

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



עילוי נשמת

ALAI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

Youthful Energy

The Gemara (Eiruvim 40b) asks whether one recites the *berachah* of *Shehecheyanu* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On the one hand, they occur only once a year, like other *yamim tovim*; on the other hand, they are not called a *regel* like other *yamim tovim*. The Gemara concludes that one does, in fact, recite *Shehecheyanu* on the *Yamim Nora'im*.

that have special mitzvos specific to that time of year, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur do not. Their mitzvah, *teshuvah*, is relevant all year long. It is not proper to wait until this time of year to do *teshuvah*, so perhaps *Shehecheyanu* should not be recited.

The Maharsha explains that this is why Moshe Rabbeinu's *takanah* to study the *halachos* of each Yom Tov at its time² does not extend to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Although there are halachos specific to these days, nevertheless, their inner depth and meaning consist of one thing: *teshuvah*. And we must not wait until the *Yamim Nora'im* to learn about *teshuvah*.³

But in case a person did not take the opportunity of *teshuvah* throughout the year, he should certainly grab the opportunity to do it during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, inspiring himself to renewed energy in *avodas Hashem*.

The Chiddushei HaRim is quoted⁴ as saying that the word שנה, *year*, derives from שינוי, *change*. A new year must mean

cont. on page 2

Light of Yom Kippur

In Maseches Yoma, the Mishnayos detail the *avodah* of Yom Kippur in the Beis Hamikdash. The Mishnah (7:4) teaches: “[The *kohen gadol*] enters to burn the *ketores* of the afternoon and to prepare the lamps [of the Menorah].” *Tosafos*¹ wonders about this: This Mishnah is discussing the afternoon of Yom Kippur. In the afternoon, the Menorah was lit; it was prepared in the morning. So instead of “to prepare the lamps,” the Mishnah should have said, “to light the lamps.”

Tosafos suggests that perhaps this Mishnah was taught during the time when Shimon HaTzaddik served as *kohen gadol*. During that time, the two easternmost lights of the Menorah miraculously remained lit until each evening. When the *kohen gadol* entered in the evening to light the Menorah, he would first prepare those two lights, which had burned until then, and then he would light all the lights. Since the *kohen gadol* needed to prepare those two lights before lighting the Menorah, the Mishnah simply states that he entered “to prepare the lamps.”

Sfas Emes offers a different explanation. The Mishnah (6:6,8) teaches that a strip of scarlet wool was divided on Yom Kippur; half was tied between the horns of the *azazel* goat, and half was tied to a stone. When the goat reached the wilderness, the wool tied to the stone turned white. The *Sfas Emes* argues that if the miracle of the eastern lamps of the Menorah occurred every ordinary day during

cont. on page 3

In Kotzk, there was no such thing as an old man. An older individual simply contained in him three or four yungerleit.

What does the Gemara mean that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are “not called a *regel*”? Simply, this means that whereas other *yamim tovim* have a mitzvah of *aliyah l'regel*, the *Yamim Nora'im* do not. But the Maharsha¹ interprets this differently: Unlike other *yamim tovim*

1 Megillah 32a

2 Megillah 32a

3 See *Sefer Hachaim, Sefer Selichah U'Mechilah*, chap. 6

4 See *Sfas Emes, Behar 5657; Likutei HaRim, Rosh Hashanah s.v. bechol shanah*

Youthful Energy

cont. from page 1

more than a fresh calendar; it must herald a transformation for each person. One must ponder his actions of the previous year and determine the path he intends to take the coming year.

The pasuk says (Tehillim 90:10), יְמֵי שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה – *The days of our years among them are seventy years.* What is added with the word בָּהֶם – *among them?*⁵ One who lives year after year without achieving real change, without renewed vitality in his *avodas Hashem*, has lived one long, unchanged mass of *the days of his years* – which, incidentally, have *among them* seventy years.

*Degel Machaneh Efraim*⁶ cites the Baal Shem Tov in explaining the pasuk (Tehillim 71:9), אַל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי לְעֵת זְקֵנָה – *Do not cast me off to old age.* Simply, this is a *tefillah* that one maintain his physical strength and cognitive faculties through old age. But the Baal Shem Tov explained that David Hamelech was asking for help in performing the mitzvos not with a sense of stale oldness, but with freshness and vigor.⁷ On a similar note, it was said that in Kotzk, there was no such thing as an old man. An older individual simply contained in him three or four *yungerleit*. He may have been eighty years old, but he was full of energy and enthusiasm. Today, it's the other way around: a *yungerman* is a third of an old man. He lacks a sense of vitality, of life. Sometimes a person is full of energy

when it comes to matters of the world, but when dealing with *ruchniyus*, he is a young old man. That is why we daven אַל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי לְעֵת זְקֵנָה, asking to be given the ability to maintain our youth and vitality in *avodas Hashem*.

This sense of freshness is especially important at the beginning of the new year, so that we may renew ourselves and make a *cheshbon hanefesh* (self-reckoning) out of a will to grow and improve.

The *chassid* Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Karo wrote the Imrei Emes a letter, known as the *Kotzker Kvittel*, in which he details lessons he learned from each of his *Rebbeim*: the Kotzker Rebbe, the Chiddushei HaRim, the Rebbe R. Henoach, and the Sfas Emes. In the *Kotzker Kvittel*, he writes that he learned from the Rebbe R. Henoach to make a *cheshbon hanefesh* “at least twice a day, once in the morning before davening, and once in the evening before going to sleep.” These are two distinct types of *cheshbon hanefesh*. In the evening, one makes a reckoning of how he spent his day, with a *krechitz* and a feeling of remorse for not having done better. But the *cheshbon hanefesh* of the morning is different; it is with optimism, “How can I spend my day in the best way possible?”⁸

David Hamelech davened to Hashem (Tehillim 27:4), אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה' אוֹתָהּ, אֶבְקֶשׁ, שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית ה' כֹּל יְמֵי חַיִּי, לְחֻזּוֹת בְּנֵעָם ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכְלוֹ – *One thing I asked of Hashem, this I seek: That I may dwell in*

the House of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary. Rashi explains, citing Dunash, that וּלְבַקֵּר derives from בָּקַר, *morning*: David was asking to be found in the House of Hashem every morning. Rashi then explains differently, citing Menachem: וּלְבַקֵּר denotes discernment, as in (Vayikra 27:33), לֹא יִבְקֵר בֵּין טוֹב לְרָע, – *He shall not distinguish between good and bad.*

Every Yid is a *heichal* of Hashem, as the *navi* says (Yirmiyahu 7:4), הֵיכַל ה' הֵיכַל ה' – *The sanctuary of Hashem, the sanctuary of Hashem, the sanctuary of Hashem are they!* The way for us to fulfill וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכְלוֹ in our own *heichal* is twofold, based on the two interpretations of Rashi above. Firstly, the nighttime *cheshbon hanefesh*: discernment and remorse over our actions of that day. This *cheshbon* certainly applies to the beginning of a new year as well; we must think over our actions of the previous year and do *teshuvah* for those that were improper. Secondly, the morning *cheshbon hanefesh*: yes, yesterday I made mistakes, but how will I conduct myself today? How will I conduct myself this year?

We ask Hashem to bless us with a sweet year. What does Hashem ask of us? That we make the effort to improve ourselves in the new year.

(שבת תשובה תשפ"ג – ליל ש"ק, מאמר א)

5 See *Eitz Hada'as Tov* of R. Chaim Vital

6 Beginning of Eikev

7 See *Baal Shem Tov*, Noach, *Amud HaTefillah* 66-68

8 See *Chashavah L'Tovah*, p. 37 s.v. *behagadah amai*; *Pnei Menachem*, vol. 3 p. 395

Light of Yom Kippur

cont. from page 1

the time of Shimon HaTzaddik, certainly it must have occurred every Yom Kippur, even outside of Shimon HaTzaddik's time, since every Yom Kippur a special miracle occurred, that of the scarlet wool. Thus, the Sfas Emes concludes, the Mishnah states that the *kohen gadol* entered "to prepare the lamps," since on Yom Kippur the two easternmost lamps remained burning and needed to be prepared before the Menorah was lit.

As long as the candle still burns, one can repair.

Apparently, the Sfas Emes found it difficult to accept that the Mishnah's teaching applied only during the forty years that Shimon HaTzaddik served as *kohen gadol*. But the Sfas Emes's line of reasoning, too, requires explanation. He establishes a *kal v'chomer* from an ordinary day in Shimon HaTzaddik's time to Yom Kippur of other periods, based on the miracle of the scarlet wool that occurred every Yom Kippur. But in fact, the Gemara (Yoma 39b) states that some years the wool did not turn white. Chazal elsewhere¹⁰ say that for forty years preceding the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, the wool only turned red. So how can we conclude that the miracle of the Menorah certainly occurred throughout all the years of the Beis Hamikdash?

Another, more perplexing question: The miracle of the scarlet wool related directly to Yom Kippur; dividing the wool and tying it was part of the *avodah* of the day. But preparing and lighting the Menorah was a daily *avodah*; it had nothing to do with Yom Kippur per se. Why should a miracle relating to the Menorah occur on Yom Kippur?

One might suggest that just as the *korbanos tamid* of Shabbos are considered related to Shabbos although a *korban tamid* is brought every day,¹¹ so too, the *avodah* of the Menorah that occurs on Yom Kippur relates to Yom Kippur. In a similar vein, the *Rishonim*¹² discuss whether the *kohen gadol* must do the daily *avodos* on the day of Yom Kippur in person, as he must do with Yom Kippur's own *avodos*. However, whether this concept would extend to support the idea of a miracle with the Menorah occurring on Yom Kippur remains debatable.

My nephew, Rav Yisrael Mordechai Alter, pointed out a phrase of a *piyyut* in *Mussaf* of Yom Kippur: לפנים להיכל יכנס להיטיב חמשה נרות ולהקטיר קטורת הבוקר ולהיטיב את שתי הנרות הנשארות – *He would enter the Heichal to prepare five lamps [of the Menorah] and to burn the morning ketores and to prepare the remaining two lamps*. Clearly, the *kohen gadol* would prepare all seven lamps of the Menorah on Yom Kippur morning, unlike the Sfas Emes's position. In fact, this is clear from the Gemara,¹³ as well.

I would add that the way the Sfas Emes presents his idea as stating that this miracle occurred every Yom Kippur is itself uncharacteristic. His *sefer* on *Shas* is written in accordance with the plain understanding

of the *sugyos*; this statement seems as if it were written with *ruach hakodesh*.

I was subsequently shown in the pamphlet *Chosamo Shel Kohen*¹⁴ that R. Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt"l* maintained that the easternmost lamp of the Menorah remained lit every Shabbos. He based this on a statement of the Midrash¹⁵ that even an ordinary Jew's lamp was shown *berachah* on Shabbos; certainly, the Menorah of the Beis Hamikdash was, as well. One could reason that if this was so every Shabbos, surely it was so on Yom Kippur, which the Torah refers to as שְׁבֵת שְׁבֵתוֹן.¹⁶ This would support the Sfas Emes's position that some of the Menorah's lights remained burning until Yom Kippur evening. However, it must be noted that while R. Yissachar Dov of Belz substantiated his point from the Midrash, the Sfas Emes did not bring any support for his idea.

According to *peshat*, the Sfas Emes's connection between *neiros* and Yom Kippur remains difficult to understand, but in application to our *avodah*, the connection is very real. The pasuk says (Mishlei 20:27), נֶר ה' נִשְׁמַת אָדָם – *A man's soul is the lamp of Hashem*. The *minhag* is to light a candle for each person before Yom Kippur;¹⁷ this is a reminder to inspire oneself to *teshuvah*, so that his spiritual light is not smothered by foreign influences. As well, it is a reminder that "as long as the candle still burns, one can repair." As the Sfas Emes said, a special miracle occurs on Yom Kippur, the day of *teshuvah* – that one's lamp continues to burn.

(בנאות דשא – יום הכיפורים תשפ"א)

10 See Rosh Hashanah 31b

11 Zevachim 91a

12 See *Baal HaMaor* and *Milchamos Hashem*, Yoma 26b

13 Yoma 33b. According to *Tosafos*, this would be explained as referring to times other than the period of Shimon HaTzaddik, when the two eastern lamps always remained lit until evening.

14 By Rav S. Bernder

15 Bereishis Rabbah, chap. 11

16 Vayikra 16:31, 23:32

17 See Rema, O.C. 610:4; *Matteh Efraim*, 603:8

Fresh Handwriting

כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל
הַטְּמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ

For on this day he shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed. (Vayikra 16:30)

The Gemara¹⁸ records a debate whether Yom Kippur provides atonement only for one who does *teshuvah*, or atonement is provided regardless. Rabbi maintains that Yom Kippur is *mechaper* even for one who does not do *teshuvah*, and the *Rabbanan* hold that *teshuvah* is necessary to achieve *kapparah*.

If we don't do teshuvah and mend our ways, our neshamos will not be cleansed on Yom Kippur and we will remain attached to our bad habits

The *Rishonim*¹⁹ question Rabbi's opinion: if Yom Kippur is automatically *mechaper*, how could the Jewish people's sins have caused the Beis Hamikdash to be destroyed? After all, less than a year before the *churban*, Klal Yisrael had a clean slate of *aveiros*. The *Rishonim* answer that Rabbi agrees that the atonement Yom Kippur grants for those who do not do *teshuvah* is not complete. Thus, Klal Yisrael's *aveiros* were still weighty enough to cause the *churban*.

What do the *Rishonim* mean that without *teshuvah*, Yom Kippur does not provide a "complete" *kapparah*? Certainly, this doesn't

mean that only a certain percentage of *aveiros* are atoned for.

The *kadmonim* write that there are two negative components to every *aveirah*. First, the person is transgressing Hashem's word and rebelling against His Kingship. Second, the *aveirah* stains his *neshamah*, leaving him entrenched in sin and more distant from Hashem.

Although Rabbi holds that Yom Kippur atones even without *teshuvah*, this is only regarding the first aspect of *chet* – one's sins are forgiven and he can be inscribed for life. The impact of one's *aveiros* on his *neshamah*, however, cannot be undone without *teshuvah*. The sinner will still find himself drawn to sin, and he will not feel satisfaction in performing mitzvos, since he trained himself to see them as a burden. His Torah learning and davening will be unenjoyable, a constant struggle, because his *aveiros* made him distant from the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

In the years preceding the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, Yom Kippur passed many times without *teshuvah* being done. The Jewish people became very deeply entrenched in sin and found themselves very distant from Hashem. The last year before the *churban*, Klal Yisrael's *aveiros* were very grave, since they occurred amid such a dissociation from Hashem. These *aveiros* alone were enough to destroy the Beis Hamikdash.

What can we learn from this? Although we may be inscribed on Yom Kippur for a year of life and peace, if we don't do *teshuvah* and mend our ways, our *neshamos* will not be cleansed on Yom Kippur and we will remain attached to our bad habits. That

is the purpose of Yom Kippur: to purify our souls. In the words of Rabbeinu Yonah,²⁰ "It is a positive mitzvah *min haTorah* to inspire oneself to do *teshuvah* on Yom Kippur, as the pasuk says, מִכָּל הַטְּמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ – *from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed*. The Torah thus admonishes us to purify ourselves before Hashem by doing *teshuvah* and mending our ways."

So what's the point of Yom Kippur atoning for one's *aveiros* without *teshuvah* (per Rabbi's opinion), if he remains rooted in his bad ways? The Kotzker Rebbe explained that when a person does *aveiros* and remains liable for them, he has run off course and will not be able to right himself properly. Just as it is difficult to write neatly on a sheet of paper that is blotched with ink, so it is hard to mend one's ways when still blotched with *aveiros*. On Yom Kippur, each person receives a fresh, clean sheet of paper to write on. His *aveiros* are forgiven, and he will not be punished for them. Now he can begin the process of rectifying his ways and purifying his soul. But if a person passes up this opportunity and remains stuck in his ways, he has gained nothing with the atonement. Stuck in a lifestyle of sin, his messy handwriting will once again sully his paper.

We must make the most of the *kapparah* we are granted on Yom Kippur, letting it serve its purpose – by returning to Hashem as His servant, loyal in all our ways. If we do this, our *neshamos* will be in a much higher place following Yom Kippur. When we begin to write on our brand-new page, it will be in the beautiful handwriting of a new version of ourselves.

(בנאות דשא – יום הכיפורים תשפ"ג)

18 Yoma 85b, Shavuot 13a

19 *Tosefos Yeshanim* and *Tosefos HaRosh*, Yoma 85b

20 *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, 2:14 and 2:17

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