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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

At-onement

By Tzvi Freeman

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is a day that is entirely dedicated to returning to G-d in Teshuvah (repentance). Among the many mitzvot involved in Teshuvah is the act of confession, as the Torah states, "You shall confess your sin." Indeed, this is the basis for the "Al Cheit" ("For the Sin of...") confessional recited on Yom Kippur, which enumerates the various sins a person may have committed.

In the Jerusalem Talmud, the question of whether or not this generalized confession is sufficient is debated. Rabbi Yehuda Ben Betaira maintains that in addition to reciting "Al Cheit," a detailed admission of personal sins is required. Rabbi Akiva, by contrast, opines that "It is not necessary to go into detail about one's deeds."

But what exactly is the crux of their argument? As the Tosefot explains, Rabbi Yehuda's insistence on a detailed account is for the purpose of arousing a deeper sense of remorse. The more a person is ashamed of his misdeeds, the deeper his repentance will be. Rabbi Akiva, however, takes the human factor into consideration, and asserts that if a person's individualized confession is overheard by others, "he might be suspected of other sins as well." In other words, the way people think about him might be negatively affected.

In essence, the argument revolves around where the emphasis should be placed: on the present, or on the future. When the present is emphasized - the fact that today is Yom Kippur - it is preferable to enumerate one's sins in order to achieve a higher level of Teshuvah. When the stress is on the future, the determining factor is to avoid any possible negative repercussions.

On a deeper level, there is another basis for their disagreement. Rabbi Yehuda views the individual in his present state, as one who is just beginning to do Teshuvah and draw closer to G-d. There are two basic motivations for doing Teshuvah: an initial stage, in which a person repents out of a sense of fear, and a higher level, on which the motivation is love for G-d. When a person enumerates his every little sin, it produces in him a stronger feeling of fear and awe of G-d.

Rabbi Akiva, however, looks at the larger picture, and anticipates that the person will eventually reach the higher level. In fact, his entire approach is to always perceive the hidden good in everything. When a person repents out of love for G-d, it makes no difference whether the sin is great or small; for he knows that every sin creates a distance between himself and G-d, and he will avoid committing even the smallest transgression.

Adapted from Volume 24 of *Likutei Sichot*

The Yom Kippur *Machzor* (prayer book) translated into English resembles a graceful bird of flight, an albatross, clumsily waddling along the ground; a ballerina in an astronaut's suit -- on Jupiter; a romantic sonata performed by a jug band. All the more amazing, then, that there is one word -- a key word -- that the English language got right. Not just right, but exquisitely right. One could say, even better than the original. And that is "atonement". For this is certainly what Yom Kippur is about in its very essence: A day of "at one-ment."

How did this language know? Our sages had picked up on it long ago that the Torah speaks about Yom Kippur as a day "once in the year". Of course, that could simply mean it is a unique day, distinct from every other day in all regards. But in a deeper sense, at the core of Yom Kippur lies a theme of "onement" and our act of being there -- at that onement.

Yes, you'll tell me, I've got it all wrong. "Atonement" is simply the translation of the Hebrew *Kapparah* -- any act that effects forgiveness, cleanses our soul of the stains it has acquired over the year and allows us and G-d to make up and get on with things. What has that got to do with "oneness" or "onement"?

Everything. First of all, because atonement achieves at-onement. When the inner soul of man below and the Essence of Being above forgive and make up, they are at one once again.

And because at-onement achieves atonement, in order to achieve atonement we must first arrive at onement.

But the rest of the year we are not at onement. Why? Because of the way we see things.

Looks are deceiving. With our fleshly eyes we see ourselves as aliens in a universe harshly cold and silent to the drama of emotions and desires, agony and ecstasy, aspirations, failures and achievements that make us human beings.

But a deeper sense tells us that, no, deep within this reality and entirely transcendent of it is an essence that resonates with the stirring of our inner hearts; for do not we also emerge out of this universe? If we have a heart, a mind, a soul, must not the universe also have such? "The One who formed the ear, does He not hear?"

We call that Essence, "G-d." And so, we pray.

All year round we live apart from this Essence. Yes, we have a conscience driving us not to fall out of harmony with it in a sort of *pas de deux*. But it is a harmony of "should": We would rather do "this," but that other voice says we should do "that." So we do. But sometimes we don't. At least, not exactly as we "should." We fall out of sync. Like two musical notes not quite in tune, a dissonance ensues. We fall further apart. Our backs are turned to each other. There is no dance, no duet, only the friction of two disparate travellers acting out their own scripts.

But on Yom Kippur we embrace, our essence with that Essence Within and Beyond. And we say to one another, "The dance may be faulty, but the hearts are one." There is no longer "should". There is "is". All is forgiven. At onement.

Slice of LIFE

The Enduring Blessing

There was once a Chabad Rabbi who led a large congregation, many of them holocaust survivors. Each member, of course, had his own memories and problems but all of them learned to pretty much cope. Or so it seemed.

One of them was Mr. Goldvasser (fictitious name). He was a seemingly normal person; a good businessman with a healthy sense of humour, a generous heart and a keen mind. But he had one idiosyncrasy; he never remained in the Synagogue for the Blessing of the Cohanim on the holidays. (The Cohanim are direct decedents from the Priests in the days of the Temple and they are commanded to bless the congregation with a fifteen word blessing as prescribed in Num. 6:24-26. Outside of Israel the blessing is usually made only three times a year; on the holidays in the morning 'Musaf' prayer.)

The Rabbi was always a bit apprehensive about asking Mr. Goldvasser for an explanation but his curiosity became so great that he finally concocted a plan. He invited him to his home for a meal and after they had eaten well, sang a few songs and made a few 'l'chaims' he asked.

"Tell me Mr. Goldvasser. I've noticed that you don't stay for the blessing of the Cohanim. Is there some reason? Is something wrong? I mean, it's not that important. It's just something I noticed. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I just wondered. Am I right?"

Mr. Goldvasser became silent and it seemed that his eyes became glossy with some past vision, or perhaps with tears.

"Well, Rabbi" he began after almost a minute, "It was like this...."

"I was in Auschwitz. I can't explain what happened there, I think it's even forbidden to remember such things. But there was one person; we called him 'The Rabbi'. No one knew his name, but he was different than all of us. I'm sure he lost his family and everything just like the rest of us but he never showed it. Not only that but he used to keep everyone's spirits up.

"If he saw someone depressed he would say a good word. If you ever wanted to talk he would listen. He could listen forever. He always had a hand for a bent shoulder and a shoulder for someone to weep on and a hug for a broken heart and even a joke to break the sadness.

"Anyway, once it was getting close to Passover and he announced that we had to figure out a way to get Matzot.

"Matzot! Everyone was thinking about dropping dead and he made us think of Matzot. And it worked. Until finally someone noticed on the way to where they took us to work outside, someone noticed a few crumbs of Matzot!

"It took a few days but finally we found out that one of the prisoners had a job cleaning the house of one of the Nazi officers and when the German wasn't at home this Jew risked his life and made a Matzo for himself. If he got caught he would have been killed for sure. Anyway a few crumbs must have fallen there near the road and that's how we found out. It was a real miracle.

"The Rabbi had a talk with this fellow and at first he said it was impossible; too dangerous. But finally he agreed ... and he somehow succeeded in making two Matzos. It was another miracle.

"It doesn't matter that we were about eight hundred men in that bunker. Do you hear? Eight hundred! But we were actually happy when the Rabbi woke us up at midnight and showed us those Matzos.

"He broke them into pieces and handed them out, then each of us broke them into smaller pieces until each of us had a piece.

And each person held it in his hand while the Rabbi recited what he remembered from the Passover Haggada by heart and we repeated after him. Finally he made the blessing and ate and so did we. Each one ate his crumb of Matzo. At first we were quiet. Like whispering so those German snakes wouldn't hear us but after a few minutes I guess we forgot where we were.

"Then the Rabbi says like this. He says 'Listen Jews! Listen my friends and my brothers. We just left Egypt! See! No one can break our spirit! No one! We are free!!' And he began to sing a song. And dance. He danced! And we all danced.

"There were all sorts of Jews there a lot of them were atheists... but everyone danced. That night we danced! We were free.

"But then the door came crashing open and the spell was broken. There stood a Nazi officer with a few soldiers behind him like mad dogs.

"What is this?!" He screamed, red with anger. 'SINGING??' He screamed even louder. 'In Auschwitz you cry, you don't sing!'"

He pulled out a pistol, put it to the head of one of the prisoners and said "Tell me who is responsible or I'll kill you. I'll kill all of you

out one by one! WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!!!"

"Everyone knew it would happen. The Rabbi stepped forward and said in a loud, calm voice. "I am. I'm responsible. You can kill me. "

"The officer motioned to his soldiers to grab The Rabbi, lowered his pistol, put it in its holster and said, "You won't die so fast, Jew. You will die tomorrow, in public by hanging."

"They took the Rabbi away and early the next morning before dawn they woke us early, and made the entire camp stand in the yard. There were several thousand prisoners and Nazi guards were everywhere us with pointed guns. There in the middle on a podium between two huge Gestapo guards stood the Rabbi.

"The officer stood straight, hands behind his back, his chest jutting out and yelled. 'Now, Jews, you will see what happens to someone who dances in Auschwitz. Everyone will watch! Do you understand?! Everyone! Anyone caught not watching will be killed on the spot. ON THE SPOT!'"

"But as they were putting the noose around the Rabbi's neck he turned to the officer and said in a clear voice for all to hear. 'As a man about to be killed I demand my last wish! Doesn't a dying man get a last wish? 'Where is your honour?'"

"The commander hesitated, smiled as though amused and said.

"Last wish is it? Alright Jew..... What is your last wish?"

"I am a Cohen" he answered "And I want to bless the crowd."

"Bless? Heh! And how long will this take?"

"It will take one half a minute, perhaps less" he replied.

The officer looked at the soldier with the noose, made a motion with his head to wait, looked at the watch on his wrist and said,

"You have thirty seconds."

"The Rabbi's voice was clear as a child's, he stood proudly straight, closed his eyes, raised his hands and the fifteen words of the blessing rang out like a voice from heaven. 'Y'vorechchaw, HaShem, V'yishmorechaw," We all burst out crying like babies and when he finished.....it was over.

"That blessing is what kept me alive in Auschwitz, through the rest of the war and to this very day.

"It rings in my ears when there is no hope and shines in the darkness when all is lost. I never want to hear another Cohan's blessing. I never want to forget that pure blessing I heard. That is why I leave the Shul."

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Editor: Yisroel Leib Lester
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone 0433 026 117
Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1104

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The time appointed by G-d for the Messianic redemption is a closely guarded secret. Nonetheless, we are offered many hints to recognize its proximity. It will be a time of suffering that will make it look as if G-d were asleep. These are the birth pangs of Moshiach, bearable only in anticipation of the bliss that follows them.

Moreover, there are also good and happy signs indicating the imminent coming of Moshiach: a good measure of prosperity; a renewal of Torah-study; and opening of the "gates of wisdom above and the wellsprings of wisdom below," evidenced also by scientific and technological discoveries and advances; a manifestation and propagation of the mystical teachings of the Torah; and also "In the time that Moshiach will awaken, many signs and miracles will occur in the world."



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh,
Shabbos Teshuvah
6 Tishrei, 5739

To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel, Everywhere -
Greeting and Blessing:

Pursuant to what has been noted about the unique quality and pre-eminence of Teshuvah [repentance] in that it enables a person to rectify completely all that should have been achieved throughout the past, in matters of Torah and Mitzvos - "with one 'turn' and in one moment" -

Parenthetically, it is surely needless to emphasize that the above must not, G-d forbid, serve as an excuse for wrongdoing, as our Sages warned, "Whoever says, 'I will sin and repent later,' is not given an opportunity to do Teshuvah" -

We will amplify the said point in order to make it clearer how much it concerns the conduct of a Jew, and of any person in general. By way of introduction:

On reflection, it can easily be seen that, all things added up, the world contains more quantity (materiality) than quality (spirituality), and more by far. Indeed, the more corporeal and gross a thing is, the greater is the quantity in which it is found. Thus, for example, the world of inanimate, (inorganic) matter is much greater in volume than the vegetable kingdom, and the latter is quantitatively greater than the animal kingdom, which, in turn, surpasses by far, in quantity, the highest of the four kingdoms, mankind (the "speaking" creature). Similarly in the human body: the lowest extremities, the legs are larger in size than the rest of the body, and the latter is much greater in bulk than the head, wherein are located the organs of speech and the senses of smell, hearing and sight, as well as the intellect, etc., which animate the entire body and direct all its activities.

On further reflection, a person might also become disheartened, G-d forbid, wondering how is one to fulfill adequately one's real purpose in life on this earth, which is, to quote our Sages, "I was created to serve my Creator" - seeing that most of one's time is necessarily taken up with materialistic things, such as eating and drinking, sleeping, earning a livelihood, etc. What with the fact that the earliest years of a human being, before reaching maturity and knowledgeability, are spent in an entirely materialistic mode of living.

The answer is, first of all, that even the so-called materialistic preoccupations of the daily life must not become purely materialistic and animal-like, for we have to be always mindful of the imperative, "Let all your doings be for the sake of Heaven," and "Know Him (G-d) in all your ways."

This means that also in carrying out the activities which are connected with the physical and material aspects of life (which, as mentioned, take up the greater part of a person's time) a human being must know that those material aspects are not an end in themselves, but they are, and must serve as, the means to attain to the higher, spiritual realm of life, namely, G-dliness. In this way he permeates all those materialistic-physical aspects with spiritual content, and utilizes them for spiritual purpose. Thus, all these mundane, and in themselves trivial matters, are elevated to their proper role, perfection and spirituality.

But in addition to the above, there is also the unique effectiveness of Teshuvah, which has the power to transform - "with one 'turn' and in one moment" - the whole past - the very materiality of it into spirituality.

Time is, of course, not measured simply by duration, but by its content in terms of achievement. Thus, in evaluating time there are vast differences in terms of content, and, hence, in real worth, of a minute, an hour, etc. Suffice it to mention, by way of example, that one cannot compare an hour of prayer and outpouring of the soul before G-d with an hour of sleep. And to use the analogy of coins, there may be coins of identical size and shape, yet differing in their intrinsic value, depending upon whether they are made of copper, silver or gold.

With all the wonderful opportunities that G-d provides for a person to fill his time with the highest content, there is the most wonderful gift from "G-d who does wonders" of the extraordinary quality of Teshuvah, which transcends all limitations, including the limitations of time, so that "in one moment" it transforms the whole past, to the degree of absolute perfection in quality and spirituality...

...May G-d grant that everyone actively strive for the above, in accordance with the prayer of the Prophetess Channah, which we read on the first day of the New Year: "My heart rejoices in G-d, my strength is uplifted through G-d... I rejoice in His help... and He will exalt the reign of His Moshiach."

With blessing for Hatzlocho [success] in all above and for a Chasimoh uGmar Chasimoh Toivoh, both materially and spiritually,

/ Signed: Menachem Schneerson

CUSTOMS CORNER

On the day before Yom Kippur it is customary to ask for and receive "lekach" (sweet cake -- signifying a sweet year) from someone (usually one's mentor or parent) on the day before Yom Kippur.

One of the reasons given for this custom is that if it had been decreed, G-d forbid, that during the year we should need to resort to a handout from others, the decree should be satisfied with this asking for food.

It is also a mitzvah to eat and drink in abundance, more than one is normally accustomed to, on the day before Yom Kippur. The Talmud states that "Whoever eats and drinks on the 9th [of Tishrei], it is regarded as if he had fasted on both the 9th and the 10th."

Two meals are eaten, one in the morning or early afternoon, and one, just prior to the onset of Yom Kippur. These meals are festive affairs, and we dip the challah in honey.

Throughout the day, one should eat only light foods that are easy to digest, such as fish and poultry. (In the final meal before the fast, we avoid eating fish too.)

A WORD

from the Director

Our sages tell us, commenting on the verse "seek Hashem where He can be found, call to Him as He is near" that this refers to the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Although G-d is always among us and listens to our prayers, there are times when He is more attentive. We therefore set these days apart as days of repentance and returning. These days are called "the ten days of Teshuvah"

In fact, there are only seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as the two holidays are part of the count. Although these holidays have their own specific qualities - the crowning of Hashem as King and Repentance - as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur respectively, there is however, an encompassing quality that all these ten days share. These ten days are the days of Teshuvah. Teshuvah means to return. The returning of the Jew to his Father in Heaven reaches its climax on Yom Kippur.

In days of old, the High Priest in the Holy Temple would enter the Holy of Holies, the room which contained the Ark of the Covenant, and stand, alone, before the Divine Presence. No one was with him; it was him and G-d alone.

This was the climax of the Yom Kippur service and is also the climax of our Days of Teshuvah, where we return to Hashem and find ourselves in this level of proximity on this Holiest day. In the synthesis of the awe of approach, and the caress of His cradle we find forgiveness and the sense of our mission to bring His presence further into our lives and the world at large, bringing with it the return of the High Priest and the Holy Temple, and the rebuilding of our inner Holy Temple as we stand within it united, with each other - us and G-d alone.

May those yearned days, when we will see the Holy Temple rebuilt, arrive speedily and may we all join in song together with the arrival of the imminent redemption.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

TZADIK OF THE ROOSTERS

Rabbi Yosef Saragosi was an exile from Sicily during the time of the Inquisition. At first, he settled in Egypt where he established a major *yeshiva*. In the late 1400's he left Egypt and went to settle in Tsfat where he devoted himself to the study of Kabbalah. He was one of the chosen few to whom Elijah the Prophet revealed himself. Soon thereafter he gained the distinction of becoming the city's first elected chief rabbi in recorded history. In 1504 he made a historic decision about the Sabbatical year in the holy land, which held sway even over the opinion of the leading rabbis of Jerusalem

Aside from his greatness in Torah, he was also renowned for his character which was like that of Aharon Hakohen. He settled arguments between neighbours and between husband and wife. He offered his help not only to the Jews of Tsfat but also to the Arabs, who came to him with their quarrels. They implicitly trusted him to arrive at a true and just settlement.

Before R' Yosef passed away, he left instructions to be buried on the very spot where Eliyahu had revealed himself to him. His request was honoured and his grave was dug in Kfar Ein Zeitim, not far from the tomb of the *tana*, Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai.

R' Yosef was a holy man, who performed miracles. He gained his various titles from those miracles. He was called "*Tzadik of the Roosters*" because of an interesting event which occurred after his death.

In those days, Tsfat was a regional centre of the Ottoman Empire. The governor of Tsfat at that time made life miserable for the Jews of Tsfat. He was an evil, hard-hearted person who despised the Jews and was jealous of their financial success. He had designs on their money.

Once, he decreed that the Jews bring him hundreds of pure white roosters, knowing very well that they would never be able to find such a large number in all of the surrounding area. And if they were unable to fulfill his decree, he would be free to punish them as he pleased.

The Jews of Tsfat decreed a fast upon themselves and gathered in the *beit haknesset* - synagogue. They poured out their hearts and prayed for heavenly assistance. Then they went to the graves of the many holy men who were buried nearby, including that of Rabbi Yosef Saragosi, and prayed that the merit of the righteous protect them and save them from the evil-doer.

That night, the head of the community had a dream in which Rabbi Yosef Saragosi informed him that Hashem had heard their prayers at his graveside. He then instructed him to tell the Jews of Tsfat to gather all the roosters they could obtain, regardless of colour, and to bring them to a certain place.

When he awoke, the man was very excited. He told his dream to the members of the community. They immediately went off to gather all the roosters which they could find. They brought them to the required place and a miracle occurred. The yellow, brown, black, reddish, spotted fowl, all suddenly turned a pure white!

The Jews of Tsfat were overwhelmed with joy. They quickly led the crowing chorus to the governor's house. The leader of the community was at the head of the procession and informed the governor that his request had been fulfilled. The governor looked at the snowy white crowing birds and understood that the Jews had wrought a miracle. From that time on, he was careful to treat his Jewish subjects fairly and to offer them his protection.

From that time, the appellation "*Tzadik of the Roosters*" clung to R' Yosef Saragosi; many also called him "*The White Tzadik*". The synagogue where he had been accustomed to study and pray during his lifetime has been preserved to this very day and is referred to by the Jews of Tsfat as "*The Beit Haknesset of R' Yosef the White Tzadik*."

Biographic Note:

Rabbi Yosef Saragossi (14xx-?) First chief rabbi in Tsfat's recorded history. He laid groundwork in 1490's-early 1500's for Zefat to subsequently become a major center of Torah scholarship. Sometimes known as "*Tzadik HaLavan*" because of a miracle that occurred in his name

Thoughts THAT COUNT

After the death of the two sons of Aaron who came close to G-d and died (Leviticus 16:1)

They approached the supernal light out of their great love of the Holy, and thereby died. Thus they died by "divine kiss" such as experienced by the perfectly righteous; it is only that the righteous die when the divine kiss approaches them, while they died by their approaching it... Although they sensed their own demise, this did not prevent them from drawing near to G-d in attachment, delight, delectability, fellowship, love, kiss and sweetness, to the point that their souls ceased from them. (*Ohr HaChaim*)

On one occasion when the holy Rabbi, Reb Aharon of Karlin, of blessed memory (one of the eminent disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch, of blessed memory), began to recite "Hamelech", "The King (who sits on an exalted seat)" he fell into a deep faint. When later asked the cause for this, he replied that he reflected upon the statement in the Talmud (Gittin 56a), "If I am a king, why did you not come [to me] before!" (*The Machzor*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: SEPTEMBER 13-19, 2013

BEGINS			ENDS	
13th	18th	19th	14th	
5:50	5:54	6:52	MELBOURNE	6:49
5:47	5:50	6:46	ADELAIDE	6:43
5:21	5:24	6:17	BRISBANE	6:14
6:25	6:25	7:14	DARWIN	7:14
5:20	5:22	6:15	GOLD COAST	6:13
5:49	5:52	6:47	PERTH	6:43
5:26	5:30	6:25	SYDNEY	6:22
5:34	5:38	6:34	CANBERRA	6:31
5:40	5:45	6:45	LAUNCESTON	6:40
5:51	5:55	6:52	AUCKLAND	6:48
5:49	5:54	6:54	WELLINGTON	6:49
5:38	5:44	6:45	HOBART	6:39
5:19	5:21	6:15	BYRON BAY	6:12
6:47	6:45	7:33	SINGAPORE	7:35

On September 19th light candles from a pre-existing flame



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
EREV YOM KIPPUR
9, 14, 15 TISHREI • 13, 18, 19 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY:	SHACHARIS: MINCHA:	8:00 AM, 9:15 AM 3:00 PM
SHABBOS:	CANDLE LIGHTING: KOL NIDREI: SHACHARIS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: MINCHA (FOLLOWED BY NEILAH): SHABBOS ENDS:	5:50 PM 6:15 PM 9:00 AM 9:20 AM 4:30 PM 6:49 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-WED: MON-WED: MINCHA SUN-WED: MAARIV SUN-TUES:	9:15 AM 8:00 AM 6:00 PM 6:45 PM, 9:00 PM
YOM TOV:	MAARIV TUES-WED: SHACHARIS: MINCHA:	6:45 PM 10:00 AM 6:00 PM