

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL

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Dear Friends,

It is with a great sense of gratitude to HaShem that we present the latest in our series of Torah Journals.

I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of our General Editor Rabbi Shlomo Hochberg and our Content Editor, Rebbitzin Rookie Billet. Together they have created a volume of Torah insights which will enhance the Yamim Noraim and Chagim for thousand of readers. Special thanks as well to our Director of Rabbinic Services, Rabbi Binyamin Hammer, for coordinating the production of the Journal and its distribution throughout the country.

This edition is dedicated to the memory of a truly remarkable individual, Reb Nissen Krakinowski, Z"l. A Holocaust Survivor, Reb Nissen was a warm, kind, caring individual whose modesty, humility and Emunah were truly exemplary. An active member of the Canarsie community, including the Young Israel of Canarsie, his sole interest was to help others and do whatever he could to benefit those around him. I urge you to read the beautiful tribute to him, printed in the center of the Journal.

We also remember and pay tribute to Rabbi Chaim Wassrman, Z"l, who served with great distinction as Rav of the Young Israel of Passaic and then, following his Aliyah to Israel, as Chairman of the Council of Young Israel Rabbis in Israel and Editor of our first Torah Journal. His legendary love for Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Torat Yisrael, stands as an everlasting model for all of us to emulate.

We are all familiar with the Rambam's image of the Shofar as our wake-up call to do Teshuvah, to awake from our spiritual slumber and actively examine our lives and devote ourselves to a resumption of a

life of Torah and Mitzvos.

For many years the Young Israel Movement, as envisioned by its founders and subsequent leaders, was left in a state of organizational slumber, forgetting its primary role of serving its branches and their members. For a whole generation, the very purpose of Young Israel and the reason for affiliation with it was virtually forgotten.

I am pleased to report that for the last year and a half, our Administration has sounded the "Shofar" and engaged in organizational Teshuvah. Our efforts to reengage with our branches and members through weekly communications and special Zoom presentations along with offering specific services and programming, have started to result in a shift back to recognition and relevance. Certainly, the publication of the Torah Journals is a primary example of this renewal.

Another major development has been the reorganization of our Israel presence and its formal merger with World Mizrachi. Young Israel and Mizrachi are a natural fit for each other, and you will be hearing much more about this ongoing relationship during the coming weeks and months.

On behalf of our entire Administration, I urge you to participate in the programming and services which we offer and to become actively involved in spreading the word about the new Young Israel Movement, reenergized and ready to serve our community.

I wish you a year of good health, prosperity and Hatzlacha in all your endeavors and a Kesivah V'Chasimah Tovah.

Rabbi David Warshaw

President, National Council of Young Israel



THE JOURNEY AND JOY OF TISHREI



RABBI SHLOMO HOCHBERG

RABBI EMERITUS, YOUNG ISRAEL OF JAMAICA ESTATES

IS THE PROXIMITY of Sukkos to Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur coincidental or intentional?

The Tur (Rav Yaakov ben Asher, Cologne & Toledo, 1270-1340) posits that Hashem designated autumn as the season to celebrate the Festival of Sukkos, rather than in the spring season when the Jewish People left Egypt and actually began to dwell in Sukkos and enjoy the Divine protection of His **ענני הכבוד** – Clouds of Glory. He asserts that if we were to leave our homes to sit outside in booths in the springtime, it might erroneously appear that we are moving outdoors merely to benefit from the shade in the warm weather. Hashem therefore designated the Yom Tov of Sukkos at the beginning of the cool, rainy season, so that it is patently obvious that we are doing so only to serve Hashem's Will.

But the Midrash disagrees, illustrating through a parable that Sukkos is the culmination of the Days of Awe

and Judgment, which punctuates the Yamim Noraim as a precious gift – that of the opportunity to recalibrate and redefine ourselves.

In expounding upon the Mitzvos of Sukkos, the Midrash illuminates the verse

תוֹדִיעֵנִי אֶרְכָּה חַיִּים שִׁבְעַת שָׁמָחוֹת אֶת-פָּנֶיךָ
נְעֻמּוֹת בְּיָמֶיךָ נָצַח:

“You will teach me the path of life. In Your presence is perfect joy; delights are forever victorious in Your right hand.” (Tehillim 16:11)

...דָּבַר אַחֵר, שִׁבְעַת שָׁמָחוֹת, אֵל תְּהִי קוֹרָא בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
שִׁבְעַת שָׁמָחוֹת, אֵלֶּי שִׁבְעַת מַצּוֹת שְׂבָחָהּ, וְאֵלֶּי הֵן,
אֶרְבָּעָה מִיָּנִין שְׂבָלֻלָּב, וְסִכָּה, חֲגִיגָה וְשִׁמְחָה. אִם
שִׁמְחָה לְמַעַן חֲגִיגָה וְאִם חֲגִיגָה לְמַעַן שִׁמְחָה, אָמַר
רַבִּי אֲבִין מֶשֶׁל...

“...Another interpretation of “sova – complete joy” can be read as “**sheva** – **seven**” –referring to the seven (sheva) Mitzvos of the festival: The four species lulav-bundle, the sukkah, the karban chagiga –



Festival Offering and the shalmei simcha - Offerings of Joy... Rav Avin (an Amora, student of Rav Yochanan) cites a parable of two people who enter a judge's courtroom. When one of the litigants exits the courtroom triumphantly carrying a palm branch aloft, that is a sign that he prevailed. So too,

Israel and the nations of the world come before the Almighty on Rosh Hashana. When we see that Israel comes out after Yom Kippur from in front of the Holy One, blessed be He,

with their lulavim and esrogim in their hands, we know that Israel has prevailed, and we therefore offer both an Offering of Joy, as well as the Holiday Offering. Therefore, Moshe tells Israel - "And you shall take for yourselves...a lulav, esrog, etc., and celebrate for seven days." (Vayikra Rabbah 30:2)"

It might appear from this midrash that our success on the Yamim Noraim is automatic and guaranteed. But the Mishna Brurah writes that "we do not recite Hallel on Yamim Noraim, because the Books of Judgment are open, despite our confidence that we will emerge meritorious."

We are thus presented with a formi-

dable challenge, as the Yamim Noraim seem to send a mixed message. On the one hand, we are to feel אימת הדין - fear of the impending Judgment - and refrain from Hallel. Yet we are also told to feel confident that we will prevail and triumph.

How can we aspire to effectuate a successful personal transformation so that when we take our lulav and esrog, we will truly feel that we have indeed emerged victorious? How do we navigate the Yamim Noraim to achieve the desired result?

How do we manage our personal teshuva-challenge during this season?

One approach can be gleaned from a universal minhag introduced by Rav Yosef Karo in the Shulchan Aruch as the first of the rituals of Rosh Hashana. Even before citing the mitzva of shofar, he draws our attention to the "simanim" - the symbolic foods which adorn our table and menu on the nights of Rosh Hashana, with our accompanying declarations that Hashem should "sweeten our coming year, increase our merits, remove our adversaries, etc."

Rabbi Menachem Meiri (France, 1249-1315) proposes that these simanim and declarations are designed to arouse

It might appear from this midrash that our success on the Yamim Noraim is automatic and guaranteed.

THE JOURNEY AND JOY OF TISHREI

our hearts to proper behavior, and intensify our teshuva and tefilla, similar to the wake-up call of the shofar.

The Rambam suggests that we are being urged through this minhag to train our perspective about ourselves, and about others – to see the good, to act with resolve, and to transform reality towards the good. (Guide for the Perplexed, 3:10) As noted by Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, (Rosh Yeshiva, Machon Lev) “We train ourselves and our family to see the positive in every situation and person, including ourselves.” Hashem graciously grants us abundant opportunity for accomplishment in the coming year and bestows upon us all the required tools to help us reach our full potential. This results in a positive self-image of who we are, and who we can be. As we recite the simanim, we are enjoined to peer deep into ourselves and realize that “all is good within.”

With this virtuous self-image developed on Rosh Hashana, the tone has been set for our tefilot and bakashot – our prayers, requests, and self-assessment during the Aseret Yemai Teshuva leading up to Yom Kippur. Are we living up to our potential? Have we taken sufficient accounting?

The tefilot of Yom Kippur are dominated by “vidui” – confession – על חטא

שחטאנו – “for the sins which we transgressed.” As we recite and contemplate this litany of sins, we acknowledge that we may have transgressed some of these 44 sins, but we also recognize that many of the listed infractions are thankfully beyond the scope of our personal experience. Why then recite them?

***Are we
living up
to our
potential?***

An invigorating and inspiring approach is based upon a novel concept developed by Rav Yosef Dov Ha-levi Soloveitchik זצ”ל in his Teshuva Drasha of 5734/1974. The Rav submitted that there

are two types of teshuva. The typical annual teshuva process results in changes to our behavior, which often prove to be temporary, as people slide back into their previous lifestyle habits. These changes are often based upon feelings of guilt or fear of punishment, so that even if the changes endure, they do not become part of the penitent’s true essence. The Rav termed this as situational or causalistic teshuva.

But the Rav also identified a deeper form of Teshuva, one which causes a “metamorphosis of one’s personality – a harmony or reconciliation of man and a renewal of the spirit from within – a personalistic teshuva” – which he illustrated with the following Aggadah:

One momentous night Yaakov



Avinu dreamed a vision of heavenly angels ascending and descending a ladder. The Talmud is puzzled both by the angels' preoccupation with both the ladder and with Yaakov Avinu.

עולין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מעלה, ויורדין ומסתכלין בדיוקנו של מטה, ...שדמות יעקב חקוק בכסא הכבוד

"The angels climbed up to heaven to look at the image of Yaakov engraved on the celestial throne. They then descended to take a second look at the image of Yaakov who rested exhausted on the cold stones below." (Talmud Chulin 91:2)

The Rav explained that the angels were engaged in a comparative study as to whether or not these two images of Yaakov, the ideal Yaakov as depicted up above, and the empirical Yaakov on earth, were identical. Who is the real Yaakov?

The same question is asked about each of us. Who is the real me?

As we proceed through Aseret Yemai Teshuva, we investigate our actions of the past, resolve to abandon negative behaviors and implement new constructive behaviors.

Is that situational teshuva or personalistic teshuva?

On Yom Kippur, our repeated recitation of the full vidui challenges us to analyze which sins are part of our personality, and tasks us to define our essential persona. If we embrace the maximum potential that Hashem granted us on Rosh Hashana, and if we resolve to manifest our ideal self, we are able to realize the personal-

istic teshuva as we conclude the Yamim Noraim, and transform our core essence, our neshama.

In the concluding tefilla of Neila, we

ask Hashem למען נחדל מעושי ידנו – to enable us to capitalize upon the unique abilities and insights that He has gifted to us.

In the words of the Rav. "The greatness of the day of Yom Kippur is that it stimulates man, it inspires man to seek himself, to find himself, and by seeking and finding himself, the Baal Teshuva ultimately finds the Almighty."

We are now prepared to celebrate Sukkos as a victory – having embraced our "weapons" – our distinctive talents and intellect – as features of our individual sense of mission. When I wave the Four Species, I express my gratefulness for all of Hashem's gifts – symbolized by my heart/neshama, eyes/vision, lips/speech, and spine/movement – and I jubilantly hoist them aloft, confident that with the gifts He

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has bestowed upon me, I possess a rejuvenated capacity to fulfill my raison d'être and His will.

In turn, the sukkah, with its minimum two complete walls plus a third wall, presents an image of a hug. In the sukkah, God embraces us, as if He were renewing His covenant with us: "My clouds of glory continue to envelop and protect you, My precious children who have restored their complete divine image."

ויהי רצון שיפרוש סוכת

שלומו עלינו ועל כל עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים טובב"א

May it be His will to spread His peaceful sheltering canopy upon us, all of Israel and Jerusalem, may it be rebuilt speedily in our day.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to each of the authors who contributed their thoughts, insights and time for this NCYI Tishrei Torah Journal, knowing that their Divrei Torah will

indeed serve to inspire and motivate.

My sincere thanks also to NCYI President David Warshaw for this and other meaningful initiatives, to Rabbi Binyamin Hammer for his ongoing support of our Rabbanim and Kehillot, and to Rebbetzin Rookie Billet for her

many hours and exceptional effort reviewing and editing the Divrei Torah for publication.

Best wishes for a transformative Journey through the month of Tishrei. May Hashem

bless all of our efforts with success, and may we be zoche to a year replete with all of Hashem's bountiful brachot.

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום

B'yedidut, Shlomo Hochberg

the sukkah, with its minimum two complete walls plus a third wall, presents an image of a hug.

OUR YOM KIPPUR MINDSET

RABBI KENNETH AUMAN
YOUNG ISRAEL TALMUD TORAH OF FLATBUSH



THERE ARE VERY FEW mysteries in Jewish practice. Other religions may have secret societies or practices, but we don't. Anything we do is discussed in the Talmud, and is open for anyone to study. The Gemara tells us that those who attempted to keep secrets, such as the makers of the ketoret, the incense used in the Temple, or the lechem hapanim, the twelve loaves of bread that adorned the golden table in the Temple, were criticized severely for doing so.

The one secret that we do seem to have concerns Yom Kippur – the pronunciation of the Shem hameforash, the Tetragrammaton, but that was done for practical reasons rather than for any deep need to keep it secret. Since it was so powerful, Chazal were worried about it being used for evil purposes.

Even the Yom Kippur sacrificial service that was done by the Kohen Gadol alone – with no one there to watch

him and in fact no one even present in the entire building while it was taking place, was not esoteric at all. There was no mystery as to what he did. The Torah in Parshat Achare Mot, the section read on Yom Kippur, explains it clearly, and the Talmud expounds on each detail. One need not have been a Kohen Gadol to know what went on there.

However, there is one aspect of this service that is not discussed at all, and does remain unknown. We do not know what the Kohen Gadol was thinking during these sublime religious moments. There do not appear to be any explicit statements in the Talmud regarding his thoughts. And yet, at such important holy moments, one would expect some direction with regard to his thoughts.

If, however, we read between the lines in the Torah and in the Medrash, we can perhaps gain some insight into his thoughts as well. The passuk states,

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בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהֱרֵן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּפָר בֶּן בָּקָר לַחֲטָאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה:

Only thus shall Aaron enter the Shrine: with a bull of the cattle herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.—

What Aharon should have with him is nothing but the avodah – i.e., his mental energy should be directed at ensuring that everything is done correctly; his pre-occupation should be to make sure that he is serving G-d properly. This is reminiscent

of a story told about R. Chaim of Brisk: the baal tekiah once asked him regarding what deep religious thoughts he should be thinking when sounding the shofar for the congregation. R. Chaim is reported to have responded, “Just have in mind that you are having the members of the congregation fulfill their obligation of blowing/hearing the shofar.”

But the Medrash adds another dimension.

ויקרא רבה פרשה כא

יֵא בְּפָר בֶּן בָּקָר זֶה אֲבֵרָהּ עַל שׁוּם (בְּרֵאשִׁית יח) וְאֵל הַבָּקָר רִץ אֲבֵרָהּ, וְאֵיל לְעֹלָה זֶה יִצְחָק עַל שׁוּם (שם / בְּרֵאשִׁית/ כב) וְהֵנָּה אֵיל אַחֵר נֶאֱחָז בִּסְבָךְ, עַד זִכְרוֹתָיו שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב דְּכָתִיב (שם / בְּרֵאשִׁית/ כז) וְקָח לִי מִשֵּׁם שְׁנֵי גִדֵּי עִזִּים טוֹבִים

With a bull of the cattle herd – this refers to Avraham, as it states, “And to the cattle Avraham ran...” (to provide a meal for his guests). And a ram for a burnt offering, this refers to Yitzchak, as it states “His eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns” (at the time of the akedah). And a he goat, in the merit of Yaakov, as it states, “And fetch me two choice kids”

(when Yaakov was following Rivka’s instructions to obtain the brachot from his father).

This Medrash is teaching that the Kohen Gadol takes the avot

with him as he enters the Temple precincts. He has their inspirational models in mind as he performs the avodah: Avraham, the epitome of chessed, as he serves his guests a par; Yitzchak, with unsurpassed mesirut nefesh submitting to the akedah represented by the ayil; and Yaakov, with his fierce dedication to the future destiny of the Jewish nation symbolized by the two goats that he brought to his father in order to receive the brachot.

Bezot yavo... As the Kohen Gadol performed the avodah, he had the images of the forefathers engraved in his mind. The Kohen Gadol’s performance of the avodah was on behalf of the entire nation. While he technically might not have been their agent, (see Yoma 19a) he was achieving atonement for



them all. The wonderful attributes of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov have been carried on by Klal Yisrael, and by bearing these attributes in mind as he performed the avodah, the Kohen Gadol was in effect beseeching G-d to look at the strengths of Klal Yisrael.

In post Temple times as well, in each and every generation, there are those who carry on the legacies of one or more of the avot. Klal Yisrael continues Avraham's legacy of chessed to this very day, on communal and personal levels in so many different ways. And we continue the heritage of Yitzchak with the many sacrifices that we make – whether as victims of terrorism, whether as soldiers in Israel risking and giving their lives, and whether the more minor monetary sacrifices required by our Torah lifestyle. And we are heirs to Yaakov's tenacity in perpetuating the Jewish people, as we continue to create institutions of Torah learning and outreach to the nonob-servant.

To our great detriment we no longer have the Kohen Gadol to represent us. We each must achieve atonement for ourselves. Each and every one of us enters our private kodesh kodoshim when we daven on Yom Kippur, be-

cause we are all lifnei Hashem, in the presence of G-d, on this holy day.

We too, therefore, ought to be thinking the very same thoughts that filled the minds of the of the Kohanim Gedolim of yore. Firstly, we must make sure to daven properly. Just as the Kohen Gadol was charged with the responsibility of performing the service properly, so too must we ensure that our service is performed properly, with perfect decorum and kavanna. It behooves us to take our time when we recite the tefillot rather than rushing through them.

We should be inspired as well, throughout the day, by visions in our minds of the Avot. Their examples of Chessed, sacrifice, and future destiny can spur us to reach for the heavens and to appreciate what true greatness is...

So let us use this holy day productively. We will be entering the kodesh kodoshim. Each and every one of us. We can emerge at the conclusion of the fast with the same radiance that suffused the face of the Kohen Gadol when he successfully completed the day. All we must do is enter with the proper mindset and set our hearts and souls to the task ahead of us!

AKEDAT YITZCHAK AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE YAMIM NORAIM

RABBI HESHIE BILLET

YERUSHALAYIM, RETIRED US SYNAGOGUE RABBI



AKEDAT YITZCHAK, the binding of Isaac, plays a major role in the Rosh HaShanah liturgy. In the middle section of the Mussaf Amidah, we beseech G-d to remember Abraham's loyalty to Him through his readiness to bind his son. Similarly, we ask that divine mercy be bestowed on us as a reward to our father Abraham.

Additionally, the Talmud (Rosh HaShanah 16a) tells us that we blow shofar with a ram's horn to beseech the L-rd's mercy by reminding him of the ram that replaced Yitzchak on the altar. Furthermore, the Talmud (Megillah 31a) instructs us to read the story of the Akedah from the Torah on the second day of Rosh HaShanah.

From this perspective, the purpose of recalling and mentioning the binding of Yitzchak in our tefilot and our Torah reading is to send a message to G-d to be good to His people, the descendants of Avraham and Yitzchak, because of the role they played in

the Akedah. I would like to suggest a different interpretation which posits that the goal of reading about the Akedah is to impart a message to us, the Jewish people.

The happy ending of the story has Yitzchak replaced by a ram whose horns were caught in the bushes nearby the site of the would-be altar. Rashi tells us that this particular ram was created during the six days of creation. Yalkut Shimoni (Genesis 22:13) adds that the ram came from the same Garden of Eden where Adam and Chava once lived. Why are these details so important?

Maimonides in his "Guide for The Perplexed" (Morah Nevuchim 1:2) addresses the prohibition to Adam and Chava regarding eating from the Tree of Knowledge. They are told that the day that they eat from this tree, they will know the difference between good and evil. The question is, what is so bad about knowing the difference



between good and evil? Isn't that something that every parent tries to teach his children, that all teachers try to impart to their students?

Maimonides explains that before Adam and Chava ate from the Tree of Knowledge, their whole moral system was based on the concept of truth and falsehood.

However, after they ate from the tree of knowledge, their moral system shifted to a basis of good and evil. What is the difference between morality based on truth and falsehood and morality based on good and evil?

Rav Aharon Soloveitchik explains that truth and falsehood are absolute concepts while good and bad are relative concepts. God's morality is absolute. Human morality is often relative.

When we speak of some statement or idea as being true or false, it must be one or the other. There are no options in between. Good and evil, on the other hand, are very much dependent upon the person defining the good or the evil. What is good for a wicked man may be evil for a righteous man. Hence the concepts of good and evil are relative, and certainly not absolute.

God's morality is absolute. Human morality is often relative.

Before they ate from the tree, Adam and Chava did what God told them to do because what he commanded them to do was true and what he cautioned them not to do was false. When they chose to violate his instructions and taste the fruit of the forbidden tree, their moral system was transformed to one of good or evil. It was

no longer based exclusively on what God said, but rather, their choices were now based on what they "liked" or "did not like."

To continue the analysis, after the Akedah, God says to Avraham, "now I know that you are a God-fearing person and you did not deny me your only son". These words are very difficult to comprehend. Abraham went through many tests in his life and proved himself to be a man of great piety. But in a human being's judgment, one could always be uncertain about him. Perhaps he did things because he liked doing them. Perhaps some deeds seemed as though they were good for him. And maybe he refrained from doing some things because they seemed like they were bad for him, and would not bring him joy or fulfillment, or other things that humans seem to need or crave. However, to sacrifice his son is an action that any father would refrain from doing

because clearly, it is bad for a father to cut off his progeny and deny himself a legacy and continuity of generations. However, if one trusts in God, and one chooses to adhere to God's morality that is based on truth and falsehood, then, what God commands is truth, and what he prohibits is falsehood. One cannot think of God's commandments or prohibitions in any other way.

That is the message of that very ram that came from the Garden

of Eden and was created during the six days of creation. That ram carried the absolute divine moral code of truth and falsehood! It was a reminder to Abraham that he was being challenged to accept the original moral code of the Garden of Eden that was a divine moral code, and not the relative moral code of good and evil.

By passing the test, Abraham chose to go back to the divine moral system of the Garden of Eden and to base his morality on truth and falsehood. Hence, he was prepared to obey God's word and sacrifice his son. Therefore,

God declares, "Now I know..." that you are truly a righteous man who abides by the divine moral system which is absolute, and not by the human moral system of good and evil which is relative.

On Rosh Hashanah, we remind ourselves of just that.

Our father Abraham taught us that we must trust in God and must follow His system of truth and falsehood. A mitzvah, a God-given commandment is true.

A sin, which is pro-

A mitzvah, a God-given commandment is true. A sin, which is prohibited by God, is false.

hibited by God, is false. We do things because God tells us to do them; we refrain from doing things because God tells us to refrain from doing those things. It has nothing to do with whether we like it or not. It is an absolute system. And it is this that we must keep in mind when we bring ourselves closer to God through the process of repentance that begins in Chodesh Elul, continues through Rosh HaShanah and the Ten Days of Repentance, and climaxes on Yom Kippur.

TESHUVAH: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

RABBANIT ROOKIE BILLET

YERUSHALAYIM, YOUNG ISRAEL OF WOODMERE



THIS ARTICLE IS BASED on an essay by Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik in the volume “Al HaTeshuvah” that takes as its point of departure the subtle difference between the performance of a mitzvah and the fulfillment of a mitzvah.

The Rav points out that when examining Maimonides’ introduction to Hilchot Teshuvah, we notice that the Rambam states that this volume has but one positive commandment, and it is “To repent and to say the vidui (meaning the liturgical words of the confession).” One might immediately ask, “Only one commandment?! Doesn’t that sound like two—to repent and to recite the vidui?”

The attempt is made to resolve this issue by suggesting that there is a difference between the performance of the mitzvah and its fulfillment. Interestingly, sometimes performance and fulfillment are one and the same, but there are surely occasions when fulfillment means more than the simple act of performing the mitzvah. For exam-

ple, consider the commandment to take the four species, the lulav, etrog, hadas and arava, as we are instructed in the words of the Torah:

”ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפות תמרים וענף עץ עבות וערבי נחל”

“Take for yourself a citrus fruit, a palm frond, a branch of a myrtle tree and some willow branches”. We fulfill this commandment by binding these four species together and saying a blessing upon them on the holiday of Sukkot. This is a mitzvah whose performance and whose fulfillment seem to be one and the same. Simply, take the bound species in the correct way, say the blessing, shake them as assigned, and voila, the mitzvah is credited to the individual that does it! Other examples might include reciting Kiddush or Havdalah, or building a fence around your roof, or giving charity, or any other commandments whose simple acts fulfill the intent of the mitzvah.

But there are some mitzvot whose fulfillment exceeds the sum of the parts of

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their performance. Take for example, the Biblical mitzvah of Tefila—speaking to God in prayer at least once a day, with no specific words or time. Or consider the Rabbinic mitzvah of Tefila, which includes specific prayers, the utterance of specific words, at specific times of the day. Even if one utters the right words at the appointed times, bends and bows when appropriate, strikes his heart when asking for forgiveness, does that fulfill the commandment to serve God with our hearts, as the Medrash Halacha states—

“ולעבדו בכל לבבכם
—איזוהי עבודה שבלב—
זוהי תפילה—”

“To serve Him with your heart—what is the service of the heart? Prayer!”

Of course not!

True prayer involves more than words and motions; it involves intent, kavannah, direction. It requires an effort to connect with the Creator, to praise Him, to make requests of Him, to thank Him for the blessings in our lives. True prayer means we cannot just go through the motions of saying the words, bowing, striking our hearts, taking steps backwards and forwards to enter and retreat from His presence. It means thinking about our relationship with our Creator and making a daily effort to get closer to Him. Here, the fulfillment is much greater

than the simple sum of the required physical actions.

Another example of a commandment whose fulfillment is more than the sum of its action is the mitzvah to rejoice on the holiday. How do we rejoice; are there specific deeds that represent joy? The physical accoutrements of rejoicing are wearing nice clothing, setting a beautiful table, eating fine

foods, buying gifts for one's spouse. However, if one did all these actions, but was overtaken by sadness, unfulfilled by life, depressed over challenging life circumstances, did he or she ful-

fill the mitzvah of Simcha? Surely not, since sincere observance of the mitzvah of simcha demands that we feel lightness in our hearts, enjoy our families and friends, and celebrate the holiday with gladness! The mitzvah of simcha requires us to think beyond the physical actions to emphasize the feelings, the emotional elements, associated with these actions!

Consider now the mitzvah of Aveilut, mourning for the seven close relatives that the Torah requires us to sit shiva for, namely, a mother, a father, a spouse, a sister or brother, a son or a daughter. Many parameters are included in the mitzvah, like sitting on a low chair, covering the mirrors, wearing

***True prayer means
we cannot just go
through the motions
of saying the words,
bowing, striking our
hearts...***



non-leather shoes, not studying Torah, not washing the full body, refraining from marital intimacy, etc. But if one did all these actions and didn't truly grieve for the loved one, did one fulfill the mitzvah? Aveilut involves grieving for the loved one, feeling bad that we may not have loved enough, respected enough, honored enough (in the case of parents) during the lifetime of the deceased. This is an emotional element that is not achieved by merely going through the motions of the specific Halachot of Aveilut.

Circling back to Teshuvah, where we began the conversation about the difference between performance and fulfillment, consider the following: Teshuvah is also a commandment that involves far more than the concrete elements that the Halacha prescribes for Repentance, like acknowledging and regretting the wrongdoing, saying the vidui (words of admission), asking forgiveness from a person we may have hurt, committing to refraining from the same wrongdoing in the future. Repentance is a lifelong process of returning to God and getting closer to Him, to feeling his constant presence in our lives so that we won't transgress His negative commandments, and will perform His positive directives with more intent and intensity, with more mindfulness and sense of commitment. Teshuvah is a lifetime

journey of the heart.

It is now easy to explain why Rambam introduces Hilchot Teshuvah by saying that it discusses one mitzvah, which is to do teshuva and to say vidui, which sounds like he should have said two mitzvot, repenting and confessing! However, the resolution is that saying the vidui is the Ma'aseh haMitzvah, the performance of the mitzvah. But the Kiyum haMitzvah, the fulfillment of the mitzvah, is much more than saying vidui or any of the other concrete actions. The Kiyum haMitzvah is the Teshuvah that takes place in the heart. What is essential is the journey of the heart and the soul back to Hashem after straying and wrongdoing have tainted the purity of the neshama. Teshuva, like simchat yom tov, tefila and aveilut are mitzvot she'ba-Lev, commandments whose fulfillment requires the dedicated attention of one's heart, the seat of one's emotional intelligence, to fulfill properly!

During this season of "Dirshu Hashem b'Himatz'o; Kiruhu b'Hiyoto Karov"--search for Hashem when he is present; call out to him when he is close by", let us take advantage and invite our hearts and souls to enhance the performance of our mitzvot and facilitate the true kiyum hamitzvot!



RESOLVING CONTRADICTIONS IN THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES OF MERCY

RABBI REUVEN FINK

YOUNG ISRAEL OF NEW ROCHELLE

RABBENU YONAH in his Shaarei Teshuva (1:1) writes:

מן הטובות אשר היטיב השם יתברך עם בראיו, כי הכין להם הדרך לעלות מתוך פחת מעשיהם ולנוס מפח פשעיהם, לחשוך נפשם מני שחת ולהשיב מעליהם אפן, ולמדם והזהירם לשוב אליו כי יחטאו לו, לרוב טובו וישרו כי הוא ידע יצרם

In essence, Rabbenu Yonah posits that Hashem does a great good for those whom He created by giving them the gift of repentance, a profound gift which allows a human to rise from the pit of sin, return to his creator, and save himself from the wrath of God.

The question, however, is: How does teshuva work? How is the stain of sin removed? Chazal teach us that even Yom Kippur cannot atone unless there is teshuva. We also know that over the years, despite our best intentions and pronouncements about doing teshuva each Yom Kippur, our commitments of the previous year do not exactly follow through to the following year. How does one create that intimate rela-

tionship with Hashem that the baal teshuva achieves as stated by the Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 7:6-7)?

How does one become אהוב, נחמד, קרוב, -beloved, close, a dear friend? How does one break down the barriers between God and ourselves?

There is a baffling question that one becomes aware of during the High Holy Day season that begs to be addressed. Throughout the Ten Days of Penitence and during all of Yom Kippur, we daven and pray to God. A central and critical prayer in our Selichos is our invocation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. The thirteenth and final attribute is ונקה, that Hashem cleanses our sins.

But when we look at these thirteen attributes in context, we find something quite challenging. After the Torah describes Hashem as נושא עון ופושע - “Hashem bears our sin, rebellion and trespass” - it is only then that it actually states, ונקה לא ינקה. According



to the flow of the verse, וּנְקָה is not an attribute of mercy at all! It is quite the opposite. It totally limits and attenuates all of the other attributes of mercy that precede it.

וּנְקָה לֹא יִנְקָה means, He shall surely NOT cleanse you! By using the verb in negation, an extreme manifestation of the formula will take place- נִיְקוּי נֹחַ - no cleansing will occur.

וּנְקָה לֹא יִנְקָה strongly emphasizes that - notwithstanding everything that has been said until this point regarding the extent of God's mercy - He will not cleanse the sinner completely. וּנְקָה לֹא יִנְקָה - despite all twelve previously listed attributes of divine mercy etc., אֵל-רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אֲרַךְ אַפַּיִם, JUSTICE demands there be retribution for wrongdoing. The מִידַת הַדִּין - the divine attribute of justice - necessitates some action. It cannot ignore that a sin has taken place, and the sin cannot be erased entirely.

If so, it seems there are only twelve מִידוֹת הַרַחֲמִים, not thirteen! Somehow, in our סִלּוּחוֹת we say וּנְקָה and ignore the end of the phrase, לֹא יִנְקָה. By our inclusion of the word וּנְקָה - we not only abridge the פְּסוּק - we actually reverse the meaning of the phrase! We transform וּנְקָה לֹא יִנְקָה which means that G-d will surely not cleanse the sin entirely into וּנְקָה - that Hashem will cleanse

the sin entirely. How can we create an attribute that contradicts what is written in Torah?

The answer to this question is that the content of the attributes of mercy was revealed not just once, but twice.

The original source in the Torah for the

מִדוֹת הַרַחֲמִים is found in Parshas Ki-Sissa and is a part of the Torah's revelation. That verse, as we read it in the Torah, presents us with only twelve attributes of mercy which are strictly

limited by וּנְקָה לֹא יִנְקָה - G-d will not totally vitiate sin. With all of His mercies, the מִידַת הַדִּין, the attribute of Justice, will simply not allow for the erasure of sin in its entirety.

But there is a second revelation contained in one of the most mysterious episodes in the Torah. In this episode, מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ is in Heaven praying for the Jewish people to be forgiven for the עֲגַל הַזָּהָב, their worship of the Golden Calf. Moshe asks to understand how God truly relates to the world. He asks Him:

הֲרֹאִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ

"Show me now your glory."

Hashem responds to Moshe,

אֲנִי אַעבִיר כָּל טוֹבִי עַל פָּנֶיךָ

"I shall make all My goodness pass be-

...the content of the attributes of mercy was revealed not just once, but twice.

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fore you.”

ויאמר לא תוכל לראות את פני

And He said, “You will not be able to see My face” -

BUT,

ויאמר ה' הנה מקום איתי ונצבת על הצור

“G-d said, ‘Behold there is a place near Me; you may stand on the rock.’”

והיה בעבר כבודי ושמתין בנקרת הצור

“When My full glory passes by, I shall place you in the cleft of the rock.”

This revelation to Moshe in the “cleft of the rock” was not in public. It was not an overt revelation to the Jewish people. It was hidden with a covered face, as G-d Himself says,

ושכתי כפי עליך עד עברי

“I shall shield you with My hand until I have passed”.

This was an intimate conversation between Hashem and His most trusted servant Moshe Rabbeinu, to whom He disclosed His Name and His divine attributes. Here G-d revealed to Moshe a thirteenth attribute. This attribute is hidden and even denied by the Torah.

But in this revelation - בנקרת הצור - in the cleft of the rock, G-d did not communicate with Moshe in their usual manner, פה אל פה אדבר בו ותמונת ה' יבית, face to face. Rather, נתעטף הקב"ה כשליח, Hashem wrapped himself like a צבור, a leader of the prayer service - covering His face and head as it were, and called out the attributes.

When we say the סליחות we do not cite the verse from the Torah, but rather we re-enact the prophecy revealed to Moshe alone in all its mystery and its esoteric quality.

The Talmud has G-d saying to Moshe Rabbeinu: יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם. When Israel sins, they should do this service and I forgive them! This service means, the divine attributes until ונקה! We are not distorting a verse which says ונקה לא ינקה, I shall surely not cleanse the sin, because we are not quoting a פסוק from the Torah! Rather, we are re-creating Moshe and God's encounter בנקרת הצור! It was there that God revealed to Moshe this new trait called ונקה.

The Gemara itself notes that these two formulations of the thirteenth attribute are in conflict; they clash; they contradict each other.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף פו עמוד א: אמר מר: לפי שנאמר בחורב ונקה, מנא לן? דתניא, רבי אלעזר אומר: אי אפשר לומר נקה שכבר נאמר לא ינקה, ואי אפשר לומר לא ינקה שכבר נאמר נקה. הא כיצד? מנקה הוא לשבין, ואינו מנקה לשאינן שבין.

“He (Hashem) cleanses those who do teshuva and does not cleanse those who do not repent”.

The Gemara essentially explains that the contradiction is not between two verses in the Torah or even within one verse. Rather, it is between the two revelations of God's attributes of rachamim. Hashem is at the same time



נקמה and also **לא ינקמה**!

He is a **מנקה** for those who repent, and He is **לא ינקמה** for those who don't repent. This analysis brings us to the following crucial point:

The divine attributes of mercy are not predicated on teshuva, repentance. The thirteen attributes enable the sinner to continue to exist in his or her current condition of sin without punishment.

Teshuva is the ultimate goal of divine mercy. For example, the attribute of **אֲרוּךְ אַפַּיִם**, "divine forbearance" delays punishment for sin in the hope that the sinner will already have done teshuva. The **י"ג מדות הרחמים** a world filled with sins and sinners to continue to exist despite sin. The world cannot endure and continue to exist when the "middas ha-din," the attribute of strict justice, reigns supreme. The presence of the divine attributes of mercy guarantees the continuation of the world **לכלל ולפרט**, for society and for the individual.

This concept presents us with a dilemma.

If the world that is governed by the

thirteen attributes of mercy continues to exist despite sins that are not repented for, what need is there for the attribute of **נקמה**? If the world can continue to exist despite sin, why do we require the attribute of cleansing?

The thirteen attributes enable the sinner to continue to exist in his or her current condition of sin without punishment.

The answer is: man has an existential need. Man knows that he can continue to live with sin. But the sinner finds himself/herself distant from G-d, estranged and disconnected. One can enter a shul during davening and feel nothing but the need

and desire to exit as soon as possible. People travel to the Kotel or Kever Rachel and feel nothing. There are many people who feel no connection with or relationship to G-d. For some, prayer, which should be a dialogue with God is all but impossible. One can mouth the words of the tefila, but there remains a great alienation, a great barrier of separation. A person can exist as a seemingly healthy being and still be very distant from God. But an existence far away from the Almighty is but a truncated existence.

Sin, even if it is not the instigator of punishment, can create a wall of steel - **מחיצה של ברזל** - between man and God.

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Despite all of the fabulous benefits of the first twelve attributes, it is the thirteenth and final one - וּנְקָה - that insures reconnection to Hashem. But וּנְקָה is only for שבים, those who repent and return. God only cleanses those who repent, not those who fail to do teshuva.

As long as a person is satisfied with basic existence, there is no existential need for וּנְקָה. The individual can continue to live on God's mercies, the first twelve middos alone. It is only when the person feels the need to close the breach between himself and God and tries to draw near to G-d - as David Hamelech wrote, וְאֲנִי קָרַבְתִּי אֱלֹהִים לִי טוֹב - does the middah of וּנְקָה become activated. Teshuva alters the very definition of existence for one who repents, as the baal teshuva feels the lifting of his/her estrangement from God. This is what the Rambam means when he says that when a man /woman is "aroused to Teshuva". At that point, when the individual understands that it isn't possible to live without God's guiding hand, then the 'hidden attribute' of וּנְקָה emerges out of וּנְקָה. It bursts forth from the midst of the cleft of the rock, נִקְרָת הַצּוּר!

This will only happen when the person feels the yearning, the ache, to be close to Hashem and repents. All of

this is true all of the time, except for one day of the year. On Yom Kippur we are promised a different reality.

כִּי בְיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפָּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהֵר אֶתְכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ

The prophet Malachi says that all year long God proclaims:

שׁוּבָה אֵלַי וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם (מלאכי ג:ז)

First, "Israel, return to Me, and I will return to you."

But on Yom Kippur G-d approaches man. God closes the gulf, the great chasm between Himself and mankind. As Rabbeinu Yonah says,

יֵעֶזֶר ה' לְשׁוֹבִים כְּאִשֶּׁר אֵין יָד טַבְעָם מִשְׁגָּת

Hashem helps people go beyond their natural tendencies to repent. That is why the climactic tefilla during Neilah is,

אַתָּה נֹתֵן יָד לַפּוֹשְׁעִים וַיִּמְנַח פְּשׁוּטָה לְקַבֵּל שׁוֹבִים

Just as we want to be close to Hashem, Hashem wants to be close to us.

Rambam writes that the Torah has made a guarantee to us that in the end, all of the Jewish people will return to Hashem in teshuva (Hilchos Teshuva 7:5). We pray that this will be the year that this promise comes true.



"T'KA B'SHOFAR GADOL." THE HASHKAFA THAT EMERGES FROM TWO CASES IN HILCHOT SHOFAR

REBBETZIN ABBY LERNER

YERUSHALAYIM, YOUNG ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK



ONE OF THE REALIZATIONS that I came to during many years of teaching Halacha to young women – seniors in high school – is that sometimes, even in the very detail of a complex Halacha, a worldview of Torah emerges. Two important hashkafot, that may help us to reframe our views of important concepts in how we approach modern attitudes toward Judaism, emerge from the study of Hilchot Shofar – the Laws of Shofar.

It seems obvious that women are permitted to do mitzvot from which they are exempt – and yet the Gemara in Rosh Hashana 33a does not take this for granted. The Mishna states “Ain me’akvin et hatinokot mi’litkoa” – “one would not stop a minor from blowing Shofar [on Rosh HaShanah].” The implication of this statement, says the Gemara, is that one would stop a woman from blowing the Shofar [for herself] on Rosh HaShanah. Nevertheless, the Gemara tells us there is no contradiction; rather there is a machloket –

a difference of opinion – between Rabbi Yehuda on the one hand and Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon on the other. Abaye brings a proof from another, similar, halachic debate where the parties are named – unlike in the Shofar debate where the opinions are stated without their authors. The case Abaye brings is the case of “smicha” b’karbanot – the mitzvah to lean on the animal that one brings as a sacrifice. Only men are obligated in this mitzvah – and Rabbi Yehuda seems to indicate that women may NOT do the mitzvah of “smicha.” Yet, Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon state that women may do the mitzvah of “smicha” if they wish to. Here too, it must be Rabbi Yehuda who thinks that women may not blow the Shofar for themselves on Rosh HaShanah and Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon who hold that women may blow the Shofar for themselves.

What is at the root of this debate? Rashi suggests that perhaps those who hold that women cannot blow

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the Shofar think that doing a mitzvah from which one is exempt is the equivalent of violating the Torah's exhortation not to add to the Torah. "Et kol hadavar asher Anochi metzaveh etchem, oto tishmiru la'asot; lo tosif alav v'lo tigra mi'menu." All that I command you to do you will be careful to observe; do not add to it and do not subtract from it." (Devarim 13:1) The Maharsha (the 16th century Talmudist Rav Shmuel Eidels) vociferously disagrees in his Chidushei Halachot on Masechet Rosh Hashanah, claiming that the concept of "bal tosif" (the prohibition of adding to the Torah) only applies to one who does a mitzvah and then adds to it (for example, carrying five species on the holiday of Succot, rather than four). One who performs a mitzvah even though he or she is merely exempt does not violate "bal tosif."

If that is the case, then why would Rabbi Yehuda hold that a woman cannot blow the Shofar for herself? Having challenged Rashi's reasoning, the Maharsha has to respond with another answer to the problem. And he does. Why would Rabbi Yehuda hold that a woman can't blow the Shofar – or perform smicha b'karabanot? Not because of "bal tosif," but rather because both Shofar and smicha b'karabanot have a built-in problem. Normally one cannot blow a musical instrument on a Yom Tov. That would violate the Rabbinic decree against using musical instruments on a chag. When

may one use a musical instrument on a Yom Tov – only if the Yom Tov is Rosh Hashana and one is obligated in Shofar – THEN one can blow the musical instrument – the Shofar. What if one is exempt from the mitzvah – like a woman? Then perhaps she cannot blow the Shofar because perhaps in that case, she is not only not fulfilling a mitzvah but she may be violating the Rabbinic decree not to play a musical instrument on a holiday! Similar reasoning applies to smicha b'karabanot. It is forbidden to place one's weight on an animal designated as a sacrifice. That would be considered "working" with an animal designated as a sacrifice – "avodah b'kodshin." When may one lean or place one's weight on an animal? Only when one is performing the mitzvah of smicha b'karabanot. What if one is exempt from the mitzvah? Perhaps then one would be violating avodah b'kodshin when performing smicha! How could Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Shimon disagree with what the Maharsha suggests is Rabbi Yehuda's reasoning? Rabbi Yosi said, "Abba Elazar told me: 'We had a calf that we were bringing for a shlamim sacrifice and we brought it to the Women's Section of the Beit Ha-Mikdash and the women performed smicha on the animal designated for a sacrifice – not because women are obligated in smicha – but for the spiritual pleasure (nachat ruach) derived by the women in performing this act.'"

Ultimately, we pasken that women,



although exempt, may blow the Shofar for themselves in the event that they cannot hear the Shofar. How is this Halacha applied today? The Shulchan Aruch writes in Hilchot Rosh Hashanah 589: “Although women are exempt from Shofar, they may blow it [for themselves], and similarly, someone who already fulfilled his obligation may blow for them [women] to help them fulfill their “obligation” [in the mitzvah], but [according to the

Shulchan Aruch's Sephardic psak] they do not make a blessing and one [who is blowing the Shofar for women] does not make a blessing for them.” The Remah, in his gloss, comments that according to the Ashkenazic psak the woman herself would make the blessing if someone who had already fulfilled his obligation of Shofar blows for her.

How amazing is this?? We overcome all our concerns about blowing Shofar on Rosh Hashanah – and the possible violation of playing a musical instrument on a Yom Tov if one is not obligated, to allow women to blow Shofar for themselves! And not only that – we allow a man who has already fulfilled his obligation to blow for a woman – even though she is exempt from

the mitzvah!! And the Shulchan Aruch speaks of this man blowing to help the woman fulfill [her obligation] – in a mitzvah that she is exempt from!!!

Through this detailed discussion by our Poskim of the minutiae of the laws of Shofar, we have learned of the su-

preme importance of Shofar to our spiritual experience of Rosh HaShanah; we have learned of the value of nachat ruach of women – the significance

we have learned of the value of nachat ruach of women – the significance of a woman's spiritual relationship to mitzvot;

cance of a woman's spiritual relationship to mitzvot; and we have learned of Rabbinic attitudes toward women and their relationship to mitzvot they are exempt from. There is a level of “obligation” even in those mitzvot! Even though we cannot broadly apply the concept of nachat ruach to all mitzvot that women are exempt from, an important factor that emerges from this analysis for our modern times is that Chazal, far from being dismissive of women's connection to mitzvot they are exempt from, seriously considered women's connection to these mitzvot as they moved toward a final psak regarding the issue of women and Shofar blowing.

In another analysis of Hilchot Shofar, we come across a deeply moving un-



derstanding of the ultimate redemption explained to us by Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, zt"l. I want to recount here a homiletic interpretation of Hilchot Shofar, cited only in the English edition of Simcha Raz's biography of Rav Kook, *An Angel Among Men*, Moshe Lichtman, Translator. (Kol Mevasser, Jerusalem, 2003), pages 508-510.

In 1933, shortly after Hitler came to power, Rav Kook, zt"l, delivered what Simcha Raz calls "a very ominous and moving sermon in the Old City's Churvah Synagogue." He spoke of the "Great Shofar" that is quoted in Yeshayahu 27:13 and repeated often in our Rosh Hashana liturgy and even our daily Amidah prayer: "It shall be on that day, a great shofar will be blown, and those lost in the land of Assyria and those cast aside in the land of Egypt will come and bow to the L-rd, on the Holy Mountain in Jerusalem."

In his speech, translated by Moshe Lichtman, Rav Kook cites Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 586:1 regarding the laws of the Rosh Hashana Shofar:

- 1) The most preferred way to perform the mitzvah is with the ram's horn.
- 2) Ex post facto (be'di'avad) all shofars are kosher (ibid.)
- 3) A shofar that comes from a non-kosher animal, or from a Gentile's animal that was worshipped as a god is invalid (pasul). However, if one blows such

a shofar, he discharges his obligations [ex post facto]. Furthermore, one is permitted to blow any shofar if he cannot obtain a kosher one, provided that he does not recite a blessing over it (Mishnah Brurah, ibid.).

"These halachic categories mentioned in connection with the Shofar of Rosh Hashanah correspond to the various levels of the shofar of redemption."

Rav Kook goes on to explain that the shofar of redemption means the awakening that causes the revival of the Jewish people. Sometimes the awareness and desire for redemption originates in holiness, a belief in Hashem and his Torah. "This is the great and excellent Shofar."

Sometimes the desire for redemption comes not from holiness but from "healthy human nature – which also originates in holiness," a desire [of a people] to be sovereign in its own land and to live in freedom. "This natural desire.... Is the ordinary, medium sized shofar. This Shofar is also kosher even if it is not the most preferable.

Then there is the third kind of Shofar blown for redemption that also corresponds to the laws of the Rosh HaShanah shofar:

"It is a small, invalid shofar, used under duress, when there is no kosher shofar to be found. If sacred enthusiasm – with its resultant, lofty desire for redemption – has expired; and if

normal, human, nationalistic feelings – a desire to live honorably as a nation – have also expired; [that is] if it is impossible to blow a kosher shofar for our redemption, our enemies come and blow [the shofar] of redemption. They force us to hear the sound of the shofar. They shout and make noise in our ears, denying us rest in the Diaspora. The shofar of an impure animal becomes the shofar of Mashiach. Amalek, Petliura [President of Ukraine 1918-21 and responsible for the worst pogroms against the Jews before the rise of the Nazis], Hitler, etc. awaken us to redemption. He who did not listen to the sound of the first shofar, and he who did not listen to the sound of the second, ordinary shofar either, because his ears were closed up, will listen to the sound of the impure invalid shofar. He will listen, against his will.

Nonetheless, even he discharges his obligation. Even [this type of nationalism] – that of the staff, of Jewish persecution – contains some form of redemption. However, one is not to recite a blessing over this kind of shofar [as the Mishnah states], “one does not recite a blessing over anything that is a type of a curse.” (Berachot 6:4).

Rav Kook died in 1935 and never saw the prophecy of his own words fulfilled.

I am writing these words in Eretz Yisrael, in Ein Yaakov, fifteen minutes from Maalot, with a beautiful breeze

blowing, surrounded by various family members who have made Aliyah over the years. We, a simple family, are seeing the bittersweet fulfillment of Rav Kook's words.

Our minds are turning toward Teshuvah, Rosh HaShanah and the myriad of halachot that Chodesh Tishrei brings, among them the many halachot of the Shofar. In addition to many other things, these halachot speak to the individual in Klal Yisrael about connectedness to our Mesorah and our obligation to mitzvot, our commitment even to those mitzvot we are exempt from and the spiritual significance of that bond. And the Halachot of Shofar also speak to Klal Yisrael as an entity and to our destiny as a people. The Halachot of Shofar remind us that Halacha is never dry; Halacha is the life blood of our people – our ethics, our values, our mission and our future.

I end with the prayer of Rav Kook with which he closed his Rosh Hashanah talk in 1933:

“We pray, ‘Sound the great Shofar for our freedom,’ a Shofar which comes from the very depths of the sanctity of the Jewish soul, from our Holy of Holies. Then the redemption will be complete.”

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A SUKKAH?

RABBI AKIVA MALES

YOUNG ISRAEL OF MEMPHIS



AN INCREDIBLE SUKKOS-related statement can be found in the Tur Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chayim 417). The Tur asserts that the Shalosh Regalim (three major Jewish festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkos) correspond to our three forefathers: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. After explaining how Pesach connects with Avraham, and how Shavuot is linked to Yitzchak, the Tur writes that the festival of Sukkos corresponds to Yaakov. What connects Yaakov with the festival of Sukkos?

The Tur suggests that the Torah itself links Yaakov to the festival of Sukkos in Bereishis 33:17. After Yaakov walked away unscathed from his encounter with his estranged brother Esav, the Torah tells us: “And Yaakov journeyed to Sukkos, and built himself a house, and made huts (sukkos) for his cattle; therefore, the name of the place is called Sukkos.” According to the Tur, Yaakov’s construction of “sukkos” / huts for his cattle is the link between

him and the festival of Sukkos.

How are we to understand this idea of the Tur? Other than the name of the huts Yaakov built for his cattle, is there any connection between the festival of Sukkos and the sukkos built by Yaakov. Rabbi Yissocher Frand suggests a link based on the comment of the Or HaChaim to Bereishis 33:17. The Or HaChaim asks the following question: Why would anyone name a locale “Sukkos” just because Yaakov built huts there for his cattle? Was that such a significant achievement that from then on, the place should be known by the name Sukkos? The Or HaChaim suggests that Yaakov did something revolutionary for his cattle that no one had ever done before. He proposes that Yaakov was the first person to ever build shelters for his animals to live in. Until that point in world history, he theorizes that no one had built shelters for their livestock. After all, animals are far more resilient than humans are, and they were



left to brave the elements on their own – just like all non-domesticated creatures. To commemorate Yaakov's precedent-setting action, the location where this innovation occurred was given the name Sukkos.

In other words, Sukkos was the place where Yaakov Avinu was inspired to treat his animals with a greater level of care and concern than anyone before him. What inspired Yaakov to come up with his novel idea of building shelters for

Through the sukkos he built for his animals, Yaakov taught us how important it is to express one's Hakaras Hatov

one's animals? Rabbi Frand suggests since Yaakov recognized that his animals were the source of his family's sustenance and wealth, he felt duty-bound to shelter them from the sun, rain, and snow. Yaakov was not motivated to do so by hopes of profit (i.e., that by keeping his animals healthy and stronger he'd be able to sell them for a higher price). Instead, Yaakov's decision to build sukkos for his animals flowed from the deep feelings of Hakaras Hatov / gratitude he felt to towards G-d's creatures which enabled him to provide for his family.

Through the sukkos he built for his animals, Yaakov taught us how important it is to express one's Hakaras

Hatov, seizing an opportunity to express gratitude in a manner that was unique and precedent-setting. While his idea of building shelters for one's animals was groundbreaking in its time, since then, it's become universal – as it makes so much sense.

According to the Or HaChaim then, the significance of Yaakov's innovation warranted calling the place "Sukkos". Yaakov's example challenges each of us to wonder if we are passing up on opportunities to ex-

press gratitude which may surround us. Let's follow Yaakov's lead. Let's keep our eyes open, and express our appreciation to those who deserve it.

Now we can understand why the Tur saw such a strong connection between Yaakov and the festival of Sukkos. Each year, as we celebrate with our families in our sukkos, we emulate Yaakov Avinu's attitude. We say "Thank you" to G-d for taking us out of Egypt and for sustaining us for forty years in the wilderness. Indeed, it was Yaakov Avinu who taught us to look for opportunities to express our gratitude, and to make saying "Thank you" a special part of our daily lives.



I Promised R' Nissen



Reb Nissen Krakinowski lived a remarkable life. Originally from Kovno and a Holocaust Survivor, his life wasn't only about being a "Survivor" of the Holocaust. His life was about being mashpiah with his emuna, and bringing simchah, to others. R' Nissen didn't hold any official shteller and was not a mashgiach or a Rov, but he truly lived a fruitful and awe-inspiring life, constantly uplifting others and give them niceties and kindness at every opportunity. His middos, his anivus and avodas-halev were remarkable. Most incredible was how he devoted a lifetime to these chasadim, to hundreds and thousands of people he met, unassumingly, humbly, under the radar. To know

him was to love him. He left behind a generation who loved him.

R' Nissen came to America with nothing but the shirt on his back and his only surviving relative at his side, his dearest brother Chaim. A modest recipe for success one might suppose, but then, one didn't know the Godol hanistar named R' Nissen Krakinowski.

R' Nissen and Chaim survived the horrors of Lithuania and the Dachau death camp through one neis after another. As R' Nissen would eventually regale, "there was no greater reason for our mutual survival other than my promise to my mother." R' Nissen would actually go on to have the short-form-story published in a periodical and would spend the better part of his life distributing copies to all eyes and ears that showed interest. 'I Promised Mama', was the story of how a young pre-teen-Nissen, when faced with the Holocaust horrors, was instructed by his mother to never leave his brother. "Promise me, Nissen- never leave Chaim. If he will die, then you have to die with him, never leave him alone- he will

not survive without you, my Nissen." In Nissen's post-script-analysis he would remark, "my mother figured that if my brother needed saving, the best chance of his survival would be with me at his side, always. Even if it meant I had to die trying."

The many miraculous incidents of their journeys of those years culminated with the time when Dachau was in its final hours. The Nazi regime stationed there ordered every inmate to march out of the camp as they "were laying dynamite around it" to erase their tracks from the Allied forces who were close by. Chaim, deathly ill from tuberculosis, was barely clinging to life and certainly could do no walking, much less a multi-mile-death-march. Chaim implored Nissen to leave him there to die and save himself, but Nissen knew better. 'I promised Mama I would never leave you and so I will stay here with you together as I promised,' Nissen told his dying brother. As it turns out, the Allied forces mistook the inmate march for a German Regiment and carpet-bombed the entire procession, killing all in their way. The handful of cripples who were left to face the dynamite in Dachau all survived, including Nissen and Chaim, since the Germans did not detonate anything, b'chasdei Hashem. Hours later, the Allies liberated the camp!

Fast forward to America in the early 1950s when R' Nissen and Chaim arrived on America's shores to start

over and to build their dreams. R' Nissen's closest (and only) friends from Kovno were none other than Horav Tuvia and Golda Goldstein. R' Nissen would proudly tell over how Horav Tuvia, living in a modest 1 bedroom apartment, would not let R' Nissen go anywhere else when he arrived in America. R' Nissen spent his first days sleeping in the Goldstein's bathtub!

Another of R' Nissen's closest friends was Horav Shiman Segal, of famed Kaminetz Yeshivah legacy. For decades, there was nary a day that went by where R' Nissen and Horav Shimon didn't speak. Yet, while he kept the company of such revered Gedolim, barely anyone knew of the Gadlus of R' Nissen, who humbly kept to himself with the incredible anivus of yesteryear.

R' Nissen met Roiza Cedarbaum and married her, eventually having 2 daughters, Shaindee and Pessie. They were the pride of his life, and that was an understatement. However, as if the challenges and sorrows that R' Nissen suffered through his adolescent years weren't enough, both Shaindee and Pessie developed chronic health issues. R' Nissen himself eventually battled cancer and dealt with his daughters' challenging issues for decades, including hospitals, surgeries, and rehabilitation after rehabilitation. There was no limit to R' Nissen's efforts to give them the very best possible lives under the circumstances. His remarkable per-

sonality, coupled with his heart of gold, endeared him to every health care worker he met. Before long, every one of them was enamored with his gadlus, his middos, and his heart. They were spell-bound and captivated by this sensitive, caring and loving man. With these gifts, he motivated everyone involved to help him, help his two treasured daughters survive another week, another month, another year.

But then, in 5768, he lost his dedicated life partner, his wife Roiza. R' Nissen was devastated. His sorrow rekindled the fever of the loss of his parents. His void was enormous; his golden-heart was shattered. As much as he tried to move on and return to his former self, there would always be something missing. His beautiful Rose had withered, he was left alone.

Slowly but surely, R' Nissen gathered the strength to rebound and return to himself, somewhat. However, most incredibly, in 5776, within a mere month of each other, r"l both Shaindee and Pessie were diagnosed with cancer. While R' Nissen immediately took the role of caring for them and extending their lives as a zokein in his high 80s, eventually in 5776 Shaindee was nifteres. R' Nissen was once again broken. His tears knew no limits over the loss of his precious daughter. A mere 14 months later Pessie was nifteres as well. R' Nissen was inconsolable. As much as he tried, he could not bear the loss. His

simchas hachaim was exchanged for an avails that would not end. Rivers of tears replaced his Illuminated smile. Regarding burying a child, he would often repeat, "It is something no one should ever know from." Everything he had, everything he spent his entire life caring for, was gone in short order. He didn't have a single immediate family member left in this world.

As the months went on, BH he eventually regained some of his enthusiasm for life. His crowning moment came when he spoke to a 900+ person audience in Spokane, Washington, about his experiences in the Holocaust. He felt invigorated by inspiring so many. He felt a new purpose in his life, to teach and inspire. His personality and oratory skills, as a vigorous, vibrant 90-year-old, were rekindled. He was now actively planning to speak elsewhere, to inspire others. To be m'Kadesh shem shomayim and instill the emunah and bitachon that he possessed, and hoped others would learn about.

A mere 3 months later, on the 12th of Tishrei 5779, just a day after Yom Kippur, R' Nissen was crossing a street in his Brooklyn neighborhood, coming out of shul from ma'ariv and saying kaddish for his daughter when a car struck him. Several hours later, he succumbed to his injuries and was niftar. A truly tragic ending to a life so beautiful, that shomayim were surely weeping along with the hundreds

and thousands of people that knew this great, uniquely-gifted, yet hidden Godol.

In 5768, shortly after he lost his wife Roiza, R' Nissen visited his wife's brother, Mr. Joe Ceder, in Bayswater, NY. During his aveilus, he stopped off at the local Agudah "by chance" (as if) and met a young father with his 11 year old son davening there. At the conclusion of mincha, as R' Nissen said kaddish, tears rolled down his face. The young boy, named Efraim Blau, approached him to ask why he was crying. The ensuing conversation led R' Nissen to meet the boy's father, Menachem Blau. R' Nissen was enamored with the young boy's maturity and care for a stranger. The result of that initial encounter was a 10+ year relationship where R' Nissen would come to Far Rockaway weekly and visit Efraim in his Yeshivah and shmooze with his adopted-grandson that he never had biologically. He came to consider Menachem the son he was never zocheh to, and the two of them spoke daily and became extremely close.

Eventually they grew close enough for R' Nissen to request a favor of Menachem.

Paramount to R' Nissen was the keen awareness that he would leave this world without grandchildren. He was concerned with his legacy, his life-story, once he was gone. The topic became more painful and



more urgent after the passing of his two treasured daughters. At that time, he and Menachem discussed several methods of perpetuating his name, the names of his relatives lost over time, and giving him the kovod and z'chusim that he so richly deserved, achar me'ah v'esrim.

Menachem made this promise to R' Nissen and hoped to honor that promise, much as R' Nissen honored the promise he made to his dear Mama, so many decades ago.

R' Nissen wished that whoever could should read his story and watch his lecture (in Spokane, July 2018 viewable on Vimeo), and remember him with Torah, tefillah, u'gmilus chas-sodim.

This was a man who spent his entire life giving of himself to others. He

cared for his children, his brother, his wife and many people beyond his family in their times of need. It is hard to comprehend how beloved R' Nissen was by so many people. There were high school girls who interviewed him for a "survivor" project, and maintained a relationship with him for years. Fellow Canarsie community members of the local shuls, including the Young Israel of Canarsie, all cherished him as their indefatigable gabbai. R' Nissen gave so much of himself and perfected the art of making others feel good. He had the uncanny ability to drill down to each person's unique talents and qualities and shine his light on them, making the recipient feel like they were the celebrity that he treated them as. He cared and cared, and then cared some more for the people that he interacted with. His heart knew know bounds and he shared it with everyone.

With this in mind, if you can be so kind as to devote just a few moments by reading these names before you daven one day; perhaps before you sit down to a seder halimud, or dedicate some mitzvah, lighting neiros Shabbos, a machson l'fi time, a giving of tzedokoh, in their z'chus. Any good deed, great or small, whether for one day or for many, is a tremendous favor to R' Nissen.

We are all looking for our own

z'chusim and segulos to bring yeshu'os for all types of t'zoros. We know sick people, we know singles waiting to find their bashert, we know people with financial challenges. Just imagine this group of neshamos, led by R' Nissen himself, davening on your behalf for whatever it is you need, after having given him a chessed shel emes like he cried for. Please, R' Nissen begged, - do something for them.

The Names are:

Nissen ben Shimon
(R' Nissen himself)

Roiza bas Michoel
(R' Nissen's wife)

Pessel bas Nissen
(R' Nissen's daughter)

Shaindel bas Nissen
(R' Nissen's daughter)

Chaim ben Shimon
(R' Nissen's brother)

Shimon ben Tzvi
(R' Nissen's father)

Pessel bas Gershon
(R' Nissen's mother)

T'hay nishmoseihem tz'ruros b'tzror hachaim

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL

DEDICATES THE
5783 TISHREI TORAH JOURNAL
IN MEMORY OF
REB NISSEN KRANIKOWSKI ז"ל
AND IN TRIBUTE TO
RABBI CHAIM WASSERMAN ז"ל

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE

ESTATE OF REB NISSEN KRANIKOWSKI ז"ל

KEDDEM WINES

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YOUNG ISRAEL OF LAWRENCE CEDARHURST
YOUNG ISRAEL OF MEMPHIS
YOUNG ISRAEL OF MONSEY WELSLEY HILLS
YOUNG ISRAEL NEW HYDE PARK
YOUNG ISRAEL OF NEW ROCHELLE
YOUNG ISRAEL OF OCEANSIDE
YOUNG ISRAEL OF PLAINVIEW
YOUNG ISRAEL OF SAINT LOUIS
YOUNG ISRAEL OF STAMFORD
YOUNG ISRAEL TALMUD TORAH OF FLATBUSH
YOUNG ISRAEL OF TEANECK

UNTO THYSELF BE TRUE

RABBI YOEL SCHONFELD

RABBI EMERITUS, YOUNG ISRAEL OF KEW GARDENS HILLS

PRESIDENT, COALITION FOR JEWISH VALUES



THE RAMBAM BEGINS the fourth chapter of Hilchos Tshuva (Laws of Repentance) by stating: “There are twenty-four items that prevent one from doing tshuva . Four of them are so serious that if one is in violation of any one of them Hashem will not allow him the opportunity to repent. They are as follows:

- 1) One who instigates the public to sin.
- 2) One who convinces his friend to go from a righteous path to an evil path.
- 3) One who sees his son going off to a bad culture and does nothing about it. and
- 4) One who says “I will sin and I will repent, which includes one who says I will sin, but Yom Kippur will give me forgiveness”.

The first three matters that the Rambam mentions have a common theme. If one causes others to sin, whether his target is the public, his friend or his

own children, these infractions are so grave that he cannot be afforded the opportunity to do tshuva.

While being rejected by Hashem from tshuva is obviously as serious as it gets for a sinner, it is understandable that he is treated in such a fashion. After all, while one may be sincere in his quest to repent, what will be with those whom he has adversely affected? The sinner cleanses himself while his victims are still mired in their sin because of his actions or inactions. Under such circumstances, there is no way that he can ever be considered repentant.

The trouble is the fourth category. How does it conform to the first three? How does one who deludes himself into thinking that he will eventually repent follow the first three categories of causing others to sin?

If you examine the four categories of the Rambam, you will note a descending progression. The Rambam starts with causing the public to sin,



UNTO THYSELF BE TRUE

then discusses causing a friend to sin, then narrows it to his own family, and finally one's self.

It seems that the Rambam is teaching us that while it may be obvious that our influence can have an ill effect on those around us, we must realize that we can cause ourselves to sin (machi) just as well.

Just as we have the ability to cause others to sin, we can also persuade ourselves to sin! Affecting others is achieved through convincing arguments or by tacit approval. Influencing ourselves is accomplished by convincing ourselves that all will be well. "Don't worry; I will eventually repent. Or Yom Kippur will cover me." With this attitude, we cause ourselves to sin in a way that is similar to how we trip up others.

We find in Pirkei Avos (4:5) "Whoever disgraces G-d's name in private will be held accountable in public." How does one disgrace Hashem's name in private? Doesn't Chillul Hashem, by definition, need to take place before others in a public setting?

I believe that here too, the Chillul Hashem referred to is the Chillul Hashem to oneself. That is, if privately I sin and I fail to meet my own standards, that is a Chillul Hashem to myself! I thought I was better than that. I guess I'm not that good after all.

Such a thought process will cause one to spiral down and ultimately bring one to sin even in a public setting. I'm in a hotel room all alone, but I watch or do things I should not be doing. That can cause me to think less of myself and eventually lower my bar in a public arena.

If we are serious about tshuva, our first objective is to make sure our internal house is in order. Even if we don't go about fooling others, we must make sure we do not fool ourselves either. As the Rambam makes it clear, if we are not honest with ourselves, we will never crawl out of the abyss.

Let us hope for a year of serious repentance, a year in which we influence those around us for the good, especially those nearest us, our very own selves. Amen!

EXPLORING THEMES FROM THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES OF MERCY

RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN

YOUNG ISRAEL OF MIDWOOD

ROSH YESHIVA, YESHIVAS RABBEINU YITZCHOK ELCHONON

THE DRAMA OF repentance and forgiveness that plays out each year and culminates on Yom Kippur is rooted in, and prefigured by, the story of the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe's impassioned prayers on behalf of the Jewish people, and the forgiveness that is finally extended by the הקב"ה on Yom Kippur.

In this essay, I will explore some of the themes that emerge from a close reading of the appearance of the Middos in scripture as well as some important philosophical and theological questions that emerge from some of the commentaries on the Middos.

TEXTUAL SOURCES FOR THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES OF MERCY

At the heart of the order of prayers that the rabbis instituted for this season are the Selichos, whose central refrain: ה'ה' קל רחום וחנן, the enumeration of G-d's thirteen attributes of mercy, was first said by Moshe on that occasion.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 17b) describes that event:

ויעבר ה' על פניו ויקרא, אמר רבי יוחנן: אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו, מלמד שנתעטף הקדוש ברוך הוא כשליח צבור, והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה. אמר לו: כל זמן שישראל חוטאין - יעשו לפני כסדר הזה, ואני מוחל להם. ה' ה' - אני הוא קודם שיחטא האדם, ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא האדם ויעשה תשובה. אל רחום וחנן, אמר רב יהודה: ברית כרותה לשלש עשרה מדות שאין חוזרות ריקם, שנאמר הנה אנכי כרת ברית.

And Hashem passed before him and [He] called...; R' Yochanan said - had it not been written, we could not have said it: it teaches that the Holy One Blessed be He wrapped Himself like a shliach tzibur and showed Moshe the order of this prayer. He said to him: Whenever Israel sins - let them do before me according to this order and I will forgive them. Hashem, Hashem; I am He before man sins and after man sins and repents. A merciful and graceful G-d; R' Yehuda said: There is a covenant regarding these thir-



EXPLORING THEMES FROM THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

teen attributes that they never return empty-handed, as it says: Behold I am making a covenant.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS TO PONDER ABOUT THE MIDDOS

This whole passage is fraught with difficulty. First, there is the sense that the **י"ג מידות** represent some extraordinary source of **רחמים** that transcends the ordinary system of **שכר ועונש**. There is even a sense that they transcend the normal process of **תשובה**--that they somehow represent absolution without **תשובה**.

This is explicit in the **גמרא (ברכות דף ז):**

וחנותי את אשר אחון, אע"פ שאינו הגון, ורחמתי את אשר ארחם, אע"פ שאינו כדאי.

And I will have mercy upon those on whom I wish to have mercy, even if they are not fit, and I will be compassionate for those for whom I have compassion, even if they aren't worthy.

This is expressed even more strikingly in the Midrash (ילקוט שצ"ה):

באותה שעה הראה לו הקב"ה כל האוצרות של מתן שכר שמתקנות לצדיקים אמר לפניו רבש"ע האוצר הזה של מי הוא אמר לו של עושי צדקה. וזה של מי של מכלכלי יתומים וכן כל אוצר ואוצר עד שראה אוצר אחד אמר לו זה של מי הוא אמר לו מי שיש לו אני נותן לו משכרו ומי שאין לו אני עושה עמו חנם שנאמר וחנותי את אשר אחון...

At that time Hashem showed him all the treasures stored up for the right-

eous. He said to Him: "Master of the Universe, for whom is this treasure?" "It is for those who give charity." "And for whom is this treasure?" "For those who support orphans." And so on with each treasure, until [Moses] saw one [remaining] treasure and asked Him: "For whom is this?" He answered: "To those who have merit, I give their just reward; but to someone with no merit I give freely, as it says: And I will give grace to whomever I shall give grace.

This Midrash is echoed in one of the **פיוטים** that we read on the first night of **סליחות**:

לחוננם חנים מאוצר המנוצר...

To give freely from the stored treasure....

All of this is very puzzling, for it would seem to fly in the face of the **גמרא** in **ב"ק דף נ':**

אמר ר' חנינא כל האומר הקב"ה ותן יותרו חייו שנאמר הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט.

Rav Hanina said: Anyone who says that G-d just overlooks things, his life should be overlooked, for it says: The Rock, whose deeds are perfect, for all His ways are just.

For that matter, what of the concept - which forms one of the Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith - that **שכר** and **עונש**, reward and retribution, are meted out strictly according to merit?

EXPLORING THEMES FROM THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

WHAT DO THE MIDDOS TELL US ABOUT HOW G-D CONDUCTS THE WORLD?

Another matter that demands attention is the striking image of הקב"ה wrapping himself in a טלית as a שליח and saying these thirteen מידות. The Gemara itself takes note of how radical this image is and prefaces it by saying: **אֲלֵמָלָא מְקָרָא כְּתוּבָא "אֵל לֹאמְרוּ"**, had it not been written we could not have said it!

Clearly, we are not supposed to take this image literally. So, what is it supposed to convey?

There is a general theological problem which recurs in many forms, but can be stated as follows: On the one hand, we believe man is free and responsible, that he has free choice and, consequently, is subject to reward and punishment. Taking this thought to its logical conclusion would seem to indicate that the הקב"ה's role is entirely reactive. Yet we also believe that the הקב"ה is all powerful, and propels history forward according to His deep plan - His **עצה עמוקה**.

How can we reconcile human freedom and responsibility, on the one hand, with G-d's power to drive history forward, on the other?

To take a specific example: The Zohar says that our exile in Egypt was a punishment for the sale of Joseph. There had to be a sin for the suffering to

make sense. But wasn't the enslavement in Egypt necessary to fulfill the promise of the covenant with Abraham in which Hashem already foretold that Abraham's children would be enslaved?

The problem is addressed by the רמח"ל in **דרך השם**. He answers by distinguishing between two different processes that are continually at work in G-d's Providence. On the one hand, there is the process of reward and retribution, **שכר ועונש**, in which the הקב"ה relates to man in a way that is correlated with man's behavior. The רמח"ל calls this process **הנהגת המשפט**, the Divine system of justice. Within the framework of that system, Hashem's role is reactive, doling out reward and punishment according to man's merits and demerits. But at the same time, there is a different Divine system at work, which is the unfolding of the הקב"ה's plan for the world and, ultimately, the fulfillment of His purpose, which is to bring the world to that point when G-d will be One and His name will be One. The רמח"ל calls this **הנהגת הייחוד**, the Divine system of unification, which means the process of revealing the הקב"ה as the One power at work in the world.

Both of these systems are at work simultaneously, with one sometimes overriding the other. In the system of justice, **הנהגת המשפט** - man is free to do good or evil, to fulfill G-d's will or to flout it, and he is rewarded and punished accordingly. Yet in the system of



unification, His plan unfolds inexorably, and cannot be thwarted by man's actions.

Hence, the question of what caused the enslavement in Egypt can be asked from two different perspectives: From the perspective of **הנהגת המשפט**

- the question

is: what did we

do to deserve

it - in which

case the answer

connects to **מכירת יוסף**.

From the perspective

of **הנהגת היחוד**

- in which the

question is: Why did the enslavement

have to happen- in which the answer

is related to the Covenant and the actualization

of G-d's plan.

How can we reconcile human freedom and responsibility, on the one hand, with G-d's power to drive history forward, on the other?

This sheds a bright light on the **מדרש תנחומא** on the verse "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt":

זה שאמר הכתוב: **לכו וראו מפעלות אלקים נורא עלילה על בני אדם (תהלים כ"ה).** א"ר יהושע בן קרחה אף הנוראות שאתה מביא עלינו בעלילה אתה מביא... וכן אומר ויראו אחיו כי אותו אהב אביהם, ע"י לשון של ארגמן שעשה לו כתנת פסים... גרם לכל השבטים לירד למצרים, וא"ר יודן ה' הקב"ה מבקש לקיים גזירה ידוע תדע, והביא עלילה לכל דברים אלו כדי שיאהב יעקב את יוסף וישנאו אחיו וימכרוהו לישמעאלים וירידוהו למצרים, וישמע יעקב שיוסף חי וירד עם השבטים וישתעבדו שם ... הוי נורא עלילה.

This is as the verse says: Go and see the works of the Almighty, awesome

in machinations (**עלילה**) on the sons of Man. R' Yehoshua Ben Karcha said: Even when it comes to the awesome things that you bring upon us, you bring them about through machinations ... As it says: "And [Joseph's] brothers saw that his father loved him"; through a purple fabric which he made for him

into a coat of colors....

He caused

the tribes to

descend to

Egypt. And R'

Yuden said,

The Holy One

Blessed be He

wanted to fulfill

the decree

[of the Covenant with Abraham], but

He brought about a plot for all these

things, so that Jacob would love Joseph

and the brothers would hate him

and sell him to the Ishmaelites and

bring him down to Egypt, and Jacob

would hear that Joseph lives, would

go down with the brothers, and they

would be enslaved there...Behold:

Awesome in machination.

The Theological Question: Egyptian Free Will vs. G-d's Plan for the Jews.

Let us consider a related issue, which is discussed at length by the **ראשונים**

If **הקב"ה** had foretold and decreed the

Egyptian slavery, why were the Egyptians

punished for fulfilling Hashem's

plan?

Both the **הלכות** in **ראב"ד** and the **רמב"ם**

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תשובה address this question. The ראב"ד's answer is that the Egyptians acted out of wicked motives, and were therefore held accountable even though they acted as unwitting agents of הקב"ה's plan. The רמב"ם answers that even though there was a pre-ordained decree that Egypt would enslave the Jews, it was never decreed that any particular individual Egyptian had to participate in the oppression.

In the light of the רמח"ל's distinction, we can re-phrase these two answers in such a way that we will see that they are really complementary:

The ראב"ד is saying that on the level of הנהגת המשפט each Egyptian was free to persecute the Jews or not. The fact that on a deeper level they were fulfilling Hashem's plan is irrelevant. Man is judged on the level of הנהגת המשפט, not on the level of הנהגת היחוד.

The רמב"ם tells us why, in fact, man is judged on the level of הנהגת המשפט: Because that is the level on which individual freedom operates. Any individual was free not to persecute the Jews - and Hashem's plan would have been fulfilled by someone else.

If we follow this thought, it emerges that the primary arena of human freedom - and hence of הנהגת המשפט - functions on the level of the individual. But if we enlarge our scale, and consider whole peoples and the whole sweep of history, then human freedom may be constrained by הנהגת היחוד and

the necessary unfolding of הקב"ה's plan for the world.

This is reminiscent of a well-known concept in physics. On the subatomic level - the "quantum" level - there is no determinism, and no way to predict the behavior of any individual subatomic particle. But if we pull back to the larger, macro-atomic level, then the iron hand of the laws of physics takes over.

This gives us a new way to think about the רמח"ל's distinction. הנהגת המשפט operates on the quantum level - on the level of the individual, which is the arena of בחירה חפשית. But on the macro-atomic level, the further we move up from the level of the individual, the more the הנהגת היחוד starts to predominate.

The word חטא means "to miss"; as in: קולע אל השערה ולא יחטיא. Every חטא represents a departure from השם's purpose. But that only makes sense on the "quantum" level, the level of הנהגת המשפט, where each individual is free. But on the level of הנהגת היחוד there is no such thing as thwarting רצון ה'; on that level, חטא cannot thwart His purpose.

What the Middos Tell Us about the Nature of G-d Himself

Let's return to the י"ג מידות. They begin with the words: השם השם. What does this double-expression mean? Says ראש השנה: אני הוא קודם שיחטא וגמרא



ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא. I am He before man sins and I am He after man sins.

The גר"א elaborates (ליקוטים סוף משלי):

אני הוא קודם שיחטא ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא, כמו שנאמר (מלאכי ג') כי אני ה' לא שנית ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם, ביאורו מפני שאני ה' איני משתנה בין קודם החטא בין לאחר החטא כי לא תשתנה מהד"ר שלי לכן אתם בני יעקב לא כליתם אע"פ שחטאתם ועזבתם אותי.

I am He before he sins and I am He after he sins; as it says (Mal-achi ch. 3) For I Hashem have not changed, and you the sons of Jacob have not perished. The explanation is, that because Hashem is not changed by sin, therefore the attribute of Mercy is not changed by it, and therefore, you the sons of Jacob have not perished even though you sinned and abandoned Me.

חטא אני השם לא שנית means that חטא - in the sense of a thwarting of the הקב"ה's will, can never affect השם Himself; moreover, in the largest sense - that of היחוד - it is impossible to thwart His will. On that level חטא is impotent.

The גר"א tells us that the רחמים of the י"ג flows from this fact. The י"ג מידות flow from the level of השם - of השם - where חטא has no power to damage, and where limitless רחמים

is therefore possible.

That's why י"ג מידות are לחוננם חינו.

We might ask: We saw that man is judged on the level of המשפט, not of הנהגת היחוד. As we saw in the case of the מצרים: On the level of היחוד, they were fulfilling the הקב"ה's own plan; yet they were judged and punished on the level of הנהגת המשפט, for their personal culpability in persecuting the Jews. So how can we as quan-

tum individuals invoke the השם of רחמים, of the השם, י"ג מידות?

The answer is that the Egyptians were judged as individuals. and - as we said earlier - no individual is necessary to the הקב"ה's plan. Each individual faces judgment only on the level of הנהגת המשפט.

אני השם לא נביא מלאכי says שנית ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם - he speaks of the Jewish people as a whole - אתם בני יעקב. And בני יעקב as a people are very much necessary to His plan, because the very essence of the ברית is that we are His agents in history. כלל ישראל in inseparable from הנהגת היחוד; like it or not, we are bound up with His purpose.

כלל ישראל is connected to that level on

Any individual was free not to persecute the Jews - and Hashem's plan would have been fulfilled by someone else.

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אני הוא קודם שיחטא אני הוא לאחר שיחטא
- I, G-d, am the same before sin and
after sin - in which the הקב"ה's purpose is
not and cannot be thwarted by חטא.
And that is an inexhaustible source of
רחמים.

Therefore, there is no contradiction
between the idea of מתנת חיים and the
שכר ועונש of עיקר. The latter relates to
the level of the individual, the arena
of בחירה חפשית, and on that level, we
cite the phrase - whoever says G-d
overlooks, his life shall be overlooked
- כל האומר הקב"ה ותרן וכו'. But the former
relates to the level of היחוד, the
broad sweep of history, and on that
level, רצון חטא is powerless to thwart
אני השם לא שניתני השם;
that is the level of השם; that is the level of
ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם.

WHY MUST WE RECITE THE MID- DOS ONLY WITH A MINYAN?

It follows that the י"ג מידות של רחמים are
bound up with the idea of כנסת ישראל.
I would suggest that that is what the
גמרא is intimating when it describes
הקב"ה מתעטף כשליח ציבור as the
revealed these מידות משה. This is as if to
say, these מידות flow from the special
eternal connection that binds ישראל
with קודשא בריך הוא.

Hence the י"ג מידות can only be recited
with a ציבור.

And yet - clearly, we invoke the י"ג מידות
not only on behalf of the ציבור, but also
on behalf of every individual within the
ציבור. How?

Because כלל ישראל is unique in that
each individual is necessary to the כלל.
No individual Egyptian was necessary
for Egypt to play its role in the drama
of שעבוד מצרים. But every Jew is neces-
sary for כנסת ישראל to fulfill its role; so
much so, that חז"ל say that had one
Jew been absent, מתן תורה could not
have taken place.

That is the mystery of the Jew. He ap-
pears to be significant only to himself.
But in reality, he is necessary to the to-
tality of כנסת ישראל which bulks large in
the רבש"ע's plan for history.

But to invoke the רחמים that flows from
that, we need to rise to an awareness
of that connection, to attach ourselves
to כלל ישראל.

Perhaps that is why when we invoke
the י"ג מידות we emphasize כמו שהודעת
ענוה משה רבינו's משה רבינו. The essence of
was his complete dedication to כלל
- to the point of מחני נא - Erase
me - of complete self-effacement.

When אליהו הנביא asked the Shunamite
woman: הלא תדבר לך אל המלך, shall I speak
for you to the king, she answered בתוך
עמי, I dwell amongst my people.
The Zohar explains that it was ראש
השנה, and he was offering to intercede
on her behalf before the King of Kings.
To which she answered:

אלא בשעתא דדינא תליא בעלמא לא יתפרש בר
נש בלחודי, דהא בזמנא דדינא תליא בעלמא אינון
דאשתמודעון ורשימין בלחודייהו אף על גב דזכאין
אינון אינון אתפסן בקדמיתא, ועל דא לא לבעי ליה



לאיניש לאתפרשא מבין עמא לעלם
דבכל זמנא רחמי דקודשא בריך הוא
על עמא כלהו כחד, ובגיני כך אמרה
בתוך עמי אנכי יושבת ולא בעינא
לאתפרשא מנייהו כמה דעבדנא עד
יומא דין.

But when it is a time of judgment in the world, a man should not separate himself, for at a time of judgment, those who are distinguished as being apart – even if they are meritorious – will be caught up first, and therefore a man should not seek ever to separate from the people, for at all times the Holy One Blessed be He's mercy is on His people as one, and therefore she said: I dwell amongst my people, and I do not want now to be separated from them, just as I have not done so in the past.

Hence, the message of the תורה is that the greatest source of רחמים we can invoke is that which flows from identifying with כלל ישראל. He is Himself ייגאלנו when these מידות are recited. There is no greater source of רחמים than the consciousness that בתוך עמי אנכי יושבת - Among my people is where I dwell.

"THE CLEANING LADY KUMT!"

FINDING
HASHEM FROM
WITHIN THE
CLUTTER

RABBI MOSHE TAUB
YOUNG ISRAEL OF HOLLISWOOD



Andy Smith
400 London Pride Road
Irmo, South Carolina 29063

April 18, 1984

Dear Mr. President,

My name is Andy Smith. I am a seventh-grade student at Irmo Middle School, in Irmo, South Carolina.

Today my mother declared my bedroom a disaster area. I would like to request federal funds to hire a crew to clean up my room. I am prepared to provide the initial funds if you will provide matching funds for this project.

I know you will be fair when you consider my request. I will be awaiting your reply.

Sincerely yours,
Andy Smith

THE CLEANING LADE KUMT

May 11, 1984

Dear Andy:

I'm sorry to be so late in answering your letter but, as you know, I've been in China and found your letter here upon my return.

Your application for disaster relief has been duly noted but I must point out one technical problem: the authority declaring the disaster is supposed to make the request. In this case, your mother.

However, setting that aside, I'll have to point out the larger problem of available funds. What I'm getting at is that funds are dangerously low.

May I make a suggestion? This Administration, believing that government has done many things that could better be done by volunteers at the local level, has sponsored a Private Sector Initiative Program, calling upon people to practice voluntarism in the solving of a number of local problems.

I'm sure your mother was fully justified in proclaiming your room a disaster. Therefore, you are in an excellent position to launch another volunteer program to go along with the more than 3000 already underway in our nation. Congratulations.

Give my best regards to your mother.

*Sincerely,
Ronald Reagan*

WHEN I WAS a child, every Tuesday I would be sternly told to clean up my room, the bathroom, the playroom. Being the youngest, I was otherwise often allowed to get away with a messier room. When I asked my mother why she was extra strict with clean-up on Tuesdays, she explained, "Because the cleaning lady is coming."

As a child and then a teenager, this made absolutely no sense to me. Clean-up because the cleaning lady is coming!?

But as I got older, I understood that it is demeaning to leave someone with a pigsty.

A recent true story makes this point even stronger:

"Police have identified a real-life cleaning fairy -- who may be flapping her wings into a jail cell.

The woman broke into a Westlake home, did some light cleaning, then left a bill.

The family thought a cleaning service sent someone to the wrong house, but the "cleaning fairy" told them it was no mistake, and they better pay up.

Sherry Bush has re-told the story more times..."There were some coffee mugs that my husband had out," Bush said. "She had washed them all."



Despite the strange nature of these crimes, nothing was stolen from the homes. (From KTSMTV [Ohio])

Rabossei: Is there a greater parable for this moment in our calendar?

Chazal in Yoma 85b share the fundamental view of Rav Yehuda HaNassi that the Itzumo Shel Yom –The Awesomeness of the Day itself – even without Teshuva, atones for us; that God, as it were, cleans up our mess.

(However, many explain that even according to this view, a bill awaits us when these Days are complete)

Yes, Hashem, l'havdil, is going to clean up our mess, yes, the Awesomeness of the Day atones, but we too must still clean-up, for the 'cleaning-lady' (kiv'yochol) is coming.

So how do we go about this. Like my younger self taking stock of my disorganized room (and my older self as well!), it seems too much, and Hashem too far!

Let me share an idea that may help us all get started; that reminds us that although we live in such challenging times, cleaning our rooms, becoming closer to Hashem, His nation and His Torah is still very much within our grasp.

As many have likely noticed, when we start these Days with Rosh Hashana there seems to be a focus on parents and children in our liturgy and Torah readings. Some examples: "K'Racheim Av Al Banim-like a father has mercy on his children"; Avraham and Yitzchak; Avraham and Sarah; Hagar and Yishmoel; Penina and her children; Chana and Shmuel, etc.

But there is another parent and child referenced. In fact, it is referenced more than all others...combined!

"Lamnatzeach
l'Vnei Korach Miz-

mor..."

Why would we mention Korach and his sons? Why would we mention their great blunder that almost destroyed us as a nation? Why would we make reference to those who challenged the leaders of their time?

More, why would we mention all of the above before one of the most auspicious mitzvos and moments of the year – Tekios Shofar?!

I believe that there is a great secret contained here; a secret about the Yomim Noraim and our relationship with Gd.

The Gemara teaches (Sanhedrin 110a):

"And the sons of Korah did not die'

**Yes, Hashem,
l'havdil, is going
to clean up our
mess**

THE CLEANING LADE KUMT

(Numbers 26:11), it is taught in a Baraisa that in the name of our teacher, the Sages said: A place was fortified for them in Gehenom (Hell) and they sat upon it and recited songs of praise. Rabba bar bar Hana said: One time I was walking on the path, and a certain Arab said to me: Come and I will show you those from the assembly of Korah who were swallowed...He said to me: Listen; what do you hear? And I heard that this is what they were saying: Moses and his Torah are truth, and they, referring to themselves, are liars..."

What an odd punishment! Create an existential crisis to our nation, rebel against Moshe Rabbeinu and you go to Gehenom- OK -but also sing praises all day to Hashem?! What is the middah k'neged middah, the measure-for-measure? How does this punishment fit their crime?

I once saw an approach that is an existential lesson for us all, and for these Days. The error of Korach, his sons, and his assembly - was the belief that in order to have true Dveykus, a relationship with Hashem, one has to be 'close' to His holiest places on earth. They must be a Kohein, a Levi, work in the Beis Hamikdash, offer on Yom Kippur in the Kodosh HaKodoshim, etc.

This is what Korach and his sons demanded for themselves, and this was their reasoning why.

But it was based on a fallacy.

ANYONE can become close to God, no matter how far from the Beis HaMikdash and its Avodah, no matter how,

presently, distant from Torah, no matter how 'messy' their lives appear.

To teach them, and history, the error of their thinking, they were sent

to the lowest of places - the gates of Hell. This was to demonstrate for all future generations that even there - in a domicile of absolute filth - one can sing praises to Hashem! For there is nowhere that is too far from returning to Hashem.

What a lesson!

There is no person, no matter how far removed from Gd, no matter what station of life, no matter how withdrawn they may feel from all that is Kodosh/holy - who cannot clean up their room and create a deep and viable connection with Hashem! Even in our Dor HaTumah it can be done - it must be done.

So too regarding our personal lives; our familial and communal relationships are rarely so broken as to be be-

***ANYONE can become
close to God, no
matter how far from
the Beis HaMikdash
and its Avodah***



yond repair. We only need look at the past Covid virus to see this lesson in action. Even in the depths of the pandemic, with shuls and Yeshivos closed, in that period of perdition, we davened, we learned, we became closer to our families...we rose to that occasion!

We sang; even then, even there.

Our homes became our Shuls, our offices, our Beis Medresh.

We must do our part; we must ‘clean our room’. This, even though Hashem and these Days can do it on their own. We must do so even though it is difficult, and with the knowledge that Kedusha can be quarried at all times and mined in all situations.

Perhaps then, should we do so, Hashem will do the same, by bringing out the greatest Kedusha from the ashes of the venalities of our day - Moshiach Tzidkeinu, SheYavo B’Meherah B’Yameinu.

Wishing Everyone a Gemar Chasima Tova!

PAYIS U-PIYUS:

RANDOMNESS AND
RESOLUTION IN THE
SERVICE OF YOM KIPPUR
AND THE SERVICE
OF OUR CREATOR

RABBI LAWRENCE TEITELMAN
YOUNG ISRAEL OF NEW HYDE PARK

THE BUSIEST DAY OF THE YEAR

The Talmud (Pesachim 109a) famously teaches that Rabbi Akiva never dismissed his students from the Beit Midrash except on two occasions – Erev Pesach and Erev Yom Kippur. This “academic calendar” serves even in contemporary times as a model for some particularly aggressive educational institutions. The Gemara attributes the special leave on Erev Yom Kippur to facilitate feeding the children, presumably in preparation for the upcoming fast.

Naturally, we can also enumerate many other activities that fill the hours in anticipation of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. In somewhat chronological order, Selichot – the penitential prayers characteristic of this period, whether truncated on Erev Yom Kippur or elongated. Shacharit, with its noted deviations for Mizmor le-Todah, Avinu Malkenu, and Tachanun. Kaparot, however implemented according to one’s custom



(chicken, fish, vegetable, coins...) Mikvah immersion, perhaps a flashback to the Takanat Ezra of antiquity. mincha, with the extended viduy-confession otherwise unique to Yom Kippur itself. At least one obligatory meal – the seuda mafseket – not to mention the possibility of eating throughout the entire day. And for those who missed the opportunity around Rosh Hashana, there might also be Hatarat Nedarim

– annulment of vows – and Tashlikh – figuratively casting away once sins into the water. Appropriately, the Gemara (Berakhot 8b) challenges the notion of catching up on one's annual assignment of Torah-learning (i.e. reviewing the parshiyot ha-shavua in the original and translation) on Erev Yom Kippur; there simply is no time for it.

ONE MORE OBLIGATION...

The Shulchan Arukh (Orach Chayim 606) records yet another practice that should be conducted on Erev Yom Kippur: she-yefayes adam et chavero, one must appease his human associates that he may have harmed over the course of the year. This requirement per se is not surprising, especially when one considers that Yom Kippur does not atone for sins bein adam

le-chavero – between man and his fellow man. (Mishna Yoma 8:9) Expiation depends on directly rectifying any interpersonal grievances and differences.

What is striking about the aforementioned halakha is its formulation: The

particular expression yefayes used to describe this religious imperative is apparently the same Hebrew root as another term that is prominently featured in the Avodat Yom Ha-Kippurim – the Holy Temple ritual

of the Day of Atonement: payis.

THE RAFFLE RITUALS

The second chapter of Maskehet Yoma describes in considerable detail the four payesot – lotteries – used to distribute the various diurnal duties in the Beit Hamikdash among the Kohanim who were on duty on Yom Kippur.

More significantly, however, is that there was also a lottery that pertained to the main event of Yom Kippur: deciding among a pair of identical goats, which would be the Sa'ir la-Shem and which the Sair la-Azazel, one a sacrifice to the Divine, the other – after a long journey through the wilderness – cast off a cliff.

The use of such a lottery is already pre-

What is striking about the aforementioned halakha is its formulation: The particular expression yefayes



scribed by the Torah (Vayikra 16:8-10):

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the L-rd, and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for the L-rd, and offer him for a sin-offering. But the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be set alive before the L-rd, to make atonement over him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness.

The Mishnah (Yoma 39a) further elaborates on the procedure:

[The High Priest] shook the urn and brought up two lots. On one was inscribed 'For the L-rd' and on the other 'For Azazel'. The Deputy High Priest was at his right hand, the Head of the [Ministering] Family at his left. If the lot having 'For the L-rd' [inscribed thereon] came up on his right hand, the Deputy High Priest would say to him, 'Sir High Priest, raise thy right hand!', and if the lot [with the inscription] 'For the L-rd' came up on his left hand, the Head of the Family would say, 'Sir High Priest, raise thy left hand!' Then he placed them on the two he-goats and said, 'a sin-offering unto the L-rd!' R. Yishamel said: he did not need to say 'a sin-offering', but 'unto the L-rd'. And they answered after him, 'Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va'ed - Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!'

Nonetheless, it wasn't enough to go through the motions of a lottery. As the Gemara makes clear based on its careful reading of the Mishnah, it was

necessary to shake up the urn containing the two lots, "lest it be intentional". The arbitrary assignment of outcomes was essential, its randomness a fundamental requirement.

DISSIMILAR DESIDERATA?

And it is this juxtaposition that is particularly ironic. The act of reconciliation is one that requires careful deliberation both before and during the process. If we are speaking of real fault and real forgiveness - not just the generic "will you be *mochel* me?" - substantive settlement is easier said than done. One cannot simply walk over to someone whom he has wronged during the year - apparently hurting or harming him enough that tensions still exist at this point in time - and expect to "wing" a resolution. One has to prepare carefully, perhaps anticipating a range of potential reactions and plan the appropriate responses. Failure to be successful, especially the first time around, is probably more likely than not. Intervention by third party mediators, maybe even skilled professionals, is often necessary.

On the other hand, the nature of the payes in the context of the goats is that it was - at least ostensibly - completely arbitrary and random. To adapt the expression of R. Yochanan (Megilla 31a), the matter of this lottery is found in the Torah, repeated in the Mishna, and reiterated for a third time in the Gemara.

Thus, the atonement of both *bein adam la-Makom* and *bein adam*



PAYIS U'PIYUS

le-chavero are respectively decided based on payis and piyus, two words that look almost as identical as the two goats of Yom Kippur. Paradoxically, the former is decided by probabilistic chance, while the latter is a precision science.

THE GREATEST COMMON DENOMINATOR

Upon further consideration, one recognizes that what may appear as diametrically opposite approaches may in fact have its point of convergence. The reality is that among decent people, most of the interpersonal difficulties are not intentional. Things happen, often outside our control, but it is just the way in which we deal with them – usually based on our own personalities and predispositions – that potentially cause harm to others. Thus, while deliberation may currently be necessary to correct a problem, the underlying cause may have been a lapse of judgment wherein a person acted arbitrarily, without properly contemplating the matter and its attendant consequences.

Conversely, while the destiny of the two goats was decided by lottery, what happened with each of the two goats after that decision was very much deterministic. Surely, the rite of Sa'ir la-Shem – a sacrifice – was dictated in great detail, and we recount – quite literally – that process during the repetition of mussaf on Yom Kippur. But even Sa'ir la-Azazel was the subject of sustained supervision. Ensuring the

goat's arrival at its final destination was so vital that, if he needed to, the escort was permitted to eat on Yom Kippur! He was called Ish Itti, “a man of time”, perhaps because like time, his role was so regulated and regimented.

Thus the “cast” of chiastic characters that we have here is in fact a justifiable juxtaposition. As we all know too well, what we are “dealt” in life by G-d sometimes seems arbitrary and occasionally even unfair – the famous issue of theodicy and tzaddik ve-ra lo. However, our concept of tzidduk ha-din involves not only formally accepting Divine judgment, but also taking concrete – and oftentimes challenging – steps of working with it.

Perhaps this also explains why the rite of the lottery itself was concluded with “barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed”, a mantra we associate with kabalat ol malkut shamayim – accepting upon ourselves the yoke of Heaven. Indeed, our own avodat Yom Ha-Kippurim – after a full twenty-five hours – ends with precisely those words as well. The process of taking that which seems arbitrary, beyond the realm of human comprehension, and then nonetheless functioning with our faith completely intact, and perhaps even further fortified, is precisely the process of translating the fundamentals of faith into our personal lives and conduct.



SELF- ACTUALIZATION AND SELF-RECKONING

RABBI YAAKOV TRUMP

YOUNG ISRAEL OF LAWRENCE-CEDARHURST

WE SPEND AN incredible amount of time talking about self-actualization. There are many contributing factors to this trend, but an obvious one can be found in the work of Dr. Abraham Maslow. In his famous hierarchy of needs, he placed 'self-actualization' at the top of the pyramid. After all the basic needs of life are met, the ultimate achievement is self-actualization.

Maslow's assumption expresses itself in many places in our daily lives. Every child attending a day-school is taught from an early age that they can and should be the one to change the world. All a kid needs to do is to discover that convergence of ability and passion deep within the self, and then they will be ready to transform society. We teach our kids that if they just work hard enough, they too can become

the next Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos or Steve Jobs. Even if we talk about less grand visions, tacitly, we still expect a lot. We



SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND SELF-RECKONING

give our kids the sense that if they are to count as anything in society, they really ought to be an Instagram or Twitter influencer. Those are the folks we talk about as if they have ‘made it’ and succeeded. Why? Because they ‘actualized’ their hidden talents.

In truth, this sentiment is not a bad thing at all. It is important for our kids to grow up believing in the possibility of understanding themselves and their strengths, and making a difference. They can and should find their G-d given talents and utilize them in the Torah and secular worlds. It is a true blessing that we live in a society today that demands that we thrive and not just survive.

However, there is one part of this whole equation which does not balance. Aside from the immensely self-focused individuals this type of philosophy produces, it is not sophisticated enough. In Judaism, the life-mission of the individual has two general components, expressed in a famous verse in Tehillim:

סור מרע, ועשה טוב

“Avoid evil and do good” (Tehillim 34:15)

This means that, as important as it is for a person to discover their unique abilities and share them with the world, it is equally important for a person to be aware of their vices and character flaws and subdue them. Every person is born with both gifts and

challenges. Our fulfillment in life comes from fixing the problems and advancing the talents.

But these two missions are not equal. When it comes to which takes precedence, this pasuk teaches that before one even gets to working on what one is great at (עשה טוב), one needs to work on fixing what one is bad at (סור מרע)!

That is what is missing in Maslow’s hierarchy. The self-actualization movement speaks little, if at all, about the latter. It preaches change, impact and influence without necessarily talking about becoming a better human being to those closest and dearest to us. A product of success from this movement could be a person who has a huge financial and social impact on society, but who may remain a morally bankrupt individual throughout their entire life. That is not fulfillment in Judaism. In fact, that would be considered missing the boat.

To make this a little clearer, the Torah introduces Parshas Ki Teitzei with the following words:

כי תצא למלחמה, על-אֹיֶבֶךָ

“When you will leave to war against your enemy.” (Devarim 21:10)

R. Sholom Noach Berezovsky, the Slonimer Rebbe, observes that the battle the Torah is describing is not just a war of Israel against the enemies of the State. The battle being described





also refers to the internal enemy: the Yetzar Harah, one's inclination to follow one's passions and instincts till the point of

'self-actualization' and sharing their abilities with the world and at the same time, may end up completely ignoring the significant internal work incumbent upon them. As important as it is to self-actualize, it is equally, if not more important to self-reckon and self-correct. That may be the very reason we were placed on this earth. Our soul might need that specific correc-

self-destruction. If one reads this section of the Torah with this renewed perspective, the Torah actually offers specific guidance for achieving victory in the internal struggle one has with one's evil inclination.

When you enter the war of character development, make sure that it is with your specific enemy, not anyone else's

tion to achieve perfection. This may not be loud and public; it usually is not. It may not attract followers and subscribers, but it will help one

build real relationships.

One pointer the Torah offers is to recall that the battle is against 'your enemy.' Every person has an aspect to their personality which is their greatest vice. It is their very own internal nemesis. It could be anger, arrogance, tardiness, carelessness or the many darker parts of the human character. The Torah is advising us to identify that flaw and spend one's entire life overcoming it. When you enter the war of character development, make sure that it is with your specific enemy, not anyone else's, and do battle against the most difficult aspects of your personality.

The irony is that a person may spend their entire existence pursuing

As we begin our new year together, let's remember the dual mission we have ahead of us. Each of us has a phenomenal amount of good to share with the world. We should keep ratcheting that up every year. But we also have unique aspects of our personalities which we need to reform well before the end of our sojourn on earth. Let's take this coming year a time to improve ourselves, as well as the world around us. May this be the year we truly discover our strengths and put them to use to achieve worthy goals!

ACHIEVING SIMCHAT YOM TOV

RABBI CHAIM WASSERMAN, Z"l
RABBI EMERITUS, YOUNG ISRAEL OF PASSAIC-CLIFTON



We were deeply saddened by the recent passing of Rabbi Chaim Wasserman, z"l, who served in many important roles in our Jewish Community. He was General Editor of previous NCYI Torah Journals, the longtime author and publisher of the practical NCYI publication "A Rabbi's Letter", President of the Council of Young Israel Rabbis, Associate National Director of NCSY, and was the deeply loved and respected Mara D'Asra of Young Israel of Passaic-Clifton for four decades until his Aliya.

He was privileged to learn from both Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, zt"l, and through his wisdom and his deep love for Jews of all stripes, he had a profound effect on thousands, directly and indirectly, inspiring their dedication to Hashem, to His beloved People, and to the Torah and land of Israel.

We are grateful to his family, his wife, Rebbetzin Leah Wasserman, and his

children Adina, Rabbi Daniel, and Hillel, amosh, for allowing us to include herein one of the multitudes of meaningful Divrei Torah that he wrote and delivered over the years. We also remember his son Shmuel, a"h, letovah.

A version of this Dvar Torah appeared in the NCYI Weekly Bulletin, Sukkot 5768/1998.

יהי זכרו ברוך!

A RABBI'S LETTER; NCYI DVAR TORAH BULLETIN - SUKKOT 5768

The Tishrei Holy Days

If we were to wonder why Tishrei is so laden with yamim tovim, the answer which, in my humble opinion, is the most satisfying is that given by R.Yehudah haLevi in his Kuzari. He explains there that the three consecutive yamim tovim were designed to allow a person to experience three basic human emotions and through these emotions



be given the opportunity, one way or another, to contemplate a process of teshuvah.

On Rosh haShanah, the Yom haDin, anyone contemplating teshuvah will probably do so out of a feeling of awe and even fear in the face of the judgment day.

Yom Kippur, as chassidim refer to it, is Yom haKadosh, that holy day. But kadosh here is reminiscent of kiddush-in, the love in marriage. Yom Kippur is the day of renewed love between God and His people. The teshuvah process of Yom Kippur is experienced through a feeling of love and oneness between God and Israel.

And then there is Sukkot, zeman simchateinu, the yom tov of constant joy. Here is an opportunity to redouble our love unto Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This love is best expressed through teshuvah.

And so, opportunities to experience the three faces of teshuvah are given to us to observe

throughout all of the Tishrei yamim tovim.

BUT WHY “THE SHALOSH REGALIM”?

RaMBaM in his Moreh Nevochim explains why the Shalosh Regalim might be clustered together. They are referred to as a unit – Shalosh Regalim – to recall and celebrate the continuum of experiences in our national infancy

that we were commanded to remember and celebrate always.

Pesach celebrates our first step of national freedom and independence. This is followed by Shavuot when, with the acceptance of the Torah at Sinai, we celebrate that point in time when our national *raison d’etre*, our cultural distinctiveness, became a way of life for us for all future generations.

And then there is Sukkot. True, we recall the forty years of homelessness in the Sinai Desert when we existed in mere huts wandering from place to place. But the joy of the Sukkot celebration is recalling that those desert huts were simply temporary domiciles which we utilized only until we arrived in the Promised Land, the land which G-d gifted to us for all times. Therein rests the root of our joy – our homecoming, to the land of our forefathers.

R. Yitzchak Arama in his Akeidat Yitzchak, distinguishes the joy experienced on Pesach from that of Sukkot. Pesach, he opines, when we recall the tragic slavery we encountered in Egypt and our miraculous freedom at the time of the exodus, is when the joy is focused on our own selves, for our own delight. Not so Sukkot. The Torah explains that Sukkot is celebrated to recall when we arrived in the Promised Land, to enjoy the serenity of its security and its agricultural bounty. The Torah informs us: “Tachogu et chag Hashem shivat yamim,” the celebra-

ACHIEVING SIMCHAT YOM TOV

tion of Sukkot has got to be entirely focused on unbridled thanksgiving unto G-d for having granted us that opportunity of joyous living. The Torah says: Your existence in the promised land, having arrived from slavery in Egypt, makes it a chag Hashem.

JOYOUS TIMES

Never in nearly two thousand years have we been able to so joyously celebrate in Eretz Yisrael over Sukkot as we do these days. The opportunities to spend Sukkot in Eretz Yisrael and especially in Yerushalayim are available to us as never before, thanks to the amenities of modern living.

And for those who cannot observe “aliyah la-regel”, as it were, one can still hold on to a piece of Eretz Yisrael when he/she takes an etrog and the other minim in hand. In centuries past, in Europe, to have been able to get any sort of a properly grown etrog was a tough task. And since the Jewish people started to return en masse to Israel in the 1800s, to be able to hold an etrog grown in the soil of Eretz Yisrael has intensified the joy of the mitzvah incredibly.

In earlier times, a major source of etrogim was Corfo, and people were habituated to use such etrogim. But when the orchards of Eretz Yisrael started to blossom successfully, among the gedolim of Europe who insisted that only Eretz Yisrael etrogim be used was Reb Shiyaleh Kutneh. “These etrogim are the absolute top

of the line,” he would insist. “They were grown by Jews in our land, the land of the Jewish People, Eretz Yisrael. Such an etrog is the ultimate hiddur mitzvah!”

A FINAL NOTE ON JOY

The Vilna Gaon was once asked which mitzvah he felt was the most difficult to observe. He replied that after considerable contemplation he concluded that the simchah throughout a yom tov

is the most arduous to observe. The obligation to be joyous, he explained, devolves upon us throughout every day and every night of the eight days of yom tov. Every minute one must resist the slightest feelings of sadness or concern with any of the daily worries that a person normally can experience. To be able to accomplish such an observance of simchat yom tov is a difficult task for most people. Not to be able to do so means that one has failed to observe a positive mitzvah of the Torah.

Simcha, says the Vilna Gaon, is not mere joyfulness. Rather, it is the experience of internal happiness, as in Yismach lev m'vakshai Hashem, those who seek Hashem have simcha in their hearts. May we be zoche to have this inner simcha always, not only on Yom Tov. This is what we daven for on Yom Tov; to deepen our simcha, and to take it with us to the rest of our lives.

Chag sameach to all!



KAPARAS HATZIBBUR

RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

YOUNG ISRAEL OF RIVERDALE

YOSHEV ROSH OF THE YOUNG ISRAEL VAAD HALACHA

ROSH YESHIVA AND ROSH KOLLEL ELYON, YESHIVAS RABBEINU YITZCHOK ELCHONON



THE RAMBAM (Hilchos T'shuva 1:3) writes: The essence (atzmo) of Yom Kippur atones (mechaper) for those who repent (lashavim). The term shavim is found in the Gemara (K'risus 7a), in contrast to one who does not believe in the ability of Yom Kippur to atone. The Rambam (Shegagos 3:10) codifies: Yom Kippur atones only for shavim who believe in its atonement, but one who rejects (lit. kicks, meva'et, the term in the Gemara 7a) it is not atoned. The Rama (O.C. 607:6) quotes the Rambam verbatim, and then explains meva'et, one who thinks in his heart - what does this Yom Kippur achieve for me?

The last mishna in Yoma (85b) reads: Yom Kippur atones with repentance, t'shuva. The Gemara (ibid.) cites the dissenting opinion of Rabbi, that Yom Kippur atones for nearly all sins, even if one did not do t'shuva. The Kesef Mishna (1:3) associates shavim with doing t'shuva. The Rambam rejects Rabbi in favor of the majority who

require t'shuva. This interpretation is problematic. The Rambam (2:2) defines t'shuva precisely. It requires one to regret his sin, resolve to never repeat it, and confess it. One who merely believes in the power of Yom Kippur to atone does none of these three things. If we reject Rabbi, how can Yom Kippur atone without complete t'shuva?

The answer is that t'shuva is a prerequisite for complete atonement. However partial atonement is achieved on Yom Kippur for anyone who believes in its ability to atone. The Rambam calls partial atonement "mechaper", of sins (1:3; Shegagos 3:10), for all shavim, (those who repent), who believe in the power of Yom Kippur, or a sin - offering (chatas) to atone.

Complete atonement of the person requires full t'shuva. Only then is he miskaper (the recipient of atonement). (1:1, 1:2, 1:4).

Tosfos Yeshanim (Yoma 85b) suggests that even according to Rabbi, Yom

KAPARAS HATZIBBUR

Kippur alone only eliminates kares, the punishment of a soul being cut off from his people (as in Vayikra 7:20, 22, 26,27 et al.) However, there is no complete atonement (kapara gemura) without t'shuva. Otherwise, why was the Bais Hamikdash destroyed because of our sins if Yom Kippur atones completely for all of our sins?

The expression kapara gemura is found in the Gemara (85b) to explain the word “mechaprin” in the Mishna. Thus, when the Gemara says that the Mishna, which requires t'shuva with Yom Kippur, is against Rabbi who says that Yom Kippur is “mechaper” without t'shuva, it implies that according to Rabbi, Yom Kippur without t'shuva does achieve kapara gemura, unlike the Tosfos Yeshanim. This position raises the question of the Tosfos Yeshanim: why, according to Rabbi, was the Bais Hamikdash destroyed if Yom Kippur alone could atone for all sins?

Perhaps the answer is based on the Rambam (1:2). The scapegoat (sa'ir hamishtalei'ach) with t'shuva achieves total atonement (miskaper) for all sins. Without t'shuva, it atones (mechaper) only for minor sins (kalos), but not for major ones (chamuros), namely, sins punishable by kares or capital offenses (misos beis din).

Rav Soloveitchik zt”l (On Repentance p. 46-49) explained the distinction between kalos and chamuros as follows: An individual cannot achieve vicarious atonement by an animal sacrifice. In-

deed, without t'shuva, the offering of the wicked is an abomination (Mishlei 21:27, see Shavu'os 12b).

There is, however, a concept of communal atonement, kaparas hatzibbur. The Rambam (1:2) begins: The scapegoat is an atonement for all of Yisrael. Anyone who is part of Am Yisrael partakes of its communal atonement even without t'shuva. Hence the atonement for kalos without t'shuva.

However, one whose soul is cut off from his nation, as well as one punishable by execution which separates him from Am Yisrael, is no longer a full member of Am Yisrael. He is, therefore, not included in its communal atonement. Hence, the scapegoat does not atone for chamuros without t'shuva.

The Rav, zt”l, added that Yom Kippur itself possesses both elements of atonement. This is expressed in the beracha recited in Sh'mone Esrei. Hashem is described as the King who forgives our sins (avonoseinu) and the sins of His nation Bais Yisrael. The first phrase indicates atonement for every Jew individually. The second phrase refers to communal atonement for all of Am Yisrael.

Based on the Rav's analysis, we can better understand the partial repentance of Yom Kippur and a sin-offering, for one who believes in their effectiveness, even without t'shuva. There is no individual atonement without t'shuva, but there is communal atonement! One's belief in this atonement



suffices for him to be considered a part of Am Yisrael and achieve partial kapara even for chamuros.

According to Rebbi, communal atonement is achieved by Yom Kippur for nearly all sins even for one who does not believe in it. This atonement is partial according to the Tosfos Yeshanim, but complete according to the plain reading of the Gemara (85b). Why, then, was the Bais Hamikdash destroyed?

This sundered the community and negated the communal kapara that Rebbi accepts without t'shuva on Yom Kippur.

The answer is that Am Yisrael as a whole is judged by its majority. Only when the majority of Am Yisrael is righteous does the kaparas hatzibbur of Yom Kippur apply. The Bais Hamikdash was destroyed because the majority of Am Yisrael sinned, negating the complete communal atonement of Yom Kippur according to Rebbi. Without communal kapara, the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed.

The ability of the scapegoat to achieve kapara was similarly eliminated. The Gemara (Yoma 67a) relates that originally a red string would be tied in the Bais Hamikdash. When the scapegoat was killed, the string would miraculously turn white as it says (Yeshaya 1:18) If your sins are like scarlet,

they will become white as snow.”

However, 40 years before the churban, the string no longer turned white (Yoma 39b). The whitening of the string, part of which was tied to the scapegoat itself, proved that Hashem forgave Am Yisrael, as it says, (Vayikra 16:22) “The goat will carry on itself all of their sins” (Rashi, Maharsha 39a). Apparently, the majority of Am Yisrael were sinners 40 years before the churban, negating the communal kapara of the scapegoat and the whitening of the string. This

eventually led to the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash.

Another answer to the question of the Tosfos Yeshanim, why was the Bais Hamikdash destroyed according to Rebbi, can be suggested based on the Mishna (85b): Yom Kippur does not atone for interpersonal sins until one appeases the person he wronged. Perhaps Rebbi argues, if the atonement without t'shuva is a communal one, an interpersonal sinner distances himself from his fellow man and does not qualify for Yom Kippur's atonement.

The Gemara (Yoma 9b) attributes the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash to widespread sinas chinam,



baseless hatred. This sundered the community and negated the communal kapara that Rebbe accepts without t'shuva on Yom Kippur. If so, the first Bais Hamikdash was destroyed because of porkei ol, a general rejection of mitzvos, a category that even according to Rebbe is not atoned for by Yom Kippur (85b). The first answer, that if the majority of Am Yisrael are sinners there can be no communal kapara, applies to the first Bais Hamikdash as well.

Thus, to be assured of the partial atonement of Yom Kippur, we must eradicate sinas chinam. This of course can hasten the ultimate redemption as well.

The final Mishna in Yoma (85b) concludes with the immortal words of R. Akiva: "Fortunate are you, Yisrael. Before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you--your Father in heaven!" Isn't this obvious? Who else can purify us? The Rav answers (On Repentance p. 5): R. Akiva lived at the time of the churban Bais Hamikdash, when the people, even the leaders, were despondent (Makkos 24). How will we be atoned on Yom Kippur in the absence of the Avoda and the scapegoat? R. Akiva's response resounds until this very day. While we lack the aspect of atonement of the korbanos, ultimately it is Hashem Himself Who purifies us. We are fortunate to be purified by Hashem on Yom Kippur even nowadays. We recite the Avoda in Mussaf, and we end Ne'ila praying for its res-

toration by next year in Yerushalayim. But we are purified every year, for the last 2,000 years, on Yom Kippur, by Hashem Himself.

The Mishna concludes: Hashem is the Mikveh of Yisrael (Yirmiyahu 17:13). Just as a Mikveh purifies the impure, so Hashem purifies Yisrael. A mikveh requires total immersion. If one fails to appease his wronged fellow, Yom Kippur does not atone for any of his sins, even bein adam la-Makom. Once again, the critical need to eliminate interpersonal sins and enmity is emphasized.

The halachic obligation to appease and ask forgiveness for an interpersonal aveira on Erev Yom Kippur is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 606:1, see Mishna B'rurah 1,2,3). The Rama demands that the aggrieved party forgive the wrongdoer. The Mishna B'rurah (8) cites the Gemara (R.H. 17a): For one who overlooks his measures (ma'avir al midosav), they (the Heavenly tribunal) overlook his sins. Rashi explains: for the person who is not exacting towards those who have pained him, measure for measure, so, too, the attribute of strict justice (midas hadin) is not exacting about his sins.

The Mishna B'rura adds: if he will not forgive, he will not be forgiven. The Sha'ar Hatziyun (8) explains: In Heaven, they judge measure for measure (mida k'neged mida). This forms the most essential part of T'fila Zaka re-

cited as we enter Yom Kippur: I totally forgive anyone who wronged or maligned me. Just as I forgive everyone, so too, (Hashem, please) grant me favor in the eyes of all so they should forgive me totally.

An additional interpretation of the Gemara (R.H. 17a) is based on our earlier analysis, focusing on communal atonement.

One who forgives others is more strongly attached to the tzibbur, as he avoids sinas chinam.

As such, his sins are forgiven by the communal atonement.

While the state of churban continues, the Rambam and Rama indicate that, even today, Yom Kippur achieves partial kapara for shavim, those who believe in Yom Kippur's effectiveness, even without t'shuva. This widespread belief, even by secular Jews, is evidenced by the nearly total shutdown in Eretz Yisrael on Yom Kippur and the remarkably high percentage of Israelis who fast (see Jerusalem Post, Oct. 7, 2019). Sadly, in the U.S., the number of Jews who fast or attend services on Yom Kippur is declining.

In earlier decades, observant Jews would mock the once-a-year Yom Kippur synagogue attendees. This is a grave error. Even as we pray for the complete t'shuva of every Jew, which will lead to the ultimate redemption (Rambam 7:5), we must appreciate and encourage the partial atonement achieved by Jews who at least believe in the concept of the Day of Atonement.

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On Yom Kippur 5783, may each and every one of us achieve complete t'shuva and, thereby, complete kapara. May all of Am Yisrael be blessed with a

year of health, peace and prosperity. May we be privileged to witness the reemergence of total communal atonement and the resultant service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur in the Bais Hamikdash - bimheira biyameinu Amein.

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