall fast on the ninth day of the month…"***

Yom Kippur is on the tenth day. Why does the pasuk say to fast on the ninth day? Chazal explain, if you eat on this day, you will be rewarded as if you fasted. We asked above, how does one show his love and appreciation for Yom Kippur?

One answer is through the meals we eat on Erev Yom Kippur. These meals demonstrate that we are happy about Yom Kippur. As the Rabbeinu Yonah (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 4:9) teaches, "By all other yomim tovim, we make seudos to rejoice in the mitzvos of the yom tov. Because the reward for being happy with the mitzvos is very great… But on Yom Kippur, we fast, and we can't eat meals. Therefore, the Torah commands us to eat a seudah on Erev Yom Kippur and to be happy about the mitzvos."



The *Tur* tells the following story; A mayor (**שוטר העיר**) sent his servant to buy fish. There was only one fish in the market, and the servant and a Jewish tailor were bidding over it. The servant offered a gold coin for the fish, and the tailor raised the price. They bid higher and higher until it was sold to the tailor for five gold coins.

The mayor summoned for the tailor. "What do you do?" "I'm a tailor." "Why did you buy a fish that's worth one gold coin for five

gold coins? And why did you bid against my servant, who wanted to buy the fish for me?'

The tailor replied, "Hashem commanded us to eat and drink, and we are certain that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will forgive all of our sins. How could I not buy it? I would pay even ten gold coins." The mayor told him that he was correct, and he let him go. The Midrash concludes that when the tailor opened the fish, he found a diamond inside. "It provided him with *parnassah* for the rest of his life.

Merit

Bombs were falling in Yerushalayim, during the Six-Day-War, and many people took refuge in the bomb shelter basement of the Mirer yeshivah, Yerushalayim. Three bombs fell on the roof of the yeshiva, but miraculously, they didn't detonate. The bachurim were ecstatic, as they saw that Hashem listened to their Tehillim and prayers, because throughout the frightening days of the war, they were davening and learning non-stop.

The rosh yeshiva, **Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt'l***, told them, "You probably think you were saved in the merit of your Torah and *tefillos*, but in my opinion, there was another merit that saved us. A woman who lives in the neighbourhood of the yeshiva took refuge in the yeshiva's bomb shelter. I know who she is. Her husband abandoned her and their children years ago, and since then, she has taken on the responsibility of taking care of her children by herself.

As we heard bombs falling in Yerushalayim, I heard her say, 'Hashem, You know that my husband left me, and I have all the reasons in the world to be angry with him. Nevertheless, I forgive him. And just as I forgive him, you should forgive us and save us.' I think her virtue and forgiveness is what saved us."

The Maggid Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchev, O"BM, had a chassid who at one time was very poor. Then, he tried his hand at business, and he quickly became a wealthy man. However, the more his wealth and standing grew, the further he drifted from Torah and Mitzvos.

One day, the Maggid paid a visit to his disciple and requested that he make a charitable donation to an important cause. The chassid, however, evaded the request with several excuses. The Maggid walked over to the window and asked the chassid to join him. As they gazed out into the streets, the Maggid asked him, "what do you see?" "I see people walking through the streets," responded the wealthy chassid. The Maggid then led the chassid to a mirror. "Now what do you see?" asked the Maggid. "Now," answered the chassid, "I see myself."

"Do you know what the difference is between a window and a mirror? A window is clear and transparent, and therefore when you look at it, you see others. A mirror, however," concluded the Maggid, "is coated with silver. Therefore, when you look at it, you see only yourself." (Story from a "Shabbos Vort," by R'Yisroel Bronstein).

Tread with Care -Written by Rabbi Pini Cohen

One of the well-known prohibitions of Yom Kippur is that one should refrain from wearing leather shoes. At first glance, one would assume that the simple reason for this, is to cause us some extra discomfort on the day of atonement. But the question arises, if that were the case, why is it that leather shoes are banned, when in fact for most of us, our non-leather shoes are the most comfortable?

The ban on leather shoes can be explained with a law written in the Shulchan Aruch, which states that normally when one purchases a new article of clothing, one should recite the blessing of

"She'hecheyonu", a blessing which shows enjoyment over the new item of clothing. On new leather shoes, however, one does not recite that blessing because there is an element of sadness, by the fact that an animal had to be killed in order to produce this pair of shoes. (Even though animals have been given for the purpose of man, it would be sadistic to rejoice over the slaughtering of an animal for the sake of covering our feet).

On Yom Kippur, mankind stands in judgement hoping and praying to G-d to judge us favourably and mercifully. There is a famous saying found in the Gemora "He who shows compassion to others, G-d will allow compassion to him". On Yom Kippur when we are desperate for that compassion, we conceal any traces of cruelty, and we dare not wear leather shoes, hoping that G-d will look at us with compassion, and grant us a good year. Maybe one could use the same logic as an argument to refrain from driving on Yom Kippur, in order to avoid sitting on leather seats!

May we all have a happy, healthy, prosperous new year.

Being Connected to Hashem



Reb Mordechai Chaim of Slonim *zt'l* would tell the following *mashal* each year at his *seudah hamafsekes*: Someone owned a beautiful bird, many people came to his home to look at it, but someone stole it. The thief didn't know how to take care of the bird and soon the bird appeared scrawny and ill. It wasn't worth keeping it as a show bird anymore, so he brought it to the town's shochet.

The original owner was also there, by the shochet. "That's my bird," the owner said. "Give it back to me." The thief replied, "It isn't your bird. Your bird was fat and beautiful, but this bird is thin and scrawny. It's my bird, and it has always been." The shochet didn't know what to do, so he said, "I won't shecht it before the rav rules who is the owner of this bird." The rav took the bird, untied the rope that was bound around its feet, and put the bird on the ground. The bird ran to its original owner. That proved it was his bird.

Reb Mordechai Chaim explained, "Throughout the year, we are afflicted by the yetzer hara, and it is hard for us to serve Hashem. Yom Kippur, Hashem takes the yetzer hara away. Now, let's see where you run to. If you run to Hashem, that means you are connected to Him."

Forgiveness



The Zohar tells us that Reb Abba saw someone, tired from his travels, lie down on a mound of earth outside the city Lud. As he slept, a poisonous snake approached, and the life of the traveller was in danger. Suddenly, a heavy object fell on the snake and killed it. When the man awoke, he saw the dead snake, and realized that a miracle happened to him. Then the man got up from the mound of earth. Immediately after he left it, the mound crumbled and fell down a cliff. He was saved a second time! Reb Abba asked him why Hashem performed two miracles for him. The man replied, "Before I go to sleep at night, I forgive everyone who wronged me, and I seek to do kindness with them."

Reb Abba cried and said, "Your deeds are greater than Yosef HaTzaddik's. Yosef forgave his brothers, and it is proper that family should forgive family. But you forgive people who aren't your family, and that is an even greater level. It is appropriate that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should do many miracles for you.'



"G-d Took Away My Son, Now Whatever He Says I Do the Opposite!"

Rabbi Zilbershtein shares an amazing story he was part of: "In one of my flights out of Israel I sat next to a Mr. Weinstein who was obviously Jewish. I was curious about him. He had a non-kosher meal with his name Mr. Weinstein on it and I was wondering why he would want to eat a non-kosher meal. So when he finished eating I turned to him." "Excuse me sir, I'm not trying to be brazen or hurt you or anything like that, but can I ask you a question?" "Sure!" The man answered.

I asked: "Are you aware that you can order a kosher meal on flights like these?" He looked at me and said tersely: "I don't eat Kosher!" So I asked back "what do you mean? That you eat kosher at home but not out of the house, or that you don't consider eating kosher something important?" "No I don't eat kosher for that is my free choice!" He said with vehemence. "I don't do any mitzvot; do you want to know why?" he asked.

"I felt he was about to unburden something in his heart, so I said yes. He started in a broken voice: "It was my son… the last thing that broke me. I held on to him the whole time in the concentration camp, until one day when I couldn't anymore. In the camp I had one sole ambition; that my son Katriel Menachem should survive. His mother and all his brothers and sisters were all taken away, but my son and I were going to live. I was certain of this".

"One day we were in a roll call in a place that had secret doors to an area used for mass hangings. My son squeezed my hand so hard from fear he cut off blood circulation to it. We started to flee from the line of fire and his hand slipped out of mine and he disappeared. Later someone told me he saw a soldier take him and shoot him."

Mr. Weinstein wiped away his tears as his voice rose in anger: "G-d took away all of my children. Now whatever G-d says, I do the opposite! I want nothing to do with His mitzvot!"

Rabbi Zilbershtein continues: "I was so shocked by his story I had nothing to say and for six hours I sat totally silent next to Mr. Weinstein till we got to Houston and we each went our own way." "I never dreamed I'd see Mr. Weinstein again, but four years later, on Yom Kippur, I was a guest in the Meah Shearim neighbourhood. I walked out of the shul to refresh myself and breathe some fresh air into my lungs, when I saw a strange sight.



A man sitting on a Meah Shearim bench of all places was smoking a cigarette on Yom Kippur of all days!" "But then I did a double take… it was Mr. Weinstein! I went over to him and said: "Here we are meeting again. Isn't it funny how life brings people together and you wonder why they were put together? What message is hiding behind this? I'm sure you know today is Yom Kippur, and in a few minutes they will be saying Yizkor to remember the loved ones no longer with us. "Come with me and during Yizkor mention your son's name to remember him and pray for his soul. This might be your only

opportunity to mention his name. Don't you want his name to be heard in the Heavenly Courts?"

"His eyes filled with tears, I hugged him, and we locked arms and went into the synagogue near the chazzan. We asked him to make a special memorial prayer for Mr. Weinstein's son. Mr. Weinstein leaned on the cantor's stand and whispered his son's name to the cantor: "Katriel Menachem ben Yecheskel Shraga" he said.

"The chazzan turned white and he broke out in a sweat, his eyes were bulging as if they'd pop out! He turned to us and in a choked voice cried, "Abba", and fell down in a faint."

"This is a wondrous story of how G-d guides the world above the natural and "one who comes to purify himself gets Divine assistance'.

Mr. Weinstein made but a small gesture to come to synagogue on Yom Kippur (after having a cigarette!) and merited something unbelievable. G-d always watches over us and He is waiting for the smallest gesture on our part for Him. Look at the good you get in return!"

Kol Nidrei Night with the Brisker Rav

One year after Kol Nidrei, **the Brisker Rav** took his son in law, **Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein**, to go for a walk. Perturbed, Rav Yechiel Michel asked the Brisker as delicately as possible, if this was an appropriate time they should be taking a stroll.

The Brisker Rav answered, "I am surprised at you. If this is not the time to take a walk, then we should never go any day of the year. This walk, however, is not for pleasure; it is for my health as instructed by my doctor. Therefore, there is no difference between Yom Kippur and any other day.



There was once a *baal agalah* (wagon driver) who served his town loyally for many years. But he was getting old and couldn't keep up with the demand, so the townspeople decided it was time to train a new wagon driver to take his place. A strong, young lad was chosen to become the new wagon driver.

The old wagon driver was insulted. He worked for so many years as the town's wagon driver, and now a young man was taking his place. He said, "I will test the new wagon driver and see whether he is fitting for the job. If he passes the test, I will graciously hand the reins over to him. But if he can't answer my questions, he isn't fitting for the job, and I will keep my post." The old man asked the young man, "What will you do if your wagon gets stuck in the mud?" The lad replied, "I will get off the wagon and push the wagon until it gets out of the mud." "What will you do if that doesn't help?" "I will tell everyone to get off the wagon and help me push it out of the mud." "And if that doesn't work, what will you do then?" "I will unload the packages to make it easier for the horses, and we will try again." "And if that doesn't work, what will you do?" The lad thought for a moment and admitted that he didn't know. "Then you are not worthy of the position."

The lad humbly accepted the rebuke, but he still wanted to know the answer. "Please tell me; what should one do if the wagon is still stuck in the mud and can't get out?" The old wagon driver looked at him

and replied, "An expert wagon driver stays out of the mud in the first place."

The lesson is that after one falls into sin, it is hard to get out. Therefore, one should take every precaution not to fall in the first place. But if he did fall into the quagmire of sins, and even if he has accustomed himself to sin, he should keep trying until he succeeds to do teshuvah sheleimah.



The Machzor Speaks - A Closer Look at *Davening*

Rav Shalom Schwadron used to say over the following idea in the name of his father-in-law, **Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach (father of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).** He asked, why is it that at *Kol Nidrei* at the very start of Yom Kippur, when we are most full of food and least into the purity of the day, we say *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso* of the *Maariv Shema* out loud in resemblance of the *malachim*, while at the *Maariv* immediately after Yom Kippur, when we have been through five *tefilos* and have made the purity of the day a part of our characters, and made solid commitments to better ourselves, we stop being like *malachim* and say *Baruch Shem* quietly? Shouldn't it be the other way around?

The answer is that at the start of Yom Kippur, our thoughts, aims, and attentions are directed towards the awe of the day and to sincere *Teshuvah*, while at the end of Yom Kippur, we are looking towards the food we will be breaking our fasts on. Therefore, even though at the start of Yom Kippur we have not yet incorporated the day's holiness, since this *kedushah* is our mental focus, we are like *Malachim*.

At the end of Yom Kippur, our direction is towards food and material thoughts, and we therefore lose that higher level and return to whispering *Baruch Shem*.

The message we learn from this is that what really matters most is the direction one is heading towards, and what their goals and perspective are.



Besamei HaTorah - By R' Shmuel Winzelberg

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* once came to a certain city before Rosh Hashanah and he asked the people, who leads them in services for the *Yomim Noraim*? The people responded that their local Rav is the *Ba'al Tefillah*. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* then asked them, "How does he conduct himself with his *Tefillos*?" They told him that on Yom Kippur he recites all the confessions (*Viduy*) with very joyous songs. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* sent for the Rav and asked him to explain this. The Rav replied, "The wretched servant of the king whose job it is to clean the courtyard of the

dirty wastewater, when he loves the king and he performs his sanitation job joyously, it brings satisfaction to the king!"

When the *Ba'al Shem Tov* heard this, he said, "If his honour, the Rav, *davens* with this intention, then my place will be with him!"



Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Call to Arms

Yom Kippur, the day of repentance, has the Jewish nation praying, fasting and asking for forgiveness. It begins with the somber, quiet, and melodious intonation of Kol Nidrei and ends with the entire congregation shouting Hashem hu HaElokim seven times after various requests of forgiveness. It seems that at the time when our strength is waning our greatest and loudest pleas are spent.

Shouldn't we begin the day with the strong requests for forgiveness and save the subdued prayers for when our bodies are weak from hunger and our lips parched from lack of water?

Rav Eichenstein, the Ziditchover Rebbe, tells the following story: One Friday, a man entered the study of the **Tchortkover Rebbe** with a request that was very common in those days.



"My son was drafted into the army," the man began. "However, we have a way out. On Sunday, we are going to a doctor who will falsely declare him unfit for service. This way he will be spared certain misery, perhaps even death in that terrible army. Rebbe," he asked, "I need your blessing that he evades the draft."

The Rebbe quietly told him that Shabbos was nearing, and he could not concentrate on blessings. The man should return to him on Friday evening after his tisch. The man did so. After most of the chasidim had left, the man repeated his request, almost verbatim. Again, the Rebbe was non-committal. "Return to me after the morning service."

Unperturbed, the man noted that he would really like to resolve this matter before Sunday morning. Shabbos morning, after services, the man approached the Rebbe again. Calmly he repeated the predicament. "Sunday morning, I am going to a doctor who will falsely declare my son unfit for military service. Please pray that we will evade conscription." The Rebbe was not moved. Again, he deferred until the afternoon.

At the third Shabbos meal, the scene repeated again, precisely the way it had the previous three times. "I understand that you are leaving Sunday morning. Come back to me late Saturday night," said the Rebbe. "By then I will have an answer for you."

By this time, his Chasidim's curiosity was piqued. They had never seen their Rebbe so reluctant to mete a blessing, especially when it was one that would save a Jewish soul from the frightful Polish army.

Saturday night a large crowd gathered as the man approached with his request. Frustrated and disgruntled, the man, once again, repeated his story, almost verbatim, for the fifth time.

Immediately, the Rebbe sprung from his chair and began to shout. "What are you asking me? Why would one even try to evade the service of our wonderful country? How dare you ask me for a blessing of that sort? Your son would make a fine soldier for our country. I wish him the best of luck in the army!"

The man quickly scurried from the room and left town. The Chasidim stood shocked and bewildered. Never had they heard such an uncharacteristic outcry from the Rebbe.

"I will explain," said the Rebbe. "The man was a fraud. He had no son, and if he did, he wanted him in the army. He was sent by the government to test our loyalty. Thank G-d we passed the test."

"But, Rebbe!" cried the chasidim, "how did you know?" "Simple," explained the Rebbe. "I watched the level of intensity. From the moment he met me until tonight there was no increase in intensity nor feeling of desperation with each request. The moment I heard his request tonight and it contained no more passion or desperation than his first request on Friday night, I knew he was a fraud."

We stand a whole entire day in prayer, and end with a ne'ilah prayer, after nearly 24 hours of pleading. The litmus test of our sincerity comes as the heavenly gates are being closed. As the sun begins to set, our pleas should intensify. That crescendo assures our sincerity. It also should assure us a Happy & Healthy Sweet New Year.

Yom Kippur Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



The prevalent custom is that before *Kol Nidrei*— the moving prayer said at the onset of Yom Kippur— the Torah scrolls are carried around the *shul* to give each person the opportunity to kiss the Torah.

R' Avraham Weinfeld offered a deeper meaning to our actions, by way of a parable: There once was a king who had a very dear, only child, and pandered to him by fulfilling all of his desires. The king also had a close friend with whom he shared all of his endeavours. The king hired his friend to teach his son keen insight to life and ethics.

One day the prince berated and disgraced his teacher in front of all of the king's servants and advisors. Out of his anger at his son's actions, the king punished him by putting him in prison.

After some time, the prince realized the inappropriateness of his actions and wanted to ask his father the king for forgiveness. Realizing the close relationship between his teacher and father, he understood that the only way he would be able to appease his father would be to apologize to his teacher first. After begging forgiveness from his teacher, he knew that his father would forgive him as well.

Rabbi Weinfeld explains that we are Hashem's children and the Torah is His prized possession. He gave it to us to teach us how to live, and we have ignored its words. These actions have led us to our exile and constant persecution. As we stand at the threshold of Yom

Kippur, when we want to ask forgiveness from Hashem for our misdeeds, we first approach the Torah and kiss it— showing it the proper respect— and only then are we able and ready to approach Hashem— *our* Father and King— and ask for full forgiveness for our actions that were contrary to what the Torah directed.

Yom Kippur Treasures An Inside Look

הַיֶּלֶד אֵינֶנּוּ וַאֲנִי אָנָה אֲנִי־בָא ***The boy is gone! And I, where can I go?***
(*Bereishis* 37:30)



Reuven said these words as he returned to the pit and expected to rescue Yosef from the hands of his brothers, but he was distressed to find that Yosef was no longer there. He expressed his sorrow at his father's grief, lamenting, *"Where can I flee from father's grief?"*

When Rav Eliyahu Lopian, *zt"l*, would come across this *pasuk*, he would sigh heavily and cry out, *"The boy is gone!* My youth has gone by! The boy in me is an old man! Reuven was worried how he would face his father. And I, how will I face *my Father* in Heaven?!" He would bemoan the fact that he had let his youth slip by 'unaccomplished', and now in his advanced years, when the time to meet his Creator was drawing near, he sensed that he was unprepared.

If a great *tzaddik* like Rav Elya Lopian feels that he could have accomplished much more during his lifetime, what can we say?

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember



There was once a woman who would always go to the *shul* of **Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev** for Yom Kippur *davening*. She especially enjoyed hearing him *daven* the holy prayer of *Kol Nidrei* and she looked forward to it all year long. One year, this woman was delayed in coming to *shul* and she didn't arrive until after nightfall.

She was extremely distressed as this was a highlight of her year, and she was certain she would only catch the end of *Maariv*. She was startled and surprised to see that when she came into *shul*, they had not yet even begun to say *Kol Nidrei*! Rav Levi Yitzchak was waiting silently and patiently until she came. The woman was overcome with happiness when she saw that she hadn't missed anything and called out to Hashem above, "*Ribono Shel Olam*! How can I *bentch* You for all the kindness that You perform for me? How can I possibly *bentch* You? May it be Your will, Hashem, that you rejoice in Your children and have great happiness from them, just as You have caused me to be happy now!"

Immediately, an *Eis Ratzon*, a time of great opportunity and kindness from before Hashem descended on the world, and Rav Levi Yitzchak began to chant the stirring and emotional tune of *Kol Nidrei*.

Later, he explained what made him wait for this woman. He said that he saw a terribly harsh decree that was about to be declared for the Jews. "When the woman came to *shul* and was overcome with joy, her *tefilos* of happiness ascended straight to the *Kisei HaKavod* and the decree was torn up. It was only then that I was able to begin *Kol Nidrei*."

When Rav Naftoli Hertzka of Rotzport related this story, he explained that a woman has the ability to *daven* to Hashem and stir up His mercy. Men *daven* as well, but they are also involved in worries about bringing food to the table and supporting their families. A man's mind is busy and he can't *daven* fully to Hashem. A woman has more ability to connect with Hashem because she can concentrate better and can *daven* better to Hashem, and it is the woman who has the power to tear up harsh decrees in *Shamayim*.

Yom Kippur Treasures an Inside Look



It is told about **Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, *zt"l***, that once on *Erev Yom Kippur* towards the evening he was pacing back and forth in his *Bais Medrash* observing the people coming into *Shul*, and he was advising them to *Daven* well before Hashem. It was evident that he was waiting for a certain person, and he could not find him.

Someone approached him and asked what the Rebbe was looking for at this time, and to his astonishment Rav Levi Yitzchak responded, "I am looking for someone who fulfilled the *Mitzvah* of the day in such an exemplary manner that he became intoxicated from the amount

that he drank!" The man wondered, "Who could be drunk at a time like this? Yom Kippur is about to begin! Even Yankel, who is always a little drunk, is standing there in the corner *Davening* and saying *Viduy* with fear and anxiety."

When Rav Levi Yitzchak heard these words, he immediately turned and faced the *Aron HaKodesh* and was about to begin *Kol Nidrei*, but before he started, he opened with words in defence of *Klal Yisroel* and he said, "*Ribbono Shel Olam*, on this day the good virtues of the *Bnei Yisroel* appear before You. On this day You gave them the *Mitzvah* to eat and drink, and they have fulfilled this *Mitzvah*, however, You will not find one of them at all who drank wine! They are all anxious for Yom Kippur that is about to begin, and all of them came to *Shul* to *Daven* to You and beg for their lives. If You had given a *Mitzvah* like this to the nations of the world, they would have filled themselves with food and drink, but would You have even found a *Minyan* of people in the evening? They surely would have been too intoxicated to gather together!"

Rav Levi Yitzchak always looked for the good in *Klal Yisroel* and constantly looked to defend them before Hashem, and we should do the same and try to recognize the good that is found in every Jew!

Yom Kippur Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*

The *Gemara* (*Taanis* 26b) tells us that there were no holidays in the Jewish year like Yom Kippur and the fifteenth of the month of Av. What was so joyous about Yom Kippur?

The *Gemara* (30b) gives the explanation, because Yom Kippur is a day of forgiveness. The fact that we can be forgiven on Yom Kippur is a cause for the greatest holiday!

Yom Kippur Thoughts Ideas and Reflections

By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Yom Kippur, the most intense day of the Jewish year, begins with the service of *Kol Nidrei*, annulment of vows. Why is this so important that we preface such a powerful day with this service?

Words have the ability to give something valuable and change the nature of that which is involved. For example, marriage commences based on words expressed by the groom to the bride. The first fruits of a tree, with words, are designated as *Bikurim*, First Fruits, and an animal can become obligated to the *Bais HaMikdash* through verbal commitment.

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig explains that based on the above understanding, by reminding ourselves of the power of words, we are hoping to correct our mistakes from the past year and establish ourselves towards a path of growth through our words.

Another idea is that by annulling our vows we show that until they are annulled, they are of real value. Our words are worth their weight in gold! As we enter Yom Kippur and will be expressing our desires to improve and be the best we can, we are showing that our commitments are real. When we are making resolutions to enhance ourselves, it is real, and we mean it. It shows that we understand what it means to give our word.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, *zt"l*, was once asked what resolutions he had made during the *Yomim Nora'im*.

He replied, "To recite the first *brachah* of the *Shemoneh Esrei* with *kavanah*."

Yom Kippur Treasures An Inside Look



Dayan Aryeh Leib Grossnass of London once spoke about the beaver. The beaver is an animal of rigorous habits. When it goes down to the river to drink water, on its return trip, it will track and follow its own footprints to get back where he came from. Trappers know about this, and they use it to their advantage. They watch for when the beaver goes down to the water, and then they place their traps on the beaver's own tracks. Strangely enough, the animal, although seemingly, it is fully aware of the trap, seems to act on 'automatic pilot', and never deviates from his original, set path! It prevents itself from the possibility of escaping!

"If we could question the beaver and ask him, 'Why is it that you won't choose another route, knowing that you are about to be trapped?' It might answer, 'I just can't do that'. The beaver is trapped, as it were, by its own instincts and habits. Its own nature is its limitation, and it continues without fail to its own end.

People are similar to the beaver. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we enumerate our many sins. We cry and beg for forgiveness, and we are genuine and sincere about it. However, as soon as the *Yamim Nora'im* have passed, what happens to us? We fall back into our 'old tracks' and our 'old temptations'! And yet, just like that foolish animal, the beaver, we are fully aware that we are walking on course to our own destructions which is in our former lifestyles. Yet, we still say that we can't break free! Let us finally break away from our bad habits and stop being like the beaver!"



Yom Kippur Gems

The *Sefer Yerei'im* writes (5:180) that having a sad facial expression is a form of *Ona'as Devarim*, oppressing others with words.

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, *zt"l*, the *Alter of Slabodka*, once remarked that a person who walks around with a sad expression on his face is likened to a *'Bor Birshus HaRabim'*, a pit in a public place. Just as a pit causes people to stumble and fall into it, so does a person whose face is sad causes others to be sad. Rather, people should strive to greet others with a cheerful expression as we learn *Pirkei Avos* (1:15).

Rav Yisroel Salanter once saw someone who had a sad expression on his face. After engaging him in conversation in order to try and comfort him, it became clear that all was well in this man's life. Puzzled, Rav Yisroel asked him, "If all is good by you, why do you seem to be so sad and troubled?"

Surprised at this question, the man replied, "*Rebbe*, aren't you aware that we are in the *Aseres Yimei Teshuvah* now? Yom Kippur is only a few days away, and I'm nervous about my upcoming judgment!" Rav Yisroel said to him, "I understand that it is almost Yom Kippur and you are concerned, but why do I have to suffer because of your *Yom HaDin*? Your sad face is troubling me! Just because Yom Kippur is a serious day does not mean that you have to be sad!"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

In his last years, the long, often hot day of the fast of Yom Kippur, would be hard on **Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l***.

One Yom Kippur, he felt particularly unwell, so he went to lie down in one of the rooms and asked a *Bachur* to bring him a pillow. Half an hour later, he returned to the *Bais Medrash*, and one of his close *Talmidim* asked him if he felt any better. Rav Isser Zalman replied that in fact, the rest had made him feel a little worse. The *Talmid* asked, "Why did the *Rebbe* not return immediately, if resting was worsening the condition?"

Rav Isser Zalman looked surprised, and said, "If I came back too quickly, the *Bachur* who brought me the pillow might feel bad, and that he bothered himself for no reason. I could never do that to another person!"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



Once, a broken-hearted man went to his Rav, and related that no matter how much effort he put into anything, whether spiritual or physical, he felt like he was trudging through mud. He removes one leg, and the other sinks in. His Rav told him, "It is good that you know your situation. You are stuck in the mud and you are trudging through it. But you should know that if you give up and stay where you are you will remain there forever.

However, if you continue to move, every step brings you closer to the end!" The Rav taught that we only have to know what our destination is and try to figure out how to reach it. This is what it means to live for the future!

Yom Kippur Thoughts Ideas and Reflections By Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



Yonah chose to run away to avoid embarrassing the Jewish people with the quick repentance of the people of Ninveh. He believed that as soon as he would chastise the people of Ninveh, they would repent, while the Jewish people had not been paying much attention to the *Neviim* who warned them to change their wayward ways. He boarded a ship to run away and avoid having to fulfil his mission.

While on board, a massive storm began to toss the ship about. Without many options, the sailors drew lots to figure out who acted in a way that brought about this abnormal storm from Heaven. When the lot fell to Yonah, he replied, "I know that it is because of me that you are experiencing this storm."

Rav Yaakov Galinsky points out that Yonah is teaching all of us a lesson of responsibility. The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 40b) lays responsibility on each person to view themselves as having the ability to affect the world. We each have the ability to sway the judgement of the world. Just as Yonah took responsibility for his actions and recognized that he impacts others, so too, particularly on Yom

Kippur we remind ourselves of this awesome responsibility. This is also a fantastic ability each one of us has to impact the entire world around us!

Eating on Yom Kippur - Fascinating Insights

During a plague (cholera), **R' Yisrael Salanter** ruled that the people eat on Yom Kippur. Not only did he rule this way, but he actually made Kiddush in shul and ate so that everyone should follow his lead! This wasn't done because he was lenient in Yom Kippur rather because he was stringent in Pikuach Nefesh!

In regard to one who is supposed to eat on Yom Kippur due to his circumstances, the **שו"ת בנין ציון החדשות** says that not only is he exempt for eating on Yom Kippur but also fulfils **ונשמרתם לנפשתיכם מאד** (the mitzvah of guarding his soul/body).

R' Menachem Mendel of Viznitz was once dangerously sick prior to Yom Kippur to the extent that the doctors forbade him to fast. Being that the Chassidim were afraid the Rebbe wouldn't listen to the orders of the doctors, they approached R' **Yehoshua Belzer** to influence him not to fast.

As a result, R' Yehoshua Belzer wrote the following letter: "I remember when my father- the **Sar Shalom of Belz**- was dangerously ill and we were concerned as maybe he would refrain from eating on Yom Kippur. However, he was quick to the matter and immediately after Kol Nidrei he asked for food to eat according to what he needed.

In fact, he declared "Behold, I am prepared and ready to fulfil the commandment of my creator according to Chazal." He then ate with such Simcha which we never saw except when he ate Matza and performed the Mitzva of the four species."

Rav Levi Yitzchok and the Goy's Fancy Dog



One Yom Kippur night, there was a large crowd assembled in the Berditchever Shul where **Rav Levi Yitzchak, zt"l**, was preparing to begin Davening Kol Nidrei. However, Rav Levi Yitzchak motioned to the Chazan to wait a while, and not begin Kol Nidrei. The minutes passed by, and people began to wonder what could be holding up their Rebbe?

Soon, Rav Levi Yitzchak turned to his Shammes and asked, "Is Reb Mottel here?" The Shammes looked around, and after noticing Reb Mottel, told the Rebbe that he was indeed in Shul.

The Rav said, "Please ask him to come here." When Mottel came over, Rav Levi Yitzchak asked him, "Do you live on a certain land that is owned by a landlord who is not Jewish?" Surprised at the question, Mottel responded, "Yes, I do."

Rav Levi Yitzchak asked, "Does he own a dog?"

Mottel replied, "Yes, Rebbe, he owns a dog." Mottel didn't have any idea why Rav Levi Yitzchak would be asking such questions just before Kol Nidrei.

The Rebbe asked, "Do you know how much he paid for this dog?" Mottel said, "I do know. He said it was a special dog with a distinguished pedigree, and he had paid four hundred rubles for it."

This was a huge sum to pay for anything in those days, and certainly for a dog. Hearing that amount, Rav Levi Yitzchak was thrilled! He exclaimed, "Four hundred rubles! That's fantastic!"

He quickly motioned for the Chazan to begin Kol Nidrei. Everyone was bewildered at this episode. Why did the Rebbe care about a dog? What difference did it make how much it cost?

After Maariv, some students approached the Rebbe and asked him to please explain what had happened.

The Rebbe told them the following story: "A Melamed, a teacher, came to our town this past year to earn enough money to support his family and pay his many debts which he had accumulated at home. After he had earned enough money and he was on his way home, he stopped overnight at an inn, and his bag with all the money he earned was stolen from him while he was sleeping.

"When he woke up in the morning and saw what had happened, he was crushed and upset. Mottel's landlord was staying at the inn that night, and when he heard the Melamed's crying, he inquired about the commotion.

The Melamed's story broke his heart, and when he heard how much money had been lost, the landlord took out four hundred rubles and gave it to the Melamed."

The Rebbe continued, "As we were about to begin Kol Nidrei, I became concerned about this story and if what the goy did would have any effect on us as we stand in judgement before Hashem.

Do we deserve that Hashem should look at us favourably? Did any of us do an unusual act of Chesed that would stand on our behalf? If a goy could act in this way, we, Hashem's nation should do no less. But can we say that we did?

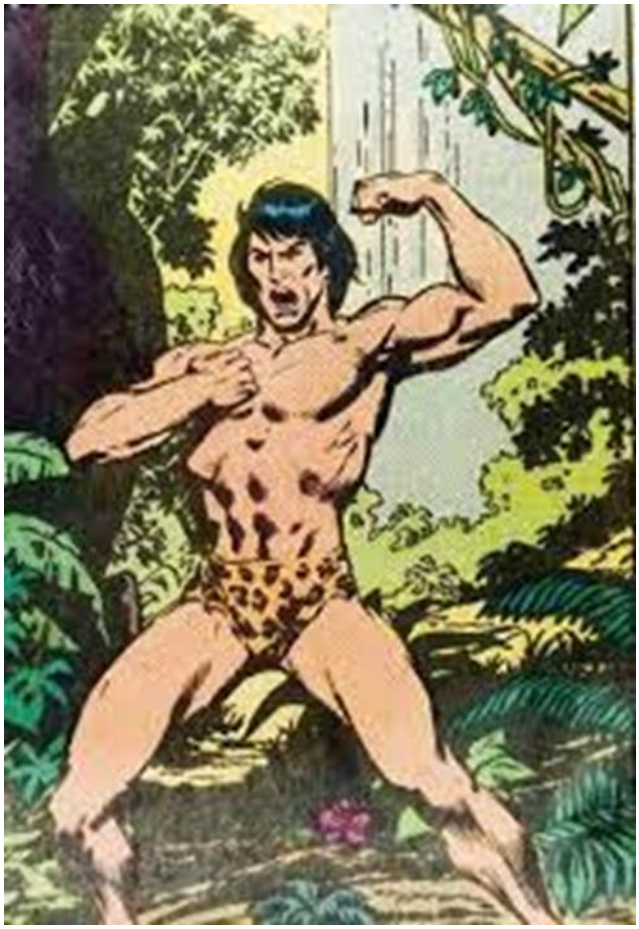
"I then remembered the dog, and when I heard that he spent four hundred rubles for a dog, a simple pet, it showed me that this rich goy does not really value money very highly. Therefore, while the act of giving the Melamed four hundred rubles was a remarkable act of Chesed, it was surely not an act of sacrifice by the goy. A man who

can spend so much money on a dog does not truly appreciate the value of money!

I know that when we do Chesed, it almost always takes some self-sacrifice to do, no matter how small, and I knew we could now start Kol Nidrei and enter Yom Kippur!"

(Torah U'Tefillah *compiled by RabbiYehuda Winzelberg.)*

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid* - Banging Like Tarzan.



Rav Shimon Schwab relates an interesting incident that he was involved in. Years ago, he was standing at a bus stop in Baltimore in front of a Catholic church. A clearly Jewish woman came out of the church, and seeing a rabbi, she walked confidently over to him.

"Rabbi," she said, "you're probably wondering what a Jewish woman is doing in a Catholic church. Well, let me tell you, those Catholics, they have something special, something that Judaism doesn't have, something that's just amazing."

"Really?" said Rav Schwab. "And what exactly are you referring to?"

"It is the confessional," she said. "You just sit in this booth, and the priest is sitting on the other side of the partition. You say, "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned." The priest says, "You are forgiven." And hay presto. Forgiveness. ? You are forgiven for all your sins, and you just feel wonderful after that. Well, Judaism doesn't have that!"

"Madam, you are quite mistaken," he said. "Judaism certainly does have confession. Three times a day, we say 'selach lanu' forgive us, our Father for we have sinned. We have vidduy on Yom Kippur to atone for all our sins.

What do you mean Judaism doesn't have confession?"

"Rabbi, you don't understand," she replied. "At the Catholic church, someone is actually listening to you."

"Madam, you don't understand," said Rav Schwab. "The Jewish

people also have Someone Who is listening. **Always**. Not just a mere flesh and blood human that doesn't have the power of forgiveness, but the Creator of the Universe Himself."

At this time of year, this must be one of the most important things we can work on. We often spend so much time in front of a siddur or machzor, but if we don't realize that there is actually someone listening, and we are actually talking to Him, and the One we are talking to has the ultimate power to do anything in the world, we may take it a bit more seriously.

There was someone at the Kotel davening, and he couldn't help but hear the fellow standing next to him, and this fellow was literally talking to Hashem, telling Him all about his day and what went on, and at one point, the fellow corrected himself, "sorry," he said, "I already told You that."

That's called talking to Hashem. Understanding Who we are talking to.

The Dubno Maggid would often scold his followers for the routine manner in which they performed their devotions on the High Holidays. He never ceased to warn his listeners that the mere beating if the breast while reciting the confession of sins, mechanically performed without self-examination and without the

sincere desire to mend one's ways, would never bring that Heavenly forgiveness for which we all hope in the Days of Awe.

He used to explain this with a Mashul:

There was a village far off in the provinces where the people were simple and ignorant. Once, one of the villagers had an occasion to spend the night in the main city. Suddenly, he was awakened from his sleep by the load beating of drums. "What does this mean?" he asked in fright.

In reply he was told that a fire had broken out and the beating of drums was the city's fire alarm. Satisfied with this information, he went back to sleep.

When he returned to his village, he excitedly reported what he had seen in the city. "They have the most amazing arrangement!" he declared. "Whenever there is a fire in the city, they beat their drums and soon the fire is out."

The mayor of the village thought this was a splendid idea and immediately bought drums for use in the event of a fire.

A few days later, when a fire did break out in the village, the inhabitants quickly took up their drums and beat them loudly. In the meantime, half the houses in the village had gone up in flames.

A stranger that happened to be present on the village square laughed ironically and said to the fire brigade who were busily beating away with their wooden drumsticks: Why, you fools! Don't you know that you can't extinguish a fire just by beating a drum? The drum is meant only to call out to the fire brigade to come and put out the fire; the noise of the drums won't frighten the fire away!"

This moshol, said the Dubno Maggid, may well be applied to those of us who believe that idle lip service is sufficient to win forgiveness from Above. However long we may beat our fists against our hearts, it is all worthless if we regard this ritual as a magic formula to ward

off the consequences of sin. We should instead consider it an alarm, to awaken us to true repentance and resolute to better ourselves and thus extinguish the searing flame of evil that burns within our hearts.

True Stories that Teach The Importance of Simcha by Rabbi Dovid Flagler

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, was always careful to make others b'simcha.

One Erev Yom Kippur, a few years before his passing, Reb Moshe was wheeled into an elevator in his apartment building. He was accompanied by his daughter-in-law, Rebbetzin Feinstein.

In the elevator was a Yid who was not wearing a yarmulke. The man bent his head towards Reb Moshe, and with a touch of hesitation said, "A happy New Year." Reb Moshe looked up and with genuine warmth wished the man the same.

Reb Moshe's sincerity moved the man to bend down again and say, "And a healthy year too, Rabbi." Reb Moshe looked back at the man and said, "May you also be benched with a healthy year, one filled with success and nachas from your children. And may you live to witness Moshiach's arrival.

The man was moved by Reb Moshe's words. As Reb Moshe was wheeled into the car, the man turned to Reb Moshe's daughter-in-law and said, "It is obvious that I am not religious. My head is not even covered. Yet, to the Rabbi I am somebody!"

Lesson learned: We can learn from Rav Moshe that it is a big Mitzvah to try and make all Yidden happy, even if they do not observe mitzvos.

The Yom Kippur Drunk by Yanki Tauber

Those who arrived early at the village synagogue on Yom Kippur eve could not but notice the man sleeping in a corner. His soiled clothes, and the strong scent of alcohol that hovered about him, attested to the cause of his slumber at this early hour. A Jew drunk on the eve of the Holy Day? Several of the congregants even suggested that the man be expelled from the synagogue.



Soon the room filled to overflowing, mercifully concealing the sleeping drunk from all but those who stood in his immediate vicinity. As the sun made to dip below the horizon, a hush descended upon the crowd. The Rebbe entered the room and made his way to his place at the eastern wall. At a signal from the Rebbe, the ark was opened, and the *gabbai* began taking out the Torah scrolls in preparation for the *Kol Nidrei* service.

This was the moment that the drunk chose to rise from his slumber, climb the steps to the raised reading platform in the center of the room, pound on the reading table, and announce: "*Ne'um attah horeita!*" Apparently, the crowded room, Torah scrolls being carried out of the open ark, seen through a drunken haze, appeared to the man as the beginning of *hakafot* on Simchat Torah! The drunk was confusing the most solemn moment of the year with its most joyous and high-spirited occasion.

The scandalized crowd was about to eject the man from the room when the Rebbe turned from the wall and said: "Let him be. For him, it's already time for *hakafot*. He's there already."

On the following evening, as the Rebbe sat with his chassidim at the festive meal that follows the fast, he related to them the story of Reb Shmuel, the *Kol Nidrei* drunk.

On the morning of the eve of the Holy Day, Reb Shmuel had heard of a Jew who, together with his wife and six small children, had been imprisoned for failing to pay the rent on the establishment he held on lease from the local nobleman. Reb Shmuel went to the nobleman to plead for their release, but the nobleman was adamant in his refusal. "Until I see every penny that is owed to me," he swore, "the Jew and his family stay where they are. Now get out of here before I unleash my dogs on you."

"I cannot allow a Jewish family to languish in a dungeon on Yom Kippur," resolved Reb Shmuel and set out to raise the required sum, determined to achieve their release before sunset.

All day, he went from door to door. People gave generously to a fellow Jew in need, but by late afternoon Reb Shmuel was still 300 rubles short of the required sum. Where would he find such a large sum of money at this late hour? Then he passed a tavern and saw a group of well-dressed young men sitting and drinking. A card-game was underway, and a sizable pile of banknotes and gold and silver coins had already accumulated on the table.

At first, he hesitated to approach them at all: what could one expect from Jews who spend the eve of the Holy Day drinking and gambling in a tavern? But realizing that they were his only hope, he approached their table and told them of the plight of the imprisoned family.

They were about to send him off empty-handed, when one of them had a jolly idea: wouldn't it be great fun to get a pious Jew drunk on

Yom Kippur? Signalling to a waiter, the man ordered a large glass of vodka. "Drink this down in one gulp," he said to the Reb Shmuel, "and I'll give you 100 rubles."

Reb Shmuel looked from the glass that had been set before him to the sheaf of banknotes that the man held under his nose. Other than a sip of *l'chayim* on Shabbat and at weddings, Reb Shmuel drank only twice a year — on Purim and Simchat Torah, when every chassid fuels the holy joy of these days with generous helpings of inebriating drink so that the body should rejoice along with the soul. And the amount of vodka in this glass — actually, it more resembled a pitcher than a glass — was more than he would consume on both those occasions combined. Reb Shmuel lifted the glass and drank down its contents.

"Bravo!" cried the man and handed him the 100 rubles. "But this is not enough," said Reb Shmuel, his head already reeling from the strong drink. "I need another 200 rubles to get the poor family out of prison!"

"A deal's a deal!" cried the merrymakers. "One hundred rubles per glass! Waiter! Please refill this glass for our drinking buddy!"

Two litres and two hundred rubles later, Reb Shmuel staggered out of the tavern. His alcohol-fogged mind was oblivious to all — the stares of his fellow villagers rushing about in their final preparations for the Holy Day, the ferocious barking of the nobleman's dogs, the joyous tears and profusions of gratitude of the ransomed family — except to the task of handing over the money to the nobleman and finding his way to the synagogue. For he knew that if he first went home for something to eat before the fast, he would never make it to *shul* for *Kol Nidrei*.

"On Rosh HaShanah," the Rebbe concluded his story, "we submitted to the sovereignty of Heaven and proclaimed G-d king of the universe. Today, we fasted, prayed and repented, labouring to

translate our commitment to G-d into a refined past and an improved future. Now we are heading towards Sukkot, in which we actualize and rejoice over the attainments of the 'Days of Awe' through the special mitzvot of the festival — a joy that reaches its climax in the *hakafot* of Simchat Torah. But Reb Shmuel is already there. When he announced the beginning of *hakafot* at *Kol Nidrei* last night, this was no 'mistake.' For us, Yom Kippur was just beginning; for him, it was already Simchat Torah...."

The Most Important Tool - Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein

כָּל נִדְרֵי וֶאֱסָרֵי וּשְׁבוּעֵי All vows, and things we have made forbidden on ourselves, and oaths…



It was without question a very intricate and tricky operation. Few doctors had knowledge about how to perform the surgery, let alone first-hand or even second-hand experience. That was the news one nine-year-old boy received after being told that a certain valve in his heart needed to be replaced.

The exception was one expert doctor in Boston. He was one of the few in the world that had the gumption to perform the operation on this young boy, and that was because he was very confident in his medical practice and team of assisting doctors and nurses.

Never before had a surgery of his been unsuccessful and a patient suffer or die as a result. And so, the child was brought for an intake meeting along with his parents, after which a date was set for the operation. The day of the surgery, the expert team filed into the operating room and prepared everything that would be needed. When everything was set up and ready, they began to get to work.

Hours later… the operation was completed and deemed successful. The doctor and assisting nurses wheeled the boy to a recovery room and continued on with their day. Two hours after the operation, the assisting doctors and nurses were sent a message that the child had caught a fever. They weren't overly worried, though, as they attributed it to the common post-surgical complication of fever that many patients face. Four hours later, the fever was even higher, yet the medical team remained calm. Two hours later, though, the boy suddenly went into a coma. Now everyone was worried. But despite their vigilant attendance to the boy with utmost care and concern, nothing seemed to help. A few hours later, the child passed away.

The team of doctors and nurses were shocked. Phoning the head doctor, they relayed the strange and sad news. They were at a loss to explain why anything had happened and could do no more than relay facts. The doctor was even more devastated and could not believe it. Nothing had ever gone wrong before in his many years of practice.

Rushing over to the hospital, he soon discovered that it was in fact true. The boy had passed away hours after the operation. Calling together his entire team, he demanded that each of them provide a thoroughly written self-report, documenting how many hours they slept the night before to ensure they were well rested, what time they checked into the hospital, their lab results from their most recent blood work and so on. The doctor in no way thought that it had something to do with him personally. But everyone's results came

back clean and without any indication that something was off on their part.

As soon as the doctor learned of this, he was done. He immediately marched his way to the head of the hospital and announced his resignation. "The day I graduated from medical school, I told myself that I will work so long as no one dies under my care. But if that were to happen, I would no longer practice as a doctor. And so now, I am finished." The hospital had practically been built around this doctor, so it was no small matter for him to leave. But there wasn't anything to talk about. The child had died, and he was done.

Heading over to his office, the doctor began packing away his personal belongings and readying himself to leave. But then, unexpectedly, he heard a knock on the door. "It's not going to work!" he yelled out. No one was going to convince him to stay and continue practicing. But the knocking persisted.

Finally, exasperated, he asked who it was. "It's Susie," came the voice from just outside the door. Unfamiliar with the name, the doctor figured that it was some random nurse who had been sent to try one last time to talk him out of leaving. "Susie, I don't think I know you! I really have nothing to talk about." Minutes later, the doctor flung his door opened, having said goodbye to his past career. But Susie stood just before him. "Doctor," she said, "I have to talk to you." "What is it now…?" the doctor annoyingly and anxiously wailed. "Doctor, I have to tell you that the child who you operated on today…it is my fault that he died."

The doctor picked up his head and stared at Susie with a look of confusion. "Listen, what's your name again?" "Susie," she politely replied. "Okay, listen Susie. I never heard of you before, I never saw you before in my life, and you are not on my medical team. If the head of the hospital sent you to convince me to stay by blaming yourself, I am not interested."

"No doctor," Susie interjected, jumping in front of the doctor, "you don't understand. I see you every day." Now the doctor was even more confused. "What do you mean?" "I am the one who stands behind the curtain. My job in the hospital is to take all the medical equipment and instruments and sterilize them between uses." "Okay, that's great," acknowledged the doctor, nodding his head, "but what does that have to do with me right now?"

"Let me tell you," Susie replied. "Yesterday, you performed surgery on a man who was full of infections and gangrenes. After you worked on him, they sent back the various tools you used to be sterilized by me. This morning, before the operation on the young boy, I planned on taking care of that. But just moments after I arrived in the hospital, I received a phone call from one of my friends who was in dire straits and I ended up talking to her for twenty minutes.

All of a sudden, I was told that you needed your tools to perform the operation on the young boy. I panicked, knowing to myself that I hadn't done my job of sterilizing every instrument. Not having the time to clean them properly, I quickly rinsed them off and wrapped them up in gauze, giving off the impression that they had been thoroughly prepared for the next procedure. But, in truth, they hadn't.

"You see doctor, you then took those tools and used them for the young boy's heart surgery, causing all those infections from the previous patient to transfer over to him. The infections must have so severely and adversely affected the young boy that he eventually died. I'm so sorry, but it was really me who caused this all to happen…"

The doctor was stunned. All he could think to himself was that something so simple turned into something so catastrophic. "Here we had the best doctor, the best hospital, the best team, but an infected tool, and the patient is dead. What seemed the most

meaningless and inconsequential component of the operation played the most vital part. Because of that infected tool, we lost the child."

As we enter the holiest day of the year, we are essentially entering an operating room. We are surgeons who are going to operate on ourselves. Throughout the past year, we have contracted many spiritual ailments and illnesses that cling to our neshama and must be removed. And on Yom Kippur, we have the opportunity to save our lives.

Yet we are not alone in this surgical process. We have the best doctor and are accompanied by the best team in the best hospital. We personally know our most hidden and deepest thoughts and feelings and every sin we have committed this past year, whether it be in the open or behind closed doors. We are thus our own best doctor.

We as well are accompanied by the best team – the congregation with which we join together in prayer over Yom Kippur. And we are in the best hospital – a shul or room filled with holiness whereby our prayers can ascend on High.

But there is something else which may seem so small and insignificant, and yet is the most important component of all. What is the tool which we will use to perform the surgery? Our mouth.

Throughout the entire night and day of Yom Kippur, we immerse ourselves in solemn prayer and express ourselves from the depth of our soul. We may have the best doctor, the best medical team and the best hospital, but if we don't have a sterilized tool, we are not in a good position. If our tool – our mouth – is infected with words of insult and hurt of others, profanity, disrespect of our parents and teachers, lashon hara, unfulfilled promises and wasteful conversation, we run the risk of harming the patient, if not worse.

Yet there is hope. Despite the diseases and sicknesses attached to our tool, if we only sterilize it, we will be in place to cleanse

ourselves. In this sense, we begin Yom Kippur with the Kol Nidrei service, wherein we annul and undo our vows, and purge our mouths of any words which have gone to waste or unadhered to. But how do we most impactfully and powerfully clean our mouth and sterilize it?

As we near Yom Kippur and stand at its threshold, we must be extremely cautious of that which we allow ourselves to say. When we spend these days being careful of our speech, we are rectifying our past and showing Hashem that we can and will be more vigilant. We must as well approach our parents, teachers, friends or whomever else we may have hurt with our words and ask forgiveness. And most certainly, on Yom Kippur itself, we must be so ever careful that the words we utter are filled with prayer and Torah and are otherwise kind and pleasant exchanges with others.

These words are the tool that will give our prayers leverage and ensure that they reach our Father in Heaven and in turn cleanse and purify us in the most effective of ways.

Yom Kippur Gems – Torah U'Tefilah

One year on Yom Kippur, **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, zt"l**, perceived that the Heavenly Court had decreed a harsh year for the Jews. Rav Levi Yitzchok led his congregation in tearful Davening, trying desperately to cancel the decree, but it was to no avail.

Suddenly, in the middle of Tefilas Ne'ilah, Rav Levi Yitzchok felt that the black clouds had lifted. The decree had been revoked! Rav Levi Yitzchok wondered what great merit had saved Klal Yisroel from certain disaster.

It was revealed to him from Shamayim that in a particular town, ten Jews who had been drafted into the Czar's army had formed a Minyan and Davened together. It was the Tefilah offered by the Chazan of this Minyan that had brought salvation to all the Jews.

The following year, on Erev Yom Kippur, Rav Levi Yitzchok travelled to the town of these soldiers, and asked to join their Minyan, but they refused to let him. He begged and pleaded, but the soldiers insisted that only fellow soldiers could join. Finally, Rav Levi Yitzchok asked if he might join them only for Tefilas Ne'ilah, and to this, the men reluctantly agreed.

Just before Ne'ilah, the Chazan turned to the men he would be leading in Davening, and said, "All over the world, Jews are busy Davening for a good year. They ask for good Parnasah, and for the good health of their wives and children.

None of this applies to us, because we are soldiers in the Czar's army. Parnasah? We receive fixed wages from the Czar. Wives? Children? We never had the opportunity to get married and raise families. We therefore have only one Tefilah that we can say, and that is, 'Yisgadal V'Yiskadash Sh'mei Rabbah!' May Hashem's Name be glorified and sanctified!"

Everyone present was aroused to Daven fervently for the sanctification of Hashem's Name alone.

Rav Levi Yitzchok remarked, "Now I understand how last year, this Minyan accomplished what no one else could accomplish!"

R' Naftoli Hurvitz ZT"L (Rebbe of Ropschitz) would say: "For some people, when they klop על חטא it's a wasted effort; why klop when there is no one home!"

R' Yechezkel Levenstein ZT"L (Ohr Yechezkel) would say: "Feel joy this day for Hashem's forgiveness. The greater our awareness of our atonement, the more joy we will have."



Why Eat Two Meals Before Yom Kippur?

By Yehuda Shurpin

Before the Yom Kippur fast, which begins at sunset, we eat a festive meal known as the *seudah hamafseket* ("meal that separates"). In addition to the *seudah hamafseket*, many have the custom to also eat a festive meal earlier in the day.

Why do we eat two festive meals?

Let's start with the *seudah hamafseket*.

The reason for the *seudah hamafseket* can be traced to a puzzling verse in Leviticus: "And you shall afflict your souls on the ninth day of the month." The sages question this verse, as elsewhere in Leviticus it is written: "On the tenth of the month you shall afflict your souls . . ." Are we meant to fast for two days?

Yet another verse states, "From evening to evening [shall you observe your day of rest]," i.e., the fast is observed for one day only. So one cannot say that the first verse is teaching that one literally fasts two days.

The sages explain that on the ninth of the month we should already engage in the fast—not by fasting, but by eating, as this prepares us to fast that evening and the following day.

Due to G-d's great love for us, they explain, He commanded us to fast one day in the year to atone for our sins. Not only that, He also commanded us to eat and drink first, so that the fast would not harm us.

Why not just tell us to eat?

This prompts the question, why doesn't the verse just state explicitly, "eat on the ninth"?

The sages explain that the reason the verse refers to eating as an "affliction" is to teach us that one who eats and drinks on the ninth is rewarded by G-d as if he fasted.

As you can imagine, the reward that one receives for a pleasurable activity like eating and drinking because of G-d's commandment is not comparable to the reward that one receives for fasting because of G-d's commandment.

Nevertheless, one who eats and drinks on the ninth of Tishrei receives a great reward, as if he fasted both on the ninth and the tenth of Tishrei.

In truth, it would have been fitting to honour the day of Yom Kippur itself with food and drink, just as we do for the other festivals. After all, what greater joy is there than being granted forgiveness for our sins? However, since Yom Kippur itself cannot be honoured this way (as it is a fast day), we honour it with food and drink on the preceding day.

Based on the above, there is a rabbinic mitzvah to eat on the day before Yom Kippur. One is only required to eat one meal, but he should eat and drink the amount of food and drink that he would normally consume in two days, or at least a bit more than he would for just one day. Nevertheless, the widespread custom is to eat two meals.

The mystics provide a deeper reason for the *seudah hamafseket*, which also explains the deeper reason for the custom of eating two meals on the ninth of Tishrei. In general, part of our purpose in this world is to refine the world and make it a "dwelling place for the

divine." This is especially highlighted when it comes to food and drink.

The Kabbalists explain that within every creation there is an "utterance of G-d's mouth," a spark that is the energy of its creation. However, the spark is static, bereft of the capacity to advance creation's quest to unite with its Creator. When a person recites a blessing before eating, and then uses the energy that he received to serve G-d, he refines and uplifts these sparks and helps get rid of negative spiritual energies.

Aseret Yemei Tshuvah, the Ten Days of Repentance are an especially opportune time for refining these spiritual sparks and any lingering negative energies. This is one reason why the Code of Jewish Law states that one should be extra strict regarding the kashrut of their food during this period.

But who will refine the food of Yom Kippur, when no one eats? Thus the kabbalists explain that on the day before Yom Kippur, we need to do the job for two days. So we eat two meals, one for the day itself, and one making up for the next day.

The great kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, known as the **Arizal**, explains that eating the *seudah hamafseket* has the power to rectify and atone for sins associated with eating that we may have done throughout the year.

(Note that during this final meal one should eat only foods that are readily digestible in order that they not be overly satiated, which may cause them to be satisfied and proud while praying on Yom Kippur.

May you be written and sealed for a happy, healthy and sweet new year!

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Surviving the Sinkable

וַיְהִי סַעַר גָּדוֹל בַּיָּם וְהָאֳנִיָּה חִשְּׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר ***There was a great storm in the sea and the ship threatened to be broken*** (Yonah 1:4)



Sunday night, April 14, 1912. None of us were alive to hear about it at the time it happened, but you've probably read about it or learned about it. The Titanic, the 882 foot-long Olympic-class ocean liner, weighing 52,310 tons and worth $7.5 million, sank. First class tickets ranged widely in price, from $150 for a simple berth up to $4,300 for a parlour suite. Second-class starting fares were $60 and third-class anywhere from $15 to $40.

Undisputedly, the Titanic was singular both in size and majesty. Two years after its architecture and construction began, it was completed and deemed the unsinkable ship. But it wasn't so unsinkable after all. As the Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England en route to New York on April 10, 1912 (23rd of Nissan, 5712), a total of 2,229 passengers were aboard, including 913 crew members. Among the passengers was an 18-year-old Jewish woman named Leah Aks with her 10-month-old son, Efraim Fischel (or 'Filly' as he was known).

But Leah Aks had not initially planned on being aboard the Titanic. After living most of her life in Warsaw, Poland, Leah married Shmuel, a tailor, who had also grown up in Poland, and they together moved to London in 1910. As Leah was soon expecting a child, Shmuel's cousin from America encouraged him to make the trip to Norfolk, Virginia from London. There, he would be sure to make a better living than he had been. Shmuel, after mulling over the matter, left London, sailing to New York aboard the SS Cymric.

After arriving in America, he wound up working in the scrap metal business in Norfolk. The plan was for his wife, Leah, to soon follow and settle down together with him in America. But as the months went by and Leah got closer to her due date, she figured that it would be better to push off her travels. Only after giving birth to Efraim Fischel did she begin planning her expedition across the seas.

Time marched on until Leah felt that her son was strong enough to endure the long and arduous trip. Eventually he was, after which she booked a ticket and prepared for the voyage. But with news of the grand Titanic ship circulating, Leah's mother urged her to instead purchase a ticket aboard what was considered the world's safest ocean liner. It was certainly a better option for travel than what she had already reserved. And so, Leah, finding reason in her mother's advice, purchased a third-class ticket on the Titanic.

Four days into the voyage, at 11:40 pm, about 375 miles south of Newfoundland, the ship struck an iceberg. With the iceberg nearly 100 feet tall and 200 feet long, it ruptured six of the Titanic's sixteen watertight compartments along its starboard side. The titanic could only stay afloat with four of these compartments flooded.

As news of the collision made its way around the ship, panic and confusion broke out. With 2,229 total passengers and only 20 lifeboats available to accommodate a maximum of 1,178 people, there was no question that many lives would be lost. Captain Edward Smith

ordered women and children to board the lifeboats first. As pandemonium was heard emanating from the top deck, Leah clutched Efraim Fischel in her arms. She could only imagine the worst.

At 12:30 am, the crew allowed third-class women and children to make their way to the deck. But with little room to even move amid the clobbering crowd, Leah and Efraim Fischel seemed stuck. Leah's screaming and sobbing eventually won over, though, and passing crew members carried her and her son to the deck where first-class passengers awaited their rite of passage to a lifeboat.

With the water temperature on that night thought to be unbearably cold at 28 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature on deck was in no way pleasant either. Leah looked around, freezing and panicking, noticing nothing but sheer chaos. People pushed and shoved each other around, frantically struggling to find their way into any lifeboat.

Water continued seeping into the ship, slowing pulling it further and further down. Lady Madeline Astor, the young wife of millionaire John Jacob Astor, could not help but notice Leah and Efraim Fischel. Her heart went out to the young mother and child, prompting her to cover Efraim Fischel's head and body with her silk scarf.

During this time, a distraught man pushed himself into a lifeboat that was about to be lowered into the water. The cabin crew pulled him out and placed him back on the deck, insisting that women and children go first. But the man remained frustrated, his eyes going wild and turning in the direction of Leah and little Efraim Fischel. In a demented moment of madness, he yelled to Leah, "You think women and children are first?" Grabbing Efraim Fischel from Leah's hands, he threw him overboard, as Leah shrieked in horror. Crew members immediately tackled the deranged fellow, but it was too late. Efraim Fischel was gone.

When Leah's turn to board the lifeboat came, she refused to go without her baby. Everyone tried convincing her that her baby was lost and there was nothing she could do. At the very least, she could save herself. She still refused though, until the crew forcibly picked her up and placed her into lifeboat 13 along with 63 other people.

A few hours later at daybreak, the liner Carpathia rescued all those afloat and still alive. The remaining 1,503 lives slipped into the icy waters of the North Atlantic and drowned.

Leah was shattered. For two days, she didn't move from her mattress on the Carpathia. Another survivor, Selena Cook, urged Leah to step onto the deck for some fresh air, but Leah would not move.

When Leah finally did comply with Selena's relentless pushing, though, she noticed a woman holding a baby. She then heard its cry, and her heart fluttered. Could it be? The baby's cry was eerily familiar. Upon stepping closer to glance at the baby, Leah immediately felt a surge of life rush through her body. It was Efraim Fischel.

Unknown to Leah, when the man had thrown Efraim Fischel overboard, he had fallen right into the lap of Italian immigrant, Argene del Carlo, in lifeboat 11. Although Argene's husband had not been allowed to follow his pregnant wife into the lifeboat, shortly after Argene settled herself down, Efraim Fischel came landing into her arms from atop the Titanic. As a devout Catholic, she believed that G-d had sent her this baby to replace her dead husband and serve as a brother to the baby she was carrying. She refused to hand the baby over to Leah. He had been entrusted to her by G-d, after all, and she wouldn't give him up.

Leah turned to the captain, Arthur Roston, for help. Just like King Solomon, it would be left to him to determine which mother was telling the truth about the baby. The captain took both women to his

quarters, where he investigated the matter further. Amidst each side explaining the story, Leah declared that she had proof that the baby was hers.

"He is Jewish," she exclaimed, "and the evidence is that he was circumcised in accordance with Jewish law." When Captain Roston saw that she was indeed correct, he took the baby and returned him to Leah. Shmuel was waiting for Leah as the ship arrived, and from there, he took her to their home.

Months later, Leah gave birth to a daughter. Deeply grateful for the help the captain and ship provided her and her son, she wanted to name her daughter Sarah Carpathia.

Confused, the nuns at the hospital copied into her birth certificate the name Sarah Titanic. Efraim Fischel went on to grow up in Norfolk, Virginia, with his parents and sister, as a religious Jew. He remained ardently committed to a Jewish life and would walk for miles to attend shul. He never forgot how fortunate he was to have survived the Titanic and been given a second chance. Not only was his life saved once then, but yet again, when he was returned to his mother because of his bris milah. Leah passed away in 1967, and Efraim Fischel in July of 1991.

While the story of Efraim Fischel may have occurred years ago, its message and lesson still ring true to this very day. Every year we are given another chance of life. We may have made mistakes and acted in ways unbefitting our stature as children of Hashem, but so long as we correct them, we will be saved and spared. We may fall overboard, but Hashem catches us and reminds us that we are His beloved Jewish children with whom He shares an eternal covenant. And as such, so long as we identify as Jews and maintain our commitment to our Torah values and ideals, we will always be able to find our way back to the deck.

Besamei HaTorah - R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ובעשור לחודש השביעי הזה (במדבר כט:ז) ***And on the tenth day of this seventh month***… (Bamidbar 29:7)

The Medrash on Tehilim (42:6) asks, what does the Pasuk mean when it says **לחודש השביעי הזה** —this seventh month?

Can there be another seventh month? The meaning is that the Congregation of Israel says to Hashem, "Hashem, You promise us year after year that You will redeem us in Tishrei, and yet, year after year we are not redeemed.

So again, we say, **this** Tishrei, may we be redeemed!" May the redemption come speedily in our days!

L'Maaseh…

Rav Yechiel Spero relates an episode of Chesed which teaches us a number of powerful lessons. The story is about an elderly, lonely Jew, a Holocaust survivor, who had lost everything. Through various events, he ended up making Bais Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey, his home. The Yeshivah provided him with a bed and meals, and the Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l**, provided him with friendship.



Rav Aharon was a world leader with the concern of world Jewry constantly on his mind. Yet, he found the time to give Chizuk and encouragement to a lonely Jew. His sympathetic ear was always listening for an opportunity to help this elderly Yid, as well as many others.

It was Yom Kippur, and the man, whose name was Leibel, approached Rav Aharon and said that he did not feel well. Rav Aharon placed his arm around Reb Leibel and told him to lie down. Rav Aharon continued with his intense Davening, and Reb Leibel went to the dormitory. The rest of the day was uneventful. The Yeshivah Davened with its usual fervour, with Rav Aharon setting the tone for the intensity and Ruchniyus.

The sun was setting, and Tefilas Minchah was coming to an end. Everybody was preparing for the concluding Tefilah of the day, Ne'ilah. This was where everybody raised their hearts and souls to Hashem in a last appeal for a positive conclusion to the day.

Suddenly, Rav Aharon left his seat and went over to an older student, and said, "I want you to go to the dormitory and Daven Ne'ilah in Reb Leibel's room. If he is up to it, Daven with him. If not, just stay at his side and Daven on your own."

The student replied, "But, Rebbe, we are about to Daven Ne'ilah. How can I miss the most important Tefilah of the year and Daven without a Minyan? What kind of Davening could that be?" Rav Aharon just stared back at the young man and said, "I am referring to a Chesed for an elderly Yid, and you are bringing up the issue of Ne'ilah?"

The student did not need any more encouragement. He understood what the Rosh Yeshivah was asking of him, and he quickly listened to Rav Aharon's directive.

Rav Aharon taught him that too often, we get wrapped up in ourselves and our own personal Ruchniyus, that we forget that there are people out there who need us. A smile and a good word can make a world of difference for another Jew. It takes so little, and it can accomplish so much!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



Rav Moshe Yitzchak Segal, zt"l, the Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, when he was enwrapped in the intensity of Tefilah, he did not overlook his obligations to others. Because of the intense respect that the community had for Rav Segal, the Chazan would always wait until he finished his Shemoneh Esrei before he would continue. After Ne'ilah at the end of Yom Kippur, Rav Moshe Yitzchak Davened Maariv alone in a room near the Bais Medrash. He did this because it was the only way he could ensure that the Chazan for Maariv would not wait for him to conclude his lengthy Davening, and he did not want anyone to delay breaking their fast on his account!

A Wise Man would say: "In this season of forgiveness remember: Always forgive your enemies - nothing annoys them so much."

The Ramchal writes that during Neilah one can attain the level of Adam HaRishon before his sin.

Live Another Year By Rabbi Ari Neuwirth

This story takes place in the famous Zichron Moshe shul in Yerushalyim. It was Yom Kippur. They were bidding on Maftir Yonah. Every single year, there was a man who bid for Maftir Yonah and got it.The purpose of him doing this, was that he felt as though it was a segula and z'chus to live out the year.

This year, he is bidding and somebody else keeps out-bidding him. He couldn't believe it. Everybody knew that he always buys Maftir Yonah every year. Who had the audacity to out-bid him? Finally, the amount was too much for him, and the other person won the bidding. He was devastated. How could I not have Maftir Yonah? How will I live out the year? My whole life was dependant on my receiving Maftir Yonah.



He turned to **Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Fischer** (1928-2003), the Rav of the shul and said, "Rebbe, what do I do?" "There is another man in shul that out-bid me, but I need Maftir Yonah, which ensures my life for another year."

The Rav says to him, "If you give in and let the other man have Maftir Yonah, I give you a **הבטחה**, a promise that you will live another year."

"But I always buy Maftir Yonah. I need it" So the Rav says, "I will tell you again, If you give in and let the other man have Maftir Yonah, I give you a **הבטחה**, a promise that you will live another year."

"But I must have Maftir Yonah."

The Rav says, "I will tell you again, Let him have it, I give you my **הבטחה**."

The other person got Maftir Yonah. Unfortunately, during that year the man who got maftir Yonah annually was nifter!

Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Fischer went to the shiva house to be Menachem ovel the children. All eyes were riveted on the Rav when he entered the home. The question marks were flashing. The obvious question. " You told my father that if he lets the other person have Maftir Yonah, then he will live another year, you gave him a promise. What happened? Our father died. You gave him a bracha and it wasn't fulfilled.

Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Fischer said, "I can explain it."



"I gave your father a bracha three times. Not once did he say **אמן** "

"I tried, but there was no response. He didn't understand that it was not just a bracha, but that we have to affirm. "

We have to show Emunah and bitachon that it is Hakadosh Boruch Hu that fulfils the bracha. We have to show that and display that by affirming with **אמן**.

Don't forget the אמן, it's that powerful!

Rabbi Yaakov Rahimi - Hashem is waiting

Every Jew, no matter what he did in the past, or where he is holding right now, Hashem is waiting for him so much, like a mother waits for her child.

My elderly grandfather once went for a walk, but he never came back. My grandmother [who lived till 120] waited anxiously for him to return. Another hour waiting, two hours, three hours. She came to me in a panic and said, "Yaakov Yaakov, I don't know where he is, I am really nervous that something bad has happened to him."

I said, "Relax, calm down, I'm sure that he will return soon."

She said, "No, he's very old and I don't know where he is and maybe something happened to him." So, she sat by the window waiting, worrying and crying for her husband.

Finally, he came back unharmed. She said to him, "Where were you. I have been waiting and waiting for you. I was so worried about you. Are you ok?"

This is representative of only a small percentage of how much Hashem is waiting for all the many thousands of Jews around the world to just come back. Come back and become religious. Enjoy the Torah. How dare a person live a life like a goy when he is Jewish.

Like the Baal ShemTov said, "The best mussar that you can give to a Jew, is to tell him that he is a Jew." Point to him, and tell him, "What are you doing?" We are **בני אברהם יצחק ויעקב** it is in you; it is in your blood. Hashem is waiting for you. The Torah is so beautiful. Why, why, why!

Hashem is waiting for every single Jew to come back! It's never too late.

Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson – What Did The Rebbe Do Before Kol Nidrei?

A Yid called Favel Shapiro from Antwerp called me up and told me that he wants to share with me a story that happened to him.

I want to share his very powerful and moving story with you:

His mother Rachel came from a Satmar family. His father, Reb Naftali Hertz Z'l was a talmid of The Damesek Eliezer of Vishnitz. Reb Favel himself was a staunch Belzer chossid. And I am telling the story!

One year on Purim in the 1970's, Favel who was a well-known affluent businessman and askan came to America. He decided that he wanted to check out the Lubavitcher Rebbe. So he went to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn where the Rebbe would hold a Purim farbrengen.



'The gathering went on for many hours until about 3 o'clock in the morning. When the Rebbe eventually finished and walked out to go upstairs to his private quarters. I thought I would take the opportunity to just go up to him to give sholom aleichem to the Rebbe. As I stretched out my hand, his two gabboim said to me, "now is not the time to give your hand in sholom to the Rebbe."

I was a bit taken aback in shock, and I pulled back my hand. But the Rebbe had noticed all this, and he stretched out his hand towards me. ***He took my hand, but he wouldn't leave go***! He led me into his private room, all the while grasping my hand! At this point the gabboim left.

He took me into his room, closed the door and gave me a chair and told me to sit down. So I sat down. I didn't know what he wanted.

He opened a drawer and took out a key. He went over to one of his filing cabinets and unlocked a drawer and removed a piece of paper. He hands the paper over to me and said, "Read."

I start reading a letter that a lady wrote to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in the early 1960's. She writes:

I come from a family of Satmar Chassidim, and my husband is a Vishnitzer chassid. I am 36 years old with 12 children. The oldest one is 14 years old and the youngest is one year old. I have been diagnosed with cancer r'l and the doctors are not optimistic about my chances of recovery. The cancer has spread, and I don't have much time left.

I myself am ready to give up. I have lived my life. I am ready to say goodbye and meet my Maker in heaven and I have no complaints.

But I have twelve children, and this breaks my heart. Who will raise them? Who will take care of them? I don't know you, and you don't know me. But I am begging you - the Lubavitcher Rebbe to please daven for them and look out for my twelve children. Daven that they should grow up to be happy people, wholesome and healthy people. They should be inspired to have Yiras Shamayim, Ahavas Torah, Ahavas Chessed and Ahavas Yisrael. And they should follow the derech HaTorah and Mitzvos.

Signed Rachel Shapiro

Favel said to me, "This is my mother! My mother died when I was 12 years old. She left little ones - 7 boys and 5 girls. I was reading a letter written by my own mother shortly before she passed away!"

"I am sitting in the chair opposite the Rebbe, and I start crying and trembling. I was overwhelmed with emotion. I look at the Rebbe and said to him, 'I have only one request of you – my mother died at a young age, and I don't have many things of hers, please let me keep this letter."

The Lubavitcher said 'nein', I can't let you have it. I was startled. I knew that the Rebbe received tens of thousands of letters. Did he really need to hold on to this one letter that was so precious to me? I couldn't understand it.

He looked at me and he said, 'Every year on Yom Kippur I can't go down to the shul to daven Kol Nidrei, until I have read your mother's letter! I am sorry, but this letter must stay here."

"I stood up on the night of Purim trembling and walked out of the Rebbe's room."

צום קל ומועיל



For years we used to end the Yom Kippur eve conversations with the blessing of 'light fasting'. This blessing certainly had something to do with it: Yom Kippur is one of the longest fasts of the year and many find it difficult. I do not know exactly when this happened, but from a certain year onwards, some of my interlocutors began to respond to my wishes

with a 'helpful fast' greeting, with a tone of rebuke rising in their throats.

Their intention was clear. If the Torah commanded fasting, we should not wish it to pass easily; We must feel it and identify with it, and if we already want to wish for something about it, then we must wish that it will benefit our spiritual world and carry out its action.

Etz Hachaim – R' CT Blau

Harav Binyomin Diskin, the Rov of Brisk, did not come to shul at the regular time on the night of Kol Nidrei. The entire kehillah was waiting and they began to wonder why the Rov did not appear as Rav Binyomin Diskin generally came on time.



They sent the gabbai of the shul to go and look for the Rov. Where was the Rov? The gabbai went to the Rov's house and what he saw almost caused him to faint. He saw Rav Binyomin sitting and learning with his son a perek of mishnayos!

The gabbai stood there in astonishment. "On the night of Kol Nidrei! This is what the Rov is doing! The Rov, rather than answering, broke into a sobbing cry and said to the gabbai, "I made a cheshbon hanefesh and I realized that I am short of so many zechuyos and I said to myself that in the very few short moments that I have left, what is the single, greatest mitzvah that I can do in order to gain the maximum amount of zechuyos.

I came to the conclusion that sitting and learning a perek of mishnayos with my son would give me the maximum amount of zchuyos that I would be able to accumulate at this particular time.

Hashem said to Dovid Hamelech "It is far greater to Me when you sit and are **עוסק בתורה** one day, more than 1,000 **קרבן עולות** that your son **שלמה** will be **מקריב** in front of Me on the **מזבח** !"

The Tallit Bag That Came Back from The War - Sivan Rahav-Meir



We are used to seeing "I found tefillin" notices regarding a pair of tefillin that were left yesterday morning on a bus. But what about a tallit bag that was lost fifty years ago and was just found?

Last night, Elyashiv Gutman told me the following story: "My father, a graduate of the Har Tzion Yeshiva, was on a base in the Golan when, in the middle of Yom Kippur prayers, while fasting, a siren was heard and he ran towards a bunker, leaving his belongings behind. The Yom Kippur War had begun. After several months someone found my father's tefillin and returned them to him, but his tallit bag had disappeared - until now.

Today my father told me that he had just received a call from someone who had been holding on to his tallit bag for fifty years!

During the war, after we had taken back the area overrun by the Syrians, the tallit bag had been discovered in a disabled Syrian armoured personnel carrier together with an IDF High Holiday prayer book, a Shofar, and a few other related items. One of the

Israeli officers, Uri Atzmon, gathered up these items for safekeeping. Atzmon, who lives in the village of Kfar Sirkin, would display these items every Yom Kippur on a table for public viewing, where they served as objects of inspiration for the Day of Atonement.

Atzmon had been searching for the owner of the tallit bag for years and telling the story about it everywhere without finding any leads. This year his son began displaying the tallit bag on social media, publicizing it as follows: 'Uri Atzmon, battallion commander of armoured infantry unit 43 of brigade 670, on the third day of the Yom Kippur War at the foot of Mount Givat Orcha, found a small bag embroidered with the initials Yud Gimmel. The bag will gladly be returned to its owner, and all are welcome to share and forward this message.'

After the message had been shared, there was soon recognition that the initials Yud Gimmel were those of my father, Yitzchak Gutman.

This evening, from overexcitement, my father could barely speak. But amidst the many phone calls from family and old friends, he admitted that he always thought his tallit bag had either been burned or taken to Syria, and never imagined that he would see it again. He was so happy that, throughout the years, his tallit bag had been such a meaningful part of the Yom Kippur experience for the residents of Kfar Sirkin ".

R' Yehoshua Heshel of Apt ZT"L would say: "As a young man, I was determined to change the world. As I matured, I narrowed my goals to changing my community. Still later, I decided to change only my family. Now I realize that it is all I can do just to change myself!"

A Bowl of Soup



About a hundred years ago, a mother in a small European village finished doling out the meagre bowls of soup which were all her family could afford. Just then, there was a knock on the door. A poor(er) man entered and asked for something to eat. Before she could say anything, one of the children escorted the man to the table and gave him his own portion.

The man gratefully ate and left with blessings for the family for their kindness. When he had gone, the mother asked her son, "You know I have no more soup to give you. Why would you give it away?"

"If I had eaten the soup," replied the boy, "what memory would there be of it in two hours? I'd be hungry again anyway and the soup would be gone forever. Now, the mitzvah I did with that soup will live on forever and never be forgotten."

Not only did that mitzvah live on in Heaven, but this man's grandson is deeply involved with a charity organization which feeds thousands of Jewish people each Shabbos. Indeed, many days of many lives were lengthened because of his thoughtfulness.

The fear of Hashem is not being afraid of Him, It's being afraid of being away from Him!

From Classics and Beyond



Many times in the prayers of the Yamim Noraim, we plead, **אַל־תַּשְׁלִיכֵנִי לְעֵת זִקְנָה כִּכְלוֹת כֹּחִי אַל־תַּעַזְבֵנִי** — "***Do not cast us away at the time of old age; when our strength fails, do not forsake us***" (based on Tehillim 71:9). Why are we only worried about being cast away when we are old? Shouldn't a young person also ask not to be cast away from before Hashem?

Rav Itzele Peterburger explains this with a beautiful mashal (cited in KeMotzei Shallal Rav, Selichos). A soldier went AWOL. After many years, he is finally caught and court-martialled. In deciding the soldier's sentence, the judge factors in the soldier's current age and physical condition. If he is still in his prime and able to make up the years he lost in service, he will be returned to his post and receive a lighter sentence. Yet if he is only apprehended when he is no longer fit for service, his punishment will be more severe; he can no longer make up for lost time. The only option at this time is a punitive consequence, not a compensatory one.

If someone does teshuvah while he is still young, explains Rav Itzele, he still has many years and much strength to make up for lost time. But if he pushes off his repentance until he is old and weak, we may wonder: What use is that?

In this sense, Rav Itzele states, Hashem is unlike a human judge. A human judge will issue a punitive sentence when the deserter is no longer able to make full restitution for the absent years. However, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is always merciful and gracious, always looking out for our good. So we plead, "Al tashlicheinu le'eis ziknah — Even

if we only repent after the onset of old age, please accept our teshuvah and don't cast us away."

This is one of the kindnesses of Hashem, about Whom we say (also in the tefillos of the Yamim Noraim), "Ve'ad yom moso techakeh lo — And until the day of his death, You wait for him." It is never too late to do teshuvah and to keep perfecting ourselves!



Limudai Moshe- R' Moshe Harris

Why We Start Kol Nidrei with the Pasuk, אור זרע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה

Yom Kippur begins with Kol Nidrei, in which we declare the nullification of our vows and oaths. Before starting this proclamation, we first recite a pasuk in Tehillim (97:11): **אור זרע לצדיק ולישרי לב שמחה** – "***light is sown for the righteous; and for the upright of heart, gladness***".

Why was this pasuk, which does not appear to be directly related to Yom Kippur, chosen as the introduction to our tefillos?

Rav Moshe Feinstein notes that the pasuk does not say: **אור זורח לצדיק** – ***"a light shines for the tzaddik",*** but rather that a light is planted for him. When a tzaddik enters a room, his glow may shine and light up the entire room, but it is important to realize that this was not always the case. The way of the righteous is to plant their light. When something is planted, it is placed in the ground, where it remains concealed and hidden away until it sprouts.

Often, when we make attempts at spiritual growth and change, we end up disheartened by a lack of tangible progress. Particularly at this time of year, many people make kabbalos [resolutions] in a sincere effort to improve, only to end up disillusioned by their lack of success.

Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky once remarked that if someone is pressed for time and doesn't know what kabbalos he should make this year, he can simply take out last year's list and change the date at the top.



For this reason, we begin Yom Kippur with the encouraging message that spiritual light and righteousness must be sown. Because it is covered and hidden, we may not see immediate results, but over the course of time, our efforts will eventually blossom. Even if we are unable to sustain our kabbalos, they still remain planted and accrue over time, until they will one day sprout and enable us to blossom and shine with the accumulated spiritual light that we have sown year after year. (**R' Ozer Alport**)

A tree doesn't grow overnight. A spiritual giant doesn't sprout in an instant. Day by day, inch by inch does a tree grow. It spends many days underground in the dark, but in that darkness, it is growing. The same is true for us. Growth isn't always noticeable, but that doesn't mean it isn't happening – day by day, bit by bit!

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ZT"L would say: "A father once asked me to give his son a blessing. Instead, I told him a very important lesson: 'Teach him to smile!'"

Limudai Moshe- R' Moshe Harris

Why We End Yom Kippur with Our Most Intense Tefillos

Yom Kippur, the ultimate day of repentance, has Klal Yisroel, fasting, davening and asking for forgiveness. It begins with the sombre, quiet, and melodious intonation of Kol Nidrei and ends with the entire congregation shouting Hashem hu HoElokim! [G-d is the Al-Mighty] seven times in succession after various requests of forgiveness.

It seems that at the time when our strength is waning our greatest and loudest pleas are spent. Shouldn't we begin the day with the strong requests for forgiveness and save the subdued tefillos for when our bodies are weak from hunger and our lips parched from lack of water?

Rav Yehoshua Heshel Eichenstein, the Ziditchover Rebbe, tells the following story: One Friday, a man entered the study of the **Tchortkover Rebbe** with a request that was very common in those days. "My son was drafted into the army," the man began. "However, we have a way out. On Sunday, we are going to a doctor who will falsely declare him unfit for service. This way he will be spared certain misery, perhaps even death in that terrible army. Rebbe," he asked, "I need your blessing that he evade the draft."

The Rebbe quietly told him that Shabbos was nearing and he could not concentrate on blessings. The man should return to him on Friday evening after his tisch. The man did so. After most of the chassidim had left, the man repeated his request, almost verbatim. Again the Rebbe was non-committal. "Return to me tomorrow morning after davening." Unperturbed, the man noted that he would really like to resolve this matter before Sunday morning. Shabbos morning, after davening, the man approached the Rebbe again. Calmly he repeated the predicament. "Sunday morning I am going to a doctor who will falsely declare my son unfit for military service. Please daven that we will evade conscription." The Rebbe was not moved. Again, he

deferred until the afternoon. At the third Shabbos meal, the scene repeated again, precisely the way it had the previous three times. "I understand that you are leaving Sunday morning. Come back to me late motzei Shabbos," said the Rebbe. "By then I will have an answer for you."

By this time, his chasidim's curiosity was piqued. They had never seen their Rebbe so reluctant to mete a blessing, especially when it was one that would save a Jewish soul from the frightful Polish army.



Motzei Shabbos a large crowd gathered as the man approached with his request. Frustrated and disgruntled, the man, once again, repeated his story, almost verbatim, for the fifth time.

Immediately, the Rebbe sprung from his chair and began to shout. "What are you asking me? Why would one even try to evade the service of our wonderful country? How dare you ask me for a blessing of that sort? Your son would make a fine soldier for our country. I wish him the best of luck in the army!"

The man quickly scurried from the room and left town. The chasidim stood shocked and bewildered. Never had they heard such an uncharacteristic outcry from the Rebbe.

"I will explain," said the Rebbe. "The man was a fraud. He had no son, and if he did, he wanted him in the army. He was sent by the government to test our loyalty. Boruch Hashem we passed the test."

"But, Rebbe!" cried the chasidim, "how did you know" "Simple," explained the Rebbe. "I watched the level of intensity. From the moment he met me until tonight there was no increase in intensity

nor feeling of desperation with each request. The moment I heard his request tonight and it contained no more passion or desperation than his first request on Friday night, I knew he was a fraud."

We stand the entire day in shul davening, and end with Ne'ilah, after nearly 24 hours of pleading. The litmus test of our sincerity comes as the heavenly gates are being closed. As the sun begins to set, our pleas should intensify. That crescendo assures our sincerity. If it doesn't then we are no worse off than the man in the story. (**R' Mordechai Kamenetsky**)

After Yom Kippur . . .



R' Shlomo Wolbe writes: It is well known that the most dangerous part of a spacecraft's flight is re-entry into the earth's atmosphere. If the craft does not enter the atmosphere at precisely the correct angle, it is very likely to burn up.

So, too, the most critical part of our Yom Kippur observance is our re-entry into everyday life. Each of us becomes elevated on Yom Kippur to the best of his or her ability. Everyone comes closer to a life filled with spirituality. Hopefully, everyone thinks loftier thoughts on Yom Kippur than he thinks all year long. But Yom Kippur is not meant to be a day that stands in isolation! We are meant to take something from Yom Kippur that will positively affect our avodas Hashem throughout the coming year. It may be that we strengthen our avodah, raise our avodah to a new level, or abandon some of our previous sins, but something of

Yom Kippur must survive when the holy day ends. Therefore, when we re-enter the atmosphere of the mundane world after Yom Kippur, we must approach that atmosphere at the correct angle. This means not running away from shul and from the day itself as a child escapes from class the instant the bell rings, for if we do, then whatever we have gained on Yom Kippur will "burn up" on re-entry.

This warning does not apply to Yom Kippur alone. The Gemara relates that pious men would prepare for one hour before davening and also would remain in shul for an hour after davening. Why? Because if we hurry to take off our tefilin and leave shul immediately after shemoneh esrei, we throw away some or all of the inspiration that we gained from davening. (Although we are not accustomed to remaining in shul for a full hour after the weekday shemoneh esrei, calmly reciting the various tefillos that precede the final kaddish serves the same purpose.]

The same thing applies to how we leave Shabbos - are we eager to throw it off, or do we allow the holiness of Shabbos to linger?

Someone once asked R' Yaakov Meir Schechter that there's Emunah, Bitachon, and Hishtadlus. They are 3 separate things. When and where do we use each one?

He answered: Emunah is for yesterday - to believe that whatever happened to you was destined to be. Bitachon is for tomorrow - to know that the outcome of what will be is in the hands of Hashem. Hishtadlus is for today - we do today what we can on our part.

"The sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit."

Rabbi Paysach Krohn



A few years ago in Lakewood, they announced that two days before Pesach, all the chadorim and kollelim would shut, to allow the husbands to help their wives prepare for YomTov .

One rebbi said to his wife, "I have off today, what can I do to help you?"

She said, "You know what will really help me out? Please take our 6 children on an outing and entertain them for the next four hours. That will allow me time to clean, cook, and bake etc."

He thinks where is there to take the kids in Lakewood for 4 hours?



Then he has a great idea. He is going to take them to Newark Airport on the Air train. The train goes round and round from terminal to terminal. You can see the planes taking off and landing.

The kids were having the time of their lives. They had snacks and were very happy to go round and round on the train. They were on the train for over two hours, and they are having a great time.



At one of the terminal stops, a pilot walks on the train. A very neat looking man with a cap and full uniform. He is a very friendly man, and when he sees the father with 6 kids, he says, "Where are you all flying to today?"

The father sheepishly answered the pilot – "Actually, we are not flying anywhere, we are flying nowhere!"

The pilot says, "Nowhere?"

The father went on to explain the circumstances, as to why they were just on an outing, going nowhere, without actually flying anywhere.

The pilot got very serious. He said, "Young man, I want to tell you something. I have been a pilot for over 25 years. There isn't a major airport in the world that I haven't flown to.

Two years ago, I got a text from my son. It said, 'Dad, you have never shown up to any of my birthdays nor the decency to attend my graduation. And last week you didn't attend your grandson's first birthday. Do me a favour and delete my number out of your contacts.'

Two weeks later, I got a similar text from my daughter requesting that I delete her from my contacts."

The pilot said. "***Young man, I have flown everywhere – but gotten nowhere. You told me that you are going nowhere, but with your kids, you are going everywhere!***"

The future of Klal Yisrael is with our children. Our children are our greatest investments. We can go everywhere, but if we're not going with our children, and spending time with them, then we are going nowhere! - Give your kids your time and go places.

Rabbi Shmuel Osher Schlamme - Simcha

The Gemara Taanis 22a relates a story whose focus is the piety of average Jewish people.





This episode occurred in the marketplace of Bei Lefet, a place frequented by Rabbi Beroka Hoza'a, who often met Eliyahu HaNavi there. On this occasion, Rabbi Beroka Hoza'a asked Eliyahu whether anyone who was in the market at that time was a *ben Olam HaBa* – someone who was assured a place in the World-to-Come.

Two brothers came to the marketplace. Elijah said to Rabbi Beroka: These two have a share in the World-to-Come.

Although the well-known *Mishna* in *Sanhedrin* teaches that every Jewish person has a share in the World-to-Come, the intention there is that after a person is purged of his sins, having received the punishment that is due to him, he will merit *Olam HaBa*. Our Gemara is discussing people whose behaviours assure them of being a *ben Olam HaBa* – someone whose actions in this world guarantee him immediate entrance into the world-to-come.

Rabbi Beroka went over to the men and said to them: What is your occupation? They said to him: We are jesters, and we cheer up the

depressed. Alternatively, when we see two people who have a quarrel between them, we strive to make peace.

It is said that for this behaviour one enjoys the profits of his actions in this world, and yet his reward is not diminished in the World-to-Come.

The Marharsha says (Sanhedrin 46a) that just as when a man is in pain, Hashem also feels that pain - **בשעה שאדם מצטער שכינה מה לשון אומרת קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי** . Conversely, when a person is b'simcha and makes others happy, that causes the Shechina to be happy too!

The key to Unlock the Gates – Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro



There was a youngerman in the tri-state area, who was seemingly a **יחיד בדורו** - one in a million. His havanah, his amkus, his hasmadah, his kishroinos, his bekiyous, his avodah his middos were incredible.

He went to **Rav Yochanan Wosner** to get a faher. He was perfect in every single possible area. He was beyond exceptional. Rav Yochanan said to him that he wants to meet with his father.

At the meeting, Rav Yochanan asks the father, "Was your son always like this?"

The father replied, "No, he was a wonderful bachur, but nothing compared to what he is now."

"Then you have to tell me what happened that made him so special."

The father said, "I will tell you."



'Years ago, when he was a bocher in yeshivah, it was a regular Monday, and they were leining from the Torah. My son got called up to do Hagbaah. He did what is called a reverse Hagbaah. This is normally specifically done on Simchas Torah. But to do this on a regular weekday, is unheard of. Nobody does that. It was most bizarre. You just don't do it.

All the bachrim started to talk and make a tumult about what he just did.

The Rosh Yeshivah called him in after davening. He asked my son, " Why did you do it, it is not Simchas Torah today?"

My son looked down, and sheepishly told his Rosh Yeshiva, "The bachur that just got the shlishi aliyah, had an incredibly terrible stutter. When he eventually managed to finish saying the endless bracha, all the bachurim were talking, with some even making fun of him. Unfortunately, his speech impediment became the centre of attention.

When I got called up for Hagbaah, I had seconds to do something – anything, that would divert attention away from this bachur. So, I did a reverse Hagbaah , which had the desired effect, and everyone was talking about me instead.

The father told Rav Wosner, "Following that day, when my son saved another bachur from embarrassment and ridicule, **נפתחו לבני כל שערי שמים** - every gate in heaven became open for my son!"





The Greatness of Every Yid

Many *yungerleit* in Eretz Yisrael don't own a car. Although financially easier, and the bus system is good, taking buses can make travelling long and tiresome. Sometimes, a person can spend most of his day on buses.

Such happened to a *yungerman* from Kiryat Gat. After he davened *shacharis* at the *netz*, he took a bus to Yerushalayim, to be *menachem avel* a friend. As soon as he arrived at his friend's house and sat down, he got a phone call.

He would have ignored it, but it was his father, so he went to the back of the room and answered the call.

"I have a medical procedure in Ramat Gan today, around noon, and I want someone to be there with me. Can you be there?"

"Certainly. I'm in Yerushalayim now, but I'll be there as soon as possible."

He apologized to his friend that he couldn't stay longer, was *menachem avel* quickly and left to catch the next bus to Bnei Brak, from where he would take yet another bus to Ramat Gan.

On the bus to Ramat Gan, his father called to tell him that the procedure was completed. and that he didn't need to come.

As it turned out, he spent half of the day on buses, and the only mitzvah he performed was a brief *nichum aveilim*.

He got off the bus and crossed the street. It was time to head home. He would take a bus back to Bnei Brak and then another bus to Kiryat Gat.

The automated sign at the bus stop showed that the next bus would arrive in half an hour. He had some time to refresh himself.

He went to a convenience store and asked the non-religious storekeeper if he could use the restroom. The storekeeper readily agreed.

The *yungerman* asked, "Can I leave this bag with you for a moment until I come out?"

"Why don't you take it into the bathroom with you and watch it yourself?"

"I have my tallis and tefillin in this bag, and it isn't proper to bring them into the bathroom."

The storeowner's eyes sparkled. "Can I put on your tefillin?"

"Of course! It will be my privilege."

When he returned, he found this irreligious Yid wearing tefillin on his tattooed arm on his bald shaven head, wearing a tiny kipa.

The storeowner said, "I'm not religious, but I put on tefillin every morning. Today, I didn't have time to put on tefillin in the morning, and I came to work without tefillin. I prayed that Hashem help me wear tefillin today. I was certain Hashem would help. And as you see, now I'm wearing tefillin."

The *yungeman* thought, "I thought I did almost nothing this morning, but I helped a Yid wear tefillin." And then the *yungerman* had another inspiring thought: "Yesterday, if you would have asked me

the worth of an irreligious Yid's mitzvas tefillin, I would have said not much. How precious could it be?

But I discovered how important it was for him to put on tefillin, and Hashem had me make this long trip just to help him. So, I guess I misjudged to what extent Hashem loves our mitzvos.

Holy Air

The gabbai of the **Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l** saw his rebbe inhaling deeply on Yom Kippur.

"Are you ok?" the gabbai asked. "Perhaps you need to eat?"

The Sar Shalom replied, "I'm fine. I just wanted to inhale the holy air of Yom Kippur!"

Rabbi Elazar Meisels – Backyard Trash

There is a family home close to where I live. The Cohens seemed to have lived there forever. Their neighbour was holocaust survivor. When she passed away, the house was sold to another family called the Golds. The Golds realised that the house hadn't been touched for many years and needed a complete renovation.

They got a contractor in to ensure that the house would be ready for them to move into by the hand over date. Everything worked out fine, and they moved into a beautiful newly re-furbished home. They loved their new home and their neighbourhood.

Their immediate neighbours – the Cohens, were such nice and pleasant people. They even brought in cakes and other goodies during the first weeks. There was nothing that they wouldn't do to help the Golds.

They had an adjoining wall, but there was never excessive noise. The Cohens were just perfect model neighbours.

Everything was almost perfect. Except for one thing. Mrs Gold was what you might call ***a 'neat freak.'*** Everything had to be spotless and perfect, inside, and outside. The front garden was manicured to perfection. The backyard was pristine.



The Cohen's house was ok – clean and mentchlech, balabatish and heimish. The front garden was presentable, but the backyard was where things took a drastic turn for the worse. It was nothing short of what you might call – a junkyard!

There were piles of garbage of every kind. It was a complete eyesore. Mrs Gold could not bring her friends to the rear garden. It was too embarrassing, and understandably so.

She spoke to her husband many times to partition it off with a high fence. Or maybe we will sort it out at our expense. We will hire a truck and get it all carted away.

Her husband refused as the Cohens were really very nice neighbours and he didn't want to offend or insult them.

They ended up not saying anything, even though it bothered Mrs Gold immensely. Sometimes, you have to learn to live with things –

you don't have to like it. And that's what they did – until came the moment of truth.

The Gold's are making a Bar Mitzva for their son. The men are going to come in through the front door, and the women are going to use the backyard!

Mrs Gold tells her husband, "That's it, there is no way we are going to make a Bar Mitzva, and all my friends are going to see this garbage tip. You must take care of it. Call up Mr Cohen and come to some arrangement. This junk has been sitting here for years. He has not got any use for it. Tell him we will pay for it to be carted away; it won't cost him a penny."

So, what does the good husband do, when he is put up to a task of this enormity?

He loses his neighbours telephone number! So, his wife got him the number again.

So, he loses his phone! And then he lost his mind!

Eventually, he dials the Cohen's number, lets it ring once – and he hangs up. He rings again, and after three rings hangs up because Mr Cohen might be sleeping.

Eventually, he rings again and Mr Cohen answers.

Mr Gold says, " Hi Mr Cohen, how are you, I don't know if you are aware, but our Yossi is going to be Bar Mitzva soon IYH."

"Ah, Mazel Tov, such wonderful news."

"So, I was wondering… – I was thinking to myself…. You know we are making a thing… and the men…. and the women.. they are going to be in the back. Her friends are going to come. Would it be ok if I would get somebody to get rid of your rubbish? It won't trouble you, and it won't cost you anything. It will be clean, and it will be very nice.

Silence… Mr Cohen didn't say a word.

Mr Gold thinks to himself, 'Ok, there goes that relationship. It was nice while it lasted. Now I have an enemy for the next 50 years.'

Finally, Mr Cohen says, "Listen Mr Gold, you can do whatever you want. It's not like you really need my permission."

"What do you mean – I don't need your permission,- it's your junk, its your zachen, it's your chafeitzim!"

"It's not really mine."

"So, tell me whose it is, I will call the guy to remove it."

Mr Cohen says, "No, No, I don't think you understand. I don't think that you remember that before you moved in, you carried out renovations. Your contractors were under pressure to finish the job before you moved in, and they asked me for permission to leave some equipment on my side of the fence."

I agreed; however, the small amount of equipment grew over time into an enormous pile of junk. I tried to get the contractor to remove it at the time, but they never returned.

All that junk on my side of the fence – ***it's yours!***

"So why didn't you tell me?"

"I figured that you must know about it but assumed that either you didn't have the time or money to sort it out. I did not want to pressure you chas v'Sholom. I did not want to jeopardise our relationship."

Raboissai, this Yom Kippur, we are not going to use our mouths to eat. We won't swallow our food. But maybe we can learn a lesson from Mr Cohen. Instead of swallowing our food, let's learn how to swallow our tongues. Let's learn how to *fargin* – how to give in to the next person. How to be more accepting of various situations in life.

Rabbi Ariel Mizrahi

A few years ago, when my wife and I moved back from Eretz Yisrael, my son at the time was 2 years old. We were sitting on the couch talking. After some time, we realised it was very quiet. We got very nervous. We said, "Oh my gosh, where is Benny?"

I look down the hallway and see that the door to the bathroom is shut closed. My heart started racing.

I ran to the bathroom, and tried to open the door, but it was jammed shut. The top drawer of the bathroom cabinet was open and prevented the door from opening.



I started banging on the door, "Benny, Benny, open the door."

There was no answer. We started freaking out! We kept trying the door and at the same time shouting "Benny!", but to no avail.

Finally, we had a great idea. Benny loves ice cream, so we yelled, "Benny, ice cream truck!"

Suddenly we hear Benny, and he calls back, "I want ice cream."

He comes to the door and bangs on the door shouting, "Daddy, Daddy!"

I call back, "Benny, Benny." And he starts crying.

I said, "Benny, just close the drawer and I will take you out."

Of course, he doesn't understand. I quickly call 911, and they break down the door. We were re-united. We were hugging and kissing each other.

Then my wife said something very beautiful.

You know, we are all stuck and locked in our own bathrooms in life. Either we can't find a shidduch, or we don't have children, or sickness, or parnassah, etc.

We turn to Hashem and bang on His door, "Hashem, please open the door. Open the door to success, to bracha."

Hashem is right there on the other side saying, "My son, My daughter – just close the drawer!"

We have to take the first step. And once we do that, Hashem will be there on the other side. "I will catch you, and shower upon you brachos – blessings and success."



Our sages interpret a passage from Midrash Rabbah on the Song of Songs (5.2): **פִּתְחִי־לִי אֲחֹתִי רַעְיָתִי** "Open to me my sister, my bride", as "open a door as tiny as the eye of a needle and I will open your gates wide enough to let carts and horse-drawn carriages drive through". **אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּנַי, פִּתְחוּ לִי פֶּתַח אֶחָד שֶׁל תְּשׁוּבָה כְּחֻדָּהּ שֶׁל מַחַט, וַאֲנִי פּוֹתֵחַ לָכֶם פְּתָחִים שֶׁיִּהְיוּ עֲגָלוֹת וּקְרוֹנִיּוֹת נִכְנָסוֹת בּוֹ** – How can we open this tiny opening?

The Michtav M'Eliyahu explains it simply and clearly: - *"Open a door to repentance as tiny as the eye of a needle and I will open your gates wide enough to let carts and horse-drawn carriages drive through". This is the tiny aperture that Hashem desires from the Jewish People; that they may open their hearts to Him, even slightly.*

Any thought of remorse, any good deed, any victory over the evil inclination creates an opening in the iron wall that isolates us from

our Father in Heaven. When a man opens even a tiny slit in his heart, as small as the eye of a needle, he receives a heavenly and bountiful response that can elevate him from his current physical or spiritual state to unknown heights.

Torah Tavlin

כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכֹּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם (Vayikra 16:30)



Russia is known for its long brutal winters and the excessive amount of snow it receives during that time. Today, Moscow employs close to 20,000 workers with over 6,000 vehicles, including plows and "Golden Claws" - wheeled vehicles, that scoop up piles of snow and toss them into trucks. Some of the snow is dumped into the Moscow River, while the vast majority of it is taken to melting stations that can handle 12,000 truckloads of snow a day. Such is the process today. But back in the olden days, they had to come up with other ideas.

During the communist regime when "everyone was equal," Moscow had a special law on the books. Every citizen would have the privilege of cleaning "Mother Russia" by shovelling the snow in front of their own home. Failure to do so was subject to a hefty fine. Naturally, in good old Communist Russia, no one actually listened. They would simply wait for the inspector to come around and then run out into the freezing cold holding a shovel in hand, as if they had been "working on it all day!"

During one particular heavy snowfall, as the inspector came around, one man decided it was simply too cold to pretend and he wasn't venturing out of his home.

It wasn't long before he received a knock on his door and was handed a hefty fine. "Why am I different than the rest of the block," the man complained. "No one else has cleaned on the block yet!" "The difference is," replied the inspector, "that at least they show they are trying, while you just simply sit inside and do not care about your own beloved Motherland!"

R' Yechezkel Levenstein zt"l (Ohr Yechezkel) would repeat this story before Yom Kippur and say: "Rabbosai, even if you know from past experiences that you won't really clean yourself up from the sins of the past completely, at the very least, show that you are trying!"

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

Those Who Eat Fill Their Soul

The Serdeheli Rov shlita (in his Sefer Nachalei Binah) quotes **The Toldos Aharon Rebbe zy"a** (Sefer Divrei Emunah), who relates the following story that he heard from **Rav Yisroel Yitzchok Reisman zt"l**, Dayan on the Badatz of Yerushalaim. Rav Reisman said that the **Rov of Barnov zy"a** would relate this story every year at the seudah on Erev Yom Kippur:

In the neighbourhood of the **Rebbe Rav Zushe of Anipoli zy"a** lived a pharmacist who was a terrible sinner. He transgressed every aveirah with absolutely no remorse. One day, he was struck with a desire to change his ways. He approached Rav Zushe and said, "Rebbe, I want to do teshuva."

Rav Zushe gave him a list of all the acts of atonement that he must do according to what is written in Sefer Hakaneh. For such-and such

aveirah, he told him that he needed to fast 120 times. For such-and-such aveirah he needed to fast another 100 times. And so on and so forth.

The pharmacist replied, "I am not able to fast so many times. If I do, I will probably die." Rav Zushe told him, "If that's true, then I can't help you." The pharmacist, however, would not give in and he kept begging him for help. Rav Zushe finally said, "I have a brother named **R' Meilich**. He is a good man Go to him in Lizhensk. Perhaps he can help you find a way to do teshuva."

The pharmacist took this advice. He packed a bag with money and set off to Rav Elimelech. When he got there, he gave some money to the shamas and was taken in to see the tzadik. The pharmacist told Rav Elimelech, "Your brother sent me to you. I want to do teshuva and he told me that I would have to fast for many days. I am not physically able to do this."



Rav Elimelech said, "You don't have to fast. Instead, you should eat a fresh roll with fish and whiskey and soup and meat and tzimmes every day. But before you sit down to eat, you should come to me."

The pharmacist did as he was told. He prepared a large meal and before he sat down to eat, he went to see Rav Elimelech. When he came in, Rav Elimelech began to speak out loud, as if he were talking to himself, and he said, "Meilich. Meilich. What did you do on such and-such day in such and-such place?" He went on to detail all of the aveiros that the pharmacist had done on that day.

The pharmacist understood that Rav Elimelech was speaking about him, even though he was pretending as if he was talking about

himself. He felt so bad that he began to cry bitterly until he fainted and had to be revived. Afterwards, he sat down to eat his meal.

However, he ate his food with a broken and remorseful heart. The same thing happened day after day. Each day, he would go to see Rav Elimelech before he ate, and the Rebbe would detail all the aveiros he had done on a particular day in the past.

This went on for some time, until his heart was so broken that he couldn't eat anything anymore. At that point, Rav Elimelech appointed a guardian to watch him and to make sure he ate enough to stay alive. This went on until the man became a full baal teshuva.

The Rov of Barnov would end the story by saying: This is how our eating on Erev Yom Kippur should look. We have to make a cheshbon hanefesh. We have to recognize that it is one day before Yom Kippur and think about how our year went. When we think about everything we did over the course of the past year, we should lose our appetite and find it hard to eat. But we have to eat in order to fulfil the mitzvah that Hashem commanded us to do!



Reb Zusha of Anipoli By Menachem Posner

Reb Zusha of Anipoli was one of the most beloved stars in the constellation of the third generation of Chassidic masters. Humble and self-effacing, he is forever remembered in the many tales of his awe of G-d and his deep love for His creations. Elder brother of **Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk**, and beloved pupil of **Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezrich**, Reb Zusha wrote no books and never amassed a large following. Yet, in his signature, understated way, he contributed greatly to the emerging Chassidic movement.

He and his brother were in self-imposed exile. The two brothers wandered from place to place, without a penny in their pockets, forced to live by the kindness of strangers.

This "forced exile" was not uncommon among spiritual seekers of the era who wished to cleanse their souls through suffering. In living a homeless life, they were emulating G-d Himself, who has been without a "home" since the Temple was destroyed.

For Reb Elimelech and Reb Zusha, however, there was another element. Traveling incognito, they were able to meet many people whom they would inspire to return to G-d. Oftentimes, they would "stage" conversations in which R' Elimelech would berate R' Zusha for sins he supposedly committed. Hearing R' Zusha's copious sobs, the listener would realize that he too had to repent for the very same sin.



He learned a lesson from everything. A central tenet of Chassidic teaching is that everything can serve as a catalyst from which one can gain inspiration and insight into one's service of G-d.

Reb Zusha was known to learn seven lessons from a thief: a) He works quietly without others knowing. b) He is ready to place himself in danger. c) Even the smallest detail is of great importance to him. d) He labours with great toil. e) Alacrity. f) He is confident and optimistic. g) If he did not succeed the first time, he tries again and again.

He was poor but happy.

A story is told about an individual who could not understand how to accept suffering with love. The Maggid sent the questioner to visit Reb Zusha, who was known to be destitute.

"I am not sure why you were sent to me," said Reb Zusha, "What can I tell you about suffering? I have everything a person could possibly wish for!"

He recognized his unique purpose in life.

There is a famous anecdote that tells of Reb Zusha quaking with fright on his deathbed.

"I am not afraid of being asked why I was not Moshe Rabeinu," he explained to his students. "After all, G-d already has a Moshe. I am afraid, however, of being asked, 'Zusha, why weren't you Zusha?"

He humbly referred to himself in third person.

Humble to a fault, Reb Zusha never referred to himself as "ich," Yiddish for "I." Rather, he would say "Zusha doesn't understand" or Zusha feels badly etc."

He was known to have said to the earth upon which he trod, ***"Dirt, dirt, you are greater than Zusha, so why is Zusha walking upon you? Never fear, the day will come when he will be buried under you!"***

Five Meanings of Teshuvah: Reb Zusha was a master of repentance. Throughout the day, he would record his "failings" in a notebook. Each night, before going to sleep, he would cry and plead for forgiveness until his tears had washed away whatever he had written.

He is known for his teaching that the Hebrew word *teshuva*, translated as "return" or "repentance," is an acronym for five elements.

T: *Tamim* - "Be sincere (*tamim*) with the Eternal, your G-d."
Sh: *Shiviti* - "I have set (*shiviti*) G-d before me always."
U: *Ve-ahavta* - "And you shall love (*ve-ahavta*) your fellow as

yourself."
V: *Bechol* - "In all (*bechol*) your ways, know Him."
H: *Hatzne-a* - "Discreetly (*hatzne-a*) walk with your G-d.

He Saw Only the Good in Others

Even where others saw failings, Rabbi Zusha saw only positive. "It is known," Reb Zusha once said, "that whenever a Jew sins, an evil angel is created. I have never seen a robust evil angel. Each one is missing a hand, a foot, or another limb. Even when a Jew sins, he is broken deep down inside—creating an angel that is broken or lame."

The Way of Emunah – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

Davening with Transgressors

One year, right before beginning Kol Nidrei, **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zy"a** proclaimed: "Ribono Shel Olam! Even the nine apikorsim in the city of Berditchev admit that there is a Creator who made everything."

The chasidim did not understand what he was talking about until they investigated and discovered that there were, in fact, 10 apikorsim in the city of Berditchev.

On the night of Yom Kippur, when the entire city gathered in shul to daven, these heretics gathered in a bar to drink wine and beer. As they sat and drank, they chatted with each other. One of them asked another, "Tell me, what led you to leave religion and become atheist?"

His friend replied, "I'll tell you the truth. I used to be a very frum Jew. However, I then suffered many tragedies. My wife and son both died and I fell into a deep depression. That caused me to abandon Yiddishkeit." He then turned back to his friend and asked, "What about you? What's your story?"



The first man answered, "I used to be wealthy. I had a good source of income until the wheels of fortune suddenly turned on me and I lost it all. Due to my great pain, I fell in my ruchnius and eventually left Yiddishkeit completely."

The conversation continued with each man relating a different reason to explain why he left Yiddishkeit and became an apikores.

Finally, the tenth man was asked what led him to become a heretic, and he said, "I did not suffer like you all did. I just decided on my own that this is the right way to live."

When the other nine men heard that he had left Yiddishkeit for no good reason, they got very mad at him. They all got up and said, "We are nine men. We will include Hashem Yisborach with us to make a minyan and decree that you deserve to die a terrible death for blaspheming Hashem for no reason at all."

A short time later, this man was in the middle of eating when he suddenly choked on his food and died.

Rav Levi Yitzchok sensed all of this when he declared that the nine remaining apikorsim in Berditchev admit that Hashem controls the world.

Before we begin Kol Nidrei, we proclaim that it is permitted for us to daven with "avaryanim", people who transgress the mitzvos of the

Torah. We include them in our tefillos because even the apikorsim who are so far from avodas Hashem all year long still believe in Him deep in their hearts.

Saying Of the Week With Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"Let's not put someone else down for having the same issues as us."



In the Kol Nidrei liturgy, we say that Hashem and the congregation should allow the sinners to join the davening. **עַל דַּעַת הַמָּקוֹם וְעַל דַּעַת הַקָּהָל בִּישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַעְלָה וּבִישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַטָּה אָנוּ מַתִּירִין לְהִתְפַּלֵּל עִם הָעֲבַרְיָנִים**

Why do we need the permission of the people?

Perhaps, it's to teach us that we must not push anyone away for being a sinner. On Yom Kippur when we do teshuva, it dawns on us that it's hypocritical to push someone away when we have also sinned.

Don't believe everything you hear. There are always three sides to a story. Yours, theirs – and the truth!

A Yom Kippur Appeal



Rabbi Yisrael Spira, the fourth Bluzhover Rebbe, was a beam of spiritual light in the dark evil of the Nazi concentration camps. This episode took place in the Yanovsky labour camp in Lemberg, a few days before Yom Kippur.

There, as in all the ghettos and camps, the Nazis appointed Jews to supervise the laborers and extract from them the last particle of endurance and strength. The chief Kapo (work supervisor) in Lemberg was a Jew named Schneeweiss. Like many Jews in his position, his fawning desire to please his masters in return for an extra portion of bread or an extra day of life, often made him seem even more cruel than they. The Nazis, in turn, enjoyed the spectacle of Jew persecuting Jew.

Now, Yom Kippur was on the way. Fasting could be managed, although it would mean placing oneself in mortal danger. Food rations were below the subsistence level in any case and the labour required even more than the nourishment that had been normal in pre-war days.

The Rabbis who were frequently called upon to decide such questions always answered in accordance with Jewish law: "The Torah requires us to eat even on the holiest of fast days because to do otherwise is to invite death by starvation and G-d wants us to exert every effort to live. We are forbidden to surrender to death even though we are too limited to understand the purpose of our living under such circumstances." Nevertheless, there were always those to whom a Yom Kippur, a smuggled pair of tefillin, a blast of the shofar on Rosh Hashana, a secretly baked morsel of matzah, a bit of oil for a

Chanuka flame, a minyan, were worth an encounter with a bullet or a whip.

A group of such people approached their spiritual leader. "Rav Spira, Yom Kippur is coming. What are we to do? How can we desecrate the Holy Day working as if it were any other day?"

The Rabbi was moved as he often was by the devotion of his fellow Jews. He said he would try to help them. The Bluzhover Rav went to the hated Kapo. "Herr Schneeweiss. As you know, it will soon be Yom Kippur. I am a Rabbi and it is important for me to observe this day as properly as possible. A group of my disciples in the camp wish to do the same. We do not ask to be freed from labour, all we ask is that for that one day we be given work which will not force us to violate the law of the Torah. We are willing to do extra work on other days to make up for any labour which goes undone."

That simple request was in itself an act of great heroism, for Schneeweiss, no friend of observant Jews, had in his own hands the power of life and death. He could easily have used the "treasonous" request as a means of proving his loyalty to his SS mentors by turning in the "lazy Rabbi who was prepared to sabotage the Master Race's war effort for the sake of his Holy Day foolishness."

Schneeweiss asked for time to consider. The next day, he told the Rabbi that he could choose a limited number of prisoners who would be assigned to clean the apartments of the camp's commanding officers. But he could guarantee them nothing, nor would he defend them if the Germans sensed something wrong. And if there was so much as a speck of dirt to be found anywhere in the house, they would pay with their lives.

So it was that on Yom Kippur an unusual prayer service was held by Rabbi Spira and fourteen young men. The Rabbi stood on a windowsill polishing the glass while the men were sweeping, dusting, tidying and all the while he led them in the solemn prayers as he had led

congregations for many years in Galicia, but never had the Yom Kippur service been as fervent or as tearful.

At midday, a tray was brought in with food. It lay ignored on a table as the praying and cleaning continued. Then a few German officers entered to admire the work of their servants for the day. They examined the rooms and were pleased until they saw the food. "Jiidische Hunde, freszt! Stuff yourselves, Jewish dogs!" The Jews could not ignore the order. What should they do?

Rabbi Spira walked over to the officers and explained: "It is our Holy Day, the day when sins are forgiven. As you have seen, we serve you loyally, even on this sacred day, and our work is perfect. But we are required to fast today, and we ask of you to excuse us from eating our meal today. Our work will continue, and it will not be affected by hunger." The officers were furious. They sent for Schneeweiss. Quaking, the Kapo came to the room. "These dogs refuse to eat their rations. You are responsible for them. We shall return in two hours and if all their food is not eaten, you will be shot."

Schneeweiss stood up straight and unbuttoned his shirt, baring his chest. "I will not force them to eat. I am fasting myself today. If you wish to shoot me, then shoot me now!"

An officer drew his gun and Schneeweiss stood firm. A shot. He was dead. Hated Schneeweiss had become holy Schneeweiss. Who can estimate the great heights to which every Jewish soul can rise?

Then the Germans turned to the fifteen Jews, who by then were expecting for the same treatment. "You will continue to work. The food will be removed, and you will receive not a scrap to eat until tomorrow morning. Now, go back to work!"

The Talmud tells us: **יש קונה עולמו בכמה שנים ויש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת *"There are those who acquire their world in many years, and there are those who acquire their world in a single moment."***

(Avodah Zarah 17a). As long as there is the possibility to do teshuvah - to return to G-d and His commandments - one's past can be compensated for.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the book, "Chassidic tales of the Holocaust" by Yaffa Eliach, who heard the Bluzhover Rebbe recounting it when she was in his house.

We Are His Children and He Is Our Father



One year on Yom Kippur, **the Sar Shalom of Belz zy"a** was informed about a terrible Heavenly decree that had been made against Klal Yisroel. There was a huge crowd in the shul, and the Rebbe asked for a certain person to be brought to him.

The man he asked for was a very simple person who did not even know how to say the words of the tefillos properly. When this man was brought to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him, "My son, please tell me the meaning of the words we recite in the tefillah of Vehu Rachum: **אִם-עֲוֹנֵינוּ, עֲנוּ בָּנוּ**

The man replied, "Does the Rebbe think I don't know the translation of these words? It means: 'Im avoneinu' – even with our sins. 'Anu banu' – we are still Your children." (The actual translation is: "If we sinned and our sins testify as a prosecution against us." The simple man confused the word "anu" (with an "ayin"), which means "sins",

with the word "anu" (with an "aleph"), which means "we", and he thought the word "banu" ("with us") means "children".)

When the people heard this, they began to chuckle. But the Rebbe was overjoyed. His intention was to arouse joy in Shomayim and to sweeten the decree with the simple man's explanation that we are still Hashem's children no matter how many aveiros we do.



Kaporos With a Potted Plant

The minhag to swing "kaporos" before Yom Kippur is an ancient and accepted custom among most of the communities of Klal Yisroel. Although the Shulchan Aruch opposed this custom, the Rema encouraged it, writing: "Some Gaonim and many Acharonim cited this custom. It is practiced in all countries, and it should not be abandoned, since it is the custom of the pious."

The earliest known source for this minhag is from Rashi from Shabbos 81b. The Gemara discusses a potted plant called parpisa - **האי פרפיסא**. To define this term, Rashi writes that he found in the Teshuvos of the Gaonim that the custom in the time of the Talmud was to make wicker baskets and fill them with earth and fertilizer, one basket for each member of the household. The baskets were called parpisa. Twenty-two or fifteen days before Rosh Hashanah, grains or legumes were planted in the baskets, and by the time Rosh Hashanah arrived, they had already sprouted.

The day before Rosh Hashanah, each person would take his basket, and circle it around his head, reciting, "This is in place of that; this is my exchange, this is my substitute," and then throw the basket in the river.

What was the significance of this custom?

The Chasam Sofer explains that the seeds sewn in the parpisa baskets corresponded to a person's children. They prayed that if a Heavenly decree had been passed against their seed, may fall it upon the parpisa seeds, and not upon their children.

This concern was especially prevalent in the time of the Gemara, when an epidemic of ascara, a fatal breathing disorder, claimed the lives of many children.

They cast the parpisa plants into the river, since when Beis Din is unable to carry out the punishment of death by strangulation, Hashem brings about the guilty party's death by drowning or ascara. They thus prayed that the "drowning" of the plant, take the place of the ascara that might afflict their children, G-d forbid.

Kaporos With a Chicken:



Many years later, the custom changed, and people instead performed kaporos with chickens. The Rosh cites this custom, and asks why specifically a chicken is used, and not a different animal.

Most simply, he explained that chickens were the most common animals to be found among the impoverished Jewish communities of Europe. In more affluent communities, horned animals were used, in order to recall the merit of the horned ram that was sacrificed in place of Yitzchak Avinu. Another reason why a chicken was used, is because the Hebrew word for rooster is gever, just like the Hebrew word for man. Therefore, it is the most appropriate substitute for man.

The Acharonim write that one must never use an animal that would be kosher as a sacrifice on the mizbei'ach (such as a dove, sheep, goat or cow), in order to avoid the mistaken impression that one intends to sanctify the animal as a korban.

Today, the minhag of kaporos is prevalent among both Ashkenazic and Sefardic communities. Although Sefardim generally follow the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch, who opposed the custom of kaporos, in this case they follow the Rema, since the Arizal also attached great importance to kaporos.

R' Yaakov Emden zt"l writes that even today, if one does not have chickens or money with which to perform kaporos, he should follow the custom of parpisa and perform kaporos with seeds.

The Shofar Shoes by Rabbi Avi Shafran



When my dear father, may he live and be well, showed me his new "shofar shoes", I was reminded of how uniquely Jews steeped in Jewish tradition look at the world. It was just about three years ago, several hours before the arrival of Yom Kippur. My family and I had the wonderful privilege of spending the High Holidays in Baltimore with my father. Before he showed me the shoes, he recounted how his old cloth "Yom Kippur shoes" - leather footwear is forbidden on the Jewish Day of Atonement - had grown uncomfortable. These new "shofar shoes," however, he explained, were much better.

He is someone, without question, who can appreciate a good shoe. As a child in a Polish shtetl, the only shoes he ever had were those first

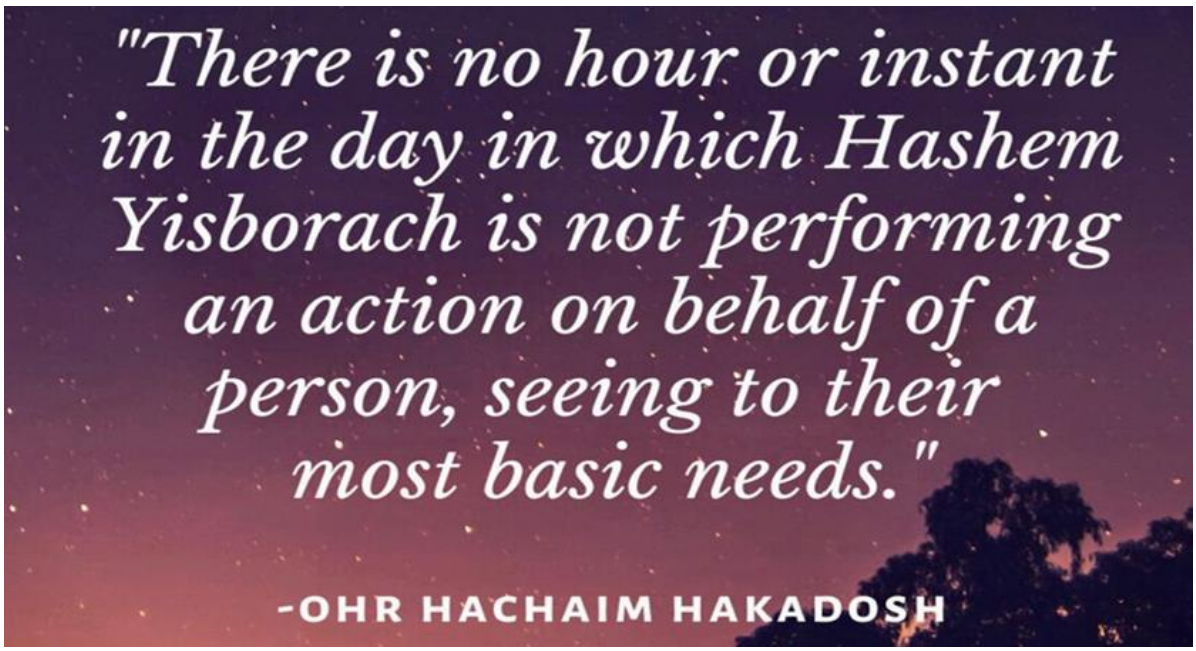
worn and outgrown by older siblings. To this day he attributes his size 6EEE feet to the confining, ill-fitting footwear of his youth.

And during the years of World War II, when he and his yeshiva colleagues found themselves unwilling guests of Josef Stalin in a Siberian labour camp, the frigid temperatures made foot-covering a matter not of comfort but of life or death.

He recalls how he and his friends would wrap long pieces of cloth in layers around their feet for insulation. When he says the morning blessing "Who has provided me all my needs," which Chazal teaches refers to shoes, he surely relates to it better than most of us.

No wonder my father was so happy to discover that the comfortable Yom Kippur shoes he had found were "shofar shoes." I didn't understand at first what a "shofar shoe" was, though, and told him.

He smiled and responded patiently, "Why, each one has a shofar on it." When I expressed scepticism, he went to his bedroom and emerged triumphantly with the footwear. And when he held them up for me to see, his Jewish eyes taught mine a lesson. I don't think I'll ever look at the Nike "swoosh" quite the same way again!



The Soviet Guard



For years, **Mendel Futerfas** defied the Soviet Union. Studying Torah was strictly forbidden by the Soviet authorities – even possessing Jewish books was grounds for imprisonment – but Mendel risked his life day in and day out, educating his fellow Soviet Jews in secret.

Finally, one day, he was discovered by the authorities and sentenced to forced labour in one of the USSR's feared labour camps in Siberia. There, Mendel tried to keep as many of the mitzvot as possible, but it wasn't easy.

One Yom Kippur, he felt particularly low. Without a machzor, the Yom Kippur prayer book, he was only able to recite a few prayers from memory. One was V'chol Ma'aminim – "We all Believe" – but this Yom Kippur, Mendel had a difficult time believing the words. In such a dark place, he wondered, was it really possible to have such faith?

Just then, Mendel noticed one of the prison guards – a rough-looking man with a big scar across his face – staring at him. Frightened, Mendel tried to look as if he wasn't fasting and praying, but the guard came towards him.

Speaking quietly, the guard said, "I see you praying today. I know you are fasting today. I want you to know I am fasting as well. I know it's Yom Kippur today, yet I don't know a single thing about Judaism except a prayer my grandmother taught me when I was a child called 'Modeh Ani'. I have been repeating this prayer all day, and I want you to know you are not the only one celebrating Yom Kippur."

After 14 long years, Mendel was able to escape from his gulag and make his way to Israel, where he dedicated his life to teaching Torah. It is not known what happened to the Jewish guard.

Blessing One's Children on Erev Yom Kippur


Blessing the children בִּרְכַּת הַבָּנִים

It is customary for parents to bless their children on Erev Yom Kippur. This is one of the customs which on done prior to Yom Kippur to enhance the forthcoming special day of connection. We do find several particular actions within this custom which we hope to provide elaboration.

Sources and Possible Reasons for this Custom

We find that the Avos blessed their children prior to their deaths. At that time, they were in an exalted state, with clear minds, removed from many of the concerns of the world. So now on Erev Yom Kippur, when one is entering to a spiritual state and welcoming extra holiness and to purify oneself before HaShem, is a proper time to bless one's children.

It is written in the holy books that one needs to strength oneself and strive to receive the blessings from one's parents. This applies throughout the year and even more so on Erev Yom Kippur.

Chaza"l teaches us in the Medrash that all benefits and kingship that the descendants of Esav were due to his concern and diligence to receive the blessing of his father.

The sefer Shaar haMelech (Shaar 6, Chapter 1) brings an allusion from the Torah for this custom. Yaacov blessed his children prior to

his death. This occurred in Tishrei. And since HaShem fills the days of the years of the Tzaddikim Yaacov would also pass away in Tishrei. Thus, when Yaacov blessed his children, it happened in this time period. Now since a person normally becomes sick in the last seven days of one's life, and it is known that Yaacov passed away on the 15th of Tishrei, then the seventh day prior would be Erev Yom Kippur when Yaacov blessed Menaseh and Efraim.

The Time of the Blessing

It is brought in the Achronim the fitting time for the blessing is prior to going to the synagogue (after the final meal). There are others that state the blessing should occur during the greater part of the day, as much as possible. The Kitzur Shulchan haAruch explains that the proper time to bless the children is prior to going to the synagogue since the holiness of the day has already begun, one is settled at home and the gates of Mercy have opened.

Whom is Blessed

The Kitzur Shulchan haAruch (siman 131, sief 16) states that the custom is for the father and the mother bless their sons and their daughters. Many Roshei Yeshivos and Chassidic Rebbes bless their students at this time, since they are their spiritual children.

Hands Help with the Blessings

Rav Emden and the Chacham Tzvi state that one blesses with two hands as Moshe did (according to the Ayin Yafeh BeMidbar 27,23), as the Cohanim bless, and as the Melachim do on Friday night (Shabbos 119b). However, many state that the blessing should be with one hand (HaMaaver Yabuk, Mishayos haChasidim, other cite the Vilan Gaon). HaShem designates special blessings with two hands; we only bless with one hand.



Not Wearing Leather Shoes

The prohibition against leather shoes is really a prohibition against comfort in the manner of someone in mourning and is not due to some ritual problem with leather itself.

The masters of the Talmud variously sported shoes of bamboo, reeds or palm branches, or wrapped simple pieces of cloth around their feet.

Maimonides advised that whatever shoes are chosen should be flimsy enough so that the wearer feels virtually barefooted as they walk.

In a similar vein, the Ba'al HaMaor, a contemporary of Maimonides, includes within the category of prohibition any shoe that is especially protective of the feet.

Some contemporary authorities have issued rulings extending the restriction. **Rabbi Yaakov Ariel** of Ramat Gan adds to the prohibited list any non-leather shoe that one would commonly choose to wear day in and day out for their comfort, i.e. sneakers and other leisure footwear.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky ztz"l upholds the "protectiveness" approach, expanding the prohibition to any material construction that functions as well as leather.

On the other side, **Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ztz"l** manages to resolve the problem more leniently, asserting that all modern people fall under the Talmudic category of *istinis*, roughly meaning ***"pernickety."***

In Rabbi Auerbach's view, given our very low tolerance for physical discomfort, banning comfortable non-leather shoes on Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur would be tantamount to unnecessary cruelty.

Of the five prohibitions of Yom Kippur, only wearing leather shoes is prohibited for children as well as adults. Eating, drinking, washing and anointing are all permitted to minors because they are considered necessary for the children's health (*Yoma* 78b).

Remember This...



Hashem won't ask what kind of car you drove, but He'll ask how many people you helped get where they needed to go.

Hashem won't ask the square footage of your house, but He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

Hashem won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet, but He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.

Hashem won't ask how many friends you had, but He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

Hashem won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived, but He'll ask how you treated your neighbours.

Hashem won't ask about the colour of your skin, but He'll ask about the content of your character.

Yonah יונה



Yonah is an appropriate reading on the Day of Atonement as the message of this profoundly deep and heavily veiled prophetic metaphor is ultimately simple and completely universal: Repent!

Yonah (dove) son of Amitai is from the root **אמת** =Truth.

According to tradition, Yonah lived to be 120 years old.

Nefesh Shimshon - Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l

Show Your Merchandise

Yom Kippur is called *Shabbos Shabbason.* It is the great and holy day on which the Jewish people are like angels. We wear white, we don't eat and drink, we have no envy and competition. We resemble heavenly beings.

The following allegory illustrates what is happening on these awesome days. A rich man had a lavish palace that was magnificently furnished. One day the palace burnt down along with everything in it.

The rich man built a splendid new building, and now he wants to buy new furniture and appliances for it. He examines everything he wants to buy very well to see if it is sturdy and well-built and tasteful, and whether it fits in nicely with the new house.

Although he would not have thrown a table out of his old house just because of some imperfection that he could either repair or live with, it is different now that he is buying everything new. He is not going to bring in a table that is wobbly or scratched up. If it is not in perfect condition, he will not even consider it.



This is how it is on Rosh Hashanah. This is the day when *Hashem* created the world, and He recreates it every year anew on this same day. And He wants to populate this new world that He is creating.

Since the world is brand-new, He examines each and every person to see if he is in tip-top shape and is fitting to the new world. Last year, even if he did some things wrong and marred himself, it is likely that *Hashem* had mercy on him and didn't throw him out. But only proper and fitting people are going to be put into the new world that is being created now.

During these days we may be compared to merchants coming to show their wares. Like every merchant who wants his wares to be bought up, we need to show samples of what we have to offer.

This is how it is during *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*. We increase our *Teshuvah, Tefilah* and *Tzedakah*. We devote as much time as we can to Torah learning. This is especially true on Yom Kippur, when we show ourselves as pure and holy like angels.

These are the "samples" of our deeds that we show to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. We want to show that we have revamped ourselves and done real *Teshuvah*, and we are fitting to be part of the new world just now being created.

But there is a problem here. Let's say a merchant shows fine, attractive samples of merchandise, but he doesn't have in stock the same quality of merchandise that he showed. In such a case, he has misled his customer. The buyer wants what will be supplied to him from the warehouse; he didn't purchase mere samples.

So it is with us. We can't just show *Hashem* on Yom Kippur that we are full of *yiras Shamayim* and good deeds, and in fine spiritual shape, if we don't intend to behave that way all year long. What will we answer *Hashem* if He says that we showed Him false and misleading samples?

On these awesome days, we are showing to *Hashem*, and mainly to ourselves, that we can indeed live a life of Torah and *mitzvos*. We need to take proper advantage of this opportunity so it will serve as a good beginning for the coming year, and extend its blessed influence throughout the rest of the year.



Straight from the Heart - Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sippurei Chassidim

Torrents of rain beat down on his face, but the tempest did not prevent chassidic master **Rabbi Leib Sarah's** from reaching the village. It was only several hours before the beginning of Yom Kippur. He was some distance from his intended destination, but he was relieved to learn that in this village, too, there would be a minyan with which to pray—eight local villagers

would be joined by two men who lived in the nearby forest. Rabbi Leib immersed himself, in preparation for the holy day, in the purifying waters of a river which ran by the village; ate the meal which precedes the fast; and hastened to be the first in the little wooden synagogue. There he settled down to recite the various private devotions with which he was accustomed to inaugurate the Day of Atonement.

One by one, the eight local villagers arrived in time to hear the words of Kol Nidrei. Together with Rabbi Leib, there were now nine. But there was no minyan, for it transpired that the two Jewish foresters had been imprisoned on some malicious libel.

"Perhaps we could find just one more Jew living around these parts?" asked Rabbi Leib. "No," the villagers all assured him, "there's only us." "Perhaps," he persisted, "there lives here some Jew who converted out of the faith of his fathers?"

The villagers were shocked to hear such an odd question from the stranger. They looked upon him quizzically. "The doors of repentance are not locked even in the face of an apostate," Rabbi Leib continued. "I have heard from my teachers that even when one pokes about in the ashes, one can light upon a spark of fire..."

One of the villagers now spoke up. "There is one apostate here," he ventured. "He is our paritz, the squire who owns this whole village. But he has been sunk in sin for forty years now. You see, the gentile daughter of the previous squire fell in love with him. So her father promised him that if he converted and married the girl, he would make him his sole heir. He didn't withstand the temptation, so he did exactly that...They had no children, and his wife died many years ago; he now lives alone in his great big house. He is a cruel master and deals especially harshly with the Jews on his land."

"Show me his mansion," said Rabbi Leib. He removed his tallit in a flash and ran as fast as he could in the direction of the mansion,

with his white skullcap on his head and his white kittel billowing in the wind. He knocked on the heavy door, opened it without waiting for a response, and found himself confronting the squire. For a few long, long moments they stood in silence face to face, the tzaddik and the apostate. The latter's first thought was to summon one of his henchmen to seize the uninvited intruder and hurl him into the dungeon in the backyard. But the luminous countenance and the penetrating eyes of the tzaddik softened his heart.

"My name is Leib Sarah's," began the visitor. "It was my privilege to know **Rabbi Israel, the Baal Shem Tov**, who was admired also by the gentile noblemen. From his mouth I once heard that every Jew should utter the sort of prayer that was first said by King David: 'Save me, O L-rd, from blood-guilt.' But the word used for 'blood' (damim) can also be translated as 'money.' So my teacher expounded the verse as follows: 'Save me, so that I should never regard money as my L-rd...'

"Now my mother, whose name was Sarah, was a holy woman. One day the son of one of the local gentry took it into his head to marry her and promised her wealth and status if she would agree, but she sanctified the name of Israel. In order to save herself from that villain, she quickly got married to an old Jewish pauper who was a schoolteacher.

You did not have the good fortune to withstand the test, and for silver and gold you were willing to betray your faith. Realize, though, that there is nothing that can stand in the way of repentance. Moreover, there are those who in one hour earn their portion in the World to Come. Now is that hour!

Today is the eve of Yom Kippur. The sun will soon set. The Jews who live in your village are short one man to make up a minyan. Come along now with me and be the tenth man. For the Torah tells us: 'The tenth shall be holy unto G-d.' (Leviticus 27:32)"

The squire paled at the words spoken by this white-clothed man with the singular face. And meanwhile, down the road, the eight local villagers waited in shul, huddled together in frozen dread. Who could tell what calamity this odd stranger was about to bring down upon their heads? The door burst open, and in rushed Rabbi Leib, followed closely by the paritz. The latter's gaze was downcast, and his eyelashes were heavy with tears.

At a sign from Rabbi Leib, one of the villagers handed the apostate a tallit. He enveloped himself in it, covering his head and face entirely. Rabbi Leib now stepped forward to the Holy Ark and took out two scrolls of the Torah. One he gave to the oldest villager present, and the other—to the paritz. Between them at the bimah stood Rabbi Leib, and he began to solemnly chant the traditional tune for the opening lines of the Kol Nidrei prayer: "By the sanction of the Almighty, and by the sanction of the congregation...we declare it permissible to pray together with those who have sinned..."

A deep sigh broke forth from the depths of the broken man's heart. No man there could stand unmoved, and they all wept with him. Throughout all the prayers of the evening, and from dawn of the next day right until nightfall, the paritz stood in prayer, humbled and contrite. And as his sobs shook his whole body as he recited the confession, the other nine shuddered with him.

At the climax of the Ne'ilah service, when the congregation was about to utter together the words "Shema Yisrael," the paritz leaned forward until his head was deep inside the Holy Ark, embraced the Torah scrolls that stood there, and in a mighty voice that petrified those present, cried out: "Hear, O Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One!"

He then stood up straight and began to declare with all his might: "The L-rd is G-d!" With each repetition his voice grew louder. Finally, as he cried it out for the seventh time, his soul flew from his body.

That same night they brought the remains of the paritz to burial in the nearby town. Rabbi Leib himself took part in the purification and preparation of the body for burial, and for the rest of his life observed the yahrzeit of this penitent every Yom Kippur by saying kaddish for the elevation of his soul.

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

וַיְהִי דְּבַר־ה' אֶל־יוֹנָה בֶּן־אֲמִתַּי לֵאמֹר "And the word of HaShem came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying:"



The Haftara we read at Mincha on Yom Kippur is the story of Yonah, the prophet who tried to run away instead of delivering his prophecy. Every child knows how he was thrown overboard and swallowed by a whale.

The commentaries teach us **וַיְהִי יוֹנָה בִּמְעֵי הַדָּג שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים וּשְׁלֹשָׁה לֵילוֹת** – that Yonah was initially swallowed up by a male whale, where he had plenty of room. Our Sages relate that he spent three days looking through its eyes and seeing the wonders of the deep. [he was literally having a whale of a time!]

When HaShem decided that Yonah was not getting the message and was simply enjoying himself, that whale vomited him up and he was immediately swallowed by a pregnant female whale, where he found himself rather uncomfortable and cramped amidst her unborn calves. **וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה מִמְּעֵי הַדָּגָה** - (Note the change in the word for fish – dag to daga.) This discomfort caused him to cry out to be saved from the belly of the whale.

It is widely accepted that the person called to the Torah to read Maftir Yonah hass a segula for parnasa. For that reason, people spend huge sums to be able to acquire this honour.

Why is this aliya more than any other supposed to bring one wealth? I'd like to suggest that there are two reasons. In the **Chovos HaLevavos, Rabbeinu Bachya** tells us that whatever is decreed for a person will be his, and no one can take it away from him. Nor, says the Chovos HaLevavos, can anyone help a person if it is not decreed from Heaven. In Maftir Yonah, we see this concept. No matter what he tried, Yonah could not escape the Will of HaShem that he prophesy to Ninveh so they might do Teshuva.

A second concept we find is that Yonah didn't pray to be saved until he was in trouble. Whether in the belly of the male whale, or under the shade of the gourd, Yonah was at peace. When things got uncomfortable, however, either in the pregnant whale or when the gourd shriveled and Yonah was subject to the intense heat of the sun, he cried out to HaShem.

It was clear that HaShem had placed him in both situations, yet G-d's role was not highlighted until things were hard. Perhaps this is to remind us that we should daven and praise HaShem when things are good, and then they won't have to turn bad so we are forced to pray.

If one learns these two lessons, his bitachon/trust in HaShem will guide him, and he will deal honestly in business, earning wealth as G-d intended. And, if such is not decreed for him, then he will at least be able to experience the true wealth of being satisfied with his lot.

"Bitachon is not the absence of fear, but the mastery of fear." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslev

Stories of our Gedolim



Yom Kippur was approaching, but the illness was still present in his body. Baruch Hashem the patient's condition was improving, and the antibiotics would hopefully rid the body of the disease. But typhus is a very serious illness, and the administration of antibiotics on a daily basis is necessary for the patient's recovery. Fasting on Yom Kippur was absolutely out of the question, as the medication could only be taken with food in the body.

The doctor's stipulation was a bitter pill to swallow for the sick patient, **Rav Shlomo Lorincz zt"l**, an askan who worked with gedoley Yisroel. He could not imagine eating on this most holy day. Perhaps he could skip the medication for just one day? No, the doctor was adamant so R' Lorincz decided to ask the advice of **Rav Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l, the Chazon Ish**, with whom he had much contact in his work for the klal.

The Chazon Ish ruled that he knew the doctor, and he highly trusted his opinion and under no circumstances was R' Shlomo to fast on Yom Kippur. R' Shlomo accepted the Chazon Ish's psak and prepared himself not to fast that Yom Kippur.

Erev Yom Kippur found R' Shlomo in his room quite surprised to hear he had a visitor. Who would come to see him on this very busy day? He was shocked to see none other than the Chazon Ish himself who lived in Bnei Brak which was over an hour away. Why had the Chazon Ish travelled so far, a journey which required 3 different buses to come see him? Had an urgent matter come up that required his intervention?

But no, nothing had come up. The Chazon Ish had travelled to ensure that R' Lorincz would eat that Yom Kippur and not go against the instructions he was given thus endangering his life. "Just as it is a mitzva to fast on Yom Kippur," he explained, "So too it is a mitzvah to take care of one's health and so on this Yom Kippur you have the mitzvah to eat."

R' Shlomo happily accepted the Chazon Ish's words, who not only gave his psak regarding the matter, but ensured it would be followed besimcha and with an understanding and acceptance that it was the will of Hashem.

Chizuk In Our Lives

Mendy was just a young boy living under the tyranny of the Germans. One fateful day he was deported to Auschwitz with his entire family. He stood in the infamous line as Mengele ימ"ש pointed him to the right and to life, while the rest of his family were sent to the left, to meet their end.

A few days after this selection, the sadistic guards decided to have some fun, so they took Mendy, stripped of his clothes, and put him in a barrel of ice-cold water. Most people who went through this torture either had a heart attack or froze to death.

As Mendy was sitting in the barrel he said, 'ה I had a loving family but You took them away. I had clothes on my back but You took them away. I can't even breathe now! But now 'ה, it's just You and me.'

He survived the ordeal and the rest of his years in the camps. At the war's end, Mendy was in a DP camp when the **Klausenberger Rov** זצ"ל approached him and asked how him how he could help. Mendy thanked him but said, 'There is nothing you can do for me'.

When the רב prodded him, he said, 'Do you know what I really want?

That feeling of closeness that I had with **ה'** at that moment when I was in the barrel, when I told **ה'** that it's just You and me in here. I hope that one day I'll get that feeling again!'

ברוך השם we live in peaceful times and do not have to face the unimaginable horrors of Mendy's generation. But **יום כיפור** is all about **לפני ה'**- the opportunity to stand in and feel the overwhelmingly close presence of **ה'** on this most powerful day.

Yom Kippur Treasures



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, the Rav of Yerushalayim, was named Chaim at his Bris. The name Yosef was added on later in his life, when he was already a young man.

Rav Chaim fell ill one year shortly before Yom Kippur, and he was afraid he might not be able to fast on the holy day. When Rav Chaim's Rebbi, **the Gaon of Brisk, zt"l**, heard about the situation, he sent a message to Rav Chaim that he gave his word that Rav Chaim would be able to fast safely, on condition that he spend Yom Kippur resting at home.

It seemed as if Rav Chaim accepted his Rebbi's instructions, so his family was surprised to see him hurrying out to the Shul to Daven Maariv on Erev Yom Kippur!

He explained, "My Rebbi didn't say that I should miss Maariv. His messenger specifically said I should rest at home all day."

After Yom Kippur, Rav Chaim's situation took a turn for the worse. His Rebbi spent an entire day at his bedside, and then finally decided to add the name Yosef to his given name, Chaim. The name Yosef literally means "he will add," and the name Chaim means "life." The name Yosef Chaim alluded to everyone's Tefilos that Hashem add years to Rav Chaim's life. Indeed, Rav Yosef Chaim immediately felt better. Within a few days, he was back to his regular routine.

A few years later, on Purim, Rav Yosef Chaim brought his Rebbi Mishlo'ach Manos very early in the morning. The Gaon of Brisk praised his student for his Zerizus, stating, "Zerizin Makdimin L'Mitzvos."

Rav Yosef Chaim smiled and said, "It was the Rebbi who turned me into a Zariz. At first, my name was only Chaim. When the Rebbi added Yosef to my name, the Gematria, numerical equivalent, of my full name, Yosef Chaim, became equal to the Gematria of the word 'Zariz'."

Hearing Rav Chaim's clever response, the Brisker Gaon rose and recited the Brachah written in the Gemara to be recited when one sees that his student is successful: "Blessed is Hashem Who has shown me fruits during my lifetime!"

If you have an impulse to do teshuva, don't dismiss it. That impulse is a message from Hashem Yisbarach. Surely no one would disregard a message that comes directly from the King of kings. Can there be a greater contempt of G-d than that?

Feelings of teshuva are sparked by yiras Hashem, and yiras Hashem is G-d's most precious treasure.~ Yismach Moshe.

הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ אָבִינוּ לְתוֹרָתֶךָ
וְקָרְבֵנוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ לַעֲבוֹדָתֶךָ
וְהַחֲזִירֵנוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ

Teshuvah is not merely doing things; it's understanding things. To come back to Hashem, we must learn to love Hashem, and to fear Hashem.

Avinu, our Father, means the One who loves us and we love Him. Malkeinu, our King, means the One who controls everything in our lives like a king; and we fear a king.

The more you are aware of Hashem as Avinu, that itself is hashiveinu, that's coming back to Him. And the more you're aware of Hashem as Malkeinu, as your king, that itself means you're coming back to Hashem.

R' Avigdor Miller זצ"ל

STORIES TO inspire

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Yom Kippur Gems



Once, the **Brisker Rav, zt"l**, publicly rebuked a Shochet for acting inappropriately with regard to the Halachos of Shechitah. With Chutzpah, the man ignored the Rav's rebuke and continued in his ways.

On Erev Yom Kippur, the Brisker Rav sent for the Shochet and asked him for Mechilah, forgiveness. The Shochet was incredulous, "Why is the Rav asking me for Mechilah? I am the one who was wrong, and I should be the one to ask for Mechilah! I did not listen to the Rav's rebuke."

The Brisker Rav replied, "That is exactly why I am apologizing and requesting your forgiveness. If you had listened to me, then the rebuke I gave you would have been justified. Since you ignored me, my rebuke was not successful, and instead, I publicly shamed a Jew for no reason. - That is why I am asking you for Mechilah!"

The Unnecessary Shehecheyanu

A common mistake that comes up on the night of *Yom Kippur* might cause people to say a **ברכה לבטלה** - a blessing made in vain. It is due to following scenario:

Ladies say **שהחיינו** when they light candles before *Yom Kippur*. If they come to *shul*, when the congregation says **שהחיינו** after *Kol Nidrei*, they should not say it a second time **(Shaar Hatziyon 619:7)**.

Yartzeit Candles on Yom Kippur by Rabbi Yair Hoffman



It is the custom within Klal Yisroel to light a Yartzeit candle on the last days of Yom Tov, on Yom Kippur, and on the day that a relative had passed away. The lighting has no accompanying blessing, and people often express the desire to express themselves in a Tefillah when lighting the candle. This is not only true on a Yartzeit but whenever Yom Tov comes as well.



The author of the **Peleh Yoetz**, **Rabbi Eliezer Papo** (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a prayer.

Rav Papo was the Rabbi of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The Tefillah of the Peleh Yoetz is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי מורי (אמי מורתי) _____ בן (בת)_____ תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלף המגן מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשת ויצא עמוד כ"ד

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלהי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים וברצון כל מעשה הטוב שאני עושה, בין במחשבה, בין בדיבור, בין במעשה ויהיה כל לזכות ולמנוחת ולעילוי לנשמות עמך ישראל, ובפרט לנפש רוח נשמה של אבי\אמי _____. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים

Behold I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father, my teacher __ the son of ___. May it be Your will before You Hashem Elokainu and G-d of our forefathers, that all the good deeds that I do will accepted with mercy, whether in thought, in speech or in deed. It shall all be

for the merit and rest and for the elevation of the souls of Your nation, Israel. It should especially be a merit for the spirit and soul of my parent _____. May it be Your will that their souls be bound in the pebbles of life.

We further observe their yahrzeits by saying kaddish, learning in their memory, and fasting. Many people also try to perform acts of Chessed on this day as well – all for the merit of the deceased.

But what are the reasons behind our custom to light? Is it a Torah Mitzvah or a derabanan?

• It is a fulfilment of the Mitzvah of V'ahavta l'rayacha kamocha. The Zohar writes that we are obligated to love our parents as we do ourselves, for their love is equated to the love of Hashem.

• It is a fulfilment of Kivud Av v'aim. The Gemorah Kiddushin 31b explains that the Rabbis taught- You honour him in his lifetime and you honour him after death. Both Dayan Weiss (Minchas Yitzchok Vol. III #136:9) and the Tzitz Eliezer (Vol XII 59:3) are of the opinion that Kivud Av v'Aim after death is also biblical.

• It is an obligation of Hakaras HaTov – recognizing the good that one had received from another. This is particularly true that we should recognize all that parents have done for us on a day that we have the ability to give merit to their neshama and assist in their receiving greater reward.

• It brings a Kapparah, an atonement for the Neshamos. The Arizal in his Shaar HaKavanos writes that the Neshama's record is reviewed on the day of the Yarhrtzeit. Thus, when the children do maasim tovim, learn Torah, say kaddish and do other Mitzvos, this atones for anything the Neshamah might have done.

• It brings an elevation for the Neshama. Even if the Neshama was free of sin, there are different aspects of performances of Mitzvos that are taken into account when the Neshama reaches the upper

realms. Observance of the Yahrtzeit assists in elevating the Neshama [See Panim Yafos on B'haaloscha "Kach es hal'viim].

• It is a fulfilment of Hashavas Aveidah. The Gemorah in Sanhedrin explains that saving one's life is a fulfilment of returning a lost object. Certainly, this would be so in regard to restoring the soul to a loftier level.

• It avoids violating Lo Saamod al Dam Rayacha. The Torah tells us not to stand idly by one's brother's blood. If we just ignore an opportunity to place a parent on a higher spiritual level – this is tantamount to standing idly by another's blood.

• It is the fulfilment of the obligation to perform Chessed. The greatest Chessed is the one that is done to someone that cannot return the favour. Those that are the shochnei afar – cannot repay anyone. Observing a Yahrtzeit is thus one of the greatest Chassadim.

• It counteracts the Raya Mazlei of the Neshama. When a Neshama ultimately passes away, there is a Raya Mazlei aspect to him. Although we say Ain mazal l'yisroel – at times there are elements that effect the mazal too according to some Rishonim. Observing the Yahrtzeit through the act of free choice of his descendents – counters that force.

• It is proper to be pained on that day. This is the day that we have lost a parent. It is wrong not to feel pain on that day.

• It commemorates the day of one's loss. Only when we truly know the pain of losing something do we truly appreciate the value of what we have. We can appreciate the gifts that Hashem has given us when we commemorate and understand the loss.

• It affords one to empathize with the pain of the parent. Empathy is a very human characteristic that Hashem wants us to develop. On the day of the Yahrtzeit we are empathizing with them.

• It strengthens our belief in Tchiyas HaMeisim. One of the pillars of Torah Judaism is the eventual restoring of the dead. If we ponder the gift of the yearly seasons, we see how things that wither away eventually come back. This helps us in our belief in Techias HaMeisim. The same is true with a Yahrtzeit – it helps entrench within us the fundamentals of our emunah.



Kol Nidrei in The Forest – Rabbi YY Jacobson

There was a Yid I remember. His name was Reb Zalman Bronshtein. He was a Russian chassid. He was in the Russian army during WW11. And he would tell his story.



His comrades and colleagues were falling like flies. One day in the middle of the war, Reb Zalman went into the bunker, and in comes a Russian General. He came into shave. As he is shaving, he is singing to himself a Russian lullaby. And Reb Zalman who was blessed with a fantastic voice, knew the tune, and felt that the General wasn't singing it correctly. So even though he was a General, he couldn't deal with the forgery of the niggun. So, he starts singing the tune in the correct manner.

The General hears this voice, and looks at Zalman, and says, "With such a sweet voice, you shouldn't be here. You will be a soloist in the Red Army's Choir. Come with me."



Reb Zalman said that this saved his life. He was plucked from the frontline, where everybody was being killed. It was impossible to survive there. They loved my voice.

One day, they told me that in a few weeks, there is going to be a massive concert. It's going to be the top performance of The Red Army. All the top echelons of the army are going to be present, and I am going to be a soloist. I look at my makeshift calendar and I realise that it is going to take place on Yom Kippur! On Yom Kippur, I am going to go and sing the Ukranian-Russian songs. I have to travel, use a microphone, musical instruments.



I can't do it. But to refuse to go and sing will be a death sentence. They will send me back to the front lines.

Pikuach Nefesh, nisht Pikuach Nefesh? He's struggling and doesn't know what to do. Yom Kippur arrives.

"Bronshtein, it's time to go."

He couldn't bring himself to go. He said hoarsely, "My voice, my voice, I don't know what happened to my voice. Some bacteria or virus must have entered my throat. There is no way that I can sing today, I'm hoarse. What can I do, I'm not the boss over my body."

"Okay Bronshtein, listen, if your voice is hoarse, you must protect it, because we need it."

He says, "Of course, *spasiba* [thank you] *achen charasho* [very good." He gets let off!

He's in his room. It's Yom Kippur. No Siddur, no Machzor, no Minyan, no Shul – gornisht. But he remembers some tefillos off by heart. He starts singing Kol Nidrei and Avinu Malkeinu.



As he is the middle of his Yom Kippur davening, with a lot of tears in his eyes, no family, no community, in the middle of the dark years of the Second World War. There is a loud knock on his door.



He opens the door, and there are three generals standing there! They come in and they say, "Bronshtein, we know why you didn't go to sing in the concert today. Your voice is as hoarse as ours. It's Yom Kippur today!" - "Oy, vey, vey, vey."

They say, "Bronshtein, *mir zenen Yidden* (we are Jewish), we want to hear Kol Nidrei!"

He doesn't know what to make of it, so at first he continues to pretend that he has got a sore throat.

"Bronshtein, we know why you didn't sing, we want Kol Nidrei!"

He says, "If I get up here and sing Kol Nidrei, all the people will hear my voice, and then you know what's going to happen to me. So why would you do this to me?"

They said, "Bronshtein, behind here, there's a forest that doesn't end. We'll go into the forest. The trees are so tall, that even your Kol Nidrei, the trees will hear, but back here, nobody will hear it."

Three communist decorated generals are walking on Yom Kippur into the depths of a Russian forest. They have to be completely remote from civilisation. They walk for a long time.



The General said, "Here it's safe, nobody is going to hear, start Kol Nidrei."

Zalman Bronshtein, who had a heavenly voice, begins. And in his imagination, he's back in his shul with his wife and children, with his Rav and community, singing Kol Nidrei.

Reb Zalman says, that it was a Kol Nidrei like he never had before. There was no fanfare. There were no seats, there was no chazzan, shammash, gabbai – it was him, Hashem, the forest, and three Russian Generals that had no connection to Judaism whatsoever. But it was so deep and authentic.

So he finished the first Kol Nidrei, and before he was ready to go to the second, he opened his eyes, and he took a look… He sees three huge muscular, powerful, tall, well built, robust generals, sobbing like babies!



He had brought them back from a world that was seemingly gone forever. That world of their youth that they gave up for the Bolshevik paradise of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. They were sobbing.

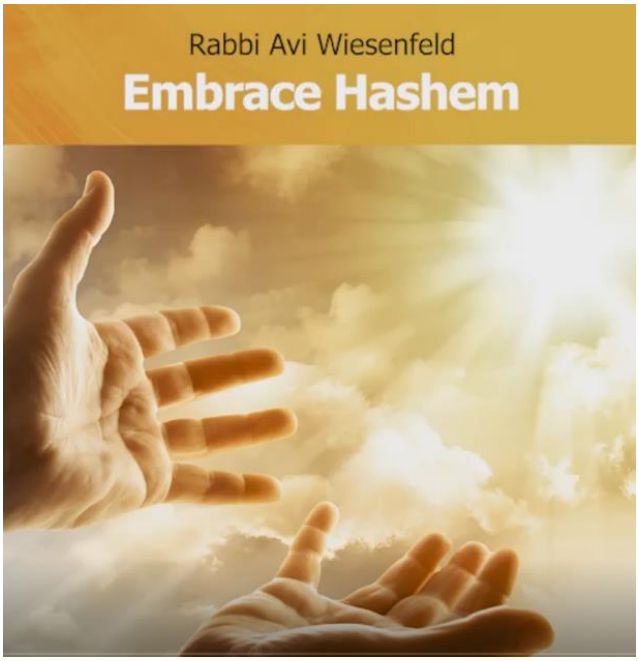
They said, "*Nochamol*." And he did Kol Nidrei a second and third time. And then, they wanted him to go through all the songs of Yom Kippur. They did this in the forest all day until they came back to the barracks. He said that every year when he gets up in shul, he is back in the forest with three generals.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Chazan in the Shul of the **Baal Shem Tov** would sing Vidui on Yom Kippur with a lively melody, rather than in the traditional sombre tone.

When the Baal Shem Tov questioned this practice, the Chazan replied, "If I were assigned to maintain the king's palace, it would make me happy to remove the king's trash, because it makes the king's palace more beautiful. The Shechinah, the Divine Presence is in every Neshamah, and when I cleanse my sins, I am making myself a more beautiful dwelling place for Hashem. That is surely a reason to rejoice!"


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A Wealthy banker contacted a shadchan. "Can you please find a shidduch for my dear daughter?"

The shadchan delighted at the opportunity said, "Sure, no problem, leave it with me."

He finds an incredible shidduch, which goes ahead. They are ready to close the deal and get engaged.

The wealthy banker sits together with the mechutan, and says, "Ok, I will support the young couple and buy them a brand-new house, the latest model car, and I will ensure that they have all their day to day expenses taken care of, and even set up investments for their future."



What are you going to give?

The other mechutan says, "I don't have much money; however I am giving you my son. He is a wonderful boy."

The banker looks at him, and says, "You're right, I've heard wonderful things about him, and I'm sure that he's a good person and will make a great husband for my daughter, but what are you giving for the shidduch? You need to give something."

The man says," I can't, I don't have."

"I want you to give $10,000"

The mechutan nearly choked and said, "That's not possible, I simply don't have that sort of money, where am I going to find $10,000?"



"Listen, this is the deal. It's either $10,000 or I'm calling off the shidduch."

The mechutan walks away thinking 'how am I going to get this money?'

Early the next morning, there is a knock on the banker's front door. He opens the door and sees the muchutan standing there. He says, "Hey, how did you manage to get the money together so quickly?"

"Actually, I have come to ask you for a loan! Have you possibly got $10,000 that you could lend me? You see, I have got an amazing opportunity for my son to get married to a wonderful girl, and I need $10,000 for it to work!"

The banker said, "No problem, you asked – I will lend it to you."

We come every year to The Riboino Shel Olam on Yom Kippur. Hashem says, "You know, I want to give you a good year. A year full of bracha and hatzlacha, but what are you giving to Me in return?"

This is when we say **השיבנו אבינו לתורתך** – Riboino Shel olam, even that we need help for! Bring us back. And when we turn to The Riboino Shel Olam this Yom Kippur, and say, "We want to embrace Your Torah. We want to embrace Your lifestyle. We want to embrace You."

Then Hashem will say, "Sure, I will always take you back."

I want to wish everyone **א גמר חתימה טובה אין א גוט געבענטשט יאר**

Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick *Flatbush*



During WWII, **Horav Yaakov Galinsky זצ"ל** was sent to prison. The only food he received was a little food that someone brought him every day. On Yom Kippur, Rav Galinsky made sure to fast, and he did not eat the food until after the fast was over.

A murderer who was also in prison was so amazed at how Rav Galinsky was able to control himself not to eat on Yom Kippur even in prison!

He was so impressed that he told Rav Galinsky, "I will make sure that no one eats your food or hurts you while you are in prison!"

The Gift of Shabbos



Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira relates a story that took place in St. Petersburg in Czarist Russia. There were a number of very wealthy Jews who had contracts with the government and they had to come to St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia, for business.

This gathering took place around the Yamim Nora'im, so these wealthy Jewish businessmen were all in the Russian capital for Rosh

Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and of course, they gathered together to make a Minyan.

On Yom Kippur, as is customary in many places, they auctioned off the Aliyos. When it came time for Neilah, they sold the honour of opening up the Aron HaKodesh for Pesicha L'Neilah.

The bidding started at 500 rubles, which was a tremendous amount of money. The bidding went higher and higher, until a certain individual, Baron Ginsberg, a famously wealthy Jew, bid 2,000 rubles.

Rav Moshe Shapira, who said this story, noted that 2,000 rubles in Czarist Russia is the equivalent today of about a hundred thousand dollars. He describes that when another Jew that was present there, Baron Folk, heard that Baron Ginsberg bid 2,000 rubles for Pesicha L'Neilah, he rose to his feet and bid 2,500 rubles for the honour!

The Gabai said, "Going once, going twice, going three times, Pesicha L'Neilah is sold to Baron Folk!"

Baron Folk then turned to the Jew sitting next to him and asked him, "What is Pesicha L'Neilah?"

The person next to him was incredulous. He said, "You just bid 2,500 rubles for Pesicha L'Neilah, and now you are asking what it is?"

Baron Folk answered, "I do not know what Pesicha L'Neilah is, but I know that Baron Ginsberg is a good businessman. If Baron Ginsberg wants to give 2,000 ruble for Pesicha L'Neilah, then I want it because it must be a good business deal. He became Baron Ginsberg because he is a great businessman. He knows a good deal when he sees one. If he wants it, I want it more!"

Rav Yissocher Frand said over this story and quoted the Gemara in Shabbos (10b), where Hashem told Moshe, "I have a wonderful present in My treasure house, and its name is Shabbos." The gift of Shabbos was given to the Jewish people.

Rabbi Frand said, "Hashem tells us that He has a wonderful present. He said, 'Shabbos is in My vault. It is very valuable!' If Hashem calls Shabbos a 'good present', then we were given something very special. It can be compared to Baron Ginsberg. If He calls something good it must be good. Certainly, if Hashem calls something good, it must really be good!"

Rabbi Frand concluded and said, "When we have experienced Shabbos virtually all our lives, then sometimes, as Shabbos rolls around again, we think, 'Ok, here comes another Shabbos'. We never appreciate what we have while we have it.

Shabbos is something that comes with a certification from Hashem. It is like when one buys a gem and he receives a certificate from the Institute of Gemology stating the value of the gem. Shabbos comes with Hashem's certificate stating its worth: "I have a wonderful present in My treasure house, and its name is Shabbos!"

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Nochum of Chernobyl, zt"l, once found out that a certain small town did not have a Mikvah. Rav Nochum immediately approached one of the wealthy men in that town and offered him his entire portion in Olam Haba, if he paid for the new Mikvah.

Of course, this man jumped at the opportunity and immediately signed a contract with Rav Nochum and acquired his Olam Haba.

A Chasid later asked Rav Nochum why he went so far to get the Mikvah built? Rav Nochum responded, "We say in Krias Shema that we should love Hashem with all of our money. The only thing I have that anyone would pay money for is my Cheilek in Olam Haba. If I wouldn't have given it away for Hashem's Mitzvos, then I would be lying every time I say Shema!"

Rav Nochum taught him that if one wants to try to be a true Tzadik, he must realize that his only real wealth is his Torah that he has learned, the Mitzvos he has done, and his Maasim Tovim, his good actions.

We must grab what we can in this world while we can!



The Philanthropist

After Maariv of Yom Kippur, **Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik**, the Av Beis Din of Brisk, realized that the city's philanthropist, who woefully didn't give much tzedakah, was staying in shul saying Tehillim for a long time.

The Rav came to him and said, "It's known that if a general in the army runs away, he is sentenced to death. But what if he doesn't abandon the army but tries to change his position? Instead of leading the troops, he stays back to cook their dinner. Is that the same as abandoning the army? Is that also considered a crime?"

The philanthropist looked at the Rav with puzzled eyes. What is the Rav eluding to? This is Yom Kippur night; he must be trying to convey an important and valuable lesson.

The Rav continued, "It's clear that switching jobs is also a crime just as much as reneging on one's responsibilities. That general who switches his job without permission would likewise also be killed. If one's given a designated job and he disregards and neglects it, he's defying the rules and therefore should be punished! "

The same is true in serving Hashem," continued the Rav. "Everyone has to serve Hashem with the mission and assignment that he was personally given. For example, a rich man has his personal mitzvos to fulfil, such as returning the mashkon that was given to him by people that can't redeem it.

"When it comes to Yom Kippur, a philanthropists' job is to invest in tzedakah, one of the three ways to merit a good decree. A poor man can't fulfil this mitzvah, so he has to observe the other two ways to merit a good decree, namely through teshuvah and tefillah. "Therefore, the poor people should stay in the beis midrash and say Tehillim, since that is their work on Yom Kippur. However, a philanthropist could return home, for if he did his duty of giving tzedakah, then he can go to sleep calmly. If not, his Tehillim is similar to the soldier who switches and takes on someone else's job.

"Now, my friend, you have swapped jobs improperly. You have run away from your job of supporting Torah to do the job entrusted to others. You have looked for a place to escape from your duty and have joined the group say Tehillim."

The philanthropist lowered his eyes and accepted the words of the Rav. From then on, he committed to improving his giving tzedakah — to doing his assigned mission (**R' David Soloveitchik**).

This is an incredible story that radiates great light. Each person was created for a purpose unique to him. By imitating others, one may be doing someone else's job. Every person was sent for a particular job, and imitating someone else's job may be tantamount to a commander disobeying the king.

"The path to true humility begins with one ignoring insults or wrongdoings that were done to him." ~ R Moshe Feinstein.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



Yom Kippur is a time when we have the opportunity to connect with The Riboino Shel Olam. How do we do this?

The Yesod v'shorash Ho'avodah says that although it is extremely difficult to do, **מעוררים לב האדם אל הבכי** - a person should arouse himself in his heart to cry. As it says (Vayikra 16:30) - **כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם** ***For on this day He shall effect atonement for you to cleanse you.***

The Roshei Teivos of **כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר** spell out the word **בכיה**. With crying, a person is able to penetrate the depths of his heart which is untainted by sin and utilise this to get closer to Hashem on Yom Kippur.

This is an amazing opportunity. We know that Hashem is always here for us, but this is magnified now on this special day of Yom Kippur. The greatest love is always expressed just prior to taking leave of someone. Hashem is so to speak leaving us after this period of Aseres Y'mei Teshuvah, and His love for us at this time is now at its pinnacle, it is at its greatest.

We must take this opportunity of *Eis Ratzon* - **וַאֲנִי תְפִלָּתִי לְךָ ה' עֵת רָצוֹן אֱלֹקִים בְּרָב־חַסְדֶּךָ עֲנֵנִי בֶּאֱמֶת יִשְׁעֶךָ** *But, as for me, may my prayer to You, Hashem, be in an acceptable time [answer me, whenever I ask You.] O G-d, with Your abundant kindness, with the truth of Your salvation.*

Yom Kippur is going to be that Eis Ratzon – My Tefillah to You (Hashem) is **אֱלֹקִים בְּרָב־חַסְדֶּךָ** – Stay with us, don't leave – always be there for us, not just at this special time.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



The pirush **Siach Yitzchok on the Siddur HaGra** [Rabbi Yiztchak Isaac Chaver – a talmid of the Vilna Gaon.] describes the two different types of rachmanus - **חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם** as being similar in meaning, but at the same time, quite different.

רַחוּם means that if you see someone who is lacking something, you will have rachmanos on them. However, **חַנּוּן** means that you won't need to wait to see what a person is lacking – You will treat them like a close relative and want to give them regardless.

Hashem is **חַנּוּן** – He wants to give us – even if we are not lacking, because we have a special relationship with The Riboino Shel Olam, like a father to a son; "**אם כבנים אם כעבדים**". We can choose – We say to Hashem, "We realise that there is nothing in this world that we have, that is not from You. You give us everything." And Hashem gives it to us as a present – with love.

The Ohr Sameach says that the ultimate bracha of the whole year is the Shecheyanu on Yom Kippur night. At Kol Nidrei, we will stand together with the chazan and say this bracha together but finish it first in order that we can say Amein to the chazans bracha. - **שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה וְקִיְּמָנוּ *Who has kept us alive, and sustained us, and brought us to this time.*** When we can shake off all our aveiros that we have accumulated, so that we can re-connect with The Riboino Shel Olam.

Yom Kippur is one of the most beautiful gifts that Hashem has given us. This ability to re-connect, which as a father, Hashem is happy

for us to have. But a father always wants to see unity between his children.

The Avudarham says that the Anshei Knesses Hagedola borrowed the word **וּבְכֵן** that we mention multiple times in tefilos from Megillas Esther (4:16) - **וּבְכֵן אָבֹוא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ**. Esther went to the king without being requested to. Similarly, we come in front of Hashem (The King of Kings) without an invitation – like only a father would allow for a child.

Esther said to Morderchai Hatzadik- "we have a problem. It appears that we have no recourse, what are we going to do? Esther says that she will go to appeal for clemency from the king, but please; **לֵךְ כְּנֹוס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְצֹומוּ עָלָי** ***'Go, assemble all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast on my behalf.'*** **גַּם־אֲנִי וְנַעֲרֹתַי אָצֹום כֵּן** ***then also I and my maidens will fast in a like manner;*** (We will fast on your behalf.)

So, when Hashem sees this achdus – that we are all davening for each other, it will have a far greater impact, and much more chance of success. **וּבְכֵן אָבֹוא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ** – and with this unity, I will approach the king (The Ribonoi Shel Olam).

So on Yom Kippur, when we say **וּבְכֵן**, we are not just davening for ourselves, but for everyone else as well, and they are davening for us. This achdus gives the tefilos much more potency and ability to be successful.

When our father (Hashem) sees that we are davening for each other, and the rachmanus that we have for one another, then He will be open to have rachmanus on all of us.

"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy".

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

In Tefillas Zaka at the start of Yom Kippur, we say that we grant forgiveness to everyone who has harmed or slighted us. And we remove the hatred from within us.

As mentioned previously, one of the prime ideas on Yom Kippur is to show Hashem, that we care for each other and forgive each other's misdeeds.

In this tefilah, we describe the different afflictions that we bring upon ourselves and what they are to atone for – as it says in the pasuk **וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם** - We don't eat, drink, wear leather shoes, anoint ourselves etc. However, these are all afflictions of the body, and not the soul? So why are they called **עינוי נפש**?



The Tchebiner Rav - Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld (1881–1965) once said, that by the mann, Klal Yisrael said about it (Bamidbar 21:5) - **וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בַּלֶּחֶם הַקְּלֹקֵל** '***And we are disgusted with this rotten bread***.'

But what were they lacking? It could taste of (almost) anything? Perhaps you will say that it didn't have the same textures, crunch and looks of the food that it was copying, so physically it may have been slightly lacking – but how did this effect their souls (**נַפְשֵׁנוּ**)?

The Tchebiner Rav says that the Yidden were fed up with the mann because they were missing out on various brachos. And this was affecting their souls? The only bracha that they had to make was '**המוציא לחם מן השמים**'. They didn't make Ha'etz or Ha'adamah, Shehakol or other brachos. They didn't even make Asher Yatzar as it was absorbed into their bodies, and there was no need to relieve

oneself. So, The Yidden said, **וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה** (Our souls are suffering) because they were unable to make brachos!

Yom Kippur is a day on which it is difficult to make up and say 100 brachos. This is exacerbated by afflicting ourselves (physically), as there are various brachos that we now can't say. And this ultimately affects our soul.

However there are a multitude of Ameins and other Tefillos that we can say, and we will be focusing on Emunah the entire day.

B'ezer Hashem, Hashem should give us all the strength that we need to be awake, alert and strong and fast well, in order that we can connect with The Riboino Shel Olam, do teshuva and to be able to daven for each other. And with Siyata Dishmaya, we should have a blessed year - **ה' יברך אתכם בכל מילי דמיטב** and Hashem should grant us all **ברכות ישועות ונחמות**. And with that we should be zoche to the Geulah Shleima bimheira v'yameinu Amein.



Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

The Ramchal says one of the main avoidas of Yom Kippur is the avodah itself as discussed in the Mussaf tefiloh. It is one of the main highlights of Yom Kippur, but for what sins were all the korbanos brought to atone for?

טומאת מקדש וקודשיו - Somebody might have entered in error (B'shogeg) or someone entered when he was tamei. Or somebody ate a korban when he shouldn't have.

However, today we no longer have a Beis Hamikdash and none of this is pertinent. So why nowadays do we go over the whole avodah? (Of course it is a reminder of what once was and that we hope for it to be re-instated soon.)



Says the Maharil (**The Beis Yosef** called him the **גדול שבאחרונים**) That the avodah of Yom Kippur is to atone for the aveirah of people that today still don't realise that it is an issur to go up to the Har Habayis!

We devote a major part of our Musaf (Chazaras Hashatz) to daven for **other** people who are inadvertently going up to Har Habayis! Not realising that it is assur because we are tamei.

This shows how much we care for and are concerned for others. And this is what we are davening for! This is the theme of Yom Kippur – to daven for others! [Of course we must daven for ourselves and our families as well.]

No Rush

One Erev Yom Kippur, after Mincha in MTJ, everybody hurried home to eat the seudah hamafsekes and finish preparing for Yom Kippur. **R' Moshe Feinstein, z"l**, however, had other plans. Walking home with his talmid, he suggested that they visit the elderly rav of Boyan. This rav was bedridden, and R' Moshe was aware that most people would be too busy to visit him on Erev Yom Kippur. His talmid agreed and they both hastened to reach his house.

When they arrived, they found the rav lying in bed alone and dejected. The rav's face lit up when he saw R' Moshe and his talmid.

They sat down, and R' Moshe talked to the Rav at length, without showing the slightest bit of impatience or worry about the passing time. R' Moshe sat and talked until he saw a discernible change in the Rav's mood. Only then did he arise, and wish the Rav a gemar chasimah tovah.

Once he was outside, he quickly hurried his steps to reach home in time to eat the seudah hamafsekes.

The Baba Meir's Advice to an Illiterate Job Seeker by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg



Many years ago, Levi decided to move from Morocco to Eretz Yisroel. The problem was that Levi did not know how to read or write, and he did not even know the letters. His friends discouraged him from moving to Eretz Yisroel. They told him, "People are more educated there, and you won't be able to get a job if you can't read or write."

He decided to ask **Rav Meir Abuchatzeira (the Baba Meir)** and do whatever the Rav suggested.

Rav Meir said, "Go to Eretz Yisroel and have no worries. HaKadosh Baruch Hu feeds every living thing. He feeds all the animals, even though they can't read or write. Why should He not feed you too?"

When Rav Meir saw that Levi was still nervous, he added, "If Hashem wants, He can send you your Parnasah, not just despite the fact that you can't read, but specifically because you can't read!"

Levi took Rav Meir's advice and moved to Eretz Yisroel. After he found a place to settle in, he went to the employment office to look for a job. During the long wait for his turn, he saw many people who were younger and better educated than he was, and his doubts returned. "What kind of employer would want to hire me over these people?" he asked himself.

When his turn finally arrived, he introduced himself to the clerk on the staff. "I just came from Morocco, and I am looking for work." Then, almost as an afterthought, he confessed, "But I can't read or write."

The clerk wrote down everything he said, and Levi was immediately consumed with regret. "Why did I have to tell him that?" Then he regained his composure and put his trust in Hashem and in the advice of Rav Meir, who had advised him to move to Eretz Yisroel. Hashem would provide his Parnasah no matter what.

Early the next morning, the phone rang in Levi's house. "We are calling from the Defence Ministry. Please come as a soon as possible for a work interview."

Levi arrived and was told to sit in the waiting room until it was his turn. Levi sat there and waited for a very long time, watching the people who were entering and leaving the room. He could not understand why, after such a long wait, no one called him in for his interview. After three hours of waiting, he was almost ready to get up and go home. Then, someone finally approached him and asked him to come into a different room.

The officer who sat there questioned Levi about his background, focusing mostly on his inability to read. Levi explained, "I never went to school when I was a child, and when I grew up, I didn't manage to grasp the shapes of the letters."

At that point, the officer stood up and extended his hand. "You're hired to work here in the department for weapons development. Your

job will be to shred piles of documents, to make sure they do not get into the wrong hands."

Levi was amazed. How could it be? Why would such an advanced department want to hire him?

Only after he started working there did he come to understand. The department produced very large amounts of secret documents, and they were stuck with the problem of what to do with it all. The staff consisted mostly of highly trained engineers, whose time was very valuable and could not be wasted on shredding paper. On the other hand, they could not hire someone from the outside to do it, since he would see all their military secrets. Then someone suggested that they hire someone who couldn't read to do the paper shredding for them. At first it sounded crazy. Where would they find someone illiterate in today's times? Nonetheless, they told the employment agency that they were looking for someone who was illiterate, and asked to be alerted if such a person came looking for a job.

Hashem had orchestrated such an amazing turn of events, that after the Defence Ministry came with such an odd request, Levi came looking for a job, and accidentally let it slip that he was illiterate. It was precisely for that reason that he got the job!

Later, he discovered that his three-hour wait was just a test. They could not believe that he was entirely illiterate, so they left him in the waiting room with a bunch of newspapers and books, and a hidden camera to watch what he did with them.

Over the course of three hours, they waited to see if he would start to read them. At one point, Levi was so bored that he opened the newspaper, but he opened it sideways, proving that he couldn't read!

He found his job simple and steady, and it paid a salary that his educated friends could only dream of. After many years of working at the same job, with a comfortable salary, he decided to retire and live off his pension. However, his retirement did not last long. He

soon received another call from the Defence Ministry asking him to come back to work for them. They had not been able to find anyone to replace him, and they desperately needed his services.

They promised, "We'll pay your pension and your salary too," and Levi agreed. Levi merited to see the fulfilment of Rav Meir's Brachah. It was precisely because he was illiterate that he found such a good job. Who knows if he would have found such a good job had he been able to read and write!

Motzai Yom Kippur – We Did Our Best - Rabbi Chaim Shabsi Ausband

One year after Ne'ilah, **the Vilna Gaon z"l** left shul downcast, but almost immediately his face lit up. When asked about this changeover, the Vilna Gaon explained that after davening he felt that the judgement on Klal Yisroel was exceedingly strong, causing him to be downcast. However, upon leaving the shul, he overheard a woman say to her friend that this year will surely be amazing and successful.

How did she know this?

When she saw the fasting and the tefilos of the entire shul, she was positive that the judgement would be a good one. Such tefilos, she said, would even break the heart of a thief, how much more so by Hashem!

Upon hearing the woman's pure and simple words, the Vilna Gaon immediately davened that Hashem should listen to her pure belief, and with that, the entire judgement was overturned (Chesed L'Avrohom).

This, explained Harav Avrohom Ausband shlit"a, is the essence of the minhag brought in Rama to have a seudah on Motzai Yom Kippur and to rejoice. Now that Klal Yisroel davened such beautiful tefillos

and fasted throughout the day, we now have bitachon that Hashem has heard our tefilos and this, in and of itself, has the power to overturn the judgement in our favour.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Dissolving Dissonance



The natural tendency of people is that they become irritable as a result of hunger. There is even a word for this — "hangry." It is a contraction of the words "hungry" and "angry."

Couched in the words of the mishna, **התקן עצמך בפרוזדור** - prepare yourself in the lobby, is marriage advice. That is, before a spouse enters their home, they should prepare themselves. Included in this is not to enter the house hungry which can lead to being short-tempered. After being away all day, instead of entering the house hungry, eat something before you come home.

Once when **R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** was being driven home, he asked the driver if could remain in the car for an extra few minutes. He then opened up his briefcase, took out a bag with a piece of cake and ate it. Then he exited the car and entered his house.

The next day the driver asked him what that was all about. R' Shlomo Zalman explained, "I typically eat something in yeshiva before heading home. This is in order that I not come home on an empty

stomach, which may cause me to be irritable. Yesterday, I was so busy that didn't have time to eat before heading home."

Avoiding hunger can prevent a person from becoming angry. This is clearly expressed in the pasuk (Yeshaya 8:21) **והיה כי ירעב ויתקצף** - ***when he will be hungry, he will be angry***. It is also overtly voiced in **ונשבע לחם ונהיה טובים** - ***when we were sated with food we lived well***,(Yirmiya 44:17) and in **ויאכל בעז וישת וייטב לבו** - ***Boaz ate and drank and his heart was merry***. (Rus 3:7) So let's follow the advice of the rhyme, "***Eat some food so you'll be in a good mood***."

After Yosef was thrown into the pit, it says about the brothers **וישבו לאכל לחם** - they sat to eat food. (Breishis 37:25). The Agra D'kalla is bothered how the brothers could possibly sit down to eat when Yosef was in such a bitter state. Even when a Beis Din (of at least 23 judges) has a person put to death the judges are not allowed to eat that entire day.

The explanation the Agra D'kalla gives is the following. The pasuk is telling us the righteousness of the brothers. They themselves had this question of how were they not concerned with Yosef's situation and Yaakov's pain as a result. The brothers thought that possibly they were angry as a result of being hungry, since we know that when a person is hungry, he is susceptible to anger and when he is satiated, he is happier and in a better state.

The brothers thought that maybe their cruelty and anger were because they were not in a good state due to hunger. Therefore they ate food in order to evaluate this. They reasoned that maybe after they eat, they will not have any anger.

The Sefas Emes Hakadmon says that the eating on Erev Yom Kippur is to put people in a good mood, so they will be willing to forgive their fellow man. He writes that atonement is more contingent on the ninth day of Tishrei than on the tenth (i.e., Yom Kippur) because on the ninth day, the Jewish people make peace with one another, as

chazal say, for a sin between man and his fellow, one is not forgiven before he receives his forgiveness. This is why Hashem gave the mitzvah to eat and drink on the ninth so that he will be in a happy mood because before a person eats, he can get irritated more easily.

A gabbai of a large shul in New York related that during a period of time there were a number of cases of discord and contention transpiring in shul. He noticed that all these conflicts began after 10:30 am (shacharis there began at 9 am). And so he figured that food was the missing ingredient. Indeed it is written (Yeshaya 58:4) **הן לריב ומצה תצומו** - ***not eating can lead to grievance and strife***. With the Rav acquiescing, a 15-minute kidush would take place prior to Krias Hatorah. It turns out that the kiddush is what did the trick as there were no disputes anymore.

Soaring Only Higher - Rabbi Moshe Michoel Halberstadt

We conclude the Yamim Nora'im with a shofar blast at the conclusion of Ne'ilah, immediately prior to Maariv, on Motzai Yom Kippur. What is the reason for this ancient custom, which is not mentioned anywhere in the Gemara?

The Me'iri in Chibbur HaTeshuvah quotes Rabbeinu Hai Gaon who suggests that this tekiah is **כדי לערבב השטן** – to confuse the Satan. The Me'iri expounds on this with a most powerful explanation:

By the time we hear that last tekiah, we have spent weeks preparing for the Yemei Hadin and have done our best to cleanse ourselves from the iniquities from the past year. We may even feel a little fatigued. The food at home beckons after a long fast and we're ready to move on to Sukkos prep, etc., without the weighty aura of Yamim Nora'im. - In short, we might feel inclined to "move on".

The purpose of that last tekiah is to "confuse" ***that inclination***. It's an obvious shame to lose what we've worked so hard to achieve. By

ending the Yamim Nora'im season with a tekiah sound reminiscent of its commencement, we ensure that our accomplishments of the season don't end. Then, we walk out of Ne'ilah not only with the familiar indescribable feeling of euphoric elation, but with a lock on our achievements.

This beautiful idea from the Me'iri helps us retain some of the exalted level of the Malachim, to whom we are compared on Yom Kippur. May Hashem give us the strength to build on what we've attained and begin next Elul with the post-Ne'ilah sense of euphoria.



You probably know that on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we daven from a "machzor". But do you know why it is called that way? The word machzor means a "cycle" (the root חזר means "to repeat"), since the prayers that we say cycle continually.

What's interesting is that originally, machzor referred to a siddur containing prayers for the entire year, including weekdays, Shabbos, and chagim. A classic example of this is the Machzor Vitry, composed by R. Simcha ben Shmuel of Vitry in the 11th century. But with time, a distinction developed between the siddur which included weekday and Shabbos prayers, and the machzor which included only the festival prayers. And eventually, machzor became the name of a siddur for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

It's interesting to note, that the root of "machzor" (namely, חזר (also means "to return", and it's on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is when we return in teshuva!

The Weekly Vort - Judging Favourably

When the **Bobover Rav, R' Shlomo Halberstam**, arrived in America after surviving the Holocaust, he settled in the West Side of Manhattan. With barely a minyan, the Rav and his son, R' Naftoli, would often stand on the sidewalk in search of Jewish men to complete the minyan.

One Erev Shabbos, they called in a man named Yankel, who was also a Survivor. Yankel shared that back in "der heim" he had served as the baal tefillah in his shtetl. When the Bobover Rav heard that, he said, "Wonderful! Please lead the Kabolas Shabbos for us!" This continued for many weeks – Yankel would lead the minyan in Kabolas Shabbos.



As they got to know him, it was clear that Yankel's traumatic war experiences had left him angry at G-d for all he had endured. One Friday, Yankel did not come. And the following week he did not come. The Bobover Rav was concerned. He asked R' Naftoli to find him. But they did not know his address. "He said he lives on the other side of Central Park," said the Bobover Rav, "so go there and see if you can find him."

R' Naftoli took someone along, and they started their search, which felt like finding a needle in a haystack. As they walked through Central Park, they were shocked to see Yankel sitting on a bench smoking a cigar – on Shabbos!

They went over and relayed that the Bobover Rav was concerned about his welfare. Yankel nodded, thanked them, and continued

smoking his cigar. R' Naftoli reported back to his father, "We found Yankel in the park. Unfortunately, he was smoking a cigar."

The Rav responded, "It can't be."

"But we saw him smoking with our own eyes."

The Rav again said, "It can't be."

"But we are two witnesses, who both saw him smoking on Shabbos."

The Rav responded, "He's not the one smoking, it's the Germans that are smoking. You don't know what he went through."

The next week, Yankel returned to shul. The Rav greeted him with, "R' Yankel, I've been missing your Lecha Dodi! Please daven for us."

Fast forward 30 years. The Rav was now a leader of thousands of chassidim. One day, a man approached the Rav after Shacharis. "Rebbe, do you remember me? I'm Yankel from your minyan in the West Side." The Bobover Rebbe game him a very warm welcome. Yankel continued, "I am marrying off my first grandchild, and I'd be honoured if the Rav would be mesader kiddushin."

The Rav explained that he didn't even do it for many of his own grandchildren but agreed to come to one of the Sheva Brachos.

R' Naftoli came along with the Rav to the simcha. When they entered, they saw at least 100 of Yankel's grandchildren – all Bnei Torah, many learning in Kollel!

The Bobover Rav turned to R' Naftoli and said, "***Didn't I tell you? It was the Germans smoking that cigar; it wasn't him***."

The Rav relegated the cigar smoking on Shabbos to the effects of Yankel's traumatic experiences, not attributing it to his essence. It's not that the Rav judged R' Yankel favourably – he did not judge him at all!

Consideration For The Cook

A talmid of **Harav Yisroel Salanter, zt"l**, once invited his rebbe to spend Shabbos at his home. Unsure about whether he should accept the invitation, Rav Yisroel told him that he had the custom never to stay in any home unless he was familiar with the way the household was run.

The talmid was quick to reassure Rav Yisroel that his home was run strictly according to halacha. "We buy only glatt-kosher meat from the most reliable butcher in town," he said. "The cook in our home is a religious woman, the widow of a great talmid chacham. My wife checks everything in the kitchen herself, too. On Friday night, we have a beautiful seudah with lots of zemiros and divrei Torah between courses. The meal ends late at night."

Rav Yisroel agreed to accept his talmid's invitation on one condition: that the Friday-night seudah last no more than two hours.

The talmid was very surprised by the request. He would have thought his rebbi would enjoy speaking words of Torah late into the night. Still, having no choice, he agreed to Rav Yisroel's condition.

At the Friday-night seudah the courses were served quickly, one after the other, with very little singing or divrei Torah between them.

Before bentching, Rav Yisroel's student asked his rebbi to please explain why he had insisted on rushing the meal to such a degree. By way of response, Rav Yisroel asked that the cook be brought in.

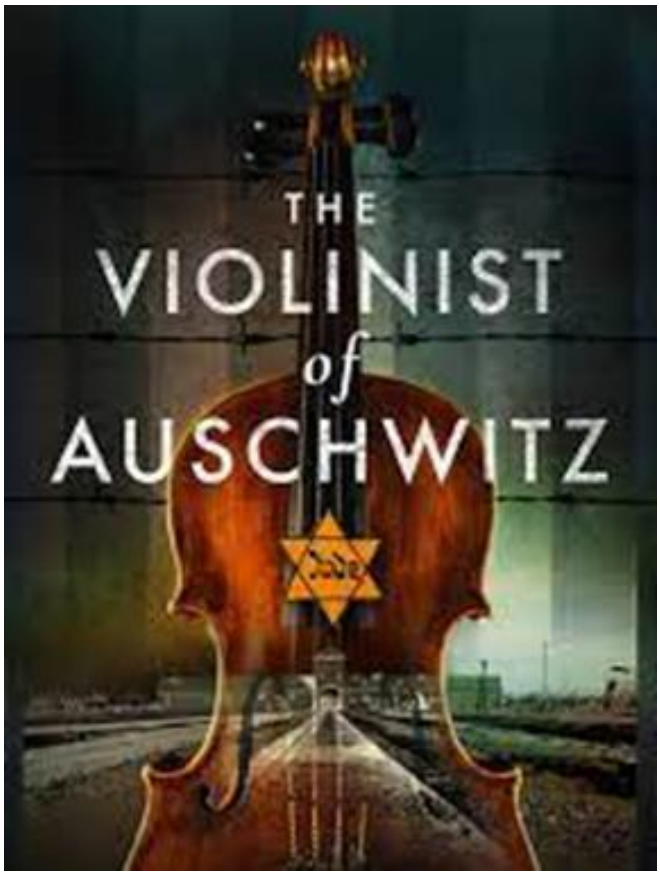
"I'd like to ask your forgiveness for tiring you out this evening by rushing through the meal," Rav Yisroel said to her.

"Oh, there's definitely no need to apologize!" the woman exclaimed. "In fact, I can't thank you enough. I wish you were here every week! I am always so tired on Friday night after working all day to cook

everything for Shabbos, but I must wait until the family finishes their meal. Now I can go home early and get a good night's sleep."

"There is the answer to your question," Rav Yisroel replied.

Chained Melody: *A Violin "Recital" in Auschwitz – A moving depiction of a true event that occurred one evening in the concentration camp.*



"Jew, play a song!"

Such was the order issued to Prisoner Srebrenik. He had been summoned to one of the camp's squares, as Nazi guards stood in anticipation of an impromptu concert.

He stood alone – Violin and bow in his hand.

What song would he play?

The choice was his. He wanted to capitalise on this most rare opportunity because he knew that his audience stretched well beyond the throng of assembled Nazis. His song would be heard by thousands of Jewish prisoners listening in the adjacent buildings.

He scanned the music files of his mind for the most appropriate, precious melody that he could cull. One that would have the power to infuse this moment with sanctity. A strain that might help his brethren momentarily transcend a world of depravity and evil.

Srebrenik stood in intense contemplation.

"Start playing Jew – What are you waiting for?"

It came to him in a flash of clarity. He knew which melody he needed to play. Closing his eyes, and lifting his violin to his chin, he set the bow, and prepared to produce magic.

Within seconds, flawlessly formed notes produced velvety sweet sounds ascending from the instrument. The Nazis were virtually captivated, swaying to the music of their captive virtuoso until the melody's completion. Its final stirring note lingered with the fading vestiges of daylight.

"Excellent – Wunderbar – Perfect." Resounding applause ensued.

"Play it again Jew!"

Srebrenik was taken aback at the officer's command.

"You heard me – Play that piece another time!"

The 'cultured', subhuman crowd nodded in collective approval.

Again, the instrument was raised in position, its bow formulating exquisite sounds as if it instinctively knew what to play. A tiny, plaintive sound rose up, gradually gained pitch, and resonated across the camp.

The Nazis appeared to be carried away in ecstasy, savouring each moment. And behind the barrack walls, on each floor, and in each room, muffled voices were faintly discernible.

Srebrenik threw his whole being into the melody, creating a frenzied impassioned blend of soul and skill.

After the crescendo, the melody ebbed away gently into the stillness of the evening. Srebrenik withdrew his bow.

The Nazi who had ordered the encore was awestruck.

"I've never before heard music such as this. It's of another world." – His cohorts agreed.

Widespread silence filled the void created by the music's absence. Srebrenik was stunned by the bizarre reaction of his audience. He then waited to be released back to his barracks – But that order did not come.

"Play it again Jew!"

Srebrenik turned to face the crowd and raised his instrument once again. He played even more passionately than before. The Nazis were swept away again, as their performer played like a man possessed.

He knew that it wasn't just the Germans who sensed the majesty of the music. The impact on his fellow Jews, imprisoned in their wooden bunks, was infinitely more powerful.

As he played on, each emotion pulsating through his soul was translated into music and came alive. The intensity of his suffering – The complete degradation – The stripping of his humanity – But the feeling that prevailed within him… was pride. Pride in his existence, and what he and his Nation represented.

The closing strains of the song dissipated into the night. Srebrenik awaited his next order. Would they have him play it again? Or would three times be enough?

"Get back to your barracks!"

He headed to his barracks walking along the orderly rows of huts, until reaching his own. Reverberating through his mind was the song that he had chosen that evening. The memory of this night would forever remain with him – For it was Yom Kippur, and the song that he played was Kol Nidrei!

Such was the Divinely orchestrated display in Auschwitz on the holiest night of the year!

Segulos From The Lelover Rebbe of Beit Shemesh

1. **Give In and Give Up** – Be Mivater because Kol HaMaavir Al Midosav Maarvirin Lo AlKol Pesha'av (Rosh HaShanah 17a) – Whoever knows how to give in, or give up his place or turn for another, or is willing to overlook it even when he's been wronged, then on High this is done for him as well and his sins are forgiven and "overlooked" by the midas hadin- by the attribute of strict justice.

2. "**Anyone who judges others favourably will be judged favourably**." (Shabbos 127b) Judge others favourably and give them the benefit of the doubt – when you judge others favourably and give them the benefit of the doubt it is reciprocated on High and then you are also judged favourably and given the benefit of the doubt.

3. **Kol HaMerachem Al HaBriyos Merachmin Alav Min HaShomayim** – Whoever shows mercy to Hashem's creature is in turn shown mercy from Heaven – Also the Targum of rachem is Ahava - Love. Ahavas Yisrael, VeAhavta LeRayecha Komocho is a great segulah!

Easy Teshuvah!

When the prominent **Ponovezher Rav** was going to South Africa this time of year to strengthen the Jewish community there, he first went to the **Chofetz Chaim** for advice as to what message he should tell them.

The Chofetz Chaim told him that the main thing to tell over was that "teshuvah is very easy. Just regret the past and make a commitment to improve in the future. Don't let the yetzer hara make you think it's too difficult and that you're unable to change." (Leket Reshimos, Yomim Noraim, p. 117)

The Weekly Vort - Just One Day

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, we observe the Yomim Tovim for two days, because of doubt as to the correct date. A *mitzvah* based on a doubt is not accepted by Hashem as fully as a *mitzvah* that is certain.

Yom Kippur, the Yom Tov that atones for our sins, must be observed on a date that is certain – for how can a doubtful day bring atonement for sins that are definite?

Chazal did not decree two days of Yom Kippur so that the atonement of Klal Yisrael should be granted on a day that is not clouded by doubt. (**Derashos Chasam Sofer**)

Judging Favourably



R' Aryeh Levin, the tzaddik of Yerushalayim, visited the ill, and those who were in prison, among many other *chassodim tovim*. His eyes sparkled with love and warmth for his fellow Jews. He was physically short in stature, but a giant in matters of the soul.

R' Aryeh was once walking on a street in Yerushalayim. A former student of his was also walking when he realized that R' Aryeh was walking towards him. He abruptly stopped in his tracks. This student had left the path of Torah and mitzvos, and was embarrassed to meet R' Aryeh.

He quickly crossed the street to avoid the meeting. R' Aryeh noticed this and ran after him. "*Shalom Aleichem*, how are you?" R' Aryeh enthusiastically greeted his student. "I'm so happy to see you. But I see that you tried to avoid me. You can be up front with me. Is there

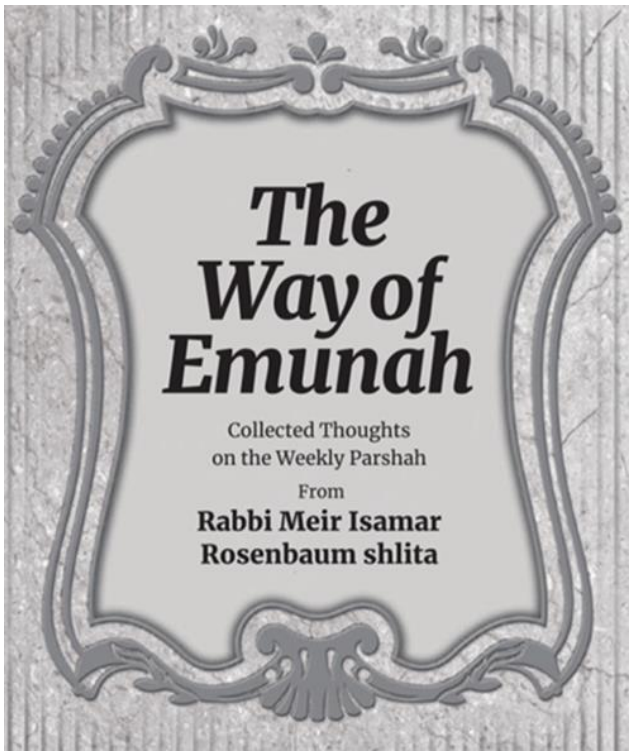
any reason that you don't want to talk to me? Have I done anything to hurt you?"

The student looked down in embarrassment and said, "I will be up front with you Rebbi. I didn't want to meet you because I am ashamed that I don't have a yarmulke on my head."

R' Aryeh caressed his student's hand, as was his way when speaking to people, and smiled compassionately, "As you can see, I am a very short man. I can only see up to your heart; not beyond that."

R' Aryeh's words transformed his student into a new person. He let the student know that he looked into the "person" and not his appearance.

R' Aryeh was able to appreciate his student's heart, his tendencies, struggles, circumstances, and challenges, and uplift him.



Hachanah For a Mitzvah

On erev Yom Kippur, it is a mitzvah to prepare a festive meal and to eat and drink with joy. The Gemara (Brachos 8B) says that even though one is eating and drinking on this day, it is considered as if he fasted, as is stated: "If one eats and drinks on the ninth (day of the month), it is considered by the Torah as if he fasted on the ninth and tenth."

Rav Avrohom Yissochor of Radmosk zy"a (Sefer Chesed L'Avrohom) states that we can learn a lesson from this about the importance of hachanos for a mitzvah. The reason one eats on erev Yom Kippur is in order to be ready to fast the next day. Since he is preparing for the mitzvah of fasting,

it is considered as if he fasted on this day as well. This is stated explicitly in Rashi (Brachos ibid): "The Torah tells us to prepare ourselves on the ninth of the month for the affliction of the next day, and it is considered as if one fasted on this day as well."

Eating With Bitachon:

One may find it difficult to eat and drink right before Yom Kippur. One doesn't know how his judgment will turn out, so he is nervous and not in the mood of eating. The truth is, however, that eating and drinking on erev Yom Kippur is a sign of our bitachon. We trust that Hashem will judge us favourably and, therefore, we are able to eat.

Sefer Imros Moshe relates that one year on Erev Yom Kippur, **Rav Moshe of Kobrin zy"a** quoted the Gemara that says that one who eats and drinks on the day before Yom Kippur is considered to have fasted for two days.

He explained that if a man is able to eat and drink on this day, knowing that he will have to stand before Hashem and be judged tomorrow, it is a sign that he trusts that Hashem will forgive him. Such as person is demonstrating a tremendous level of bitachon, which is why it is considered as if he fasted and atoned for his sins.

The Avodah of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov With Simcha:

The great tzadikim were very joyful on this day because they had strong bitachon that Hashem would judge Klal Yisroel favorably. Sefer Zicharon Yomtov states that **Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz zy"a**, once witnessed the avodah of **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zy"a** on erev Yom Kippur.

Rav Levi Yitzchok was always joyful, and he was especially happy on this day. As he sat down to the seudah, he related lofty thoughts and was full of joy. Afterwards, he cried exactly two tears and no more. He was then served a portion of gefilta fish and he said, "Malei kol mishalos l'tova!" ("Malei" can be translated as "stuffed". He was

using a play on words to say that the stuffed gefilta fish should be sign that Hashem will fulfil all of our requests.) He was then served soup, which is called "yoichel" in Yiddish, and he said, "Yichal Yisroel el Hashem." (This is another play on words to mean that Klal Yisroel should daven to Hashem. - He continued acting very joyfully for the rest of the day.

The Avodah of the Kobriner Rebbe With Mesiras Nefesh:

Sefer Imros Moshe relates that **Rav Nochum Eliyahu Levi zt"l** personally witnessed the avodah of Rav Moshe of Kobrin zy"a on erev Yom Kippur. The chasidim came to Rav Moshe with kvitlach. Although the Rebbe suffered from severe problems with his feet, he stood the entire time as he took each kvittel and placed it in a white box. He continued doing so until the box was stuffed to the brim.

The Rebbe then lifted the box and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, grant every Jew a 'g'mar chasima tova' and seal their names in the book of the righteous for life."

He continued with more brachos for quite some time. He then raised his hand and struck himself on the chest and said, "V'ani kirvas Elokim li tov. (As for me, it is good simply to be close to Hashem.) I am ready to accept even a harsh judgment!"

Rav Moshe continued his avodah throughout the entire Yom Kippur, while standing on his feet the entire time. Eventually, blood began to flow from his feet.

On Motzoei Yom Kippur, after reciting Kiddush Levana, he went into the bais medrash and drank a l'chaim. His son, the Rebbe of Atka, asked him, "Tatte, how are your feet feeling?"

Suddenly, he fainted from the pain. Throughout the entire day, he was so immersed in his avodah that he didn't feel the discomfort, but as soon as he was reminded about it, the pain returned.

Teshuva Through Eating

It is obvious that the eating on erev Yom Kippur must be with yiras shomayim and thoughts of teshuva. **The Toldos Aharon zy"a** writes (in his Sefer Divrei Emunah, page 242): "On erev Yom Kippur, it is a mitzvah to eat but one must know how to eat." He goes on to relate the following story that he heard from **Rav Yisroel Yitzchak Reisman zt"l**, a Dayan on the Badatz in Yerushalaim, who heard it from the **Rov of Barnov zy"a**, who would relate it every erev Yom Kippur during the seudah:

In the neighborhood of the Rebbe **Rav Zushe of Anipoli zy"a** lived a pharmacist who was a terrible sinner. He transgressed every aveirah with absolutely no remorse. One day, he was struck with a desire to change his ways. He approached Rav Zushe and said, "Rebbe, I want to do teshuva." Rav Zushe gave him a list of all the acts of atonement that he must do according to what is written in Sefer Hakaneh.

For such-and-such aveirah, he told him that he needed to fast 120 times. For such-and-such aveirah he needed to fast another 100 times. And so on and so forth.

The pharmacist replied, "I am not able to fast so many times. If I do, I will probably die."

Rav Zushe told him, "If that's true, then I can't help you."

The pharmacist, however, would not give in and he kept begging him for help.

Rav Zushe finally said, "I have a brother named **R' Meilich**. He is a good man Go to him in Lizhensk. Perhaps he can help you find a way to do teshuva."

The pharmacist took this advice. He packed a bag with money and set off to Rav Elimelech. When he got there, he gave some money to the shamash and was taken in to see the tzadik.

The pharmacist told Rav Elimelech, "Your brother sent me to you. I want to do teshuva and he told me that I would have to fast for many days. I am not physically able to do this."

Rav Elimelech said, "You don't have to fast. Instead, you should eat a fresh roll with fish and whiskey and soup and meat and tzimmes every day. But before you sit down to eat, you should come to me."

The pharmacist did as he was told. He prepared a large meal and before he sat down to eat, he went to see Rav Elimelech.

When he came in, Rav Elimelech began to speak out loud, as if he were talking to himself, and he said, "Meilich. Meilich. What did you do on such-and-such day in such-and such place?" He went on to detail all of the aveiros that the pharmacist had done on that day.

The pharmacist understood that Rav Elimelech was speaking about him, even though he was pretending as if he was talking about himself. He felt so bad that he began to cry bitterly until he fainted and had to be revived.

Afterwards, he sat down to eat his meal. However, one can imagine how he ate. He ate his food with a broken and remorseful heart.

The same thing happened day after day. Each day, he would go to see Rav Elimelech before he ate, and the Rebbe would detail all of the aveiros he had done on a particular day in the past. This went on for some time, until his heart was so broken that he couldn't eat anything anymore.

At that point, Rav Elimelech appointed a guardian to watch him and to make sure he ate enough to stay alive. This went on until the man became a full baal teshuva.

The Rov of Barnov would end the story by saying: This is how our eating on erev Yom Kippur should look. We have to make a cheshbon hanefesh. We have to recognize that it is one day before Yom Kippur and think about how our year went. When we think about everything

we did over the course of the past year, we should lose our appetite and find it hard to eat. - But we have to eat in order to fulfil the mitzvah that Hashem commanded us to do!

Like a Father Has Mercy on His Son

It is related that one year on erev Yom Kippur, **Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov zy"a** announced that everyone who wants him to daven for them should write a kvittel with his name and his mother's name and should include two coins for tzedakah.

Everyone was overjoyed to hear that Rav Levi Yitzchak was going to daven for them, and they all hurried to bring their kvittel and two coins.

After everyone handed over their kvitlach, Rav Levi Yitzchak remained in his room for a long time. It was almost Yom Kippur, but he still had not come to the bais medrash. Suddenly, a woman ran in and handed him a kvittel with her name and her son's name written on it, along with two coins.

Rav Levi Yitzchak told her, "There are two names on their paper. That costs four coins – two coins for each." The woman said, "I only have two." Rav Levi Yitzchak replied, "If that is the case, I can only daven for one of you." The woman responded, "If you can only daven for one of us, just daven for my son and not for me."

When the Rebbe heard that this woman was willing to sacrifice herself for her son, his face lit up. He got up and walk to the shul to start Kol Nidrei and as he walked, he said, "***I am going with the power of the mother who was willing to sacrifice herself for her son. If a human mother has so much mercy on a child, Hashem will certainly have mercy on His children***!"

Looking for the Heart

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen writes: When I was in the presence of the **Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy"a**, I saw one of the chasidim, **Rav Eliezer of Bialistock zt"l**, reciting Vidui on Yom Kippur. As he said the words, he hit himself all over his body, including on his head.

I said to him, "You only have to hit your chest – the place where your heart is located."

He replied, "***I am looking for a 'shtikel hartz' (a little heart)***!"

How great is Hashem's mercy to us! Had He given us Yom Kippur but once every seventy years to forgive us for all our sins, we would consider it our great fortune. Now that the opportunity is given to us every year, how intensely happy we must be with Hashem's kindness! ~ R' Yisroel Salanter [Sparks of Mussar]

Parshah Pshetl – R' Y Schechter

Tefilas Ne'ilah – פתח לנו שער, בעת נעילת שער, כי פנה היום "***Open for us the Heavenly gate, at this time of the closing of the gate, for the day wanes.***"

It is the holiest day of the year, and the day is waning – is almost gone. After being Mispalel all day, we come to the climax of the day, the end of the day, when we are Mispalel Tefilas Ne'ilah.

What are we asking of Hakodosh Boruch Hu when we say these words? Are we asking Him to open the Heavenly gates when they are closing? We know that the gates are closing. Shouldn't we be asking that our Tefilos be accepted in Shomayim before the gates close?

Ne'ilas Sha'ar" – "The closing of the gate."

The Be'er Moshe says that even one who did not take advantage of the days of Elul and the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, must still awaken within himself Yiras Hashem, and at Tefilas Ne'ilah, must Daven to Hakodosh Boruch Hu with all of his heart and do Teshuva.

Saying the words "**פתח לנו שער בעת נעילת שער**"- 'Open up the gate, at the time of the closing of the gate' – one must think, "Now is the time to really be Mispalel to Hakodosh Boruch Hu."

One should be trembling in front of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. One who is Mispalel properly, Hakodosh Boruch Hu closes the gates in front of those celestial beings which come to be Mekatreg, prosecute, the person – and being that the door is closed, they cannot prosecute against him.

נעילה – is **נעל י-ה'** "Ne'ilah is a time that Hakodosh Boruch Hu closes the gate in front of the Mekatragim so that they cannot prosecute Klal Yisroel.



Chesed

Reb Avigdor Miller zt'l said that smiling is a segulah for attaining good judgment. He added, "I know you think I'm old, and I don't know what I'm talking about, but this is good advice. - If you smile at people, you will merit a good year."

Reb Avigdor Miller explained that if you smile to others, Heaven will say, "You are needed in the world. People need you. They receive joy from you. So, I will keep you alive." Furthermore, Hashem will provide all his needs so he can continue smiling because this service is so precious to Hashem.

Reb Yisrael Salanter zt 'l also taught a similar lesson. He explained that those who do *chesed* stand a better chance of receiving a good judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Even if they don't deserve to live by their own merit, they will be granted life because people need them.

Someone asked the **Chazon Ish zt'l** why he spends so much of his time giving counsel to people. - "Wouldn't your time be better spent learning Torah?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "If I had a lot of money, I would spend this time distributing money to the poor. Since I don't have much money, this is my way of helping others."

Someone spent most of his Rosh Hashanah in the hospital helping a sick friend. **Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zy'a*** commented that this man is a "ben Olam HaBa." He didn't daven much on that day, but he will inherit Olam HaBah in the merit of the *chesed* he performed.

On the night of Yom Kippur, we say the brachah of "shehechiyanu." Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l asks that due to the awe and fear of the judgment, it doesn't seem to be the right time to say shehechiyanu.

He answers that we aren't saying shehechiyanu on the yom tov; we are saying shehechiyanu on ourselves. Because when we do teshuvah, we become brand-new people.

Rebbe Zusha of Anipoli zt'l would say, "If the Jewish nation hadn't sinned, where would Hakadosh Baruch Hu get a ונסלח such as the Jewish nation says on Yom Kippur night, with such a tune and outpouring of the soul?"

The Yismach Yisrael zt'l said that when he was young, he heard from magidim that when one says viduy he should think: There will yet be another time when I will say viduy. That will be after my demise when I stand before the beis din in heaven. I will be dressed in a tallis and kittel, I will say viduy like I'm saying it now, but then it won't help me. Now I can still fix everything with my viduy."



On Yom Kippur, the Cohen Gadol would say אחת, ושלש אחת , ושתים אחת, ואחת אחת, אחת ... וארבע – The Imrei Emes explains that the most precious moment for Hashem is when one makes a strong resolve to improve his ways. Afterwards, he may have ups and downs, but it is this first firm resolve which is so precious to Hashem. That is the reason the Cohen Gadol continually repeats achas (one) representing that first moment that he accepted upon himself to improve his ways.



Yom Kippur - The Weekly Vort

● **Sinning & Repentance** *"If one says, 'I will sin and repent, sin and repent,' no opportunity will be given to him to repent"* (Yuma 85b). Why does the mishnah repeat itself? The first time the person says this, he might say that he sinned in order to be able to fulfill the mitzvah of doing *teshuvah*, because one can do *teshuvah* only if he commits a sin. But when he sins a second time he cannot use this rationale, for he already fulfilled the mitzvah of *teshuvah* after his first sin. (Meir Einei Chachamim)

● **Bending Over** It is customary to bend forward slightly when saying the *Viduy*. The Shelah Hakadosh explains that this custom is based on the Gemarah which says that if one does not bow down when saying Modim in the Shemoneh Esrei, his spine will become curved like a snake. When we say *Viduy*, we confess our sins which

originate with the primeval Serpent – the Satan. We incline our backs like a snake, to rectify the sins that were prompted by the Serpent, Satan. (Elef Hamagein 607:8)

● **Always Open** The *Aron Kodesh* is left open while the *Sifrei Torah* are carried around the shul before Kol Nidrei, to indicate that the gates of *teshuvah* are always open. (Imrei Noam)

● **Shedding Tears** It is commendable for a person to cry to Hashem, shedding tears on Yom Kippur. *A king ordered a magnificent castle to be built. To discourage invaders, he fortified the castle with two defences: an impenetrable high wall, and a deep, water-filled moat surrounded it.*

In times gone by, the Jews were protected by a mighty wall, the *Beis Hamikdash*, to deter Satan and the *yetzer hara*. Unfortunately, we have lost this stronghold. We now depend on our second line of defence, the water-filled moat of our tears, to ward off the onslaught of the evil inclination. (Tiferes Uziel)

The Weekly Vort - Yom Kippur



■ **ויאמר ה׳ סלחתי כדבריך** - ***'Hashem said, 'I have forgiven you as you requested from Me.'*** Hashem says to Bnei Yisrael: In the same measure that you beg Me for forgiveness, so do I measure out My forgiveness to you, as it says **כדבריך**, according to *your* words. (**Botzina D'Nehurah**)

■ **ברוך אתה ה׳ מלך מוחל וסולח לעונותינו** – ***'Blessed are You Hashem, the King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities.'*** The Rebbe, **R' Elimelech of Ridnik**, explains with a parable: *A man brought home a bunch of sweet apples from the market. His bright young child wanted to eat one, so he recited the blessing on an apple and his father rushed to bring him one to taste so that the boy would not utter a blessing in vain.*

We, too, recite the above blessing stating that Hashem forgives our sins, and Hashem, as it were, rushes to forgive our sins so that we will not have uttered the blessing in vain. (**Mishna La'Melech – Reisha**)

■ **על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בוודוי פה** – ***'For the sin we have sinned before You through verbal confession [of our sins].'*** This sin is the actual verbal confession we utter for our sins, which is only an expression of our mouths (lip service), and not of our hearts. In order not to add to our sins on Yom Kippur, we immediately ask Hashem to forgive us for the sin of verbally confessing our sins only with lip service and not from our hearts. (**R' Meir of Apta**)

■ **וסלחת לעוני כי רב הוא** – ***'And forgive my sins for they are numerous.'*** *A* parable is told of *a king who hosted a lavish banquet for his ministers and servants. When they had eaten their fill, there was still plenty of food left. So all the citizens of the state were invited to dine, but when they concluded, there was still an abundance left over. Since it is not befitting the king's honour to leave over delicacies from his meal, he was forced to invite all the prisoners in the state prisons, among whom were traitors and those sentenced to death – they all came to feast.*

R' Avraham of Slonim explains: The words **כי רב הוא** above refer not to our sins, but to Hashem's kindness and forgiveness, which are abundant and without limit. We therefore ask Hashem to also forgive our sins, so that His abundance of kindness will be utilized, and not go to waste.

■ **אנו מלאי עון ואתה מלא רחמים – *'We are full of sin, and You are full of mercy.'*** There is no limit to the abundance of Hashem's mercy. Who are we and what are our sins in comparison to Hashem's limitless mercy? (Like a small drop of dirt that will be washed away in the face of an abundance of flowing water, so too) our sins will be forgiven with the limitless abundance of Hashem's mercy. - Even though we are full of sin, we still seek His mercy, because it is bountiful and unlimited. (**R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**) [**Yeinah Shel Torah**]

■ We recite a total of 53 *Al Cheit* confessions of various sins. Could it be that only one of these, **"for the sin we have sinned before You with the yetzer hara,"** was prompted by the *yetzer hara*? What provoked the other 52 sins?

Most of our sins are induced by the *yetzer hatov* because we do not have the slightest inkling that our evil tendency is causing our sins. We think that our actions are virtuous, and that we are motivated by noble impulses. Our consciences are clear. It is rarely that we realize that it was our *yetzer hara* that convinced us to sin. (**R' Pinchos Horowitz, the Baal Haflaah**)

■ Why are the sins in the *Viduy* listed in the order of the alef-beis? It would take a person all day if he were to enumerate all his sins. Arranging the sins according to the *alef-beis* assures us that there is an end to them. (**Chiddushei Harim**)

■ One Yom Kippur before Minchah, the **Gorlitzer Rebbe, R' Baruch Halberstam**, mounted the *bimah* to give the following address: "The month of Elul, of *teshuvah*, has gone by; Selichos has passed; Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Teshuvah, and Erev Yom Kippur have elapsed. And now the hour of Minchah of Yom Kippur is at hand. Perhaps someone may imagine that he has reached a high level of piety and devotion. - To teach you otherwise, we will now read the parshah of *Arayos*. In this way everyone will realize how low he still

ranks, and how great is the need for everyone to do *teshuvah*." (**Divrei Baruch**)

■ In the hour of *Neilah*, when the heavenly gates are about to be closed, one should open his heart to *teshuvah*. This is **the hour when Hashem closes the gates to all accusing angels**, making it impossible for them to malign the Jews. This is alluded to in the word *Neilah*, which may be seen as a composite of *Na'al Yud'Hei*, "Hashem Yisbarach shuts off," forbidding the accusing angels to denounce Klal Yisroel. (**Be'er Moshe**)

■ After Yom Kippur we blow only one *tekiah* sound, because the *tekiah* alludes to Avraham Avinu. The first blessing of *Shemone Esrei* mentions Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov, but it ends only with "Magen Avraham," as Rashi says: "*Boch Chosemin*, with your name will the prayer be concluded."

Avraham is symbolic of *chessed*, kindness. We end Yom Kippur with a *tekiah*, providing an aura of *chessed*, so we may be sealed for a good year. (**Ezra Avraham**)

With regard to sin, our Sages say, 'Once he has sinned and repeated the sin, it becomes to him like something permissible' (Yuma 77a). Habit has a powerful effect.

The same is true with proper behaviour. The more a person does that which is correct, the easier it becomes. (R' Moshe Feinstein)

In his sweet melodic voice, Reb Nosson Wachtfogel would constantly repeat, "Lev tahor bara li Elokim — please, Hashem, implement in me a new spirit." - Repeating this or the like can leave us with a very meaningful day.

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ



Rav Yechezkel from Kuzmir once said, even if a person was on his way to *shul* on *erev* Yom Kippur, if his friend would stop him and ask if he could go for a walk with him because there is something that is bothering him and he would love to be able to speak his heart and remove the worry, the man should say yes and go with him because the goal of Yom Kippur is *teshuva*, and fulfilling the great mitzvah of **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ** , which is a *klal gadol b'Torah*, is an enormous *zechus* and will help fix all the times during the year that we ignored people instead of helping them. - At this time, we need every *zechus* we can get.

למודי משה - R' Moshe Harris

Lighting Long Lasting Candles

The Mishnah in *Pesochim* (53b) teaches, that if one is in a place where the *minhag* is to light candles on Yom Kippur night, then he should do so, and if one is in a place where the *minhag* is not to light, then he shouldn't. The *Shulchan Aruch* (610:1) brings down the above *l'halachah*. Practically, nowadays, the *minhag* is to light and to make the *berachah "lehadlik ner shel Yom HaKippurim"*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (*s.k.* 6) explains, the reason we light nowadays, is for *sholam bayis* [to create peace and harmony in the home], just like Shabbos.

Many men and women light candles and then go off to *shul* for *Kol Nidrei*, and only return a few hours later after *Ma'ariv*. Therefore, one should make sure to light candles which are long enough, so that

they are still burning by the time one comes home from *shul*. If by the time one comes home from *shul* the candles are out, and one doesn't benefit from them at all, then the *berachah* made on them may be a *berachah levatolah* [blessing in vain].

On a regular Shabbos there is a big discussion about what the point of lighting candles is, as in todays world with electric lights normally there is already light. Generally, we take on that since one lights near the Shabbos table, the more light there is the better. On Yom Kippur, however, there is no meal, which makes things slightly more complicated. To avoid this issue, one should either light candles in a dark room, or one should turn off the electric lights, and then turn them on again, and have in mind that the *berachah* on the Yom Kippur candles is going on the electric lights as well.

Actualizing Our Potential

כִּי הִנֵּה כִּזְכוּכִית בְּיַד הַמְזַגֵּג "For man is like glass in the hands of the glazier…". (Ma'ariv, Yom Kippur)



Here we liken the fragility of man to glass, that without the necessary care could so easily shatter. There is, however, another understanding of this phrase. Glass has a special property: when glass is held up towards light at the right angle, the light refracts and a beautiful rainbow prism of colour can be perceived. - To achieve this, however, one must first pick up the glass and manoeuvre it until the light shines at exactly the right spot.

This is an additional message of the *piyut*: every person is a bit like this glass – everyone has their point where they can shine, sometimes it can be hard to identify, but if one looks hard enough it can always be found.

Hashem, "the glazier" discerns this most aptly, and knows where we can excel and what our true potential really is. Yom Kippur is the time when we are expected to identify this for ourselves, and make a plan of how we will come to realize our potential.

At this time of year, we are expected to enter ourselves in a process of introspection and ask: did I shine as brightly as I could have this year; how could I better actualize my potential from now on? Was the devotion I gave to my personal life and professional development consistent with the attention I paid to my growth Jewishly? Did I spend as much time doing quality activities as I did doing less important things? Was I ready to spend money on important causes, just like I was for my own holidays and pleasure?

The famous story is told of the *Chassidic* Rebbe – **R' Zusha of Anipoli, the brother of R' Elimelech of Lizhensk**. He once remarked: "If I were to be questioned by Hashem why I was not like my renowned brother Elimelech, I will have no problem answering. We were both endowed with very different skills and are very different people, so to that comparison I have a good retort.

What I fear, however, is when I will be asked – 'Zusha, why were you not Zusha?' For to that I will have no good answer".

Like glass, we all have the ability to shine. On Yom Kippur we are given the opportunity of reorienting our path and making sure that we are on the route that will actualize our greatest potential. (**R' Chaim Burman**)

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Boyaner Rebbe of Yerushalayim is a respected leader. When the Rebbe's parents moved to Yerushalayim in their final years, the Rebbe attended to them personally whenever he could, and he was unwilling to give up on the Zechus.

One Erev Yom Kippur, as the day wound down, the Gabbai of the Rebbe was worried. The Rebbe had not gone to the Mikvah before Kol Nidrei as he usually does, though he had gone several times over the course of the day.

Finally, the Gabbai approached the Rebbe to tell him that the sun was starting to go down, and there would not be much time left for the Mikvah. - The Rebbe, who was busy taking care of his father, looked up and said, "***Now, I am being Tovel in the Mikvah with the Mitzvah of Kibbud Av Va'Eim***!"

The Boyaner Rebbe taught that we must immerse ourselves in Mitzvos, and not just do them by rote and without thought, but with feeling, love, dedication, and a true desire to get close to Hashem!

Yom Kippur Gems

The Tchebiner Rav, zt"l, was once walking home from Shul one Yom Kippur night, when he heard beautiful singing. The Rav was amazed. Where was this sound coming from? He listened and he determined that the sound was coming from one of the Shuls in his neighbourhood. He glanced inside, and he saw several average men who had endured the horrors of the Holocaust, sitting and singing songs with tremendous emotion and attachment to Hashem.

The Tchebiner Rav could not restrain himself, and he went inside and sat at a corner of the table. A short while later, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l**, walked by. He too heard the singing and he also glanced inside. He was quite surprised to see the Tchebiner Rav

sitting on this holy night with a group of men sitting and singing, but he did not say a word.

The next day, after Yom Tov, when the two Gedolim were returning from Shul, Rav Shlomo Zalman asked the Tchebiner Rav to explain. How could the Tchebiner Rav, at a special time like the night of Yom Kippur, sit around and sing?

The Tchebiner Rav replied, "The truth is, when I left Shul after Davening, I intended to spend the night reviewing all of Masechta Yoma, but when I passed there and I heard the inspiring singing of those people, and I saw how they connected to Hashem, I decided to sit with them to give them Chizuk."

Rav Shlomo Zalman went home and said, "The Tchebiner Rav taught me that to sit with heartbroken people and connect to Hashem is more important than learning Masechta Yoma all night long!"

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz taught from this story that there are two approaches in the battle with the Yetzer Hara. The first way is with Mussar and rebuke, but with this way there is a chance that Chalilah, someone may stumble. The second way is through encouragement, and in this way we see only good in others and we strengthen ourselves that every little thing is important in the eyes of Hashem.

Moshe Rabeinu said to Klal Yisroel in Parashas Vayeilech to be strong and courageous, and to not be afraid or broken because Hashem goes with us.

Moshe teaches us that the preferred way to fight the Yetzer Hara is through Chizuk and encouragement! Even at a great time like Yom Kippur, the preferred way is through encouragement. Aside from the obligations of Viduy and Teshuvah, we must strengthen ourselves with Chizuk!

L'Maaseh

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, zt"l, recounted that one year, on Erev Yom Kippur, **the Baal Shem Tov** arrived at the Bais Medrash for Kol Nidrei, and he was clearly distressed. After Kol Nidrei he rested for a little while, and then the people around him saw that his distress had vanished, and a new, lively mood took its place. He was then able to Daven Maariv the rest of the evening with Simchah and singing.

After Yom Kippur, some of his Talmidim asked him why his mood changed after Kol Nidrei, and he told them that in a certain village there was a non-Jewish landlord who very much liked one of his poor Jewish residents. It happened that this poor Yid and his wife passed away, and they left a little orphan behind.

When the landlord heard about this, he felt compassion for the little orphan that was now alone, and he took the child into his home, and raised him as his own. This child grew up knowing nothing about being Jewish, but the landlord eventually told him that he was born to Jewish parents, and now that he had adopted him, he would one day inherit all his possessions. He told him further of the few things his parents had left behind for him. He showed him a few Chumashim, a Siddur that his mother used to Daven from every day, and a few other small items, but these were just fond reminders of his parents that he hardly knew.

One morning, in the days before Rosh Hashanah, when people wake up early to Daven Selichos, this child saw small groups of Jews from the neighbouring villages in wagons that were heading into town. The curious little boy asked, "Where are you going so early?"

They explained, "The holiest days of the year are just around the corner. On Rosh Hashanah the verdict is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed. We are on our way to town to Daven in the big

Shul with all our brothers. Hashem always listens to the prayers of a large group!"

From that short encounter, this child felt something stir within him. He had known for a long time that he was Jewish, but he didn't know it meant anything.

That night, when he went to sleep, his parents appeared to him in a dream. They urged him, "You are a Yid! Come back to your faith."

Night after night, throughout the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, this dream repeated itself. He told his adopted father about it, but he said it was nothing, but that did not stop the dream from recurring. The dream continued, and one night he dreamed that his parents threatened to punish him if he did not return to the faith of his family.

On Erev Yom Kippur, he again saw wagons full of Jews making their way to town. He asked, "Why are going to town today?" They said, "We are going to Shul for Yom Kippur. It is a day of forgiveness, and it is the holiest day of the year." This boy had now heard enough, and he had made up his mind. He darted home, took his mother's Siddur, and ran all the way to town. He arrived at Shul out of breath, just as Kol Nidrei was about to start.

All around him, people stood in their white Kittels with their Machzorim in their hands and wept quietly as they Davened. He started to cry bitter tears, but this child did not know how to Daven. With each anguished sob, he caused a great stir in Shamayim.

The Baal Shem Tov witnessed all this and shared in this child's distress. He looked for ways to intercede and help the boy's wordless Tefilos to be accepted, and that he get help with his resolve to follow the path of his fathers.

Then, suddenly, the boy cried out, "Master of the Universe! I don't know what to pray or how to pray. So here You are, Master of the

Universe. I'm giving You my whole Siddur! It's all I have left from my mother!" And with that, he bowed his head over the open pages of the Siddur, and cried honest tears.

The Baal Shem Tov said, "His Tefilah from that Siddur soared straight up, and came right before the Kisei HaKavod, and that was when my distress vanished, and I was able to sing with joy!



Generational Teshuva

כי אתה סלחן לישראל ומחלן לשבטי ישורון בכל דור ודור ומבלעדך אין לנו מלך מוחל וסולח אלא אתה '***For you are the forgiver of Klal Yisroel and the Pardoner of the tribes of Yeshurun in every generation and besides You we have no King who pardons and forgives - only You***'

Why do we say that Hashem forgives Klal Yisroel in every generation? What is the significance of mentioning this?

A well-known story happened many years ago with the ***Chofetz Chaim***. After the *Chofetz Chaim* became too busy and was unable to sell copies of his own *seforim* - the *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* and *Shemiras Haloshon* - he hired Jewish merchants to travel around the towns and villages to sell copies for him. Obviously, they were paid on a commission basis, but he asked of them something else also.

"Every place where you find Yidden, make sure to speak publically about the importance of *Shemiras Haloshon* and the need to learn the *halochos*," he instructed them.

Once, one of his merchants who was a fine, *erliche* Yid, came to see the *Chofetz Chaim* and was very upset. "I'm sorry but I can't continue to sell your *seforim* anymore," he told the *Chofetz Chaim*.

"Why ever not?" the *Chofetz Chaim* asked him, surprised. "It's such a wonderful *zechus* and a good source of *parnosah* too!"

"Indeed it is," replied the merchant. "But the reason I want to stop is because I feel it's dishonest when I encourage the public to keep the *halachos* of *Shemiras Haloshon* and yet I struggle myself to keep them myself. If I am not perfect in this subject, how could I possibly ask of others to be careful?"

The *Chofetz Chaim* seemed pleased to hear the man's concerns but he still did not accept his words. "Let me tell you a story," he replied instead.

There once lived a Yid called Yankele who used to rent an inn from the local Poretz and would make a living serving food to customers. One day the Poretz came to visit and Yankele rushed to make him comfortable.

"What would his honour prefer? Wine? Or perhaps a different beverage?" Yankele asked the Poretz.

The Poretz waved the suggestion away with his hand. "A glass of hot tea and a cube of sugar will do fine," he said.

Yankele rushed to draw water from the well outside. Then he schlepped the bucket of water inside and poured it into a pot to heat up on the stove. In his great haste he forgot that he had to first filter the water from the stones and debris that were often mixed into the water outside.

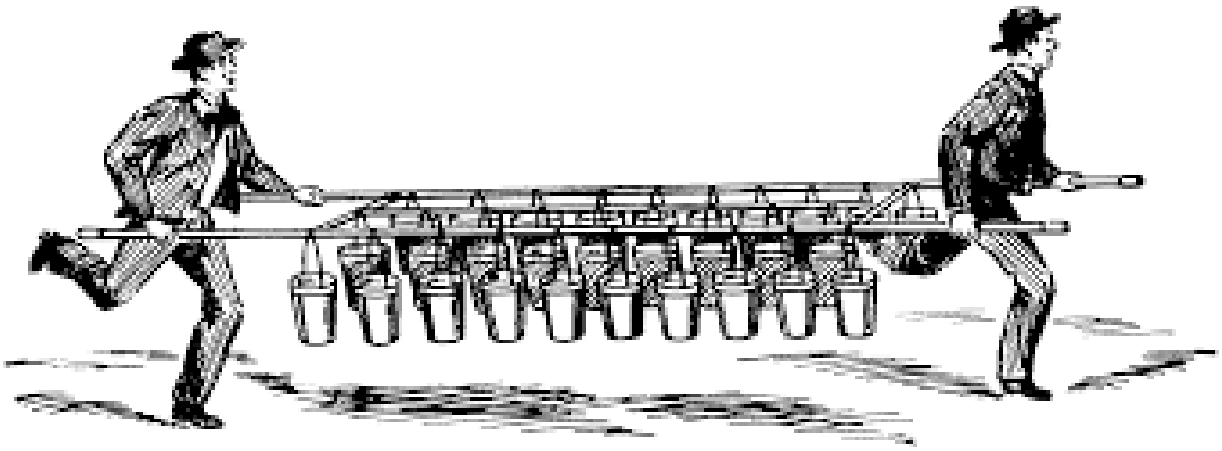
When the hot water was ready, he made the tea and brought it to the Poretz on a posh tray.

"Ugh!" the Poretz spat the tea out of his mouth as soon as he had taken his first sip. "Did you forget to filter the water or something?" he said angrily.

Poor Yankele fell on his knees and begged him for forgiveness. "I'm so sorry! But don't worry; I will make you a new tea right away!"

Eventually a new tea was made and the Poretz went on his way.

A while later, a terrible fire broke out in the Poretz's mansion. His staff worked very hard to douse the flames but they were short on water. A call went out to the entire town that everyone should fill buckets of water wherever they can and bring it to put out the fire.



The Poretz watched how all of his loyal townspeople came and emptied their buckets of water onto the flames and then returned home to refill. But one person was missing; Yankele.

"Where was he?" the Poretz thought angrily. "Does he not care that my mansion is burning?"

Enraged he ran to the Yankele's inn, ready to shout at Yankele for his disloyalty. But much to his surprise he found Yankele still filling up his bucket with water. "What is taking him so long?" the Poretz wondered. Then he saw the filter. Yankele was filtering every drop of water that entered the bucket; no wonder it was taking him so long!

"Fool!" the Poretz shouted at Yankele. "You only need to filter the water which is being served to me to drink from!"

"But for a fire??? To put out the flames of a fire, any type of water is good enough!"

The *Chofetz Chaim* turned to his merchant and explained, "In previous generations when Yidden lived more correctly, Hashem expected more of them. They had to aim to do *mitzvos* that were much closer to perfection."

"But now, we're living in times of a fire! The generation is weak and people are struggling much more. Where there is a fire - any type of water is accepted! Therefore in these times, any level of effort in Yiddishkeit is appreciated by Hashem, even when it is far from perfect."

"So don't worry if you are not perfect in *Shemiras Haloshon* - Hashem is not looking for perfection!" ended the *Chofetz Chaim*. It depends on the generation.

And so, explains **Rav Ya'akov Galinsky**, this is the significance of the words of this *Tefillah* that we say many times on Yom Kippur: **ומחלן לשבטי ישורון בכל דור ודור** – "*and the Pardoner of the tribes of Yeshurun in every generation*".

Every generation is judged according to that generation. According to its challenges, its trials and troubles and their overall level of Yiddishkiet. We must bear this mind as we look to do *teshuva*. Hashem only expects of us what we are able to do, according to our level, and according to the times that we live in. (**R' Yossi Goldberg**)

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

A year before he was Niftar, on Erev Yom Kippur, **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, zt"l**, the Rosh Yeshivah of the Mirrer Yeshivah, was busy the entire day with Chesed. He was raising money for a Rosh Yeshivah who had a lot of debt, and he was attending to a child who wasn't well and needed special care.

He returned home late in the day, and the one driving him said, "Rebbe, it is almost Yom Kippur. What is Rebbe going to eat?"

Rav Shmuel replied, "***I will eat Mitzvos! That will be enough to hold me through Yom Kippur***!"

Midei Shabbos BeShabbato: by Rabbi Eliezer Chrysler

Yom Kipur - Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur *(Adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)*

The Mishnah requires 'Kol Nidrei' to be recited on Rosh Hashanah, and the reason that we defer it until Yom Kipur, says the Seifer ha'Tanya, is because that is when everybody is available to gather in Shul (unlike Rosh Hashanah, where cooking and the preparation of food is permitted).

It is also close to Rosh Hashanah, he points out, and what's more, Yom Kipur is also referred to as Rosh Hashanah, like we find in connection with Yom Kipur of Yovel.

Reciting 'Kol Nidrei' before Nightfall

One recites 'Kol Nidrei' whilst it is still day, says the Magein Avraham, because one cannot release Nedarim at night-time (other than Nedarim that concern Shabbos or Yom-Tov).

Two people (important members of the community) stand next to the Shatz whilst he sings 'Kol Nidrei', the Darkei Moshe explains, because the statement 'With the consent of Hashem and with the consent of the community we grant permission to Daven together with the transgressors' (sung by the Shatz as he walks round the Shul prior to 'Kol Nidrei' requires three people.

And since they are already standing there, they remain where they are until after 'Kol Nidrei'.

The Darkei Moshe rejects the suggestion that they stand there because releasing the Nedarim of the community requires a Beis-Din of three. If it was, he explains, then the question arises as to who releases their Nedarim?

And if you say that their Nedarim are released by the community, who recite Kol Nidrei quietly together with the Shatz, then they

may as well remain in their seats and let the community release all the Nedarim.

Reciting 'Kol Nidrei' together with the Shatz

The community should recite 'Kol Nidrei' quietly together with the Shatz, in order to release the Nedarim of the Shatz, says the Hagahos Minhagim.

(The Mishnah Berurah however, attributes it to the fact that the conditions specified by the Shatz cannot take affect vis-a-vis the community, and they must specify them themselves).

Including the Transgressors in Our Prayers

And the reason that they make the above statement ('With the consent of Hashem … ') is due the Gemara in Menachos, which states that any Ta'anis that does not incorporate the transgressors, is not called a Ta'anis. And it learns this from the Chelb'nah (galbanum) which in mixed with the other spices, despite its repugnant smell.

The word 'transgressors' (Avaryanim) by the way, refers to people who have transgressed sins for which they are subject to Niduy or Shamta (excommunication or a ban).

Under normal circumstances, they are forbidden to participate in the communal prayers, but on a Ta'anis Tzibur this ban was lifted (Mateh Efrayim).

The P'rishah explains that when the Resha'im do Teshuvah, this creates a great Kidush Hashem, enabling them to join the ranks of the Tzadikim. If, on the other hand, they do not, then the Tzadikim are taken to task, based on the principle 'All Yisrael are responsible for one another'.

It therefore transpires that if the Resha'im are precluded from the communal prayers, the prayers of the Tzadikim will not be heard either.

Saying it in a Loud Voice

The Shatz recites 'Kol Nidrei' in a loud voice, says the Levush, to remind the people to recite it together with him, so that they should take to heart the Nedarim that they make during the year; and for the benefit of those who did not get the message the first time, he repeats it a second time, raising his voice slightly to catch their attention.

And just in case there are still some people who did not get the hint, he raises his voice once more, and says it a third time. This is because a condition that a person makes can only take affect when he makes it himself, not when others make it on his behalf.

According to the Mateh Moshe, repeating 'Kol Nidrei' three times is no more than a mannerism that is typical of Rabbinically instituted statements, such as 'Is this a scythe?' and 'Is this a box?' (Both in connection with the cutting of the Omer); 'It is permitted for you!' (When annulling a Neder) and 'Beis Chalutz ha'Na'al' (in connection with the Chalitzah ceremony), all of which are announced three times consecutively.

Annulling Past Nedarim, or Future Ones

The Mishnah Berurah cites the ancient text of 'Kol Nidrei', which refers to annulling retroactively the Nedarim that one made from 'last Yom Kipur until this one' ("**מיום כיפורים שעבר עד יום כיפורים זה**"), with reference to those Nedarim that one already contravened.

Rabeinu Tam however, objected to this text, changing it to '**מִיּוֹם כִּפּוּרִים זֶה עַד יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים הַבָּא עָלֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה**', with reference to negating in advance the Nedarim that one is going to make in the course of the coming year, and which one is nullifying in advance (provided one does not recall the nullification at the time that he makes the Neder).



You probably know that the mitzva of **הכנסת אורחים** -inviting guests) is a great mitzva, but did you know that there is a special **ענין** to have guests on erev Yom Kippur?!

The following is brought down in the Matteh Ephrayim **מטה אפרים תרד-תרה, יח: ויש להזמין על שולחנו עניים הגונים, שהוא סגולה להיות שולחנו כפרה. ומכל שכן שיש לעשות כן בסעודת המפסקת.** ***One should invite appropriate poor people to his table on erev Yom Kippur, because it's a segula that his table should serve for an atonement for the host. And all the more so, one should do so for the Seuda Hamafsekes***. [Matteh Ephrayim 604-605, 18]



L'Shana HaBa'ah B'Yerushalayim – Next Year in Jerusalem! Recited at the conclusion of Yom Kippur, most think of it as a prayer for Moshiach to arrive so we can be at peace in our homeland of Israel. But there's more. It is said, as well, after the Hagada on Pesach, which is very telling.

At the Seder, as in the prayers of Yom Kippur, we discuss the sacrifices and service in the Bais HaMikdash. As we read on Shabbos Shuva, "We shall fulfil bulls with our lips," meaning that by speaking of the korbanos and Temple service, it is as if we had brought them

and performed it. We're not just speaking of watching the Kohain Gadol perform the service, we are participating in it!

It is at those times, when we complete the reenactment of the Temple Service, that we pine for the real thing, and cry out, "Next Year [may we do this for real] in Yerushalayim.



Yom Kippur Insights With Rabbi Eliyahu Maksumov - Big People, Small Actions

The concept of the Zodiac plays an important role in Torah Judaism. For example, the month of Nissan is Aries, which is the sheep, and we know the role of the sheep in the Korban Pesach experience. The month of Sivan is represented by twins, which alludes to the idea that we got the Torah in a pair of two tablets, as well as the written and oral sections. When it comes to Tishrei, the zodiac is libra, which are scales. There are scales in the Heavens on which our Mitzvos and sins are measured. Those in the know spend these days adding Mitzvos and often think that the quantity or the "nuclear-level" Mitzvos are what's needed to tip the scales in our favour.

However, it is not the stacking of grandiose Mitzvos that will seal us for a year of life; rather, it is the small, seemingly insignificant Mitzvos. What impresses Hashem all year round (*Shemos Rabba* 2.3; 2.2) and especially during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* is how we invest in actions that can be overlooked by the masses and how we are sensitive to the feelings of others. The Midrash writes that the great Torah Sage and the great Jewish king, Moshe Rabbeinu and Dovid Hamelech, were catapulted to greatness in this world through minor actions stemming from mundane activities.

We know Moshe was a shepherd and once a sheep of his escaped. Moshe followed the sheep and caught it drinking next to a river. Moshe could've just moved on with the rest of the flock, but the wellbeing of a sheep - which he personally carried back - was of paramount importance to him. At that moment, he noticed the miraculous sight of a thorn bush ablaze without being consumed and as he approached to investigate, Hashem spoke with him and sent him on a mission to free the Jews from Egyptian slavery. Hashem chose Moshe for this mission, telling him: "Since you have such compassion for even a scrawny sheep, you're worthy to become the Jewish leader."

The Midrash relates a similar incident about King David who was a considerate shepherd and made sure that each animal was well taken care of. He never allowed the strong sheep to push aside weaker ones in order to grab the tender grass for themselves. He helped the small, weak sheep get the softest grass. Then, he let out the old sheep to graze on stalks that were less soft. Finally, he let out the strong sheep that were able to chew on the tough sticks. Hashem said, "*A faithful shepherd like you will certainly be a good shepherd for my nation, Bnai Yisrael!*". Therefore, it is the small actions that we take for granted that can tilt - or reverse - our judgment toward a favorable outcome. As I am going to show you, great people involve themselves with small things and it is the small deeds that make them great.

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, ZT"L, the founder of the Mussar movement, once fainted at the Pesach Seder. When he came to, someone asked him what happened; he replied, "Elul is coming". He had to prepare for the days of judgment six months beforehand mentally and spiritually!

Six months later at the Yom Kippur meal, the *seudas hamafsekes,* as he was preparing to go to *Kol Nidre,* he busied himself with writing a letter of approval for a *bachur* from Kovno, so that the

bachur could go into the holiday with a peace of mind. Rabbi Salanter could have easily taken care of this matter after Yom Kippur, but calming the worries of another Jew superseded his preparations for the holiest day of the year.

Even more recently, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Telz yeshiva, **Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, ZT"L**, bought flowers on Erev Yom Kippur to present to his wife in honour of their upcoming anniversary.

Similarly, **Rav Aharon Kotler, ZT"L**, a man who wouldn't waste a second and utilized every moment to learn Torah, was once asked for directions, but he insisted on walking the man to his destination. When his students asked why the Rabbi did not just simply give directions, the Rabbi explained it was because he noticed the man had a stutter, so he did not want to take a chance that the man might not fully understand the directions and would have to come to ask someone else for directions, putting himself in an uncomfortable situation where he would have to stutter again.

Practically speaking, let us offer two pieces of advice, one short-term and one long-term. In the short term, as we get ready for Yom Kippur, let us not "lose the forest for the trees". As we do Teshuva and worry about our fate, let us remember to be polite, friendly, and greet others more graciously. It is the little things that are not so little. In the long term, let us try to take on small *kabbalos* (resolutions) such as taking upon ourselves a few minutes a day not to speak Lashon Hara, to try starting Shabbos a bit earlier, making a bracha a bit slower and with better *Kavana* (concentration) and take sincere steps to a new and improved us.

Once Hashem sees us going towards the proper path, we will find ourselves in a better position to receive a favourable *gzar din*. May we walk into a year of blessing and prosperity and Be'ezras Hashem, reach our full potential!

Question Of The Week With Rabbi Binyomin Radner: The Five Days Of Kippur

Gemara (Yoma 20a) writes that the numerical equivalent of HaSatan (the devil) is 5 + 300 + 9 + 50 = 364. This alludes to the idea that the Satan has permission to accuse and prosecute Klal Yisroel for only 364 days a year. However, the Satan does not have a voice with which to accuse and prosecute Klal Yisroel on the holy day of Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur, the Satan is silenced as a kindness from G-d to ensure that we are forgiven for our Aveiros.

The obvious question is that the word Satan without the Hei = 5 - has the numerical equivalent of 359, not 365. So, the devil should not get the title of HaSatan, rather just Satan. Why does he get the Hei Hayedia?

Rav Yonasan Eibshutz (Yaaros Devash Drush 10) answers that the five days in question are the five days from Yom Kippur to Sukkos (counting a portion of the first day of Sukkos.) These 5 days of preparing the Daled Minnim (Four Species) and Mitzvah of Sukkah are special days, which are an extension of the day of Yom Kippur.

In addition, these days are the test after Yom Kippur is over to see if a person is going to deliver on his/her new resolutions and are going to implement their Kabbalos from Yom Kippur. - May we be Zoche to utilize these days properly.

The Yismach Moshe zt'l said that when he was young, he heard from tzaddikim that when one says viduy he should think: a time will come when I will stand before the beis din in heaven (the Heavenly court). I will be dressed in a tallis and a kittel, and I will say viduy like I'm saying now, but then it won't help me. But now I can fix everything with my viduy…"

Short And Sweet Story of The Week

The Brisker Rav, ZT"L, was one of the leading source of Torah wisdom, device, and counsel. One day, an American came to the Rav's home in Jerusalem. The Rav asked him, "What do you do?

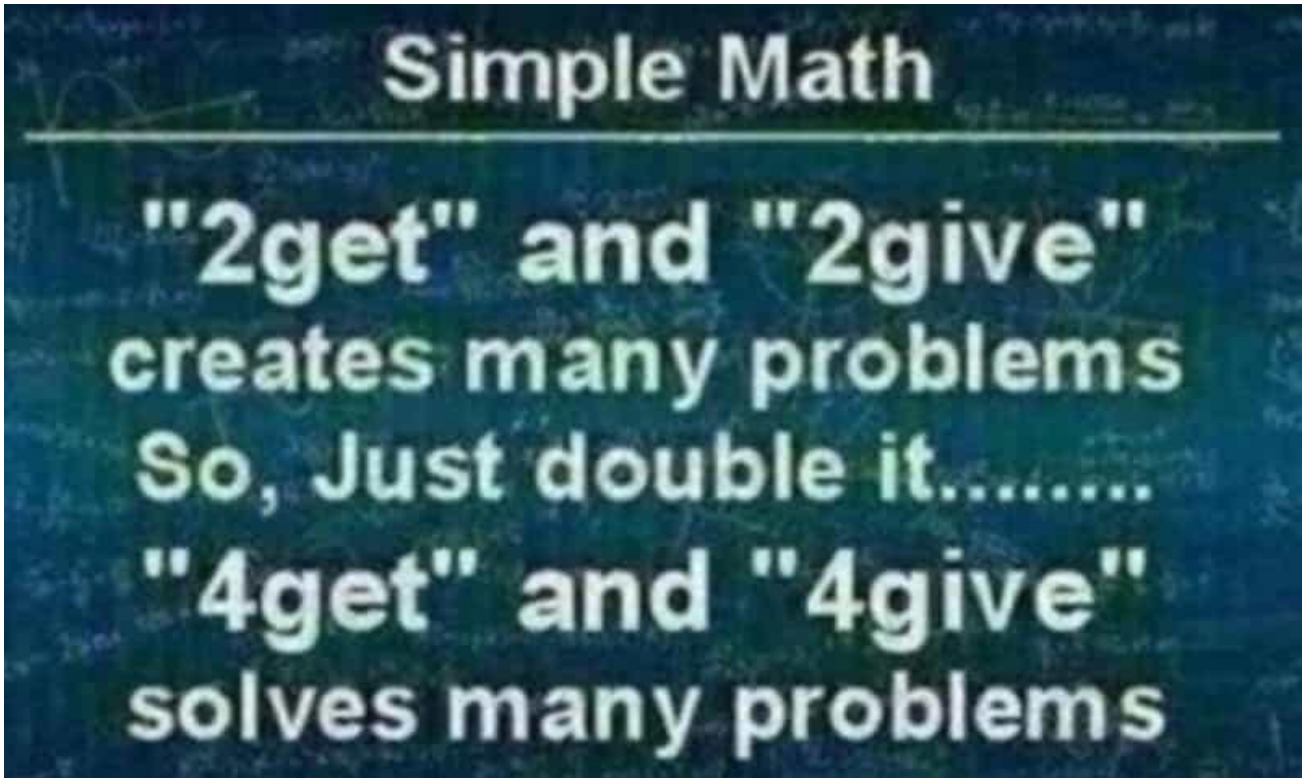
"I am a lawyer in New York," the man replied.

The conversation continued and a short while later the Rav asked again what his occupation was. The man thought that he wasn't clear or maybe the Rav was not paying attention so he slowly and respectfully repeated, "I am a lawyer. I work for a New York law firm."

The Brisker Rav responded firmly, "I know you told me that earlier, but that is not how a Jew answers such a question. I will tell you how the prophet Yonah answered this question. - When Yonah was on the ship fleeing to Tarshish there was a sudden storm and the vessel was about to break apart. the sailors cast lots and determined that Yonah was the cause of the tempest. They asked him, "what is your trade?" Yonah replied (Yonah 1:8), "*I am a Jew, and I fear Hashem the G-d of the heavens.*"

The Radak writes when Yonah replied he feared Hashem it was the proper reply to the query what is your trade that is at the Brisker Rav is how you should answer the question I asked you. A Jew's profession is fearing Hashem and following His ways.

Comment: A Jew's occupation is not determined by his job working as a lawyer, doctor, diamond dealer, accountant, or real estate agent, as that is merely a means to earn a living and support one's family. The definition of who we are is one of the most powerful ideas that we can learn from the Book of Yonah, which we will read at the Torah reading of Yom Kippur Mincha. Let's remember that we are holy Jews more than anything else.



Short Thought on Yom Kippur - Vidui Brings Us Home

The Maharal Mi'Prague gives an incredible reason why we speak out the Vidui "confession." 'Sin', posits the Maharal, is only incidental to the Jew's soul. It cannot blemish the soul itself. Rather, sin superimposes layers of impurity that separate one from his essence.

Since a Jew's connection to G-d is through that untainted essence, when he becomes distant from his essence, he also becomes estranged from G-d. When one says the words "I sinned," he is externalizing the sin, proclaiming, "Sin is external to who I am. My essence is my G-dly Neshamah that wishes to cleave to Him!"

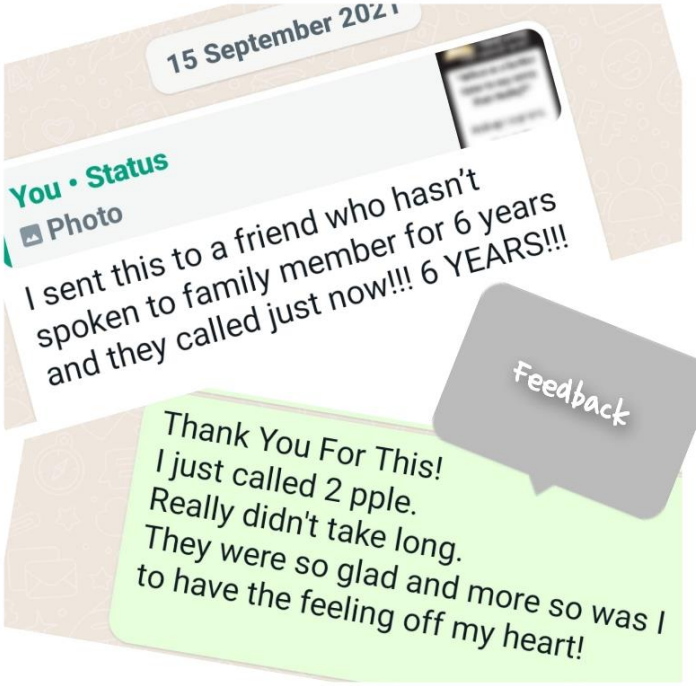
This is the simplest definition of Teshuva, return, as we are going back to the goodness that is part and parcel of our essence.

"The greatest kindness we can do for someone is to help them come closer to Hashem." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman.



We posted this on Erev Yom Kippur 2 years ago. See some of the responses we received.



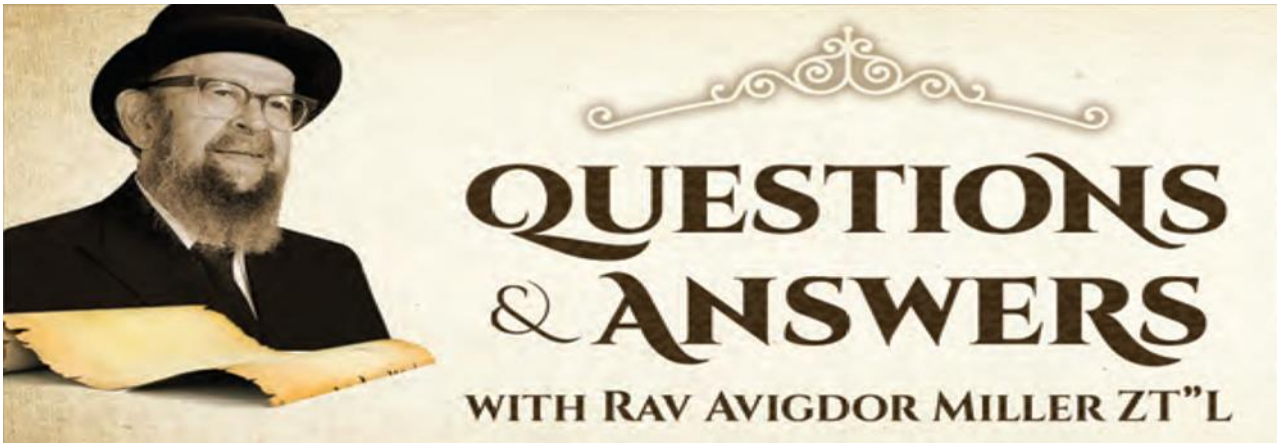


Deep down, no-one really wants to live with the weight of a grievance. When is a better time than now to reconcile? - Pick up the phone now. - Wishing you a Gmar Chasima Tova, The 1KW team 🙂

The Meal After Yom Kippur

The custom of eating an elaborate meal on Motzei Yom Kippur is a celebration of the fact that Hashem has forgiven our sins. We consider it a Yom Tov meal, just as one would make a party for friends and relatives if he came upon an unexpected windfall.

The message of the Heavenly Voice – "Go eat your bread with joy…" – is indeed a cause for rejoicing. (**Torah Emes LeMotzei Yom Kippur**)





What words of chizuk can you tell us today on the day after Yom Kippur?

I recall the day after Yom Kippur in Slabodka. The Rosh Yeshiva, *zichrono livracha,* spoke to the *bnei yeshiva* in the morning after *tefillas shacharis.* The *bnei yeshiva* were going to leave to their homes soon – some would remain for *yomtiv* but many were going home to their families.

And this is one of the things that he said to us: "You laboured very much on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. You put your hearts into your *tefillah* – you prayed with all your heart in the yeshivah and you were elevated and inspired. And you accomplished a precious achievement because to pray in a good place these three days is equivalent to three months learning.

But it is important now to be on guard. The Mesillas Yesharim makes a statement :– '*One thoughtless jest can overthrow the results of one hundred sessions of serious thought.*'

Let's say you go someplace and you hear one hundred lectures on *yiras Shomayim,* on understanding, on *daas Hashem.* And after the lectures you sit in the company of *leitzim,* jesters, empty people, then you must know that you have lost all that you have accomplished. If you hear one foolish remark it can overthrow one

hundred edifices of *yiras Shomayim* that took you a long time to build."

Soon will begin the *yomtiv* of Sukkos and all the way through Simchas Torah it's going to be days of happiness. So it depends how you'll celebrate. If it will be a thoughtful celebration, *lisheim Shomayim* — of course you'll dance, of course you'll sing on *yomtiv;* of course you're happy. Who should be happy if not those who learn and those who keep the Torah?! They're the ones in whose houses should always be the sound of song and there they should always be dancing.

But if it deteriorates into wildness, into *hefkeirus* and frivolity, then all the achievements of Yom Kippur is lost. Yom Kippur is a very precious possession, and we have to hold on to the effect of the day as long as possible.

בס"ד

למודי משה

Lighting A Candle on Yom Kippur



There is a well-known *minhag*, brought down by the *Rema* (610:4) to light a *yahrtzeit* candle in memory of a deceased parent on erev Yom Kippur. The candle is referred to as a *ner neshamah,* and it functions as a form of *kapporah*, atonement, for the deceased parent.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (*s.k.* 12) writes that it would seem that one candle would be sufficient for both one's parents. This *minhag* is certainly well-known, yet there is another, lesser-known *minhag*: In addition to the *yahrtzeit* candle, one should

light additional candles. The *Rema* (610:4) writes that it is customary to light a candle on behalf of every man in the house, and clearly states that this is done for the men, and not the women. The *Mishnah Berurah* (*s.k.* 11) adds that nowadays we light a candle only for those men in the household who are married. In addition to a *yahrtzeit* candle when relevant, every married man should light a candle for himself before Yom Kippur.

This additional candle is called a *gezunte licht,* a candle of health or well-being. What is the reason for this candle and why do only men light this candle? The *Magen Avraham* (610:3) provides an explanation, stating that the Torah, in the form of the second *Luchos,* were given on Yom Kippur. Torah is compared to a *ner,* a candle, as the *pasuk* says **כי נר מצוה ותורה אור**, for a mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light (*Mishlei* 6:23). As a way of signifying that this is the day on which we received the Torah, the ultimate *ner,* we have the *minhag* to light a *ner*. The *Elya Rabbah* explains that since women are not obligated in the mitzvah of *talmud* Torah, they therefore do not have the *minhag* to light this candle.

Once again, we find that the backbone and soul of Yom Kippur is the fact that it is the day on which the Torah was given.

Rav Moshe Shapiro zt"l shared the following:

How can we stand before Hashem saying Avinu Malkeinu—"Our Father, our King… Have mercy on us like a father on a son"? Are we truly His children? Do we act like it? Do we deserve it?

Rav Moshe Shapiro z"tl explained: look especially at parents who keep giving even when they see little or no nachas, who pour love into struggling children who offer no respect in return.

It is actually because of those parents that all of Klal Yisrael can cry out, Ke'rachem av al banim—"Like a father has mercy on a child."

Every parent who gives and gives despite the pain and shame, lends the entire nation the strength to plead for rachamim. When you love a child who hasn't "earned" it, you empower all of us to say, "Hashem, show us your love even when we don't deserve it."

So if you feel alone, know this: the whole Klal Yisrael owes you thanks. Your quiet devotion fuels our tefillos for mercy on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and draws down Hashem's compassion—even when we are not deserving. (Heard from Rabbi Avi Fishoff)





When Hashem pushes you to the edge of difficulty, trust Him fully – Either He will catch you, or He will teach you how to fly!





R' Elyashiv's Special Yom Kippur Shoes Designed with a Special Sole Made of Ropes So He Could Feel the Floor.

The Kol Nidrei Plot



One of the members of the Jewish community in Berditchev was a fierce mitnaged (opponent) of the Chassidic movement in general and Rabbi Levi-Yitzchak in particular. He tried his utmost to cause disturbances in the Rebbe's holy work. Despite the many insults suffered from him, he never answered him back. This infuriated the mitnaged even more. In his heart he concocted an entire plot on how to put Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to shame in public.

Since he knew that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had a beautiful voice and that many people always came to hear him praying on the holy day of Yom Kippur, and especially the prayer of 'Kol Nidrei', he made up his mind to disturb Rabbi Levi Yitzchak in this prayer specifically.

On the eve of the holy day, he came to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's house and asked to speak to the rabbi in private. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak welcomed him in, and his opponent explained to him that because it was the Eve of Yom Kippur and each person must ask forgiveness from people whom he might have hurt during the year, he also wanted to ask for forgiveness for all that he had done to the rabbi.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak immediately forgave him with a full heart.

His new 'friend' then took out a big bottle of vodka that he had brought with him, containing 96% alcohol. He asked the rabbi to say 'l'chaim' as a sign of forgiving him. He poured out a big glass of vodka and handed it to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. The Rabbi said 'l'chaim' and blessed his opponent with a good and prosperous year.

When the mitnaged was about to leave, he turned to the rabbi and said that since he was not sure that the rabbi had forgiven him with

a full heart, he wanted the rabbi to say 'l'chaim' once again. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak accepted his request and once more the mithnaged poured him a full glass of vodka.

The mitnaged went towards the door, as if intending to leave the tzadik's room, but instead turned around and came back, asking the rabbi to say just a 'small' 'l'chaim' for him…and then another one...and then….

And Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, the defender of all Israel and the lover of his people, how could he refuse the request of a Jewish man on the Eve of Yom Kippur? In the end, the mitnaged made sure that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak finished the whole bottle of vodka.

The man hoped that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak would be unable to pray properly due to the influence of the large amount of vodka that he had drunk. Maybe he would vomit or do something else that would portray him in a negative light to the large congregation attending the Kol Nidrei prayers in the synagogue.

It was twilight time. All the synagogues were filled with Jews, standing in awe on this holiest of holy days. The last Jews hurried along, dressed in their white robes and prayer shawls, in order to get to big synagogue in Berditshov where Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was to officiate. In the background, quiet words of Tehilim were being recited. Everybody was busy making a final spiritual reckoning, purifying his soul before the Day of Forgiveness. Within a few moments the shadows of darkness would descend on the city and the Holy Day would commence. The awe of the Holy Day was clearly felt upon the faces of all the people in the big synagogue.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, wrapped up in his prayer shawl, rose to approach the Holy Ark. The sound of his sweet voice, so full of emotion, could be heard in every corner of the synagogue. The Kol Nidrei prayer had begun. - The whole congregation was lifted above the physical reality, borne by the exalted words of prayer emanating from Rabbi

Levi Yitzchak. "And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel shall be forgiven..."

Even the mitnaged, who had arrived specially to see the 'drunk man's show' could not but feel the impact of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's prayers and admire his beautiful voice, so full of emotion and devotion. Not the smallest reminiscence was felt of drinking a whole bottle of vodka containing 96% alcohol.

After the evening prayers were completed, nearly everybody remained in the shul to recite the book of Tehilim (Psalms), as is customary on this night.

When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak reached the verse (Tehilim 41:12) "By this I knew that You wanted me, since my enemy will not cause harm upon me", Rabbi Levi Yitzchak repeated this verse over again.

Suddenly he turned to the people in the synagogue and said: "How did King David, who had so many opponents, know that he had found favor in G-d's eyes? The answer is: 'since my enemy will not cause harm to me' - which can be understood in an additional sense - that my enemy will not be harmed because of me."

The mitnaged understood full well towards whom these words were directed. He realized that the rabbi was arousing compassion for him, that he - the opponent - should not be punished because of what he had intended to do against Rabbi Levi Yitzchak.

There words of pure love entered his heart. He became a changed person, and soon thereafter, a true follower of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

"On Yom Kippur, a person can reach a closeness to Hashem not attainable the entire year, for the barriers of the material are lifted." — Rav E.E. Dessler (Michtav M'Eliyahu).



A Moment of Closeness!

Reb Avraham Pollak, zt"l, mashgiach of Slabodka, asked the **Chazon Ish zt"l**, "Why do we go through the process of doing teshuvah in Elul and during the Yomim Noraim When Cheshvan comes around, we will be back to our old selves again!?"

The Chazon Ish answered: "It's all worthwhile for a few days of closeness to Hashem." A moment of teshuvah is so significant that even if it doesn't last, it's very much worth it.

A Simple Jew's Tooth Offering



A Jew from Russia boarded a bus in Yerushalayim and took a seat next to **Horav Kluft**, a grandson of the **Steipler Gaon, zl**. During the course of their conversation, the Jew mentioned that he had once served in Joseph Stalin's army. (Stalin was the accursed Russian dictator during World War II.)

On his first Erev Yom Kippur, he sought a way to circumvent working on the holiest day of the year. He claimed that he was unable to work due to a toothache. He went to the infirmary where his tooth was extracted without Novocain. He fainted from the extreme pain – but he was permitted to take the day off to rest. Although he was in excruciating pain that entire day, the joy in not having to transgress Yom Kippur more than ameliorated his pain. He was able to spend the day in solemn prayer to Hashem. This overrode any pain.

When Rav Kluft expressed his great admiration for this Yid, the man said, "Do not be impressed. I am a simple Jew!"

The man's stop was called, and he got up to say goodbye to the Rav, who gave him a warm handshake. The man responded in kind and beamingly smiled at him.

Rav Kluft noticed a gaping hole in the man's smile. His upper front teeth were missing. When the man observed Rav Kluft's surprise, he said, "Please forgive my toothless smile; I was in Stalin's army for four years, and I used the same excuse each Yom Kippur."



The Weekly Vort

● **Return The Penny**

למען נחדל מעושק ידינו – so that we may stop our hand from rapacity.

We recite this phrase as part of the section that replaces the *Al Cheit* in *Ne'ilah*. The criminal act of dishonesty in business relations has the power to arouse stern judgment against the guilty man, and to seal the sentence more surely than all other sinful deeds (see Sanhedrin 100a).

The Chofetz Chaim asked why we recite these words at *Ne'ilah*. He explained that we are now approaching the close of the day of judgment. Over the misdeeds between man and his Maker that we committed, we have already repented. Yet for misdeeds between man and his fellow, Yom Kippur atones only after we obtain forgiveness from our fellow man.

Even if we have forgotten to return as little as one penny to a person to whom we owe it, we cannot be forgiven. But now there is no possibility for us to return the penny gained by theft or force, because here we are in shul, about to start *Ne'ilah*. Every Jew must therefore solemnly accept the obligation that immediately after

Yom Kippur, he will return whatever he may have taken unjustly or by force. This is why we recite these words in *Ne'ilah*.



● A Single Tekiah

The straight sound of the *te'kiah* symbolizes the *tzaddik*, while the broken, searing sound of *shevarim-teruah* represents the wicked. On Rosh Hashanah, when the *tzaddikim* have been inscribed for life, there are still those who are "in-between" – people whose decrees are still pending – as well as evildoers who are inscribed for death. Therefore, we blow both *tekiah* and *shevarim-teruah*. But on Yom Kippur we are confident that the "in-between" people have been judged favorably. Now all are *tzaddikim*. We therefore blow only a *tekiah*, the straight sound of the *tzaddik*. (Chochmas Shlomo, Orach Chaim 623:6) [The Radiance of Yom Kippur]



● Always Open

The *Aron Kodesh* is left open while the *Sifrei Torah* are carried around the shul before *Kol Nidrei*, to indicate that the Gates of *teshuvah* are always open. (Imrei Noam)



● More Precious Than Standing

On one Yom Kippur, the **Chofetz Chaim** noticed a weak, elderly man straining to stand during *Ne'ilah*. The man swayed, pale and exhausted, but refused to sit. The Chofetz Chaim quietly left his place at the front, walked over, and urged him to sit down. When the man protested that it was Yom Kippur — how could he sit? — the Chofetz Chaim gently said: "Do you think Hashem needs your standing? What He wants is your heart. Davening with kavana while sitting is far more precious than swaying in pain while standing."





Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"The yetzer hara will even convince a person to fast for three consecutive days – only so that when he breaks his fast, he does so ravenously!" ~ Harav Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira – the Saraf of Moglanitza.

Besamei HaTorah

…Beneath the Surface

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם...*and you shall afflict yourselves (lit. your souls)* (Bamidbar 29:7)

The world asks: Why do we refer to abstention from eating and drinking as 'affliction of the soul'? This is actually an affliction of the body, as the soul does not derive benefit from the eating!

A similar question can be asked regarding the Bnei Yisroel when they complained about the Mann: **וְעַתָּה נַפְשֵׁנוּ יְבֵשָׁה אֵין כֹּל בִּלְתִּי אֶל־הַמָּן עֵינֵינוּ**

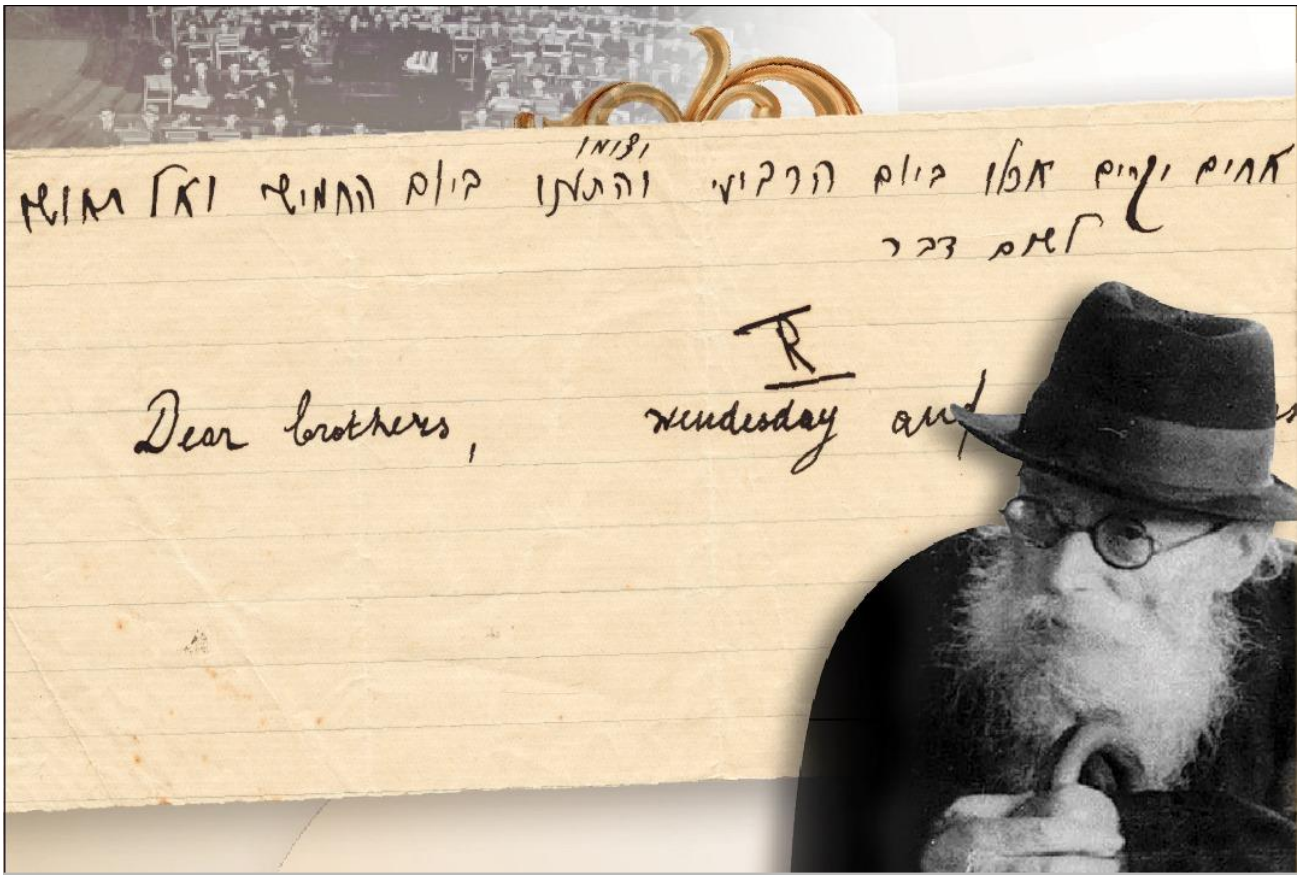
- *But now our life (lit. soul) is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing before our eyes but the Mann!* (Bamidbar 11:6) - Were they not speaking about eating and the body should benefit from it?

The Tchebiner Rav explains, on the Mann they only recited one Brachah, 'Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha'aretz' before they ate it, and Birchas HaMazon after they ate it. But the Brachos of 'Borei Pri Ha'eitz', 'Ha'adamah' and 'Shehakol', 'Borei Nefashos' and 'Asher Yatzer', they could not recite. Therefore, their soul was also parched.

The same applies to Yom Kippur. This is the one day a year when it is very difficult to recite 100 Brachos. Therefore, there is also affliction to the soul. (Umatuk HaOhr)

📖 The Guardians – bringing Jewish history to life!

"Eat on Wednesday, Fast on Thursday"



The statement "Eat on Wednesday, fast on Thursday" refers to a historic ruling by the **Chazon Ish** (Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz). On the eve of Yom Kippur 1941, a single hurried note was rushed across the world concerning the International Date Line's impact on Yom Kippur for Jewish communities and The Yeshivas Mir which was in Kobe, Japan, from March 1941 for 9 months, before relocating to Shanghai. in Kobe, Japan.

A misunderstanding of the date line led some rabbis in Kobe to determine that Yom Kippur would fall on a Wednesday. [Shanghai is part of the Asian mainland, and Yom Kippur would have been observed on the earlier date according to everyone. The

disagreement was about islands off the east coast of Asia - such as the Japanese islands.]

The Chazon Ish saw this as a serious danger to life, as it created a situation where some might fast on the preceding Wednesday and then again on the correct Thursday.

When the date line caused the day of Yom Kippur to shift to Wednesday for some, creating a risk of fasting on both the day before and the day of Yom Kippur (a safek pikuach nefesh or danger to life), the Chazon Ish telegrammed Kobe to eat on the actual Wednesday and fast on the subsequent Thursday, thus preventing a potential double fast.

Until then, **Rav Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz, the Chazon Ish**, had lived quietly, avoiding public disputes and publishing his early sefarim anonymously, and his name became widely known only after his arrival in Eretz Yisrael. But the crisis of the dateline forced his hand.

Most rabbanim ruled that Yom Kippur in Shanghai should be observed on Wednesday. The Chazon Ish, almost alone, ruled otherwise:

"Dear brothers! Eat on Wednesday and fast on Thursday—and don't be concerned about anything."

But in the great debate over the halachic dateline, he took a stand. The directive emphasized that the actual fast for Yom Kippur should be observed on the Thursday.

The note before you contains the very first version of this famous psak, written in haste by his nephew on Erev Yom Kippur, so that the Jews in Kobe, Japan, could know the Chazon Ish's position in time.

This scrap of paper, hurriedly written on the holiest day of the year, became one of the most famous psakim of the Chazon Ish—marking the moment he emerged as a towering voice in halacha.



כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לפני ה'

The Greatness of Yom Kippur

The happiest day of the whole year is Yom Kippur because it is a day of forgiveness and atonement. Some people are afraid of Yom Kippur because there is a lot of avodah to do, and the fasting is hard and uncomfortable. But in truth Yom Kippur is the simplest thing in the world. We just sit a whole day and rake in sparkling diamonds. It is a joyous day when everything is open and we can take as much as we want – happiness, life, *siyata d'Shmaya*.

On other fast days we afflict ourselves so as to bring ourselves to *teshuvah*. They are remembrances of sad days in the past. But Yom Kippur is a day of *Shabbos Shabbason*, of total cessation. We cease not only from work but also from eating and drinking. On Shabbos, a person is not sad that he doesn't have to go out to work in the field or the office. The Torah removes him from all this and brings him to another, much greater happiness.

Yom Kippur is the same. We take a break from eating and drinking so we can involve ourselves in something much better and loftier. On Yom Kippur we derive our sustenance straight from *Hashem*. We don't always feel nourished by *Shacharis* like we do by breakfast, due to the darkness of this world, but on Yom Kippur we are in a higher world where we live on *kedushah*. On Yom Kippur you just walk into a world of *kedushah* and purity and it's all yours. Yes, you need *teshuvah*, but it's just an entrance ticket. That's how you get in the door. Once you are in, Yom Kippur showers you with amazing gifts and it's all yours. The more *kavanah* you put in, the more *tefilah* you put in – you are right there in the *kodesh kodoshim*, and on this day, everything is for the taking, there are no limitations.

The height is *Ne'ilah*. Everything is totally up for grabs. You can ask whatever you wish. This is the day of the *Yud Gimel Midos Shel Rachamim*. It's the happiest day that could be. To think about how you are feeling tired and hungry is simply madness. But you need to believe in it.

The atonement of Yom Kippur is like the person who went to the doctor, complaining of skin lesions, and the doctor said it's all because of an internal infection. He prescribes for him a medicine and says that after three days he is sure the infection will be gone. The person comes back after three days and says the lesions didn't go away and nothing has changed. The doctor informs him that the internal infection is indeed totally healed but the new skin takes a little time to grow back. - If the patient believes he is healed, he will see that healthy skin growing in. But if he thinks nothing has changed, he will go right back to the unhealthy habits that caused the infection in the first place.

It's the same with Yom Kippur. The day after, a person gets up, goes to shul, and doesn't feel that his *tefilah* is any different or better. Where's Yom Kippur? He needs to believe that he is healed. He just needs to shake off the old dust, and soon he will see the difference.

We need to work hard on Yom Kippur, especially on *teshuvah*, and know that this is the happiest day in our life.

"If Yom Kippur only came around once in every 70 years it would be a tremendous opportunity! How fortunate are we to experience it every year" ~ R' Yisroel Salanter.

"If we could understand how much Hashem loves us. We would realize that Yom Kippur is not a burden but a gift." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.



Inspired by Time - The Koach of Teshuva – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

We live our lives surrounded by limitations. A person may be wise, clever, insightful – but even the sharpest mind has boundaries it cannot cross. A person may be strong, with muscles that can lift enormous weights – perhaps even a car – yet eventually he will encounter something too heavy, beyond the ability of a human to lift.

We may similarly cultivate sterling character traits, yet we know: we are never flawless. Human greatness is real, but it is always finite. A person should also consider that even when he cannot do something that does not mean it cannot be done. What is impossible for him may be effortless for is friend. What crushes his shoulders may be light as a feather for another.

If this is true among mortals, how much more so with the Ribbono Shel Olam – haKol Yachol, the One who is infinite and perfect in every way. His wisdom is boundless. His strength is endless. His mercy knows no limit. As Yeshayahu haNavi declared: "Ki lo machshevosai machshevosechem, v'lo darchechem derachai" – My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are My ways your ways.

And yet, here lies our greatest stumbling block. We take our own weakness, our own fragile limitations, and we project them onto Hashem. This mistake is most dangerous when it comes to teshuva. We fall. We stumble. We regret. We cry. We resolve to change. We confess before Him. And then comes the whisper of the yetzer hara: "Do you really think Hashem will forgive you – again? After all your failures, after last year's broken promises, after so many times you swore to change and fell back – do you truly believe He still believes in you?"

And tragically, we nod. Because we know ourselves. We know that if someone hurt us fifteen times, twenty times, a hundred times – we would not forgive again. Our capacity to believe in them would be drained. Our patience would be gone. And so we imagine Hashem is the same.

But that is the terrible lie! Ki lo machshevosai machshevosechem. Our weakness is not His weakness. Our narrow heart is not His infinite heart. Our forgiveness dries up; His mercy is an ocean without end. We shut the door after too many disappointments; He keeps it open, waiting, yearning, calling, again and again.

The koach of teshuva lies exactly here: Hashem's love and forgiveness are beyond measure. His desire for our return is greater than our sins. His ability to cleanse is greater than our failures. His patience is stronger than our despair.

A Story of Contrasts

R' Aharon Weinberg shlita relates a powerful story that highlights with stark clarity the contrast between our limited ability to forgive and Hashem's boundless capacity for mercy. It grants us new perspective on the awesome and unfathomable day of Yom Kippur.

The heilige **Nesivos Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy"a**, was the son of a remarkable father – haKadosh Reb Moshe Avraham Berezovsky, hy"d. Reb Moshe Avraham was a Yid of towering greatness, a man of ceaseless aliya, refinement, and depth. He served as the Rosh Hakohol of the Slonimer community in Baranovitch, a role in which his brilliance and nobility were recognized by all. He was tragically murdered in the horrors of the war, but his legacy remains etched in eternity. To appreciate his stature: even Reb Chaim Brisker and Reb Boruch Ber, giants of Torah themselves, are said to have trembled before his awesome koach ha'limud. He was not only a sage of profound wisdom but a presence that commanded awe and reverence.

In Baranovitch, Reb Moshe Avraham was close with another great gaon, Reb Moshe Midner. Reb Moshe Midner was known as a man whose hakpada was not to be taken lightly. People were careful to stay in his good favor, for to incur his displeasure was considered dangerous. His very nature carried a force and intensity that all were wary to provoke. And as in every generation, since the days of Dasan and Aviram, there were those who thrived on stirring conflict, people who could not resist planting seeds of strife between even the greatest of men.

One such individual came to Reb Moshe Midner with slander, carrying words of lashon hara against his dear friend Reb Moshe Avraham Berezovsky.

The Test of Forgiveness

When Reb Moshe Avraham entered the room of his beloved friend, he immediately noticed a storm upon his face – the trace of anger, the fire of suspicion. His heart trembled. He knew the danger well: to bear the kpeida of Reb Moshe Midner was like treading upon burning coals.

Without delay, Reb Moshe Avraham dispatched shlichim, pleading on his behalf. They explained that the lashon hara was false, begged that Reb Moshe Midner not accept it, and entreated him to let go of the anger.

Baruch Hashem, the efforts bore fruit. Reb Moshe Midner softened, accepted his friend's words, and sent back word: he was ready to forgive, to dismiss the lashon hara, and to restore their friendship to its former closeness.

Not long after, Reb Moshe Avraham re-entered the room, now standing once more before his friend. He saw the calm upon his face, felt the peace restored between them. And then, with the brilliance of a gaon and the honesty of a tzaddik, he posed a breathtakingly deep question: "Tell me, Reb Moshe: if, chas v'shalom, someone were

to once again bring you lashon hara about me – will it then be considered a second time, or a first time?"

What a staggering question! Reb Moshe Avraham was laying bare the human heart. He was saying: I know you have forgiven me, I know you have let go. But tell me, is there not still a faint trace left within, a tiny scar that cannot be erased? And if it were to happen again, would it awaken as a continuation – a second time – or could it truly be considered as if the first had never been?

The words pierced like lightning. Reb Moshe Midner's face flushed red. He paused, he pondered, and then, with honesty, he admitted the truth of the human condition: "If, chas v'shalom, it were to happen again – it will be considered a second time."

With those words, Reb Moshe Midner revealed the limits of mortal forgiveness. Flesh and blood can pardon, can reconcile, can let go – but to utterly erase, to wipe a slate so clean that nothing at all remains, that no trace of history lingers – this lies beyond the reach of man.

But the Ribbono Shel Olam is not like man. When Hashem grants selicha, mechila, and kapara on Yom Kippur, it is with a power beyond comprehension. When He forgives, it is not partial, not provisional. It is absolute. The sin is not merely set aside – it is erased, deleted, dissolved as though it never existed.

So complete is Hashem's forgiveness that if, chas v'shalom, a Jew stumbles again, it is not considered a "second time." It is judged afresh, as if it were the first time. For before Him, when we do teshuva with sincerity, the past no longer exists.

Above Nature

This is the awesome koach of Yom Kippur. Hashem's ratzon, His love and closeness to His children, is reawakened as if nothing had ever come between us. The pegam, the stain, the record, the history – all

vanish. The bond returns k'rishonah – to the pure love of the beginning, untainted and unmarked.

This is the very essence of teshuva. The Gemara in Pesachim teaches that teshuva was created before the world itself – one of the seven things that preceded brias ha'olam. Why? Because teshuva is not bound by nature. In the natural order, what was done leaves a trace; an act cannot be undone.

But teshuva is l'ma'ala min ha'teva. It does the impossible: it cleanses, washes away, and utterly erases, as if the sin never existed.

The Rambam states: a ba'al teshuva is an acher – an entirely different person. Rabbenu Yonah adds: the ba'al teshuva is like a newborn child, k'katan she'nolad. And if he stumbles again, it is counted not as a repetition, but as a first time – because Hashem's forgiveness obliterated the past completely.

This is the depth of the Rambam's words: Who is the true ba'al teshuva? The one about whom the Ribbono Shel Olam Himself - the Yodea Ta'alumos - testifies that he will not return to his sin.

How can Hashem testify about the future of a ba'al bechira? The answer: He testifies not about tomorrow, but about today. The charata is so deep, the yearning so genuine, that in Hashem's eyes the Yid standing before Him is a new creation. Should he falter again, it is not a continuation – it is a new chapter, a fresh beginning.

This is the meaning of the Kedushas Levi's words on the Selichos: ma'avir rishon rishon – Hashem has the power to make every fall a "first," erasing every trace of the past and leaving only another chance to return.

The Gift of the Day

This is the essence of Yom Kippur. It is the day of ratzon and ritzui. The Ribbono Shel Olam bends toward Klal Yisrael and proclaims: I

am ready to erase. I am ready to cleanse. I am ready to renew. All can be made fresh. All can be restored to the closeness and love of the beginning. - That is the koach of teshuva. That is the priceless gift of Yom Kippur.

Let us not waste a single moment. Let us grasp its power with both hands. For on this day – ki ba'yom ha'zeh yechaper alechem – Hashem Himself, infinite and without limitation, descends to us and washes us clean.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Teshuvah

An important counsel in teshuvah is to know that we do the most we can, and Hashem helps us with the final parts of teshuvah.

Reb Issar Zalman Meltzer zt'l told a mashal of two people walking on a mountain. One was on the top, walking down. The other was at the bottom of the mountain, walking up. Right now, one seems higher than the other, but soon, the one on top will be at the bottom, and the one at the bottom will reach the top.

Reb Issar Zalman explained that teshuvah isn't about being on top; instead, it is about changing course and heading in the right direction. Eventually, he will grow higher and higher.

The Bardichover Rav *zt'l* once told a great sinner, "I am jealous of you because when you do *teshuvah*, you will have so many mitzvos."

The man replied, "Just wait another year, and you will have even more reason to be jealous."

A bachur once stared at **Reb Yitzchak Meir of Zinkov *zt'l***, and Reb Yitzchak Meir asked him, "Why are you looking at me?"

The *bachur* replied, "It's brought down in *sefarim* that it is a great *inyan* to look at tzaddikim. It purifies the soul."

The Rebbe replied, "It is also written (*Yeshayah* 60:21) **ועמך כולם צדיקים** - all Yidden are tzaddikim. - I think it would be more beneficial for you to look at yourself [to see where you can improve]."

The Anchoring Rope - Rabbi Yitzchak Oelbaum



Every year the same question lingers in the back of our minds. We come to Yom Kippur, we work on ourselves, we do teshuvah, we make real changes—and then what happens? A few weeks later, many of us are back to the same habits, the same struggles. So what's the point? Is Yom Kippur just a game, a cycle of trying and falling, year after year?

The Mashgiach of Ponovezh answered this with a powerful mashal.

There was once a wealthy man who owned a yacht. He kept it anchored in the marina, but every few months he would replace the rope that held the anchor. Someone asked him: "Why bother? The rope looks fine. Just leave it as is."

The man explained: "You don't understand. If I don't change the rope, it will slowly corrode and weaken. One day the rope will snap,

and the boat will drift away. I'll lose everything. By changing it regularly, I make sure the yacht stays in place."

So too, says the Mashgiach, with Yom Kippur. It is our chance each year to "change the rope." Without it, without that annual anchoring of our lives to Hashem, we would drift far, far away. Slowly, without noticing, we could lose our entire connection.

Even if, after Yom Kippur, we slip back into certain habits, something changes inside us. For ten days, from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur and into Sukkos, we anchor ourselves again. We remind ourselves who we are, what we're striving for. Even if we cannot hold the same level all year long, we walk away with a new awareness, a deeper sensitivity.

And that alone makes a difference. Maybe you still stumble. But this time, before you stumble, you pause. You think twice. That pause is Yom Kippur living inside you. That hesitation, that awareness, is worth everything. - This is why Hashem gave us these days. Not to become angels forever, but to anchor ourselves again and again, so we do not drift beyond return.

Institution of Neilah

We know who instituted the various tefillos. However, on Yom Kippur we have the once-a-year tefilla of neilah. Who instituted that?

The Chassam Sofer calculates and concludes that Moshe's 514th tefilla (of his famous 515 tefillos) was mincha of Yom Kippur. Then Moshe arose and instituted the tefilla of neilah. That was his 515th tefilla, the zenith, the special tefilla to finally break through. This is why it says **ואתחנן אל ה' <u>בעת ההיא</u>**, *I implored Hashem at that time*, as it was at a specific, special time.

Upgrade Your Kol Nidrei - R' Shlomo Landau

In just a short time, we will all be gathered in shuls around the world, and Yom Kippur will start. And the chazon will get up and start those awesome words - Kol Nidrei.



And we'll stand there and we'll shockel, and we'll beg and we'll plead - It's such a holy moment.

I have a simple question for you… "Do you even know what Kol Nidrei means?"

Kol Nidrei just basically means that if we made any vows, or we took upon ourselves any oaths, that they should be abolished - Hakadosh Baruch Hu should be *matir* our *neder*. – Why is that so awesome? And more importantly, why is that's this is how we begin the Yom Hakadosh? Let's start with Avinu Malkeinu, or with Unesaneh Tokef – Something more meaningful?! Nedarim, Charamim, Koinomos - we don't even know what we're saying!

There was this crazy scientist who lived in a basement in Long Island. He would tinker with all types of chemicals. One day he hit upon the cure for cancer! He tried it in the lab over and over again, and every time, that special potion killed all the cancer cells. But he didn't trust Pharma. He didn't trust Corporate America. So, he put an advertisement in the local newspaper – 'Cure for Cancer, $1000 in cash. – One injection and you're cured!'

And people who were desperate came flocking for the cure. And sure enough, within a few days of taking the concoction, they were cured!

Word about this miraculous cure spread, and thousands of people paid thousands of dollars in cash to be cured.

Everything was going great. This guy was a miracle worker who had cornered the market, and was making a fortune, at the same time as savings many lives. But, six months later, one of the first people who took the remedy, suddenly got sick and died. And then the next person, and the next and the next.



The FDA heard about this and realised that it was crazy, and that this man is a murderer. They swooped down on him. They did an investigation, and they found out that the potion that he had discovered and produced was good and worked, it saved lives and didn't take them, but the problem was that he was so negligent when it came to keeping his equipment sterile, that he took the same injector to administer the medicine to multiple patients without sterilizing it in between each treatment! – One of the first patients had Hepatitis, and therefore every subsequent patient caught it! So while they were getting a miraculous drug, in essence, it was killing them! [This mashul is based on a true case scenario.]

Do you know why we start Yom Kippur with Kol Nidrei?" Because Kol Nidrei is about that injection! It's about that case that houses that life-saving potion. It's about our mouth that houses our speech – our most powerful weapon that we use every moment of Yom Kippur – Begging, pleading, beseeching, confessing.

If our mouth is clean and it's sterile, then every tefillah that comes out is complete, and it reaches the Kisei Hakavod. But if our mouth doesn't keep its promises, and says things that are negative, then

every tefillah that comes out is contaminated! So while the tefillah may be pure, it will not reach its destination.

This year, when we stand at Kol Nidrei, and that shudder goes down our spine, let's commit to making sure that our speech is pure, and that the words that come out of our mouth are holy. And then every one of our tefillos will ascend directly to the Kisei Hakavod.

Stop Scrolling, Start Noticing – Rabbi Yehoshua Alt

R' Yehuda Leib Orlean offered a striking explanation in the Al Chet of **על חטא שחטאנו לפניך ביודעים ובלא יודעים**, '*for the sin we have committed before You knowingly and unknowingly*'. He asked: Why should we be held accountable for sins committed unknowingly?



His answer was that this phrase does not refer to mistakes made in ignorance, but to the *sin of not knowing itself*. We are commanded to know—to be aware, attentive, and sensitive.

We live in a world where people are wrapped up in themselves, concerned only with their own needs and concerns. Such self-absorption leads to spiritual blindness. A person who doesn't notice another's pain, confusion, or struggle is guilty of *not knowing.*

To truly live as a Jew means to be aware of what is happening around us—to see the person crying in distress, the elderly man who is lost, the one struggling under a heavy burden. There is no excuse to say, "I didn't know my neighbor was sick or alone and needed help." You should have known—because caring requires awareness.

[**R' Yehuda Leib Orlean** (1900-1943) was born to a family of well-off Gerer Hasidim in Warsaw and was a Gerrer chassid of the Imrei Emes. In 1933, he became the director of the Bais Yaakov Teachers' Seminary. He was a soft-spoken but charismatic and beloved teacher, who wrote a number of important Bais Yaakov texts including the 1935 textbook *Yidish leben* (Jewish Life) and the biographical essay "Sarah Schenirer." In 1943, R' Orlean was murdered in Birkenau.]

I heard an amazing story from **Rav Moshe Ahron Stern זצוק״ל** about someone who lived not so long ago, whom we will call Reb Shlomo. After he was **נפטר** they found a book where he had written all the different things that he had worked on.

One of the things they found in his book may sound like something beyond the capacity of a human being to do, yet each person on his level can definitely learn something from it.

He wrote: "**Today someone embarrassed me terribly. I thought into it and I could not think of anything I did wrong to this person. Every night I try to remove any hard feelings toward this person, but I am having a lot of trouble. I decided that every day I am going to write two nice things about this person, perhaps this will help me to truly be מוחל him with a full heart.**"

They continued reading, and they saw for some time afterward he wrote two nice things about this person every day. Later he wrote as follows: "**It is now x number of days later and ברוך ה׳ I have managed to erase any bad feelings toward this person and I completely forgive him.**"

The Ribbono Shel Olam does not ask a person to be someone else. He asks him to be the best version of himself. ~ R' Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l.



רבי ישראל סלנט זצ״ל once said, 'Do you know why when it comes to יום כיפור even the secular אידן try to fast and go to shul?

The reason is because the אידן who are שומרי יום כיפור fear תורה ומצות with such awe that it has an effect on all אידן.'

He continued, 'If we would treat שבת like we treat יום כיפור then even the secular אידן will start keeping שבת.'





Why Did the Rabbi Skip Shul on Yom Kippur? Dedicated in loving memory of the unforgettable lover of the Jewish people, Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald, Refael ben Yehoshua Falik (yartzeit 10 Shevat, 5776).

I want to share a story about the person I dedicated today's class to, Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald. A few years ago, the Jewish Heritage Center made a retreat for secular Jews who wanted to have a warm and inspiring **ראש השנה** and **יום כיפור**, and Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald and his wife joined the services.

As the sky darkens, the sun is about to set over the horizon of the day before **יום כיפור**, the **שול** is filled with men and women who came especially to observe **יום כיפור**, to celebrate **יום כיפור**, many of them wearing the white **קיטל** as the holiest day of the year is about to begin. Around five minutes before sunset, before the beginning of **יום כיפור**, a van pulls up to the hotel where the Jewish Heritage Center is running its program.

And I kid you not, out come of the van seven boys and three girls. They're all wearing beachwear and flip-flops. You look at them and

you know right away that they grew up in Orthodox homes, not just in Orthodox homes, in **חסידישע** homes, in Chasidishe communities. They all went to **ישיבה**, they all went to girl schools, **חסידישע** girl schools, and basically they were trying to escape for **יום כיפור**.

Where's the best way to escape? You find a hotel and you chill out.

אוי אוי אוי, the nightmare begins. They walk into the lobby and suddenly they see there's a bunch of Jews who are praying and many religious Jews who are there. So they go to the clerk and they say, "We want back our deposit. This was a mistake. We need to go somewhere else. This is not a place for us."

He refuses, he doesn't want to refund their reservations, and he refuses their request. They didn't have a lot of money, so they were standing there confused.

They didn't know what they should do, what should be their next step. They really didn't want to stay among all these people. They were trying to escape these people and now they ended up in the lion's den.

Rabbi Portnoy, from the Jewish Heritage Center comes over to them and he says, "Guys, I know you're not comfortable. I see you guys are perturbed, but I just want to tell you we don't bite. We're not going to bother you. Don't worry, we're not trying to threaten you. We just came here for our program. Do what you want. I just want you to know that the **שול** is always open and you're welcome to join us whenever you want. You're also welcome to ignore us if you want. Don't worry."

He was trying to be very friendly and polite, make them feel comfortable.

And they took their rooms and they went to their rooms and the rest of the crowd went in to **דאוונען כל נדרי**. Rabbi Portnoy said, "G-d wants you to deal with the **חסידישע** kids too. So He brought them to us." And I thought, you know, maybe after **יום כיפור** I'll have a chance

to have a **שמועס** with them and I went to **דאוונען כל נדרי**, and after **יום כיפור** hopefully we'll connect, maybe they'll come to the meal and we'll be able to strike up a more warm and friendly conversation.

But Ronnie Greenwald had a very different reaction. At night they went to their rooms, but shortly after coming down to **דאוונען** in the morning, he sat out in the lobby waiting for them to come down.

And as they came down, he began talking to them, first one-on-one and then as a group. He listened to them, he validated them, he validated their emotions, he encouraged them. He made them feel they were not outcasts but welcome members of the family. In fact, he did not **דאוונען** in **שול** that **יום כיפור**.

He Davened his **תפילות** privately whenever he fit them in, but most of the day he spent hanging out with these kids. Now you have to understand, these kids went swimming, they were drinking beer, but whenever they showed up in the lobby, he was waiting. He was out there smiling, welcoming them. No tension, no criticism, no flinching, no awkward faces, no anger. - Just pure love and acceptance all day.

He spent seven hours of the day with them. Again, they went to do their own thing, and they wanted to get rid of him at some points of the day, but then they came back to the lobby. He just listened, laughed, joked, listened to their stories individually and in group settings.

As Ronnie said, "These were broken vessels, **שברי כלים**." This was the first time they felt accepted within a religious Jewish environment.

The hours crept. And as the sun was about to set and everybody went into **שול** for **נעילה**, Rabbi Portnoy says we turned around and we see that two of the boys came into **שול** for **נעילה**. He says we invited them back for **סוכות** for **שמחת בית השואבה**, and they and 25 of their friends showed up.

We kept up a connection, and a hundred of them attended the Jewish Heritage Center for the **חנוכה** party. He said we had to create a special division for **חסידיש** young men and women because of that connection that Rabbi Ronnie created on **יום כיפור**.

Rabbi Portnoy was in Israel when the news arrived a few years ago that Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald passed away. He passed away suddenly in Florida. Rabbi Portnoy attended the funeral. As he left the room where the funeral was taking place, he was approached by a young woman he did not recognize. She was dressed in a very refined and modest way. She introduces herself and she says, you don't remember me, but I was one of the three girls who came to the hotel a few minutes before **יום כיפור**.

I struggled terribly in high school. I wasn't sure which way to go in life. I just joined this group of outcasts. And **יום כיפור** we did not want to have part of.

Too much anxiety, too much religion. I spent most of the **יום כיפור** drinking beer and hanging out in the pool. But that day, Rabbi Ronnie Greenwald touched my life in such a profound way that I changed my direction completely. I went to a regular **בית יעקב** seminary in Israel and nobody even imagined the upheavals I went through before that. I'm now in Israel and when I heard that he passed away, I had to come to the funeral just to say thank you.

Rabbi Portnoy said that that entire group of kids who came that **יום כיפור** today have all built beautiful Jewish homes based on **תורה** and **מצוות**. He says they were so alienated, they were so cynical. They felt that even intermarriage is fine for them, **חסידיש** kids.

Some of them even despised the idea of having a **ברית**, a circumcision which secular Jews do, that's how far they were. But when Ronnie Greenwald gave them his **יום כיפור**, they saw what Judaism really is and they saw who they really are

TheYeshiva.net
BY RABBI YY JACOBSON

The **בעל שם טוב** once saw somebody, he was a **חזן** and he was dancing by **על חטא**.



על חטא שחטאנו. So people wanted to throw him out. This is **פאסט נישט**.

על חטא you cry, you don't sing. So he said, "Why do you dance and sing by **על חטא**? You're confessing your sins!"

He said, "A king has a palace and different people have different jobs in the palace, and each of them celebrate their privilege of working with the king. You have the chef, you have the economy minister, you have the building minister." He says, "There's also a janitor. His job is to sweep up the dirt so that the palace should be splendid." He says, "And now I ask you a question: The one who's the janitor, he doesn't sing while he's sweeping? Shouldn't he be happy that he gets to clean up the king's palace?" He says, "**על חטא**, I'm cleaning up **השם**'s palace.

The **שכינה** lives inside of me. But there's a little dirt there, I gotta clean it up, why shouldn't I sing? Why shouldn't I dance?

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם. Doesn't say **בתוכו**." So **רב משה אלשיך** writes, "Why **בתוכם**? There was one **מקדש**, because **בתוכם** means within them, within the people." When a Jew realizes who he or she is, my **תפילה** is not coming from a place of separateness, you're actually **דאוונען** for something that **השם** wants.

Dr. Sholom Springer

רב הוטנר discusses the well-known idea that **יום כיפור** is **מכפר** only for **עבירות שבין אדם למקום**; it does not work for **עבירות שבין אדם לחברו**. It is based on the **פסוק**:

כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכֹּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ.

The **גמרא** darshens the words **מכל חטאתיכם לפני השם**— meaning, the **חטאתיכם** which are **לפני השם**, referring to sins **בין אדם למקום**. But sins which are not **לפני השם**, namely **בין אדם לחבירו**, are not dealt with by **יום כיפור**.

רב הוטנר explains it with a beautiful **משל**.

Even an earthly **בית דין** requires both protagonists to be present when the case is heard. If one person goes to one of the **דיינים** the night before and says, "I want to tell you about the case you're going to hear tomorrow," that **דיין** would immediately be disqualified. Both sides have to be present.

Similarly, if an issue is still outstanding between one person and another, there is no point in going to **הקדוש ברוך הוא** and saying, "At least forgive me for the **בין אדם למקום** part." Because every **בין אדם לחבירו** also contains a part of **בין אדם למקום**.

רבונו של עולם says, so to speak: "You haven't settled things with your **חבר**. I need both of you to be part of the case."

But if you settle things with your **חבר**, and your **חבר** has been **מוחל** you, then it is completely different. Now the **בין אדם לחבירו** has been dealt with, and you can address the **בין אדם למקום** aspect as well.

That is one level of **רב הוטנר's** explanation.

And I must say that this idea is also presented by **רבי בערנשטיין** in one of his tapes. I certainly cannot emulate either the **המתקה** of his delivery or the erudition with which he presents it. If you can find that recording, it is a particularly beautiful presentation of this **רב הוטנר**.

But **רב הוטנר** takes it one step further.

He focuses on the words **לפני השם**. There are many places in the **תורה** where the expression **לפני השם** appears.

For example, **מעשר שני** is brought to **ירושלים**, **קרבנות** are brought **לפני השם**, the **עזרה** is referred to as **לפני השם**, and when the **כהן גדול** enters the **קודש הקדשים**, he is entering **לפני השם**.

What is the common denominator?

In all these cases, **לפני השם** refers to a geographical place — **ירושלים, היכל, עזרה, קודש הקדשים**. But in the **יום כיפור פסוק**, **לפני השם** doesn't seem to be a place at all.

So **רב הוטנר** gives a beautiful explanation.

All these places have one common denominator: **they are accessible to everybody**.

Everybody can go to **ירושלים**. Everyone can bring a **קרבן**. Everyone can enter the **עזרה**. And even in the **קודש הקדשים**, although only the **כהן גדול** enters, he enters as the representative of **כלל ישראל**.

So **לפני השם** represents a place where nobody is excluded.

Now take that idea and apply it to **יום כיפור**.

A person comes before **רבונו של עולם** and says, "I want to be **לפני השם**." - What does **לפני השם** mean?

It means that everyone has access. And that means that **everyone must have access to you as well**. No one can be excluded. If there is an outstanding issue between you and another person, then you are not truly in a state of **לפני השם**.

רב הוטנר even suggests that perhaps this affects our **בין אדם למקום** as well, but let's not go that far. The main point is that **לפני השם** is not merely a location. It is a **state of being**.

When we come to **כל נדרי**, to **יום כיפור**, we want to be in that state of **לפני השם**. That means having no unresolved issues with other people,

having settled whatever we can settle, asking for **מחילה**, and making sure that nobody is excluded from us.

Then we can come before **רבונו של עולם** with confidence and ask for **מחילה, סליחה וכפרה**.

I wish you all a **גמר חתימה טובה**.

The 9/11 Miracle by Rabbi David Ashear



Rabbi David Ashear recently met a man who told him something extraordinary. "Every morning," the man said, "before I say Modeh Ani, I look at a picture hanging on my wall."

The man began to explain. And to understand that photograph, you have to go back more than thirty years.

It was 1993. The man was working in the World Trade Center on the 88th floor. One day, his boss called him and asked him to come down to the basement. He needed an envelope. The man left his office, traveled all the way down from the 88th floor, found his boss, and handed him the envelope. Then he turned around to head back upstairs.

Moments later - There was an explosion. The basement filled with smoke. Soot covered him. People began scrambling. A bomb had exploded beneath the World Trade Center. The man could hardly comprehend what had just happened. Only moments earlier, he had been standing right there. His boss, whom he had just gone downstairs to see, did not survive. Now the man was desperately trying to escape.

Firefighters began directing people through the confusion. "You can't leave here." "Don't go that way." People were trying to figure out how to get outside safely. Then he was directed toward the B1 level. There was a particular door there through which he could safely escape. He found the door. He went through it. And he made it outside alive. He thanked Hashem. He had survived.

Eventually, life moved forward. But he never forgot that day. And he certainly never forgot the door that had led him to safety. At the time, he had no idea that eight years later - His life would depend on remembering it.

Eight years passed. The man was still working in the World Trade Center. Still on the 88th floor. Then came the morning of September 11, 2001. He was already at work when a hijacked airplane struck the tower above him.

Once again - Chaos. People began rushing toward the staircases. Everyone wanted to get out. The stairwells became packed. Movement was painfully slow. Fear was everywhere. The man noticed an elderly man who needed help. He could have thought only about himself. He could have tried to move as quickly as possible. But someone needed him. So he stopped to help.

Together, they slowly made their way down. Floor after floor. It took approximately an hour and fifteen minutes. Finally, they reached the lower levels of the building. But they still weren't safe.

The scene downstairs was chaotic. They tried to leave. "You can't exit here." They looked for another way. "You can't exit there." Another route. Closed. Another exit. Blocked. The man realized they were trapped inside a building that had just been struck by an airplane. And then - He saw something. B1. He stopped. B1? He knew B1. Suddenly, his mind traveled back eight years. 1993. The bombing. The basement. The smoke. The firefighters. And - The door. There was a door on B1. A door through which he had escaped once before. He knew where it was. He headed toward it. He found it. And once

again - He walked through that door to safety. Minutes later, the World Trade Center came crashing down.

Think about that. Eight years before September 11, this man had been called down from the 88th floor because his boss needed an envelope. An ordinary errand. Something that probably seemed completely insignificant. Bring an envelope downstairs. That's all. Then a terrorist bomb exploded. And while escaping that first attack, he learned about a particular door on the B1 level. Eight years later, he found himself escaping another terrorist attack - From the very same building. From the very same 88th floor. And when the obvious exits seemed inaccessible - He remembered the door. A door he had been shown eight years earlier. A door he never could have imagined he would need again.

But the story wasn't over. The man worked in a company with seventeen people. On September 11 - All sixteen of his coworkers were killed. He was the only one from the company who survived.

Today, there is a photograph hanging on his wall. Seventeen people are in that picture. He knows every face. They were his coworkers. People he saw. People he spoke to. People he worked alongside. Sixteen of them never came home that day. And he did. He is the only person in that photograph still alive.

That is the picture he looks at every morning. Before Modeh Ani. Imagine waking up every morning and seeing that photograph. Seventeen faces. Sixteen gone. One still here. He doesn't look at the picture merely to remember tragedy. He looks at it to remember something else. Responsibility. Why did Hashem give me another day? Why am I still here? What am I supposed to do with the life I was given?

He doesn't claim to understand why he survived while others did not. None of us can know Hashem's calculations. But he knows one thing. If Hashem gave him another day, that day must mean something.

So every morning, before saying Modeh Ani, he looks at the wall. He sees those sixteen people. Then he looks at himself. And he says: "Modeh ani lefanecha, Hashem." Thank You, Hashem. Thank You for another morning. Thank You for giving me back my life. Thank You for another opportunity.

And then he asks: "What can I do for You today?" How can I serve You today? What more can I accomplish? How can I use this life properly? Not because of what I hope to receive. But because of what I have already received.

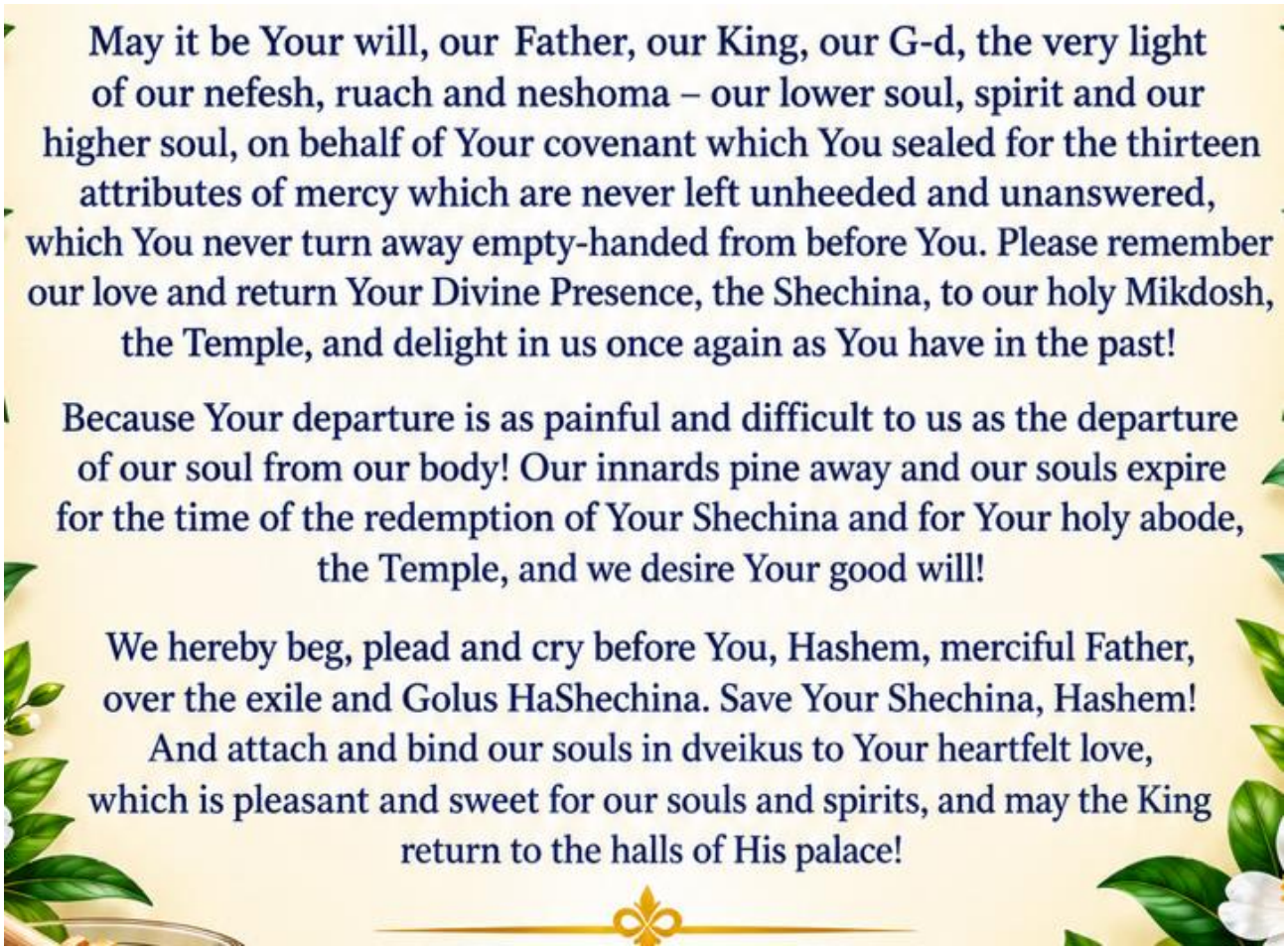
There is something remarkable about the timing. We might naturally call his escape on September 11 the miracle. And it certainly was an extraordinary survival. But in a sense, part of the story had begun eight years earlier. He didn't know it then. In 1993, he simply thought he was trying to escape a bombed building. He didn't know that while escaping - He was learning the route that would one day lead him out again.

Sometimes something happens in our lives, and we have no idea why. We meet someone. We learn something. We experience something. Plans change. We are sent somewhere we didn't expect to go. Perhaps we even go through something difficult. And we see only that moment. - Hashem sees the entire story. This man could never have known in 1993 what the B1 door would mean to him in 2001. Only eight years later could he look backward and understand how one chapter had connected to another.

That is avodas Hashem. To recognize that life itself creates responsibility. To realize that every morning is another gift. And to understand that the greatest way to thank Hashem for giving us another day - Is to give that day back to Him.

סדר תיקון שובבים Livorno (Leghorn), Italy 1740 - A supplication for the redemption, intended for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. **תפלה שיסד ה״ה הרב המובהק הכולל החסיד והעניו כמוהר״ר חיים בן עטר ... לאומרה בראש השנה בג׳ תפלות אחר גמר העמידה קודם אלהי נצור, וביום כיפור בעוד שהשליח ציבור אומר ויעבור ה׳ על פניו**

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ אֱלֹקֵינוּ יְדִידוּת אוֹר נַפְשֵׁנוּ רוּחֵנוּ וְנִשְׁמָתֵנוּ, לְמַעַן בְּרִיתְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתָּ לִשְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת שֶׁאֵינָן חוֹזְרוֹת רֵיקָם לְעוֹלָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, זְכֹר אַהֲבָתֵנוּ וְחִבָּתֵנוּ וְהָשֵׁב שְׁכִינָתְךָ לְבֵית קָדְשֵׁנוּ וְתַחֲזֹר לְהִשְׁתַּעֲשֵׁעַ בָּנוּ כְּימֵי קֶדֶם, כִּי קָשָׁה פְּרִידָתְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּפְרִידַת נַפְשֵׁנוּ מִגּוּפֵנוּ, הָמוּ מֵעֵינוּ וְכָלְתָה נַפְשֵׁנוּ אֶל גְּאֵלַת שְׁכִינָתְךָ וְאֶל מְעוֹן קָדְשְׁךָ, וְלִרְצוֹנְךָ ה׳ הִנָּנוּ מִתְחַנְּנִים וּבוֹכִים לְפָנֶיךָ ה׳ אָב הָרַחֲמָן עַל גָּלוּת הַשְּׁכִינָה – נִכְסַפְנוּ הוֹשִׁיעָה ה׳ שְׁכִינָתְךָ, וְדַבֵּק נַפְשֵׁנוּ בְּאַהֲבָתְךָ הַנְּעִימָה וְהָעֲרֵבָה עַל נַפְשֵׁנוּ וְרוּחֵנוּ וְנִשְׁמָתֵנוּ, וְיֵעוֹל מַלְכֵּנוּ בְּהֵיכָלֵיהּ



Hashem Never Forgets by Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

The Woman Who Was Supposed to Die That Night

Rav Chatzkel Mishkovsky related the story of a woman who became gravely ill. Her condition deteriorated until the doctors had exhausted every possibility. They tried medications. Treatments. Therapies. Experimental drugs. Everything available to them. - Nothing worked.

Eventually, the doctors told the family there was nothing more they could do. Instead of allowing their mother to die in the sterile surroundings of a hospital room, they suggested that the family bring her home. She was not expected to survive the night.

They brought her home. The family gathered around her bed. They cried. They held her hand. They kissed her forehead. They began saying Vidui with her.

Throughout the night, there was almost no sound in the house except for her labored breathing and the cries of her family. Everyone was preparing themselves for the inevitable.

But then the sun began to rise. ***And she was still alive.***

One Last Tefillah

Her husband looked outside and realized morning had arrived. He knew that once a close relative passes away, before the burial, the immediate mourner has the status of an onen and is exempt from positive mitzvos.

He thought to himself: They are telling me that my wife may pass away at any moment. If that happens, I may no longer be able to daven. So while she was still alive, he decided to go downstairs to the small shul and quickly daven with sunrise.

He prayed and immediately rushed back upstairs. He opened the bedroom door - And nearly fainted.

The woman he had left gasping for breath, seemingly moments away from death - ***Was sitting upright in a chair.*** Her eyes were open. She was speaking.

The family was gathered around her once again. But now - They were crying for joy. Her husband ran toward her. He hugged her. He kissed her.

"What happened? I left you barely alive! I didn't even know if I would come back and find you still with us. And now you're sitting up?"

She looked at him. Then she told him what she had experienced.

Back to Chevron

As she had drifted in and out of consciousness, she felt that she was approaching the end. And then, in what she described as a dreamlike state, two people appeared before her. People she had known many years earlier.

Her mind suddenly returned to the year 1929. She and her husband had been a young couple living in Chevron. That was the year of the terrible Chevron massacre, when dozens of Jews were murdered.

Among those killed was a young couple who lived nearby. They had recently had a baby. The parents were gone. ***And their tiny infant had been left an orphan.***

The woman remembered what had happened next.

At the time, she was expecting a child of her own. But she had not yet given birth and therefore could not nurse the orphaned infant. The baby was only days old. There was no mother. No father. And the little child was barely willing to eat.

So this young woman took the orphan into her home. She tried milk. She tried formula. And when the baby would not drink normally, she placed the milk into a small bag and painstakingly fed the infant - ***Drop by drop.***

It took hours. But she didn't stop. She cared for that orphaned baby in her own home for months until the child became strong enough to be taken in by relatives outside Chevron.

Then life moved forward. The years passed. Decades passed. And perhaps she rarely thought about that act of chesed again.

But now - On what appeared to be the final night of her life - She saw that baby's parents.

"You Must Give Her More Life"

The couple appeared to her and told her what had taken place in the Heavenly Court. They had gone before the Beis Din Shel Maalah and pleaded on her behalf. How could this woman be taken from her family?

Her husband was crying. Her sons and daughters were crying. She still had a family who needed her. And then they presented their claim:

"When we died and there was no one to care for our baby, she cared for our child." She had taken their helpless infant into her home. She had struggled to feed the baby. She had raised and protected the child when there was no mother or father to do it. And now those parents asked that she be given more life.

The woman said that, in her vision, the Heavenly Court accepted their plea. ***"You must give her more life."***

And then - She woke up. She felt well.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu never forgets.

There is no chesed He forgets. There is no act of rachamim He forgets. There is no sacrifice that disappears.

Something that may have seemed difficult but relatively insignificant at the time can return to a person years later –

The Street That Was Closed for Shabbos

There was a man who worked as a caretaker in a yeshivah in Bnei Brak. He was approximately sixty years old. His wife was around fifty-five. And they had never been blessed with children.

Year after year passed. They davened. Others davened for them. But they remained childless.

And then - At an age when almost no one expected it - ***They were blessed with twins.*** A boy. And a girl. The simchah was enormous.

Students from the yeshivah came. Former students came. People who had davened for this couple for years came to celebrate. It was almost impossible to believe.

At the bris, someone approached the new father and asked him a question:

"What do you think happened? What zechus do you think brought you this incredible brachah?"

The man answered carefully. "I can't know for certain." Then he added: "But if you want my opinion - ***I'm sure."***

Ten or Fifteen Cars

He began telling the story. He and his wife lived in a very religious neighborhood of Bnei Brak. Almost everyone on their street was shomer Shabbos. Yet each Shabbos, approximately ten or fifteen cars would pass through. The drivers apparently did not live on the street. They were simply using it as a route from one place to another. But it bothered this man.

Here was a street filled almost entirely with Shabbos-observant families. And yet every Shabbos, cars would drive through, disturbing the atmosphere and kedushah of the day.

He wanted to do something about it. So he went to the municipality.

"What would we have to do to close our street to traffic on Shabbos?"

The official explained that there was a legal process. A large majority of residents on the street would have to sign their approval. If they could obtain the required supermajority - ***The street could be closed for Shabbos.***

Door After Door

The man went home. He told his wife. And together - They started knocking on doors.

That may sound simple. It wasn't. These were large apartment buildings. One address could contain thirty or forty families.

Night after night, the husband and wife went from apartment to apartment. Door after door. Family after family.

Some people signed immediately. Others weren't interested. Some told them to leave. Some didn't want the street closed at all.

They explained. They pleaded. They spoke about the beauty of Shabbos. Sometimes they brought challah. They returned to people who had refused. They tried again.

Weeks passed. Then months. ***Eventually, the effort stretched over three years.***

Finally - They reached the required number. They had enough signatures. They were ecstatic.

"I'm Sorry"

They gathered all the papers. They went to the iriyah, the municipality. They proudly handed over the list.

The official behind the counter looked through it. Then he said:

"I'm sorry." There was a problem.

Signatures expired.

Some of the signatures were more than two years old. They could no longer be counted. "Who knows if these people still live there?" the official explained. "Maybe circumstances have changed."

The couple stood there stunned. Three years. Three years of knocking. Three years of conversations. Three years of persuading people. Three years of effort. And now they were being told - ***Start again.***

For a moment, they looked at each other and thought: Forget it. We can't do this again.

But that thought didn't last very long.

They Started Again

They went back to the street. Back to the buildings. Back to the doors. Back to the neighbors again. They redoubled their efforts.

This time they moved more quickly because people already knew what they were trying to accomplish. But they still had to revisit residents. They still had to get updated signatures. They still had to put in the work.

Finally - They again reached the number they needed.

They brought the updated signatures to the municipality. Everything was approved. And the street was officially closed to traffic on Shabbos.

And then came the remarkable ending.

That Very Week

The man told Rabbi Goel Elkarif: ***The week the street was closed for Shabbos, his wife became pregnant.*** After decades without children. At approximately sixty and fifty-five years old. She was expecting. Not one child. - Twins. A boy - And a girl.

At the celebration, the father said: ***"For my efforts, we were blessed with a boy."***

"And for my wife's efforts, we were blessed with a girl."

He could not prove why Hashem had given them the children. None of us can know Hashem's calculations. But in his heart - He knew what he believed.

Years of effort for the honor of Shabbos had not disappeared. ***The decision to begin again was remembered.***

Hashem remembers. **Hashem Never Forgets**

No chesed is lost.

No mitzvah is forgotten.

No sacrifice disappears.



R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischah ZT''L would say:

"Why do we enumerate the Al Chet on Yom Kippur, according to the letters of the Alef-Bais?

Because how else would we know when to stop!"

R' Yechiel Michel of Gustinin ZT"L would say:

"Part of a day is Halachically considered to be like a whole day, and a single day is considered like an entire year. Thus, if we do real teshuvah on Yom Kippur, it will be as if we had done teshuvah the entire year!"

Autumn Leaves – Rabbi Fyvel Shuster



The **חידושי הרי"ם** provided an interesting answer to a question that comes to many people's mind at the end of **יום כיפור**. Just after we blow the **שופר**, we start to **דאווען מעריב**, the first **מעריב** after **יום כיפור**, and in the **שמונה עשרה**, we say the **ברכה סלח לנו, סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו**, asking **השם** to forgive us because we've sinned.

And people wonder, who had time to sin? What sin could we have done? We're still in **שול**, we've just gone from the end of **נעילה** where we reached our highest point, the highest we were able to reach, and now we head straight into **מעריב**.

So, he answered that we have to ask forgiveness for not having the **אמונה** that **יום כיפור** purified us. It's very important to maintain that understanding because the **יצר הרע** tries to trick us into feeling that it's not so. And that can be very negative, because if you imagine something which is very stained, it doesn't really bother you to stain it again. But if somehow you were able to make it entirely clean and pristine like it was, you would be very careful about not staining it again.

So, there are other important approaches to why **יום כיפור** helps us, even though, as we all know, after **יום כיפור** we go back often to doing **עבירות**, hopefully not the same ones, hopefully not the same magnitude, but things do get stained up again.

So, the **רבי**, the **עטרת ישועה** of **דזי"קוב**, 'Ateres Yeshua' of Dzikov was once in Vienna for medical treatment. He was walking through the streets of Vienna in the fall, and he was watching a street cleaner. Now, he noticed that every day the leaves fell off the trees,

and every day the street cleaner went around sweeping up the leaves and putting them in piles and putting them in containers.

And one morning he asked the street cleaner, he says, "Why do you work so hard clearing the streets if tomorrow the streets are going to be full of leaves again?"

He said, "It's very simple. If I didn't clean them each day, so then the leaves would be up over people's heads. This enables me to clean it and to keep it in reasonable proportion so that I can clean it again."

With excitement, the **עטרת ישועה** turned to the people who were with him, and he said, "Do you see the great **חסד**, the great loving kindness **השם** gave us in giving us **יום כיפור**? If we didn't have **יום כיפור** that enabled us to clean off, to clean the slate, so to speak, so then the **עבירות** would pile up over our heads. That would cause us to despair of our ability to be able to repair and to move on. And here, by this gift of taking away those leaves of **עבירה** that have piled up over the year, we have the sense of being able to start fresh.

And then, as some more leaves fall, we're quickly and more easily able to clean them up and to believe that we can clean them up. And that enables us to go on, hopefully progressing throughout the year."

חז״ל said that a **בת קול** comes out, a heavenly voice comes out after **יום כיפור** and says the **פסוק, לך אכול בשמחה לחמך**, eat with joy your bread, drink **שתה בלב טוב יינך**, drink with a good heart your wine, **כי כבר רצה אלקים את מעשיך**, because **השם** has desired and accepted your deeds.

Wishing everyone a wonderful **יום טוב**, a wonderful **יום כיפור**, which is a gift that **הקדוש ברוך הוא** gives us.

May we be able to receive the gift in the maximum way possible and to be able to then go on **בשמחה** to a new year with a fresh start of serving **השם**. Wishing everyone a **גמר חתימה טובה, כל טוב**.

The Weekly Vort

■ Shedding Tears

It is commendable for a person to cry to Hashem on Yom Kippur. *A king ordered a magnificent castle to be built. To discourage invaders, he fortified the castle with two defenses: an impenetrable high wall, and a deep, water-filled moat surrounding it.* - In times gone by, the Jewish People were protected by a mighty wall, the *Beis Hamikdosh*, to deter Satan and the evil inclination. Unfortunately, we have lost this stronghold. We now depend on our second line of defense, the water-filled moat of our tears, to ward off the onslaught of the *yetzer hara*. (Tiferes Uziel)

■ Open Aron Kodesh

The *Aron Kodesh* is left open while the *Sifrei Torah* are carried around the *shul* before Kol Nidrei to indicate that the Gates of *Teshuvah* are always open. (Imrei Noam)

■ Bending Over

It is customary to bend forward slightly when saying the *Viduy*. The Shelah HaKadosh explains that this custom is based on the Gemarah which states that if one does not bow down when saying *Modim* in the *Shemoneh Esrei*, his spine will become curved like a snake. - When we say *Viduy*, we confess our sins which originate with the Serpent – the *Satan*. We incline our backs like a snake, to rectify the sins that were prompted by the Serpent. (Elef Hamagein)

"When one does teshuvah, he becomes a brand-new person. He isn't the same person who did the aveirah. This is the reason teshuvah atones — he is no longer the person who committed the aveirah." ~ The Chofetz Chaim.

Yom Kippur That Falls on Shabbos

ואמנם בשבת אין יום צרה, כי רגע אחד של שבת פועל יותר מכל הזמנים, דמהעונג שבת הוה נחלה בלי מצרים (כשבת קי״ח ע״א), על כן יום הכפורים שחל בשבת זכות השבת ילין. [Drashos Chasam Sofer 36]

And indeed, on Shabbos there is no day of distress, for a single moment of Shabbos accomplishes more than all other times, since from the delight of Shabbos comes 'an inheritance without limit' (as in Shabbos 118a); therefore, when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbos, the merit of Shabbos rests upon it.



When The Sole Awakens The Soul - Steps to the Throne with Joy by Rabbi Nosson Muller

The seudah hamafsekes has ended, and Yom Kippur is just moments away. We remove our shoes, the first act of the self-affliction that will define the next twenty-five hours.

What is it about shoes? There are so many ways to deny pleasure to the human body. Why is going shoeless so integral to the message of Yom Kippur?

Derishah (Orach Chaim 606) suggests two reasons. Only shoes fashioned from leather are forbidden, he points out. It is because leather is formed from an animal's hide, and on Yom Kippur, we seek to distance ourselves from the animalistic instincts that drive us to sin.

Second, footwear in general signifies movement. A person on his way somewhere puts on his shoes before he ventures out. On Yom Kippur, we stay in one place, standing before Hashem, focused only on Him,

His will and His honor. We have nowhere to go, and nowhere else to be. Today, we remove our shoes!

The Beis Yisrael offers another explanation in the name of the **Kli Yakar**. A barefoot man feels every little twig, rock, and pebble digging into his feet. He notices every depression in the ground, and every crack in the cement. On Yom Kippur, every Jew has to know that even the slightest aveirah does damage. Every crack in his soul needs to be seen and each sinful little pebble's prick of pain needs to be felt.

R' Dovid Baharan, one of the pure tzaddikim of Yerushalayim, was seen weeping in shul on Chol HaMoed Succos. He had made the berachah on the Four Species without noticing that the hadassim had slipped out of its knot and fallen to the floor. - "I made a berachah levatalah, uttering Hashem's Name in vain," he explained through his tears.

Several years later, **R' Sholom Schwadron** happened upon R' Dovid crying on Succos again. "What is the matter?" asked R' Sholom.

"Four years ago at this time on this day, I made a berachah levatalah," he said.

Stunned at the level of fear of Heaven in open display, R' Sholom made a note on his calendar to daven in that shul every year on that day. And without fail, he would encounter a Jew who lived without shoes all year round, crying in pain over a sin he could never forget.

Once a year, we take off our shoes, too. It reminds us that aveiros are real, and they should cause pain and tears.

"The happiest moment of my year is when I say Shehechiyanu on Yom Kippur." A reminder that Yom Kippur is not a day of fear, but a gift of closeness. ~ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

כָּל נִדְרֵי



It was Yom Kippur eve in Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. As two great men carried Sifrei Torah from the aron kodesh, one slipped and fell.

A gasp swept through the crowd, but despite hitting the ground, the man held the Sefer Torah securely against his chest.

After Kol Nidrei, **R' Meir Shapiro** rose to speak.

"Tatte in Himmel," he cried, "that Sefer Torah, held so firmly even as we fall, is the story of our lives. The yetzer hara may sometimes knock us down. But even when sin knocks us down, we never let go of Your Torah. We hold it tight."

If we only make one pledge tonight, that should be it. Promise Hashem that no matter what challenges or difficulties we may face, we will always hold on to the Torah. Tell Him that we are His when we stand, and we remain His when we fall.

When a man came to The Kotzker Rebbe saying "Rebbe, I sinned, but I don't know how to repent — no one taught me," He replied: "Did you know how to sin? Did someone teach you? So just as you sinned, in the same way, do teshuva."

R' Zvi Hirsh of Safrin ZT"L would say:

"A man who leads the davening with perfect vocal virtuosity is not the proper chazan for me. One who doesn't have even the smallest trace of fear when davening for the amud, cannot have full fear of Heaven either."

A Lesson in Kindness Before Kol Nidrei



Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz relates the following story:

It was Erev Yom Kippur, and the Hasidic master **Rabbi Raphael of Bershad** was making his way from his home to the synagogue for the Kol Nidrei service.

Dressed in elegant white garments, his face radiated holiness, and he appeared, in the words of those who saw him, like "an angel of G-d."

Immersed in thoughts of the sanctity of the day, he walked quietly toward the synagogue. Along the way, he was greeted by a simple Jewish farmer who was delighted to see the revered rabbi.

"Rabbi, Shanah Tovah!" the farmer exclaimed. "I'm so happy to meet you because I've been needing your advice but haven't had the chance to come see you. Here's my problem: lately, the goats in my pen have refused to eat their hay. Since they aren't eating properly, they're becoming thinner every day."

Rabbi Raphael listened attentively and patiently, giving the man his full attention despite the sacred moments leading up to Kol Nidrei.

When the farmer had finished explaining his concern, the rabbi thoughtfully replied, "I think you should try mixing more water into the hay and straw. Perhaps you could also mix in a little porridge. The goats will surely enjoy the porridge, and once they come to eat it, they'll naturally eat the hay as well."

The farmer was overjoyed with the practical advice. Thanking the rabbi warmly, he left feeling that his beloved goats had been saved.

The rabbi's students, who had accompanied him on the walk to the synagogue, were deeply impressed. They could hardly believe that, on the eve of the holiest day of the year, while on his way to Kol Nidrei, their teacher had patiently discussed the eating habits of goats with a village farmer.

As they continued walking, Rabbi Raphael turned to them and said: "In the famous Iggeres HaRamban, which should serve as a guiding light for every Jew, it is written: **לְעוֹלָם יְדַבֵּר אָדָם כָּל דְּבָרָיו בְּנַחַת, עִם כָּל אָדָם וּבְכָל עֵת** - ***'Always speak gently, to every person and at all times.'*** The words 'to every person' include even a simple farmer, and 'at all times' includes even Yom Kippur, just before Kol Nidrei."

His message was clear: genuine kindness and patience know no boundaries — not of person, place, or even the holiest moment of the year.

The Joy of Yom Kippur

In connection with Yom Kippur, **Rabbi Moshe Aharon Stern**, the longtime spiritual mentor of the Kaminetz Yeshiva, would often say that if he were not embarrassed, he would begin dancing in the synagogue as soon as the blessing of *Shehecheyanu* was recited on Yom Kippur night.

He explained: *"If a person knew that even one of their sins had been erased, how overjoyed they would be! They would rejoice that the Creator, in His infinite mercy, had forgiven them. How much greater should our joy be on Yom Kippur, when the sins of the Jewish people are forgiven! As the Mishnah teaches, 'There were no happier days for Israel than Yom Kippur and the Fifteenth of Av.'"* (Ta'anit 26b)

Rabbi Stern would add that if people truly sensed the extraordinary spiritual purity that Yom Kippur brings, they would find it almost impossible to sin afterward. Once a person appreciates that their soul has been completely cleansed, they naturally desire to preserve that precious purity.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Mendel Kaplan, zt"l, would say, "The main thing about Yom Kippur is not to bang your chest, but to look for ways to improve yourself. Nowadays people enjoy saying a long Viduy on Yom Kippur.

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zt"l, and **Rav Elchonon Wasserman, zt"l,** were brothers-in-law, and one year Rav Elchonon asked Rav Chaim Ozer how his Yom Kippur fast had gone.

Rav Chaim Ozer answered that the fast was bearable but confessing his Aveiros was too hard for him!

That's how the Al Cheits are supposed to be — more painful than the fast!"

"I don't want you to sin — not because it is forbidden to sin but because you will be so busy that you won't have time to sin." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

R' Moshe of Kobrin ZT"L would say:

"Vanquishing the Yetzer Horah is like learning to ride a horse. If you fall off the horse you immediately climb on again. So too, with the Yetzer Horah, if you tried to control it and failed you must try, try and try again."

Historical Events That Happened on Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, when Jews everywhere, from all backgrounds and denominations, flock to the synagogue to pray and reconnect. The Torah sets aside the tenth day of the month of Tishrei as a day of fasting and forgiveness. But quite a few other things happened on Yom Kippur too. Read on for 14 historical events that took place on this holy day, from the Biblical era all the way to our times.

1. Abraham Was Circumcised

At the age of 99, Avraham was given the covenant of circumcision. The Torah doesn't spell out the exact date, but it does drop a clue: the verse says it took place "on that very day," an unusual phrase that's also used for Yom Kippur. According to one tradition, this hints that Abraham's circumcision took place on Yom Kippur. That merit, it's said, stands us in good stead every Yom Kippur when we ask for our sins to be forgiven. (According to another tradition, Abraham's circumcision was on 13 Nissan.)

2. Isaac Was Bound on the Altar

There are a few traditions about the exact date of *Akeidat Yitzchak*, the day Abraham bound Isaac as a sacrifice, only to be told to let him go at the very last moment. One tradition places this dramatic event on Yom Kippur.

3. Moshe Descended From Mt. Sinai With the Second Tablets

Moshe spent three separate stretches of forty days and forty nights on Mt. Sinai. During the first, from 6 Sivan (Shavuot) until 17 Tammuz, he received the first set of Tablets, which he then broke upon seeing the Jews sin with the Golden Calf. During the second, from 18 Tammuz until 29 Av, he pleaded on behalf of the Jewish people and secured Divine forgiveness. And during the third, from 29 Av until 10 Tishrei (Yom Kippur), he received the second set of Tablets.

Yom Kippur thus marks the day the Jewish people were wholeheartedly forgiven, which is why it was dedicated as a day of forgiveness for all generations to come.

4. Jubilee Years Would Begin

In ancient times, every fiftieth year was marked as a Jubilee Year. On Yom Kippur, the Beth Din (Jewish court) would sound a shofar to announce that this special year had begun. At the sound of the blast, all property would return to its original owners, and all slaves would go free.

5. The First Temple Was Inaugurated

King Solomon inaugurated the First Temple with seven days of celebration, running from 8 Tishrei through the 14th. That meant the Jewish people ate and drank on Yom Kippur that year—the only time in history such a thing was ever permitted. G-d was pleased with their conduct, promising each participant a share in the World to Come.

6. Zechariah Was Killed in the Temple Courtyard

Scripture records a tragic episode from the days of Joash, King of Judah. A prophet named Zechariah, son of the High Priest Yehoyada, stood up to rebuke the nation for abandoning G-d and returning to idol worship. Furious and unwilling to listen, the people rose up and stoned him to death in the Temple courtyard. According to a Midrashic tradition, this happened on Yom Kippur.

7. Ezekiel Envisioned the Third Temple

The book of Ezekiel closes with a prophecy set in the year 3352 (410 BCE), fourteen years after the First Temple's destruction. Ezekiel saw himself transported to the Temple Mount, where an angel holding a measuring rod walked him through the Third Temple in careful detail, delineating the exact measurements of its various structures. This vision came to him on Yom Kippur.

8. Rabbi Akiva Was Killed by the Romans

Rabbi Akiva was one of the most prolific and inspiring teachers in Jewish history. He led during the turbulent years surrounding the destruction of the Second Temple, and was ultimately put to death by the Romans for the "crime" of teaching Torah. Some sources place his tragic death on Yom Kippur.

9. Rabbi Yehuda the Prince Was Born

Rabbi Yehuda the Prince is best known for being the first to give structure to the Oral Law by compiling the Mishnah. The Talmud tells us that he was born on the very same day Rabbi Akiva passed away. Since Rabbi Akiva was killed on Yom Kippur, that means Rabbi Yehuda was born on Yom Kippur too.

10. Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg's Ransomer Passed Away

Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg was one of the most influential scholars of medieval Germany. In 1286, he was arrested by a local ruler and held for ransom. Rabbi Meir, however, forbade his followers from paying for his release, worried that doing so would only encourage others to imprison more Torah scholars. He remained in prison for seven years, until his passing. Even then, the authorities refused to release his body.

Fourteen years later, a generous Jew named Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfort paid a heavy ransom to recover Rabbi Meir's body and give it a proper Jewish burial. In exchange, he asked to be buried beside Rabbi Meir when his own time came. Alexander passed away shortly after, on Yom Kippur 5068 (1307), and was laid to rest right alongside the great sage.

11. The Jews Were Expelled from France

The Jews of medieval France endured several expulsions, each followed by an eventual invitation to return. The last and final expulsion was signed into law by King Charles VI in 1394. According to some sources, the Hebrew date of this decree was Yom Kippur,

5155. It wasn't until the 17th century that Jews returned and began reestablishing their communities.

12. Antisemitic Riots in Djerba

On Yom Kippur, 1864, antisemitism struck the ancient Jewish community of Djerba, an island off the coast of Tunisia. A mob of three thousand Arabs stormed the Jewish quarters of Hara Kebira and Hara Seghira while residents were gathered in synagogue praying Musaf. The rioters robbed, killed, and left destruction behind.

13. The Horrific Tragedy of Babi Yar

In a diabolical twist of cruelty, the Nazis often timed their roundups and massacres to fall on Jewish holidays. One infamous example is the massacre at Babi Yar, a ravine just outside Kiev, Ukraine, where more than 30,000 Jews were murdered on the eve of Yom Kippur, 1941.

14. The Yom Kippur War Began

Yom Kippur marks the start of the Yom Kippur War, fought between Israel and a coalition of Arab forces in October 1973. On the afternoon of Yom Kippur, while Jews across Israel were fasting and praying, Egypt and Syria attacked from the south and the north simultaneously. Tens of thousands of reservists had to leave synagogue mid-prayer, pulling off their *tallits* and *kittels* and rushing straight to the battlefield. Israel suffered heavy losses at first, but the tide miraculously turned, and its forces pushed back those bent on its total destruction.

R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk ZT"L would say:

"Everything can be duplicated except the truth. If you try to duplicate the truth - it is no longer the truth!"

The Chafetz Chaim's Ne'ilah Derasha — Yom Kippur 5677



On Yom Kippur of the year 5677 (1917), when the *Chafetz Chaim zt"l* was living in the Russian town of Semyatich, he gathered his *talmidim* together before *Ne'ilah* and delivered a stirring address — one that remained etched in the hearts of all who heard it.

With the awe of the closing moments of Yom Kippur upon them, the *Chafetz Chaim* began:

"We are now standing before the final judgment. Certainly, regarding sins between man and Hashem, each of us has already done *teshuvah*. But sins between man and his fellow — Yom Kippur does not atone for them until one appeases his friend."

He continued:

"It is possible that each of us once borrowed money and simply forgot to repay it. What shall we do now? How can we proclaim in *Ne'ilah*: 'So that we may cease from the oppression of our hands' — if we are not certain that we are free of such wrongdoing?"

Then the *Chafetz Chaim* offered a solution:

"Let each person establish for himself — right now — a specific day on which he will examine all his notebooks and records. If he discovers that he owes money to anyone, he will repay it immediately.

This commitment must be made with a full heart. And if so — it will be considered as though he has already fulfilled it."

With these words, the *Chafetz Chaim* concluded his *derasha* and instructed the congregation to begin the awesome *tefillah* of *Ne'ilah*.

Wishing People "Have an Easy Fast"

R' Hadar Yehuda Margolin *shlita* (*Birchas Mo'adecha* pg. 292) writes against those who wish people on *erev* Yom Kippur "have an easy fast". He continues that after the fast people ask each other, "how was the fast", however, they are missing the main point, as the fast is not the main thing, rather it is the *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and coming closer to Hashem, the fast is just an opportunity to do this.

He writes: The best thing to do would be for people to wish each other before the fast, "You should have a meaningful fast, and a day full of inspiration and coming close to Hashem".

R' Gamliel Rabinovich *shlita* (*Gam Ani Odcha*) discusses this, and he says that wishing someone "have an easy fast" seems to go against the concept that Yom Kippur is a day of **ועניתם** – affliction. He then brings that R' Dadon said that the question of whether one can wish someone "have an easy fast" would depend on the *machlokes* if one is allowed to take fast easing supplements (*kalei tzom*) before the fast.

According to those who allow taking the pills, one would be allowed to wish his friend "have an easy fast", and according to those who hold that one can't, then it would be a problem.

Some people wish each other, "you should have an easy and **meaningful** fast", to stress, that the fast itself is not what it is all about, and that the idea of the fast is *teshuvah*.

There is a story that the *Yismach Yisrael* (*Toldos Yismach Yisrael*, Vol. 2, *Perek* 19, pg. 523) once wished a young child who broke his fast, "May it be Hashem's will that just like this year the fast was easy for you, so too for the rest of your life it should be easy."

When this child became older, he said that not once did he feel the pain or discomfort of a fast. From here it would seem quite clear that one may wish his friend "have an easy fast".

The Sin of Leaving Room for the Yetzer Hara to Enter

(Adapted from a shiur given by R' Yisrael Rot shlita)

In the great *Viduy* of *Al Chet*, we recite a long list of sins: "For the sin we have sinned before You without awareness… with awareness… with deceit… with impure speech… with idle chatter… with *lashon hara*… with greed… with arrogance… in secret…" A long list of sins.

And then we say: "For the sin we have sinned before You with the *yetzer hara.*"

The question is, surely this statement is redundant. Every sin we listed is the work of the *yetzer hara*! If so, what is added by saying: "With the *yetzer hara*"?

To understand this, let me share with you a remarkable story about the *posek hador*, Rav Nissim Karelitz *zt"l*, as told by Rav Natanel Rosenblatt *shlita*.

The Story

A *baal teshuvah* once came before Rav Nissim Karelitz and complained:

"It isn't fair. Hashem did not distribute the *yetzer hara* equally. I have a huge *yetzer hara* — and the Rav has a small one. How is that just?"

It was nighttime. Rav Nissim told him:

"Come to me tomorrow after *davening*, and we will speak on the way to my home."

The next morning, the man arrived at *shul*. After *davening*, a long line formed — people waiting to ask Rav Nissim *halachic* questions. The *baal teshuvah* stood nearby, waiting and waiting.

Finally, Rav Nissim began walking home, surrounded by questioners. The man followed behind.

When they reached the house, Rav Nissim said:

"I am about to eat my morning meal. Come inside and we will talk."

He washed his hands. But before they could begin speaking, the phone rang — a *halachic* question. Then another call. And another. One question after the next.

Only after a long while did Rav Nissim finally turn to the man and say: "You saw what happened here. Just as you had to wait in line to speak with me — so too the *yetzer hara* must wait in line. He cannot simply enter. He has to wait his turn."

Then Rav Nissim added: "Other people, because they are free and idle, the *yetzer hara* arrives without waiting — and is admitted immediately."

Now We Understand the *Viduy*

This is the meaning of: "For the sin we have sinned before You with the *yetzer hara*."

It refers to the sin of having free time, of being idle, of leaving an opening through which the *yetzer hara* can enter without waiting.

If we were constantly occupied with Torah and *mitzvos* the *yetzer hara* would have no access. He would arrive and find the door closed.

But when we have "empty time," when we are unoccupied — he enters freely.

Let us internalize this. If we immerse ourselves in Torah and *mitzvos*, if we fill our days with purpose, if we leave no empty spaces — the *yetzer hara* will have no place to enter.

"The tefillos of Yom Kippur lift a person higher than he believes possible. Even a small step taken today becomes a giant step for the entire year." ~ Rav Aharon Kotler.

Why Is It That on Yom Kippur All Pleasures Are Forbidden Besides for Smelling Fragrances?

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 612-615) brings the *dinim* of the five afflictions of Yom Kippur. Why didn't the Torah also prohibit smelling fragrances on Yom Kippur in order to increase the affliction?

The Soul Is Never Damaged by Sin

The five afflictions on Yom Kippur come to repair the damage done to the body by sin, like we say in *Tefillas Zakah*: "Through the affliction of eating and drinking, atone for what we sinned in forbidden foods… through the affliction of washing and anointing, atone for worldly pleasures…"

Based on this we can understand why smelling fragrances is permitted on Yom Kippur. The benefit that the body derives from smell goes to the *neshomah* [soul] not the physical body. The Gemara in *Berachos* (43b) teaches: "What pleasure does the soul enjoy but not the body? Smell."

Since the soul is never damaged by sin because Hashem with His kindness removes it before we sin, there is no need to afflict the soul. Therefore, smelling fragrances is permitted on Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is not merely a day of fasting and affliction — it is a day of exalted joy, the joy of serving the King. Every moment of hunger, every moment of weakness, every moment of standing on tired legs — when embraced with joy — becomes a moment of immeasurable reward.

May we merit to serve Hashem on Yom Kippur with joy, with love, and with a full heart — and may that joy lift us to the highest levels of purity and closeness to Hashem.



Inspired by Time - The Gift of Yom Kippur – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Every year, we are given a tremendous gift from Hashem — Yom Kippur. It is the day when we stand before our Creator, repent for our mistakes, and are granted complete forgiveness. On this day, we reach the highest level of purity possible for a human being. We confess, say Viduy, make promises to improve, and begin again with a clean slate.

But all too often, we misuse this precious gift. We make promises and do not keep them. We tell Hashem we will change, but our resolve fades with time. The great power Hashem gave us — the power of our mouths, our ability to speak, to commit, to declare truth — becomes weakened when we use it without care.

We arrive at Yom Kippur with mouths that are not pure — not because we spoke lashon hara, but because we made promises and didn't live up to them. Our words have lost their strength. Our commitments have lost their weight.

That is why the first words of Yom Kippur are Kol Nidrei. Before we begin the tefillos of the holiest night of the year, we cleanse our mouths. We annul our vows, but much more than that, we purify the instrument of speech itself.

We stand before Hashem and declare: "Ribbono shel Olam, I want my words to mean something again."

The real avodah of this sacred time is to purify our mouths — not only by nullifying old vows, but by ensuring that our new promises are genuine, measured, and lasting.

If last year we said "I'll do better" without a plan, this year we must say: "I will make a change — and here is how."

Strengthen your commitments. Build better systems. Make them real. Use a calendar, set reminders, create accountability — whatever it takes to make our words true.

Yom Kippur is not only about asking Hashem to forgive us. It is about learning to take our own words seriously again: to speak less, but to mean more; to promise carefully, and to keep faithfully.

When our words become pure, our tefillos gain power. When our commitments become real, our teshuvah becomes lasting. And when our mouths are cleansed, Kol Nidrei becomes not only the opening of Yom Kippur, but the opening of a new life.

Let us conclude with an astounding story about the power of one's words toward a fellow Yid.

R' Moshe Erlanger was traveling during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and had a stopover in Frankfurt, Germany. Unfortunately, at the very last moment, his connecting flight was cancelled, and he was forced to stay in Frankfurt for Yom Kippur.

Although he was given a nice hotel room that was close to the Great Synagogue, the thought of spending Yom Kippur away from home, without his tallis and kittel, and without his familiar shul and its niggunim, bothered him a lot.

Little did he realize that he was about to experience an exceptionally inspiring Yom Kippur.

On Kol Nidrei night, wearing his weekday clothing, he entered the beautiful Great Synagogue of Frankfurt (destroyed by the Nazis but rebuilt in 1946) and sat down in one of the thousands of seats, hoping to make the most of the holiest night of the year despite being so far from home. He was approached by the gabbai, who inquired where he was from, and who, upon hearing his story, had given him a tallis and kittel to use.

As the chazzan began the holy words of Kol Nidrei, "Al daas haMakom...," R' Moshe felt disappointed that this time the davening

would be far less inspiring than usual. However, as the chazzan began humming, "Aha, aha, aha, Kol Nidrei," he felt the tune and the words penetrate deep into his heart. It was the most amazing, inspiring, and heartrending moment he had experienced, eclipsing the wonderful Kol Nidrei he was used to at home.

The chazzan proceeded through the wonderful melody and broke out into sobs. His voice ascended each time, finally arriving at the berachah of Shehecheyanu. It was an unforgettable experience.

Following a meaningful and special Maariv, R' Moshe approached the chazzan, eager to understand what made his Kol Nidrei so special, so unique, and so heartrending.

The chazzan smiled and told the following remarkable story:

"My name is Tzudek Greenwald, and I am the child of Holocaust survivors. To be able to stand in this blood-soaked country that wiped out a third of our nation, and stand in front of thousands of Jews and say Shehecheyanu is extraordinary.

"For many years I have been the chazzan here in the Great Synagogue in Frankfurt. One year, after a special but strenuous fast, having led the davening, not only for Kol Nidrei, but also for Maariv, Shacharis, Minchah, Mussaf, Ne'ilah and finally Maariv, everyone had left the shul, and I felt tired, weak, and ready to break my fast.

"As I switched off the lights and left through a side door, I saw an elderly Jew wearing a white silk yarmulke standing by the closed gates in front of the shul. He turned to me in surprise. 'Farvos zenen di toyren farmacht? Iz heint banacht nisht Kol Nidrei? - Why are the doors closed? Isn't it Kol Nidrei night tonight?' he asked.

I was stunned and did not have the heart to respond. But he persisted. 'Entfer mir!'

I had no choice but to tell him that Kol Nidrei was last night, and today the gates are closed.

"The man broke down in tears. 'I have never missed a Kol Nidrei,' he said. 'My parents were survivors who drifted away from Yiddishkeit, but before my father died he turned to me and told me that as long as you go to shul on Kol Nidrei night you are a Jew.

Until today I knew I was Jewish because I came to shul on Kol Nidrei night. Tonight, as I realize that I have missed Kol Nidrei, I also realize that I am no longer Jewish, no longer part of the Jewish nation.'

"I stood there looking at the sobbing elderly Jew in his silk white yarmulke. I knew what I had to do.

I turned to the man and said, "I am the cantor of the Great Synagogue of Frankfurt. No, you have not missed Kol Nidrei. Come with me."

"I returned to the now pitch-dark shul, switched on a small light, gave the elderly Jew a kittel, a tallis, and a translated machzor, and began the tune of Kol Nidrei.

"As I uttered these words without a crowd in attendance, I felt that it was just me and Hashem. I felt the deveikus like never before and began to cry. - After crying through Kol Nidrei, we davened Maariv.

When we finished, the man removed his kittel and said to me: 'I will always be grateful to you. Now I know that I am still part of the Jewish people.' Then he hugged me.

It was a moment I will never forget."

As we begin this sacred day and utter Kol Nidrei, let us ensure that our mouths are not only clean from nedarim but also free from anything hurtful to others. Further, let us resolve to bring fellow Yidden closer to Hashem. Then, with pure and powerful speech, may Hashem accept our teshuvah, hear our tefillos, and grant us a chasimah tovah — a blessed year filled with everything we need.

Appreciating the Small Things in Life

Teshuvah*: The *Shaarei Teshuvah teaches that *teshuvah* is one of the greatest gifts. Really, it is not logical. If someone gets a speeding ticket and tells the officer that he is sorry and won't do it again, he will still receive a ticket. Yet *teshuvah* gives us the ability to completely erase our sins no matter how much one has transgressed!

Hashem desires our teshuvah and is eagerly waiting for us to return to Him. As we say **סְלַח לָנוּ אָבִינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ מְחַל לָנוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ כִּי פָשָׁעְנוּ כִּי מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אָתָּה: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' חַנּוּן הַמַּרְבֶּה לִסְלוֹחַ**, "Blessed are You Hashem… Who desires repentance."

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Neilah

Zera Kodesh writes that נעילה is from the words נעל י"ה, which can be translated as, "Locked with Hashem." This means during Neilah, each person is alone with Hashem. No one else is there, and at this intimate moment, we plead and pray before Hashem.

The Ramchal (Kitzur Kavanos) writes that during Neilah, every person can reach the level of Adam HaRishon before his sin.

"The serenity of Yom Kippur comes from knowing that Hashem desires our closeness more than our perfection." Chazon Ish.

"Yom Kippur reveals the inner purity that never leaves a Jew. Teshuvah is not creating holiness — it is uncovering what was always there." ~ Sfas Emes.





It's a Privilege to Look at Who We Are in this Generation

Before *Shemoneh Esrei*, we proclaim the *pasuk*, **כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם** — *for on this day He will provide atonement for you* - meaning the Ribbono Shel Olam will grant us forgiveness, **לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכֹּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם** — *to cleanse you from all your aveiros.* **לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ** — *before Hashem, you shall be clean;* as we stand before Hashem, we emerge completely pure.

When we recite these *pesukim*, our hearts race as overwhelming thoughts and emotions wash over us: *Who am I to stand in the presence of the Ribbono Shel Olam?*

The *Ari Hakadosh* explains, based on the *Zohar*, that we are entering a day defined as *Olam Haba*. This makes us wonder even more, "Who am I to step into such a day, into the realm of *Olam Haba?*" - We can feel discouraged and hesitant to begin *davening*.

The following story offers us the strength and encouragement needed to enter this holy day.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was a *tzaddik* and *Gadol Hador*, whose greatness is truly beyond our comprehension. So much so, Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz quotes his Rebbe, Rav Chaim Brisker, that if the *Beis Hamikdash* were to be rebuilt in this generation, the Chofetz Chaim would serve as the *Kohen Gadol.*

The *Chofetz Chaim* used to urge people to go visit and gaze upon the countenance of the holy *tzaddik*, Rav Shlomo Elyashiv (the

grandfather of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, renowned for his *sefer*, *Leshem Shevo V'Achlama.)*

He encouraged everyone to travel by wagon to visit him while he was still in this world, noting that in the World to Come, we might not be worthy of seeing him. - The *Leshem's* stature was truly lofty.

The *Alter of Novardok,* a primary *talmid* of Rav Yisrael Salanter, was an incredibly powerful *tzaddik*. He established dozens of *yeshivos* in defiance of the Russian Empire, completely unafraid of their authority.

When soldiers stormed his *Beis Midrash* on *Motzei Shabbos* in the middle of *havdalah,* his *talmid*, the Steipler, attested that he was in such a heavenly state that he heard nothing. He did not hear the gunfire or the soldiers breaking in; not a single drop of wine fell from his cup.

One night, when he was learning *Toras HaNistar* with the *Leshem,* he sought rest in the middle of the night. He went to the outer room of the *Leshem's* house, which was the sole entrance to the *Leshem's* room. Suddenly, he heard voices and witnessed an incredible light. - It seemed as though *neshamos* from the upper world had come to learn with the holy *Leshem*.

Overwhelmed from fear, he fell from his bed.

From this story, we can begin to appreciate why the *Chofetz Chaim* urged people to behold the *Leshem's* face in this world – for few would merit standing in his presence in the next.

Yet, there was another group of people whom the *Chofetz Chaim* urged others to look upon, explaining that we might not be worthy of seeing them when *Moshiach* comes.

Who were these remarkable individuals?

In the early 1900's, Lithuania was a hub for the greatest *yeshivos*: Mir, Ponevezh, Lomza, Brisk, Radin, and Baranovitch. So much so,

that in America, the land of gold, many young men sacrificed everything to travel to the Lithuanian *yeshivos* in Europe to learn Torah.

Some of these individuals became the greatest *Gedolim* of the generation. Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg was raised in America and went to learn in Lithuania. He became a preeminent *Gadol;* the author of *Taba'as Hachoshen, Mishmeres Hachaim,* and others - *sefarim* which are a necessity in every Yeshiva.

Rav Avigdor Miller, whose teachings and *sefarim* have reached every corner of the globe, was also American-born and studied in Lithuania.

Rav Gifter, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe *yeshiva;* and many other leaders were born in America and sacrificed much to go learn in Lithuania.

Among them was the Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in America, Rav Shmuel Birnbaum, a *gaon* in all of Torah, whom many of us were privileged to see. He also traveled with other young men from the materialistic land of America to the simple *yeshivos* of Lithuania.

While there, he and a group of Americans went into the *Chofetz Chaim* for a *bracha*. Though he was elderly, when he heard that *talmidim* had come from America with such sacrifice to learn in Mir, he pleaded with his family, "***Let them in; I only wish to look at their faces***."

He stated clearly, "I want to see them because I have the merit to do so in this world. But in *Olam Haba* when *Moshiach* arrives, I do not know if I will be worthy to look upon the faces of those who showed such self-sacrifice."

This is the second instance where the *Chofetz Chaim* noted the privilege of seeing certain faces now, as we may not have that merit in the future world or when *Moshiach* comes.

Since the passing of the *Chofetz Chaim,* the world has changed many times over. The self-sacrifice our ancestors displayed is beyond our

capabilities. Yet, the dedication a *Yiddishe* child displays today - growing up in a Western culture surrounded by modern technology - is immense! Everyone puts in the effort and sacrifices in a different way, whether in their relationship with Hashem or in their conduct toward their fellow man.

How would the *Chofetz Chaim* react?

He would suggest that in such a generation, it is a merit just to look at our faces.

As we enter the *Beis Midrash* on this holy day, we turn to the *Ribbono Shel Olam* and declare that despite the modern world around us, countless trials, and the many struggles we may endure, we still arrive for Yom Kippur. Dressed in white and wrapped in our *talleisim*, we joyfully recite the *bracha Shehechiyanu*, eager to do *teshuvah* and improve, making firm resolutions for the coming year. It is truly a merit to look upon our faces.

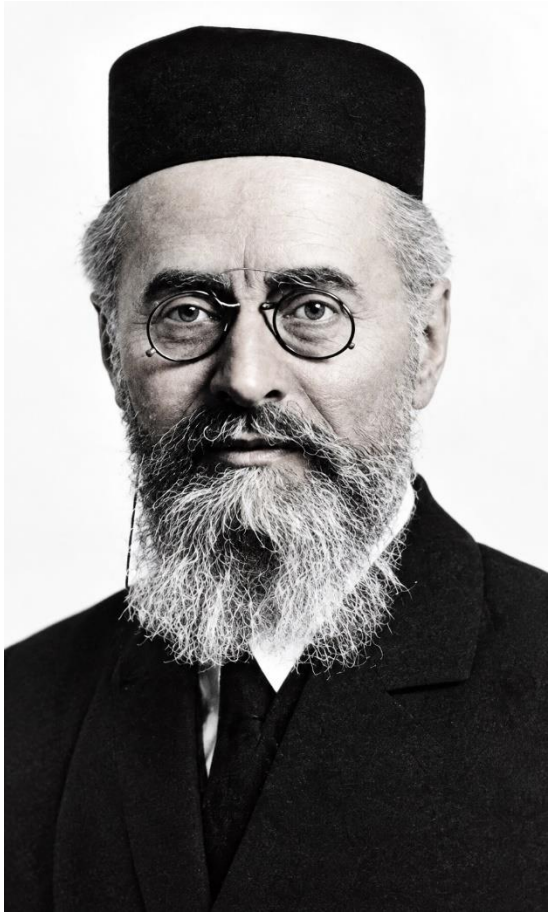
This realization grants us great courage as we step into this extraordinary day, which the *Ari Hakadosh* refers to as the realm of *Olam Haba* - a day when we stand before Hashem to be purified.

On one hand, we might wonder about our worth, knowing exactly what we have done this past year. Yet, on the other hand, we must consider the challenges of our generation and how much we have grown and achieved. - It's a merit to look at our faces.

With that encouragement, we enter this incredible, holy day of Yom Kippur. We will stand courageously before the *Ribbono Shel Olam* to be cleansed, trusting that He will seal us in the *Sefer Hachaim* for a good, *gebentchte* year.

"Teshuvah is the courage to choose truth over habit. Yom Kippur gives us the strength to make that choice." ~ Rav Dessler.

Teshuvah - Small Resolutions



Reb Yisroel Salanter, cites the *Gemara* in *Masechta Taanis,* which states: **ימים טובם לישראל כיום לא היה הכיפורים** – *there were no yomim tovim for Klal Yisroel like Yom Kippur; there is no Yom Tov as auspicious as Yom Kippur.*

Reb Yisroel Salanter shares that Yom Kippur is an extraordinary day for business, and we should strive to secure the best possible deal on it. On Yom Kippur, our outstanding debts are unconditionally wiped clean.

The primary business of Yom Kippur is *teshuvah*. The magnificent outcomes of successful *teshuvah* affect us both spiritually and physically. The more sincere and deep our self-purification, the greater our merit to be inscribed in the *Sefer Hachaim* for a wonderful life.

What specific business deal should we undertake?

Reb Yisroel Salanter answers that the most effective and successful deal one can make on Yom Kippur is a small resolution. He emphasizes that the value of a small commitment made on this day is beyond measure and incomparable to anything in the physical world. No sum of money, vacation, or personal dream can compete with the impact of taking on a small resolution.

While Reb Yisrael Salanter famously established the *mussar* movement, he originally intended to be a *tzaddik nistar* - hidden tzaddik. In his younger years, he would wander in exile from town to town, following the tradition of the *Shaagas Aryeh,* the *Vilna Gaon*, and the two brothers, Reb Elimelech and Reb Zusha.

These *tzaddikim* followed a practice that the *Sefarim Hakdoshim* describe as an immensely spiritual path. Living as a hidden *tzaddik* allowed them to reach exalted levels because it eliminated pride. Furthermore, wandering in exile serves as a profound purification for the *neshama*.

However, Reb Yisrael Salanter faced a dilemma. He was afraid of wasting time while traveling and not learning Torah, yet he couldn't carry a *Gemara* while in exile without revealing his identity as a true *talmid chacham*.

As a solution, he began studying and reviewing the entire *Shas* along with the four sections of *Shulchan Aruch* by heart. By memorizing these texts, he ensured that he wouldn't waste a single moment while in exile, enabling him to learn twenty-four hours a day without needing a physical *sefer*.

He began reviewing *Shas*, eventually mastering half of it along with every single *Tosafos*. He memorized it all perfectly, but then he stopped. He decided he would neither go into *galus* nor become a hidden *tzaddik*.

Why? Because he came across the teachings where *Chazal* describe the incredible merit of inspiring the public, and he realized the immense value of bringing a fellow *Yid* back to *teshuvah*.

The *Zohar* states that if we truly understood the significance of inspiring others, we would run through the streets to reach out to *Yiddishe* children.

The *Alter of Novardok* used to tell his *talmidim* that the reward for influencing others is so vast that he feared if he described it, they would lose their fear of *Gehennom*.

Thus, Reb Yisrael Salanter decided he wouldn't keep his *tzidkos* to himself; he went out into the world and founded the *mussar* movement. He began with approaching the wealthiest individuals. He spoke with the *Alter of Novardok* who was a very successful and

wealthy businessman. Through that single conversation, he completely transformed his life.

Reb Yisrael traveled around delivering lectures and visiting the wealthy to secure funding for the *mussar* movement. When visiting a rich person, it was never just about obtaining a donation; he would engage them in conversation to try and shift their entire worldview.

Once, he visited a very wealthy man and encouraged him to start learning. After an hour of Reb Yisrael's persuasion, the man agreed, saying, "Okay, Rabbi, I will give you ten minutes a day, but that's all."

He then asked, "What should I learn during these ten minutes? *Gemara*, *Shulchan Aruch,* or *Rambam*?" He expected to be told to study something complex and demanding. Instead, Reb Yisrael Salanter said, "I want you to spend those ten minutes studying *mussar* and *Aggadeta."*

This seemed quite easy, and the wealthy man was relieved. He said, "Excellent! I won't have to struggle with complex topics. No problem, Rabbi," and he accepted the commitment.

A year later, Reb Yisrael Salanter returned to find the man completely transformed. He was an entirely different person, as if he had been reborn.

Reb Yisrael asked, "What happened to you?" The man replied that he was now learning for many hours a day and serving Hashem in an incredible way.

Reb Yisrael asked, "I don't understand; I only asked for ten minutes."

The man answered, "Yes, Rabbi. But in those ten daily minutes of mussar, I discovered that I actually have plenty of time to learn, and those few minutes truly changed my life."

Therefore, on Yom Kippur – when our commitments have a profound effect and is the ultimate business deal – let's resolve to learn

mussar every day. Whether it's ten minutes, five minutes, or even just two minutes, it should be a fixed and consistent practice. Such small commitments can literally transform our lives and bring out the best in us.

May Hashem help us all to accept the study of *mussar* every day with consistency — a practice that will truly transform our lives.

Small Resolutions



Reb Shlomke Zvhiler was a tremendous *tzaddik* who possessed *ruach hakodesh*. There was hardly a family in Yerushalayim who didn't have some connection to him. There is a prominent family in Yerushalayim today with thousands of descendants who are *talmidei chachamim*. Unbelievably, the patriarch of this family was once a major *baal aveira*, deeply involved in forbidden behaviors. Despite many efforts to bring him back to *teshuvah*, nothing seemed to work.

When Reb Shlomke heard about this man, he requested for him to be summoned. The man told the messenger, "Tell the Rebbe I will come out of respect, but if he wants to talk about *teshuvah*, forget it. It won't work."

Reb Shlomke replied, "I won't talk about *teshuvah*."

Upon arrival, the man said, "Rebbe, what do you want? I only have a few minutes."

Reb Shlomke requested that the next time he faced a temptation, he should postpone for just five minutes.

Incredulous, the man asked, "That's all?"

The Rebbe confirmed, "Yes, I don't need more. I'm not asking you to change your life around, just delay the prohibition for five minutes."

The man gladly agreed, relieved at having not been forced into *teshuvah*.

A few months passed, and the man returned to Reb Shlomke; completely transformed, looking like an *ehrliche Yid*. He described that he had accurately followed the rebbe's instructions. He asked what the secret was behind those five minutes.

There are two versions of Reb Shlomke's explanation.

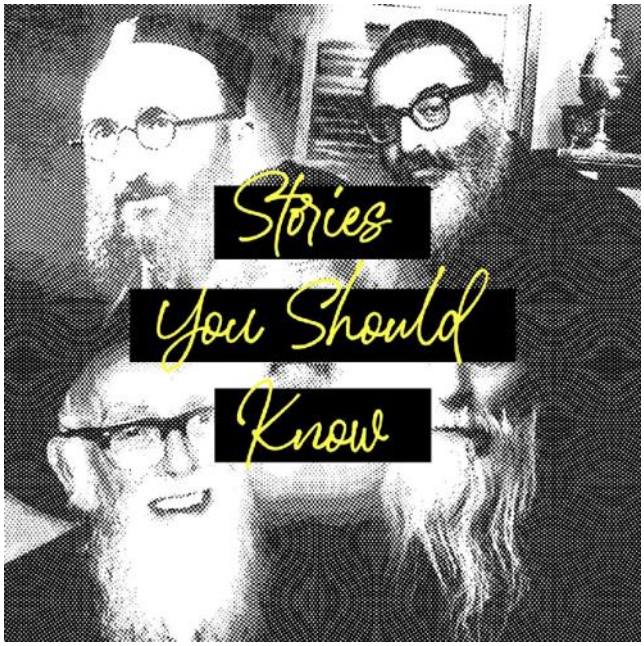
One explanation was that when one delays a temptation, even for just five minutes, it stirs the Heavens, bringing immeasurable joy to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

The second explanation was that by postponing the *aveira* for five minutes, the person breaks the iron gates and walls surrounding his heart. Once that barrier is breached, he is freed from his internal prison. Once he's out of that darkness, he receives *siyata dishmaya* and returning to the right path becomes much easier.

The man related how the first time he delayed the initial temptation for just five minutes he felt wonderful! "I am capable!" He told himself that if he can manage five minutes, why not try for another five?

That process continued repeatedly until he reached the point where he stood across Reb Shlomke, dressed as an *ehrilche Yid*.

The most inspiring point derived from this story is the first principle in doing *teshuvah*: Do not dwell on your history; focus on what lies ahead. Committing to a resolution - even a minor one of just five minutes - transforms your entire life.



You Ate Without Paying For It- The Alter of Kelm Teaches Us How To Be There For Someone At Any Opportunity

Rabbi Simchah Zisel Ziv, known as the Alter of Kelm, is credited with the development of many of the great Jewish leaders that we know today. A few notable students are the Alter of Slabodka, the Alter of Novardok, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, and Rav Yerucham Levovitz.

On one occasion, the Alter of Kelm and Rabbi Eliezer Shmuelovitz were traveling from the town of Lomza. As dinnertime approached, they found an inn so that they could rest and eat.

But they didn't go unnoticed. Within a short period of time, everybody began to recognize that these two great rabbis were eating together at the inn. The woman who owned the inn took special care of these rabbis and treated them with the utmost respect.

In the process of serving the meal, she started chatting with the rabbis and opening up to them about her life. She shared her business struggles, her family struggles, and this conversation really carried on longer than expected.

Now throughout this entire process, Rabbi Eliezer had been engrossed in a *sefer* that he was learning, not paying proper attention to this woman. The Alter of Kelm, on the other hand, paid full attention to her, responding to her questions and asking questions in turn. When it came time to pay for the meal, she refused to accept any money from them.

When the two great rabbis began to travel again, they started to talk. The Alter of Kelm asked Rabbi Eliezer, "Don't you think you

transgressed the prohibition of stealing? You ate and drank at that meal and didn't even pay!"

Shocked by the question, Rabbi Eliezer quickly responded, "What are you talking about? We offered to pay, but she didn't let us. That's not stealing!"

The Alter responded with a pointed insight: "You are right that we paid for the meal, but that woman was pouring out her heart to us, and found emotional relief and satisfaction speaking to us. By not listening to her, you enjoyed the meal without paying for it."

In this story, the Alter of Kelm was teaching Rabbi Shmuelovitz a lesson. It's one thing to be there for someone when they make a meeting with you and you set up a time to help, but in terms of truly being there for others, one must be ready at any opportunity to provide emotional relief, wherever that may be. It might be when you're in your house, it might be when you're working, or it could even be when you're traveling, sitting down for a quick meal, and someone shows that they clearly need you.

Sweeter Than Honey

Teshuvah is 99% about the future!

The Chafetz Chaim ztl told public speakers that their speeches should not focus on making people feel guilty, because people already feel bad and guilty enough.

Rather, they should focus on the GOOD of the future, the blessings, and how uplifted a person will feel when he does what is right and good and keeps the holy torah!

***

A bachur came to **R' Shlomo Friefeld ztl** and said, "I feel so guilty about how much I messed up!"

R' Shlomo said with fire, "You are INNOCENT! Do you hear me? YOU'RE INNOCENT!"

R' Shlomo told a story about the **Chiddushei HaRim**. He told his chassidim erev Yom Kippur, "Don't keep focusing on all the sins you did. If you roll in the mud, you will get dirty!"

Reb Shlomo told his talmid, "We learn, 'Sur meira va'aseh tov,' turn away from bad and do good. This can also mean:

Stop focusing on your sins. Instead, focus on the FUTURE. Focus on how much *GOOD* you can still do and how much you can still *ACCOMPLISH*!"

What's the lesson? "Teshuvah is 1 percent about the past and 99 percent about the FUTURE!" (R' Tzadok HaKohen in the name of the Kobriner)

This Connects To Yom Kippur:

The fact that Hashem made a day of Yom Kippur shows that Hashem doesn't expect us to be perfect! We need to try our best, yes, but Hashem knew we would sometimes slip and make mistakes. This doesn't mean you are bad. (Based on R' A. J. Twersky ztl)

But getting back up is our *avodah*, our battle, no matter what, to keep going forward! Hashem gave us Yom Kippur to say, "Clean yourself up and keep going!"

Yom Kippur is a day to refocus on who we are, how we live our life, and what life is all about. It is a day of teshuvah, when we stop being busy. We don't even eat or drink. We refocus on following Hashem's Torah and ask ourselves, "What does Hashem want from me RIGHT NOW?"

If They Wait For Me - I Will Wait For Them!



A bachur was about to leave for America and went one last time to the Kosel to daven. There, he saw the **Beis Yisroel of Gur ztl**, who walked over to him and asked the bachur, "What is the greatest praise one can say about Hashem?

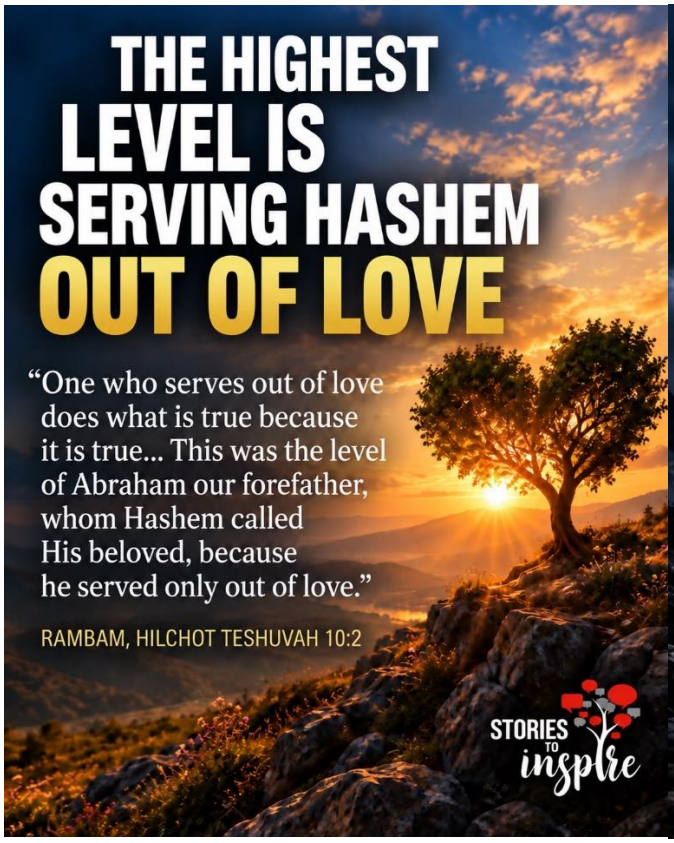
The Beis Yisroel answered his own question, "That He doesn't laugh at us," and then he walked away. [The Beis Yisroel was known for saying short, sharp statements that needed deep thought to understand.]

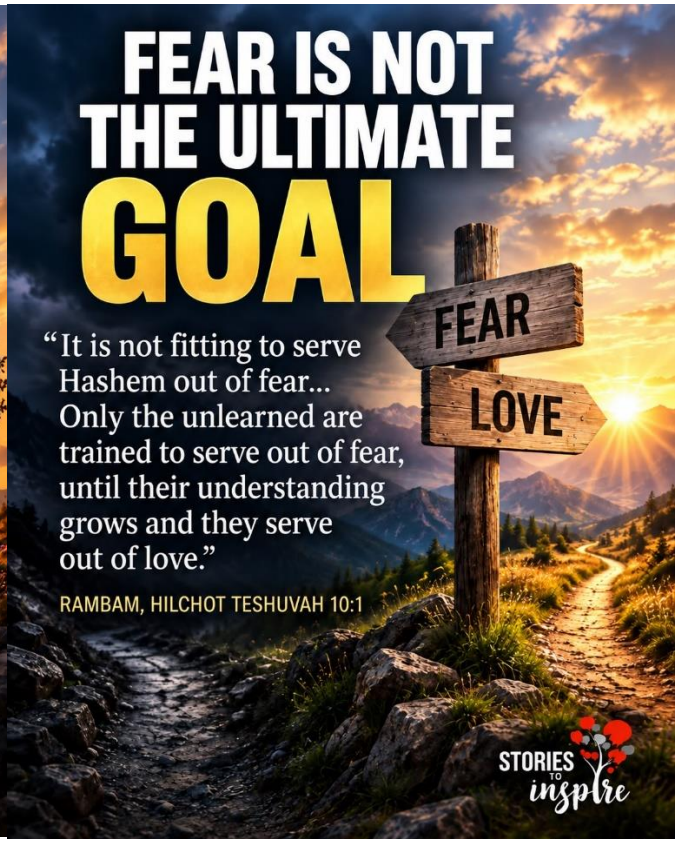
The bachur went to his Rosh Yeshiva, who later became the **Pnei Menachem**, and asked what the Beis Yisroel meant.

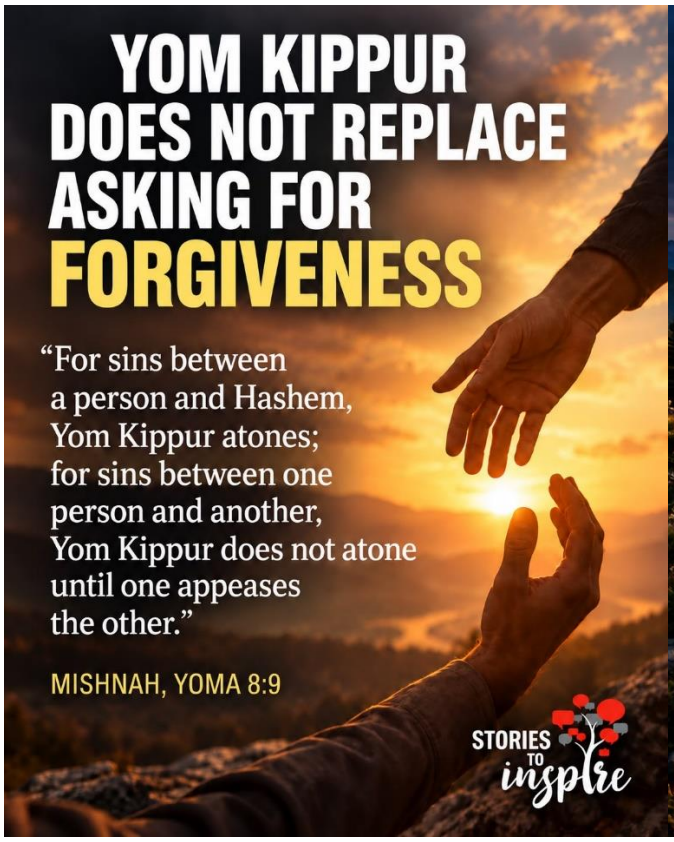
The Pnei Menachem said, "How many times have Yidden promised to be better during Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, year after year, yet we don't always keep our word. Yet every year, when we once again tell Hashem that we want to be better, He doesn't laugh at us! He BELIEVES in us. He knows we really mean it, and He believes that THIS TIME, we will try even harder!"

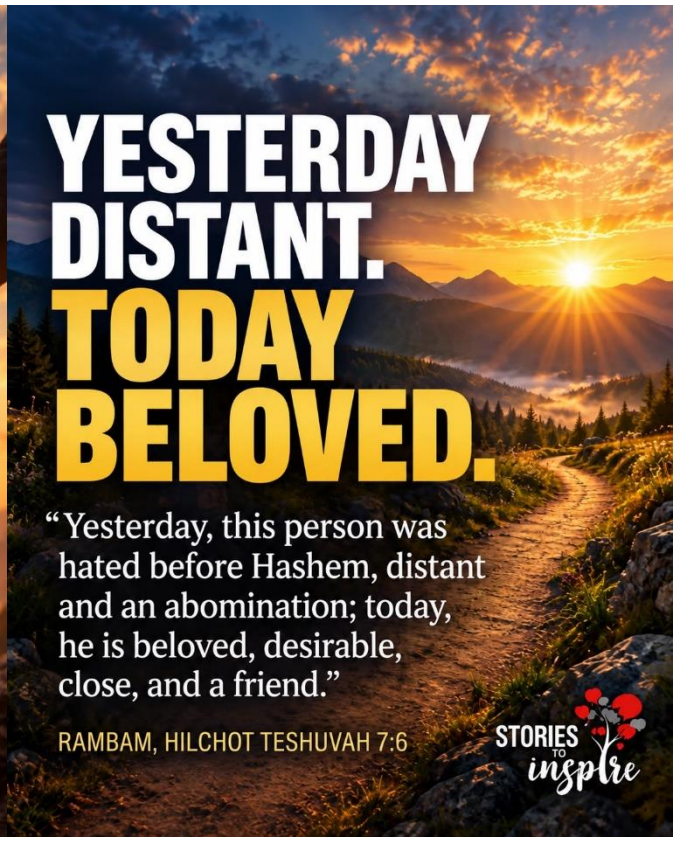
Hashem believes in us! The question is: Do we believe in ourselves?

"The serenity of Yom Kippur comes from knowing that Hashem desires our closeness more than our perfection." ~ Chazon Ish — Emunah u'Bitachon.









Teshuvah Can Turn Sins Into Merits - "Great is teshuvah, for deliberate sins become merits." ~ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Maharam Paparish zt'l writes, "Whoever has compassion on others, Heaven will have compassion upon him. His tefillah will be accepted as it is, and the tefillah will be accepted with a shining countenance. When he is judged, he will have many malachim speaking in his favor in the court in Heaven."

The father sent a message. "Come as far as you can, and I will meet you midway." The Psikta says that HaKadosh Baruch Hu says **שובה אלי ואשובה אליכם** - Return to Me, and then I will return to you.

Hashem tells us to return as much as we can, and then Hashem will help us complete the teshuvah.

Kiddush on Yom Kippur - Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

During a break on Yom Kippur, **Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch** once invited several people to accompany him home. When they entered, they saw that the table was beautifully set and that Rav Hirsch proceeded to take a Kiddush cup and fill it with wine. One of the guests couldn't understand what he was seeing. What was going on?

Rav Hirsch lifted the cup and said, in effect, "Ribbono Shel Olam, today is Yom Tov. Really, we should make Kiddush and really, we should sit down to a festive seudah. But we are not doing so for one reason: because You told us not to."

Sometimes, when we can't eat L'Shem Shamayim, for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, we do the next best thing. We prepare everything as if we would and tell Him, "All of this is for You." And with that, we demonstrate that even when we do it, it's not for ourselves. It's to be healthy and strong to serve Him.

The Candle That Never Went Out by Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan

Before World War II, the town of Bobov was a thriving centre of Jewish life. Its Chassidim were known as anshei maaseh and yirei Shamayim - Jews of extraordinary character and devotion to Hashem. And at the centre of the community stood the great Bobover Rebbe.

The Rebbe had a special custom every Erev Yom Kippur. Hours before Yom Kippur began, he would enter a side room in the shul and light candles, one after another, l'ilui nishmas those who had passed away. - There were many candles to light, so the Rebbe would come early, close the door behind him, and quietly begin his holy work.

One Erev Yom Kippur, however, there was someone on the other side of that door. He was only eight or nine years old. And he desperately wanted to know what the Rebbe was doing inside.

He tried the handle. Locked. He jiggled it again. He scratched against the door. He shook the handle.

Finally, the Rebbe heard the commotion. He walked over and opened the door just slightly to see who was there.

That tiny opening was all the boy needed. He slipped inside. The boy began looking around the room. Candles were everywhere.

The Rebbe looked at him. "My young friend, what can I help you with?"

"Rebbe, please let me stay. I just want to see what you're doing on Erev Yom Kippur."

The Rebbe agreed. He closed the door, locked it again, and returned to his candles.

The boy watched. But watching wasn't enough. He had questions. Lots of them. The boy approached the Rebbe.

"Rebbe, who's this candle for?"

The Rebbe told him the name of the person whose neshamah the candle was being lit for. The Rebbe lit another.

"And who's this one for?"

The Rebbe answered. Another candle.

"Rebbe, who's this one for?"

Again, the Rebbe patiently explained.

Candle after candle. Question after question. The Bobover Rebbe never lost his patience. He continued telling this curious little boy who each candle represented. Until finally, the boy noticed something different.

There was a large candle. He pointed toward it. ***"Rebbe, what about that candle?"***

The Rebbe looked at it. "That candle?"

"Yes. Who is that one for?"

The Rebbe answered: ***"That candle I am lighting for a Jew in Los Angeles, California."***

The boy was confused. Los Angeles? California?

The Rebbe continued. "There is a Jew there who has forgotten about Yiddishkeit.- He has forgotten about Hashem. And I am lighting this candle so that perhaps, in the zechus of this candle, his neshamah will awaken."

The little boy listened. Soon afterward, Yom Kippur began. And eventually, the conversation became just another childhood memory.

But the candle had been lit.

Then the World Went Dark

Only a few years later, everything changed. The Nazis invaded Poland. The world this little boy knew was destroyed. He was taken

with his family to Auschwitz. He was still only a child. There, he witnessed horrors that words cannot describe. He lost his parents. He lost his brothers and sisters.

He lost practically everyone he had ever known.

Somehow, through Hashem's grace, the boy survived.

When the war finally ended and the camps were liberated, Allied soldiers found him. Among them was a Jewish serviceman named Lieutenant Birnbaum. He saw this young Jewish survivor who had been left practically alone in the world and decided to help him.

Eventually, the boy was brought to the United States and placed with a Jewish family. He was now a teenager. He had survived Auschwitz. But inside, something had been shattered.

"I Want Nothing to Do With It"

The boy knew what he didn't want. He wanted nothing to do with religion. Nothing to do with Judaism. Nothing to do with the world he had known before the Holocaust.

In his broken heart, Yiddishkeit had become associated with the horrors he had experienced. He still carried the memories. He still carried the pain. And he wanted to leave all of it behind. So he began building a new life in America. No Shabbos. No kashrus. No religious observance.

Years passed. Eventually, he married a wonderful non-Jewish woman. He began living the American life he had chosen. And the little boy who had once stood beside the Bobover Rebbe on Erev Yom Kippur seemed to have disappeared forever.

Or so he thought.

The Voice Behind the Door

One day, he was walking down the street when he heard something. Singing.

He stopped. It was coming from a shul. Then he heard the powerful voice of a chazzan.

Something about the sound was familiar. He moved closer. He put his ear near the door. And listened.

The melody reached somewhere deep inside him. ***He knew that tune.***

Without even realizing it, he began humming along. Then he realized something else. ***He knew the words.***

The memories began returning. His childhood. His family. Bobov. The shul. Yom Kippur.

Suddenly, something inside him began screaming. For years he had promised himself: Never again. I'm never going back.

But now, almost against everything he had decided for himself - ***He opened the door.***

He Walked Back Into Shul

He entered. He picked up a tallis. He wrapped himself in it. He opened a machzor. He looked around the room. The scene felt like a childhood memory that had suddenly come alive. - He began to daven.

For a few moments, the years seemed to disappear. He wasn't an American trying to forget his past. He was that Jewish boy again. Standing in shul. Davening on Yom Kippur.

Then suddenly - He stopped.

"What Am I Doing?"

The memories of Auschwitz came rushing back. What am I doing? I was in Auschwitz. I still have the numbers. I saw what happened. This isn't for me anymore. I promised myself I would never go back.

He closed the machzor. He removed the tallis. And turned toward the door. He had walked back into a shul for only a few moments. Now he was ready to walk away again.

He began making his way out. And then, as he passed the Aron Kodesh - ***He saw the candles.***

The Memory Came Back

He stopped. Something about those candles reached deep into his memory. And suddenly - He wasn't standing in America anymore. He was eight or nine years old again. He could see the little room in Bobov. He could see the Rebbe. He could see himself running around asking questions.

"Rebbe, who's this candle for?" "And this one?" "And this one?"

He remembered the Rebbe's extraordinary patience. And then he remembered the large candle. The candle that had been different from all the others. He remembered pointing toward it.

"Rebbe, who's that candle for?"

And after all those years, he could hear the answer again. ***"That candle is for a Jew in Los Angeles, California."*** A Jew who had forgotten Hashem. A Jew who had forgotten what it meant to be Jewish. A Jew whose neshamah needed to be awakened.

The man stood frozen. Los Angeles. California.

And then it hit him. ***I live in Los Angeles, California.***

His mind raced back to that Erev Yom Kippur. He had been only a little boy. He had asked the Rebbe who that candle was for.

And now, after Auschwitz, after abandoning Yiddishkeit, after building an entirely different life - He suddenly understood.

That candle was for me.

He smiled. And at that moment, something inside him came alive. The candle the Bobover Rebbe had lit so many years earlier had never really gone out. Not through the war. Not through Auschwitz. Not through the loss of his family. Not through the years without Shabbos. Not through the years without kashrus. Not even through

all the pain that had convinced him he wanted nothing more to do with Judaism.

Somewhere beneath everything - ***The flame was still burning.***

He turned around. He walked back into the shul. He picked up the tallis again. He opened the machzor again. And he continued davening.

It was as though this Yom Kippur was simply a continuation of the last Yom Kippur he had experienced as a little boy in Bobov. Years had passed. An entire world had been destroyed. But the candle had never gone out.

Your Candle Is Already Lit

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan explains that there is a powerful message here for every one of us. Sometimes we think we are walking into Yom Kippur alone. We arrive carrying everything that happened during the year. Our mistakes. Our disappointments. Our failures. Our questions. Our distance.

Sometimes we wonder whether we even belong. But perhaps there is something we don't realize.

The candle has already been lit.

Hashem prepared Yom Kippur for us before we ever arrived. The opportunity to return is already waiting. The closeness is already waiting. The love is already waiting. The door is already open.

A person may believe that his neshamah has gone dark. But a Jewish neshamah does not disappear. Sometimes it is hidden beneath years of pain. Sometimes beneath disappointment. Sometimes beneath mistakes. Sometimes beneath questions. Sometimes beneath an entire lifetime of distance.

But the flame is still there. And then comes Yom Kippur. A melody. A machzor. A shul. A memory. A moment.

And suddenly - ***The candle inside begins to burn again.***

That little boy could never have imagined what his life would become when he watched the Bobover Rebbe light that candle. But somehow, a light had been prepared for a darkness that had not yet arrived.

And perhaps that is what Hashem does for every one of us. Before we even know how far we may wander - ***He has already prepared the way back.*** The candle is already lit. The door is already open. And no matter how dark things may seem -

The flame of a Jewish neshamah never truly goes out.





On Yom Kippur, in the kedushah of Shacharis, Mussaf, and Minchah, we say **כתר**, and not the more standard kedushah of **נקדישך**. The translation of **כתר** is crown, and Midrashim tell us that on Yom Kippur, Hashem elevates Klal Yisrael and places them above His head, like a crown.

Shir HaShirim (3:11) writes, **בְּעֲטָרָה שֶׁעִטְּרָה לוֹ אִמּוֹ**, "upon the crown with which his mother crowned him." The Gemara (Taanis 26b, Rashi **ד"ה זה מתן תורה**) states that this pasuk is referring to Yom Kippur, the day Hashem places us on His head like a crown.

The Kotzker said that if people knew how pure their neshamos had become on Yom Kippur, they would be cautious never to blemish their neshamos again.

"Feel joy on Yom Kippur for Hashem's forgiveness. The greater our awareness of our atonement, the more joy we will have." ~ R' Yechezkel Levenstein (Ohr Yechezkel).

Imagine that at the end of Yom Kippur of last year you received a note from Hashem saying that you are going to have a good year, you'd be overjoyed and full of thanks.

Look back at the year you had. You can see all the good Hashem had given you last Yom Kippur. So before asking for another great year, thank Hashem for the previous year! ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



The Shofar Blast at the End of Yom Kippur - Rav David Brofsky

For many people, the closing moments of Yom Kippur are the most moving of the entire day. The congregation proclaims **"שמע ישראל"** together with the repeated declaration of **"ה' הוא האלוקים"**. The chazzan concludes the Ne'ilah service with a festive Kaddish, the shofar is sounded, and everyone joins in singing **" לשנה הבאה בירושלים"**.

The shofar blast occupies a particularly prominent place in these concluding moments. Why is the shofar, which is generally associated with Rosh Hashanah, sounded on Yom Kippur? Furthermore, is blowing the shofar not prohibited on Yom Kippur, just as it is forbidden to blow the shofar on a Rosh Hashanah that falls on Shabbos?

Many halachic authorities suggested explanations for this custom.

Tosafos (Shabbos 114b), citing a view attributed to Rav Hai Gaon, note that some prayer books of their time linked this practice to the shofar of Yom Kippur in the Yovel year, as the Torah states:

וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ שׁוֹפַר תְּרוּעָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי... בְּיוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים תַּעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּכָל אַרְצְכֶם (ויקרא כה, ט)

However, Tosafos reject this explanation. If the custom commemorates the Yovel year, why would the shofar be blown every year?

The *Sefer Ha'Itur* suggests that the minhag continued annually because the precise calculation of Yovel years was no longer known.

The *Hagahot Maimoniyot* adds that if this were truly the reason, the shofar should be blown during Yom Kippur itself rather than at its conclusion.

Alternatively, he suggests that the custom is based on a Midrash which teaches that at the end of Yom Kippur, a Bas Kol announces:

"לֵךְ אֱכֹל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחְמֶךָ כִּי כְבָר רָצָה הָאֱלֹקִים אֶת מַעֲשֶׂיךָ" (**קהלת ט, ז**)

Similarly, Tosafos explain that the shofar serves as a public announcement that the fast has ended, signalling that one may feed the children and begin preparing the festive meal marking the conclusion of Yom Kippur.

Other authorities offer different interpretations:

Rabbi Elazar of Worms (*the Rokeach*) writes that the sounding of the shofar symbolizes our victory over the Satan.

Rabbi Aharon ben Yaakov of Lunel, in *Kol Bo*, explains that the shofar serves **"לבלבל את השטן"**, to confuse the Satan, who resumes his influence after Yom Kippur has ended.

Finally, the *Semag* (*Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*) writes that the shofar blast corresponds to the ascent of the Shechinah through the seven heavens, paralleling each proclamation of **"ה' הוא האלוקים"**. This idea is linked to the verse: **"עָלָה אֱלֹקִים בִּתְרוּעָה"** (**תהלים מז, ו**)

The Rishonim record two customs regarding this shofar blast. One custom is to sound a single long tekiah. The other is to sound a complete sequence of **תקיעה־שברים־תרועה־תקיעה** (*Tashrat*).

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that Tashrat should be sounded at the conclusion of Ne'ilah. The *Rema*, however, writes that the common custom is to sound a single extended tekiah.

These differing customs appear to reflect the various explanations given above. If the shofar functions merely as a proclamation, whether announcing the ascent of the Shechinah or declaring that eating may begin, a single long blast would seem sufficient. If,

however, it commemorates the Yovel shofar of Yom Kippur, then a full series of shofar sounds would be more appropriate.

Regarding the permissibility of sounding the shofar, the Rishonim explain that blowing the shofar is considered a **"חכמה"** (a skilled act) rather than a **"מלאכה"** (a prohibited form of labor). For that reason, they permit it during *bein hashmashos* at the close of Yom Kippur.

Some authorities questioned this practice, arguing that such leniencies are generally granted before the onset of Shabbos or Yom Kippur, not after their conclusion. Others explain that there is certainly room to permit the shofar blasting some time after sunset, once the period traditionally identified by the Geonim as tzeis ha-kochavim (nightfall) has arrived, marking the halachic end of the day.



4 Easy Ways to Have All Your Sins Atoned on Yom Kippur - Rabbi Daniel Glatstein

Preparing For יום הכיפורים.

If I could bring to your attention and share with you four opportunities on **יום כיפור** where we could do small things that have the **כח** to be **מכפר עונות**. Four small things, some of them we're familiar with, others perhaps not.

First of all, **חז"ל** say in **גמרא שבת קי"ט ע"ב**, **כל העונה אמן יהא שמיה רבא מברך בכל כחו, קורעין לו גזר דינו**. Anyone who answers **אמן יהא שמיה רבא** with all their **כח**, they rip up your **גזר דין**.

רב חייא בר אבא says in the name of **רב יוחנן**, even if someone has a **שמץ** of **עבודה זרה**, they're **מוחל, מוחלין לו**. A person gets **כפרה**.

The **ספר חרדים** says the **זוהר** says that your body should tremble and answer with all your strength. And the **ספר חרדים** says that this great **ברכה** accrues to somebody who is **מרגיל** themselves to do that.

Now, this is one particular **סגולה**. Now it's interesting, the **חיד״א** writes that on the one hand the **לשון** of **חז״ל** is **בכל כחו**, with all your strength. But of course **תוספות** says it means **בכל כוונתו**.

So do you need to answer **אמן יהא שמיה רבא** on the top of your lungs, with as loud as you can?

So the **חיד״א** writes, well, on the one hand, if you do that, people may laugh at you. And even worse, they may tie you up, call **הצלה** and have you carried away and institutionalized if somebody would actually shout it on top of their lungs. So the **חיד״א** says the way to do it is like this: rev yourself up as if you're going to answer with every fibre of your being, and then when it comes to answering it **למעשה**, you could do it **כרגיל**, but you so to speak rev yourself up to do it that way.

I'm bringing this to your attention because certainly in the next couple of days, and certainly on **יום כיפור**, this is a great **סגולה** to take advantage of. We're in **שול** anyway, and giving **אמן יהא שמיה רבא** your full attention and **כוונה** is very powerful.

The next thing, saying **אז ישיר**. The **ספר חרדים** says that when we say the **שירת הים**, to say it **בקול**, **בשמחה** as if you were leaving **מצרים**. And **חז״ל** say **וייסע משה את ישראל**, he made them travel away from their sin through the **שירה**, **מוחלין לו על כל עוונותיו**.

And therefore says the **ספר חרדים**, since it says **ויאמרו לאמר** that we have a **מצוה** to say it every day, it means we should say it every day **בשמחה**. And therefore the **משנה ברורה** says, say the **שירת הים** **בשמחה**, consider it as if you just crossed. If you say it **בשמחה**, **מוחלין לו על כל עוונותיו**. So this is certainly something to keep in mind every day of the year, but certainly on **יום כיפור** itself, to give extra attention to **אז ישיר**.

Number three, the **חיד״א** brings down in **צפורן שמיר קנ״ד**, he also says it in **מורה באצבע סימן ר״פ**: Anyone who is distressed and cries on **יום כיפור** when they read in **פרשת אחרי מות** about the **פטירה** of

נדב ואביהוא, **השם** atones all of your sins. It's amazing **סגולה**. If you hear The **זוהר** says further that one who is **מצטער במיתת צדיקים**, their children will not die in their lifetime, and about such a person there's a **הבטחה**, **יראה זרע יאריך ימים**. You will see descendants and you will live long.

So we see that the **קריאת התורה** of **אחרי מות** of **יום כיפור** is extremely powerful. Not only because it's about the **עבודה** of **יום כיפור**, but it's another juncture to have your sins forgiven.

And then, this is so simple, the **שלחן ערוך** says that when we say **שמע**, we should say it **באימה וביראה ברתת ובזיע**, with great trembling, The **משנה ברורה** explains from the **רשב"א** that you should be **מכוון** when you say **שמע** that if ever put to the ultimate test, you would give up your life **על קידוש השם**, **בכל נפשך אפילו נוטל את נפשך**. So if you have this **כוונה**, then you'll say **שמע באימה וביראה ברתת ובזיעה**.

Be it as it may, we know that one of the **כוונות** to have when saying **שמע** is you should think that if I was ever put to the ultimate challenge, I would give up my life.

Therefore, says **תלמיד הרמ"ע מפאנו - ר' אלעזר נחמן פואה**, that **השם** considers it as if you gave up your life. And if you're **מהרהר בתשובה** before saying **שמע**, the recitation of **שמע** actually could be **מכפר** all of your **עבירות**.

Three of these opportunities that we said are everyday: **אמן יהא שמיה רבא**, **שמע**, **שירת הים**, and the **קריאה** of the death of the **בני אהרן**. These are four very powerful ways to gain **כפרת עוונות**.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a **גמר חתימה טובה**. May **השם** strengthen everybody and give us **סייעתא דשמיא** to be able to be **מקיים** the **מצוות** of **יום כיפור** properly, to be able to fast properly, to be able to **דאוועך** and do **תשובה** properly. And through this, may **השם** bless all of **כלל ישראל**. - May **השם** bless all of you **שפע ברכה והצלחה** and a **גמר חתימה טובה** to everybody. **גוט יאר**, **גוט יאר**, **גוט יאר**.

One Act of *Teshuva* Can Change The Course Of A Person's Entire Life, As Well As His Future Generations

Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein was told a story by a *talmid chocham* who today teaches Torah to the masses. He said he is one of over 5000 offspring of his great-great-grandfather Ya'akov. And every one of those offspring are *bnei* Torah and *yireh* Hashem. Some of them are rabbis in communities in all different parts of the world. And it all came about in the *zechus* of one nice hello.

His great-great grandfather Ya'akov grew up in a religious home, but his father died when he was young and Ya'akov got swept up in the enlightenment movement and was lured away from Torah and *mitzvos*.

One morning, he woke up remembering it was the *yahrzeit* of his father and his conscience was eating away at him. His father had requested before he passed away that he always say *kaddish* for him on his *yahrzeit*.

At the present time, Ya'akov had moved away from his hometown and didn't even know if there were any *shuls* in his neighborhood. He decided he was going to make an effort to search for a *shul*. So he searched for the entire day, walking around the city until he finally found one.

He was very nervous to walk in, thinking that he would be judged by his appearance. He hoped to find a place in the back of the *shul* where he wouldn't be noticed. He would just say *kaddish* and leave.

When he walked in, he saw they were in the middle of the silent *amidah* of *Mincha*. He waited in the back of the *shul* until they ended the prayers, he said the *kaddish* for his father and he quickly tried to leave.

As he was making his way towards the door, the rabbi of the city Rav Yitzchok Dov HaLevi Bamberger caught up to him and gave him

the warmest greeting. Instead of rebuking him for his dress, he told him how much he admired him for coming to *shul* to say *kaddish*.

Ya'akov stood there with tears in his eyes. He had been feeling so guilty about leaving Torah and *mitzvos*, and now he felt so special from the Rabbi's uplifting words. He ended up speaking to the Rabbi and became re-energized to come back to religion.

Two years after that *kaddish*, Ya'akov was standing under the *chuppah*, marrying a girl who aspired to reach great heights in religion as he did. They established a family together of *bnei* Torah – 13 children all going in the way of Hashem. And now, 150 years after that *kaddish*, Ya'akov has over 5000 offspring, all *shomrei* Torah and *mitzvos*.

The power of one decision to come closer to Hashem has affected generations and generations of people. Everyone has greatness inside of them. With one decision to commit to becoming stronger in Torah and *mitzvos*, we can bring it out of ourselves and change the entire course of history. Let us utilize this awesome day of Yom Kippur to repent and recommit ourselves to Hashem. (R' Dovid Ashear)

Rav Yechezkel from Kuzmir once said, even if a person was on his way to shul on erev Yom Kippur, if his friend would stop him and ask if he could go for a walk with him because there is something that is bothering him and he would love to be able to speak his heart and remove the worry, the man should say yes and go with him because the goal of Yom Kippur is teshuva, and fulfilling the great mitzvah of וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ, which is a klal gadol b'Torah, is an enormous zechus and will help fix all the times during the year that we ignored people instead of helping them. - At this time, we need every zechus we can get.

Actualizing Our Potential

כִּי הִנֵּה כַּזְּכוּכִית בְּיַד הַמְזַגֵּג, בִּרְצוֹתוֹ חוֹגֵג -"For man is like glass in the hands of the glazier…". (*Ma'ariv*, Yom Kippur) (R' Chaim Burman)



Here we liken the fragility of man to glass, that without the necessary care could so easily shatter. There is, however, another understanding of this phrase. Glass has a special property: when glass is held up towards light at the right angle, the light refracts and a beautiful rainbow prism of colour can be perceived.

To achieve this, however, one must first pick up the glass and manoeuvre it until the light shines at exactly the right spot. This is an additional message of the *piyut*: every person is a bit like this glass – everyone has their point where they can shine, sometimes it can be hard to identify, but if one looks hard enough it can always be found. Hashem, "the glazier" discerns this most aptly, and knows where we can excel and what our true potential really is. Yom Kippur is the time when we are expected to identify this for ourselves, and make a plan of how we will come to realize our potential.

At this time of year we are expected to enter ourselves in a process of introspection and ask: did I shine as brightly as I could have this year; how could I better actualize my potential from now on? Was the devotion I gave to my personal life and professional development consistent with the attention I paid to my growth Jewishly? Did I spend as much time doing quality activities as I did doing less important things? Was I ready to spend money on important causes, just like I was for my own holidays and pleasure?

The following story is told of the *Chassidic* Rebbe – R' Zusha of Anipoli, the brother of R' Elimelech of Lizhensk. He once remarked: "If I were to be questioned by Hashem why I was not like my renowned brother Elimelech, I will have no problem answering. We were both endowed with very different skills and are very different people, so to that comparison I have a good retort. What I fear, however, is when I will be asked – 'Zusha, why were you not Zusha?' For to that I will have no good answer".

Like glass, we all have the ability to shine. On Yom Kippur we are given the opportunity of reorienting our path, and making sure that we are on the route that will actualize our greatest potential.



Some Important Lessons to Take from Yonah (R' Yehonasan Gefen)

The Book of Yonah is unique in that it is read as Yom Kippur approaches its culmination at *Mincha*. The obvious connection between Yom Kippur and Yonah is that the concept of *teshuva* is a prevalent theme in the story. However, it seems that in addition to this general focus on *teshuva*, there are valuable lessons that can be learnt from the behavior of Yonah that can deepen our understanding of Torah in general, and *teshuva* in particular.

The Brisker Rav was once talking with a certain Rabbi about the difficult situation that existed at that time in Eretz Yisroel. The Rabbi blamed all the struggles on the irreligious, arguing that it was their actions that brought about the terrible state of affairs.

The Brisker Rav disagreed, basing his argument on an incident in the Book of Yonah, noting that it is evidently no coincidence that we read it on Yom Kippur. Yonah had left Eretz Yisroel on a ship in order to avoid having to warn the people of Nineveh to repent. While he was on the ship, a terrible storm begins to rage, and the idol worshipping sailors ask Yonah what they should do. He answers that they should throw him off the ship, "for I know that it is because of me this storm is upon you."

The Brisker Rav pointed out that Yonah was a *navi*. Yes, he did err in trying to evade his mission, but was nonetheless a great *tzaddik*. Everyone else on the ship was an idol worshipper. In Yonah's situation, he could have easily blamed the sailors for the drastic situation. Yet he did not do that. He recognized that he was at fault and he took responsibility for it.

The Brisker Rav continued, "This is why we read the Book of Yonah on Yom Kippur afternoon. There will always be people around us whom we can identify as the cause of the storm, and it is very easy to do so. However, Yonah teaches us that we would do better to recognize our own role in the matter, for that is something we can do something about."

The practical lesson is obvious here; when bad things happen around us, it is always easy to ascribe blame to others, and it may well be true that they have some level of guilt. However, the Brisker Rav teaches us that this is not the *avodah* for us. Rather, we should focus on our aspect of responsibility for the situation and focus on that, rather than being busy criticizing others. This is a vital component of *teshuva*, for if one does not learn lessons from the events surrounding him, then he is failing to heed the messages that Hashem is sending him.

Rav Immanuel Bernstein *shlita* adds a fascinating point based on Yonah's words: He asks, that Yonah himself was not simply answering a single question, of 'what do you do?'. Rather, the sailors asked

Yonah a number of questions: "Tell us now, on whose account has this evil befallen us? What is your trade? and from where do you come? What is your land? And of what people are you?"

While Yonah clearly answers some of the questions, he does not seem to have addressed the opening questions when the sailors asked, what to make of their predicament, and so on. So how did Yonah satisfactorily answer all their inquiries?

Rav Bernstein explains: "Here we are being taught a fundamental lesson: The answer to most of life's questions regarding how we should respond to any given situation is to begin by affirming who we are. Once that is established, the other answers will naturally follow."

Yonah's message teaches us that the foundation of *teshuva* is built on the fact that we must establish who we are and which of our actions over the past year we identify with. This will have a dramatic effect on how we will act throughout the year, after the inspiration of the Yomim Noraim fades.

When faced with so many of life's difficulties, if we remember the foundational idea of '*Ivri anochi*' then it will be far easier to find the clarity to react correctly with the challenges we will be facing.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler — The awakening of Yom Kippur

"On Yom Kippur, the power of the evil inclination is muted. Therefore, one's yearning for spiritual elevation reasserts itself, after having lain dormant as a result of sin's deadening effect on the soul." - Yom Kippur is a time when the soul's natural desire for spiritual elevation becomes more perceptible. The day gives a person an opportunity to reconnect with aspirations that may have been obscured during the year.

The Pnimiyus of Wearing Sneakers on Yom Kippur | Rabbi Moshe Weinberger

I want to explore one small piece of the tapestry of *Yom Kippur*: the *inyan* of **נעילת הסנדל**, not wearing shoes. Every detail of Yom Kippur reflects the *kedushas hayom*, and this seemingly small *inyan* contains a tremendous message.

The Mishnah in Yoma says: **יום הכיפורים אסור באכילה ובשתייה וברחיצה ובסיכה ובנעילת הסנדל**. Why specifically are leather shoes forbidden?

כתנות עור and כתנות אור

When Adam HaRishon was first created, he was clothed in **כתנות אור**—garments of light. Chazal teach that in the Torah of Rabbi Meir, the word *or* was written with an **א**, meaning light, rather than with an **ע**, meaning skin. Before the *Chet HaEitz*, man was connected directly to the *ohr* of Hashem. After the *chet*, however, the Torah says: **כתנות עור** - Man went from **אור** to **עור** —from light to skin.

Chazal further teach that these garments came from the skin of the snake. The *nachash* represents the force of *ra* that entered the world through the *chet*. Man was now surrounded by a physical body in which *tov* and *ra* were mixed.

This explains why the *sitra achra* has its particular hold on the feet. The foot is the lowest part of the person, furthest from the head. In the language of Kabbalah, the *sitra achra* is **נאחז ברגלי המלכות**.

The Torah therefore says to the snake: **ואתה תשופנו עקב**. The snake attacks the *akeiv*, the heel. The heel represents the most vulnerable point of a person—the lowest place, where spiritual weakness can begin and then spread throughout the entire person.

The Gemara teaches on the words: **עוון עקבי יסובני** that these are the *aveiros* a person "treads upon with his heel"—things he does not take seriously. They may seem insignificant, but on the *Yom HaDin* they can surround a person.

Why do we wear shoes?

This gives us a deeper understanding of the *inyan* of shoes. The *Arizal* explains that clothing provides a protection from the *kelipos*, and the particular protection around the feet is the shoe. The shoe creates a barrier between the vulnerable heel and the forces that seek to attack it.

There is a remarkable Chazal about Chanoch: **חנוך תופר מנעלים היה** - Chanoch was a shoemaker, and with every stitch he would say: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד**.

Why specifically while making shoes?

Baruch Shem is the *yichud* of Malchus—recognizing that Hashem is present even at the lowest point. Chanoch was proclaiming with every stitch: Even here, at the heel, even at the lowest level, Hashem is here too.

That is the message of the shoe. The snake wants a person to believe that Hashem is present in the spiritual places but absent from the ordinary, difficult and low places of life. The shoe protects the heel and declares: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד**—Hashem is here, even here.

And then comes Yom Kippur

If shoes protect us from the *kelipos*, why does Yom Kippur specifically require us to remove them?

The answer is that Yom Kippur is fundamentally different. - The *sefarim* explain that on Yom Kippur, Tiferes and Malchus ascend to the level of Binah. The lowest part of a person is elevated toward the highest. This is why on Yom Kippur we say loudly: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד**

Unlike the rest of the year, the *sitra achra* has no ordinary *achizah* on Yom Kippur. The *koach* of the *ra* is weakened and the person is

elevated beyond its normal reach. Therefore, we do not need the protection of the shoe.

In fact, wearing a leather shoe on Yom Kippur would contradict the very message of the day. It would suggest that we still require that protection, that the *kelipos* still have the same *achizah*. But on Yom Kippur, we rise above that level.

That is why Yom Kippur is a day when a person can accomplish in a short time what might require enormous effort during the rest of the year. Teshuvah is connected with Binah—and on Yom Kippur we are elevated to that level.

We are temporarily removed from the physical world. We do not eat or drink, and we separate ourselves from the ordinary physical needs of the body. We become, in a sense, like *malachim*.

The *ohr* that was covered by the **כתנות עור** can shine again.

Yom Kippur and Tisha B'Av

There is another day when we do not wear shoes: Tisha B'Av. But the two days are opposites. On Yom Kippur, we remove our shoes because the protection is no longer necessary. We are elevated beyond the normal *achizah* of the *sitra achra*.

On Tisha B'Av, we remove our shoes because the situation is so broken that the shoe cannot provide its normal protection. It is a day of *aveilus*, *churban* and *galus*, when the barriers have been breached.

The *Beis Yosef*, in the *Maggid Meisharim*, distinguishes between the two: on Yom Kippur, the power of evil is *batel*, so we do not need the shoe; on Tisha B'Av, the *sitra achra* is strengthened, and the shoe does not provide the same protection.

This also explains the discussion about the bracha **שעשה לי כל צרכי**.

The *Rema Mi-Pano* says that on Yom Kippur one should say the bracha **בשמחה**. Why? Because not wearing shoes on Yom Kippur is

not a *chesaron*. It is actually a sign of *shleimus*. We can say: **שעשה לי כל צרכי** because on this day, I do not need the shoe. I am being elevated beyond the place where I require that protection.

On Tisha B'Av, however, the removal of shoes expresses *chesaron*, pain and mourning. **כתנות אור**

This brings us back to Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Meir was able to see the *ohr* within everything. Even when his rebbe, Elisha ben Avuya, became *Acher*, Rabbi Meir continued to learn from him. Chazal say:

תוכו אכל, קליפתו זרק - He took the inside and discarded the outer shell. That is the *koach* of Rabbi Meir: to see beyond the *kelipah* and reach the **ohr** inside.

And that is the ultimate message of Yom Kippur.

During the year, we live within **כתנות עור**. We struggle with the physical world, with our weaknesses and with the "snake" that attacks at the heel. But on Yom Kippur, we are given a glimpse of **כתנות אור**.

We remove the shoe. We remove, as it were, another layer of the **עור**. We step away from the physical world and enter the world of *teshuvah*, the world of Binah, where the *ra* has no *achizah*.

And perhaps this is why the end of Yom Kippur is called Ne'ilah.

Ne'ilah means to close and lock ourselves in with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. By the end of Yom Kippur, after a day in which we have risen higher and higher, we reach a place where we can enter, as the *sefarim* describe, into: **הביאני המלך חדריו** - into the inner chamber of the King.

We should be *zocheh* to use the light of Yom Kippur to achieve genuine *teshuvah*, to return to the **כתנות אור**, and to be *nischatem* in the *Sefer HaChaim* of *tzaddikim gemurim*. Amen.

Who Are We Kidding? — A Yom Kippur Thought by Rabbi Aron Litwin

Every year we beat our chests through Al Chet, promising Hashem we'll be perfect — and every year we fall short again. So what's the point? Are we just kidding ourselves?

Rav Ovadia Yosef, in the introduction to his sefer on Pirkei Avot, brings a story that answers this:

A princess in a faraway kingdom lived in luxury until an invading army killed her parents and threw her in a brutal prison — sleeping in mud, fed watery soup. One guard took pity on her. He couldn't do much, but he found her an old, filthy mattress and gave her a little extra soup and bread each day.

Years later, her family reconquered the kingdom. Restored as queen, she immediately appointed that guard to the highest position in the land. Others were baffled — he'd only given her a dirty mattress and some scraps. But she explained: in that prison, where she had nothing, those small gifts were priceless. Value is relative to the situation.

Rav Ovadia's point: we live in a spiritual "prison." There's no Beis HaMikdash, no nevuah, no generation of great sages walking among us — and we live amid unprecedented distraction. In this reality, even our small efforts carry immense value, even if they don't feel like much.

He illustrated this with a kettle: at 211°F water won't boil, no matter how long you wait. One more degree — 212°F — and it boils. That single extra degree looks tiny, but it's the difference that makes everything happen.

Our small efforts work the same way in the eyes of Hashem. So when we approach Yom Kippur feeling like failures — "I'll just mess up again next year, why bother?" — we're missing the point. Nobody expects perfection. That's why we say Al Chet again and again, all

year long: because we know we'll fall again. The real question is whether we can do a little better, just once.

With lashon hara, for example: instead of vowing "I'll never say it again" (a vow we'll likely break), try holding off just 10-20 seconds the next time you're desperate to share something juicy. Do it "l'shem Yom Kippur" — in honour of the day. One small pause, one small win.

As one mashgiach used to advise: take whatever change you're considering, then halve it — and halve it again — until it's something truly small and doable. The few resolutions that actually stick tend to be the tiniest ones.

We tend to imagine our small efforts are as unimpressive as a stained mattress. But Hashem sees them differently — those tiny efforts, done in a "prison" of distraction and spiritual darkness, may earn us the greatest rewards in Olam Haba.

So this Yom Kippur: pick one small, specific change. Not "I'll stop completely" — just "one time less." Next year, one time less again. That's not kidding yourself. That's real growth.

Wishing you a meaningful Yom Kippur.



Wishing you all an easy fast and meaningful and inspiring Yom Kippur! May we all merit a G'mar Chasima Tova and a sweet New Year, and may we see the redemption speedily in our days. **גמר חתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה**



"Charity atones even for intentional sins." ~ Chida.