

LAMPLIGHTER

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Yom
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

What was the highlight of the Yom Kippur service in the Holy Temple? The entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. Concerning this entry, the Torah tells us: "No man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he [the High Priest] comes to provide atonement." Our Sages go further, explaining that not even the angels could intrude on this intimate experience. It was a private moment, man being entirely alone with G-d.

The special nature of this event enables us to understand a unique phenomenon that occurred in the Second Temple. The Romans took control of the Temple and auctioned the High Priesthood to the highest bidder. The overwhelming majority of the priests who bought the position were not worthy; some were outright sinners.

Now when an unworthy High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he would die within the year. Some died immediately - indeed, that was so common an occurrence that a chain was placed around the High Priest's leg so that if he would die, he could be pulled out without others having to enter the Holy of Holies. Others who possessed certain merits lived longer, but all those who were unworthy would die within a year.

The price the Romans demanded for being appointed High Priest was extremely high. Moreover, the person purchasing the High Priesthood knew what had happened to his predecessors. Why then was he willing to do something knowing that the position would lead to his death?

The resolution lies in the desire every Jew possesses to come close to G-d. The knowledge that he could be alone with the Divine Presence and share this closeness was so inspiring that even an unworthy person was willing to give up his life and his fortune just for that one moment.

This is not merely a story of the past; it is a spiritual reality relived every year on Yom Kippur. The final prayer of the Yom Kippur service is Neilah, which means "locking." The traditional interpretation is that the gates of heaven are closing and we must hurry to get our prayers in before they and our fates are sealed. Chasidut, however, explains that at this time, each of us is intimately closeted and entirely alone with G-d.

Yom Kippur should not, however, remain an isolated moment, a spiritual peak unrelated to our ordinary daily experience. Just as intimacy between people should not be expressed merely in brief moments of passion and heightened feeling, the intimacy we share with G-d on Yom Kippur must be translated into an ongoing relationship that finds expression in our day to day lives.

This point is highlighted by the Torah reading for Yom Kippur which begins "And it came to pass after..." Implied is that we must focus not only on the spiritual highs of Yom Kippur, but also on what will "come to pass afterwards," integrating our Judaism into the fabric of our daily lives.

At-onement

By Tzvi Freeman

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 keyword -- 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 atonement. 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. Because, 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 travelers 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

What I Learned When My Son Lost His Money

By Elana Mizrahi

My grandfather used to say that life itself is the best college education. It is, isn't it? What did I learn today?

I took the list of schoolbooks that my son would need for the following year and made my way to the bookstore. I bought all the books on the list (or at least I thought that I did) and smiled to myself in satisfaction. One more thing that I could check off my to-do list! When I got home, my son was happy to see all his new books, but I had made one mistake. One of the books that I bought was the wrong edition, and we needed to exchange it for the correct one.

"Mommy, I'll take it back to the store and exchange it," my son offered.

With a sigh of relief for not having to trek back out in the sweltering sun, I handed my oldest son the receipt and an extra 20-shekel bill (about \$5) in case the new edition cost more.

Fifteen minutes later, my son called me from the bookstore. "Mommy, they don't have the new edition, and will only give me a store credit for the old one. What should I do?"

I told him to return the old one, take the credit and come home; we would look someplace else for it on a different day.

Another 15 minutes later, my son walked in the door. He handed me the receipt, and then started searching all his pockets. "Mommy, I lost the 20-shekel bill."

"Are you sure? Check your pockets again."

"No, it's not here, I lost it. I must have dropped it."

"Maybe you can go back and look

for it?"

He went and came back frustrated.

"I didn't find it. I told you. I lost it. It's better not to give me any money!"

I was surprised by his reaction, and to be quite honest, I didn't know how to respond, so I didn't say anything - I needed time to think. On the one hand, 20 shekels is a lot of money - it can buy a meal for someone. On the other hand, 20 shekels lost, thank G-d, is not going to make a difference in our lives, and any amount of money is certainly not worth crushing my child's self-esteem. On the one hand, I want my child to learn responsibility. On the other hand, I don't want him to feel bad about losing something or making a mistake that is human and normal. I also don't want my son to not try something for fear of taking responsibility. It's such a challenging job to be a mother!

Later in the evening I sat down with my son, and this is what I told him:

"Twenty shekels is a lot of money to lose. But you know, Avraham Nissim, if you learn a lesson from the experience, then it's totally worth 20 shekels. I've lost money before or things that were valuable, and I learned from each experience how to be more careful. For example, if you came home, realized you lost the money, and said to me, for example, 'Wow, Mommy, I lost the money. Next time, I am going to be more careful and put the money in my pocket or a wallet instead of carrying it my hand,' then the loss is actually a gain."

It's not that I was upset by my son's losing the money. He didn't mean to lose it, and these things happen. I was worried by his response because I know that he is responsible, mature and capable. His response showed me that he didn't see those qualities in himself. For him, it was better to not even try to be more careful. How many times do I myself fail at something and, instead of reevaluating the situation and seeing how I can make it work better, give up before I try?

Life's lessons. Yes, this is what I learned today. In life, when we make a mistake, when we lose something, when we do something wrong - even without any intention of causing ourselves or others harm - it's an opportunity for growth. But if we give up on ourselves before we even try again, we lose that opportunity. If we decide we can't change or do things differently the next time, we miss out.

I think about all this as Yom Kippur draws near. Yom Kippur is a beautiful, holy day. It's a time for introspection and self-growth, but what happens to some of us on Yom Kippur? We get scared! We get discouraged! We make all these promises to ourselves during the preceding month of Elul and during the first nine days of the new year about how we want to be better people and work on ourselves. On the eve of this holy day, we ask for forgiveness from those we hurt. And then comes Yom Kippur itself, and we turn to G-d, asking for forgiveness.

In the prayer service on this awesome day, we repeatedly recite a confession called vidui. The vidui is hard. You verbalize all the areas where you did the wrong thing, all the times you caused yourself or others harm. And you repeat this list many times over. Guess what happens? There's a part of you that, as you recite the vidui, says, "I can't change. I'm going to repeat the same mistakes. Why should I even bother?" These thoughts, they produce the most tragic loss of all. The loss of faith in the power of change, the power of growth, the power of learning from life's lessons.

But today I learned a lesson worth more than a college education. Today I learned that after I recognize what I did wrong, after I verbally confess the action, after I regret the action, then my determination to not repeat the action - the fourth and final step in the process of teshuvah (repentance) - has to first come from a belief in myself that, with the help of G-d, I really won't repeat it. Today I learned that if we don't believe in our ability to grow, we won't.

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Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Thank you for your letter of December 10th. I also received the book, Encounters, which I perused with great interest, although somewhat superficially, because of lack of time at this moment. I was particularly interested to note in it the photographs of your parents.

In keeping with the characterization of our Jewish people as a "stiff-necked" people, I will at once return to the theme of our recent correspondence, to which you reply in your letter. Having seen the book and the photographs, my views have been further reinforced, and I am more strongly convinced than ever that your participation in the museum in the Holy City of Jerusalem is not for you.

Now to refer to the contents of your letter.

...You cite the well-known story related of the Baal Shem Tov in regard to a certain nonconventional manner of prayer which proved very effective. I have heard this story from my father-in-law of saintly memory in a version which has been published in the enclosed brochure. It is to the effect that a Jewish boy who grew up in the country without the benefit of Jewish education could not participate in the communal service on Yom Kippur, and being carried away by the fervor of prayer in the community, he exclaimed with ecstasy, "cock-a-doodle-do," and it carried all the prayers of the community right to the Heavenly Throne. The moral of this story is surely not to make that exclamation a permanent institution of communal service on the Holy Day of Yom Kippur, just because a certain individual could not express his feelings in any other way.

Besides, and this is more important for our case, the attempt to express one's feelings by the same sound as the rooster expresses his feelings, namely "cock-a-doodle-do," is in itself quite an innocent one and does not evoke an "obstacle" to the outpouring of the soul and to the sanctity of the blessings, etc., which are associated with the Holy Day of Yom Kippur; only the external form of this expression strikes us as absurd. Essentially, it is in no way in conflict with the inner spirit of either the person expressing himself in such a manner, or of those surrounding him.

It is quite different from the illustration which I used, namely, to bring a ballet troupe into the Synagogue on Yom Kippur on the assumption that it might make some esthetic or artistic contribution. In this case, even the external form would be in violent conflict with the whole spiritual set-up, and the reactions that such a display often calls forth in many individuals would be absolutely contrary to the spirit.

Incidentally, throughout your letter I do not find a reply to one point which I raised, and which is fundamental to this issue. As a matter of fact, I do not think that there can be a reply to this point. I refer to the fact that Jerusalem is the Holy City not for a group of individuals, and not even for a large group of individuals, but it is intimately connected with the inner individual spiritual life of millions of Jews in our own time as well as in past and future generations. Moreover, it is more intimately bound up with those Jews who pray every day, and who have no conception of burlesque. Therefore, no one has a moral right to do something which many of them would consider as a most obvious desecration of their Holy of Holies, even in a small way, and even with the best of intentions. As I said, this would be true even in regard to the Holy of Holies of a single individual of a group of individuals, all the more so when it directly affects millions of our people, who pray daily for the return of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) in the Holy City and its restoration to its former glory and holiness.

As I wrote to you previously, I feel I have no choice but to be quite candid in my correspondence with you on this subject, because of the far-reaching implications of the issue. I'm therefore also pleased to see that you have expressed your views in a similar candid manner. This gives me the hope that eventually our views will coincide since, I am sure, both of us have the sacred heritage of our people at heart.

With kindest personal regards and with blessing,

P.S. - I noted in the book, Encounters, that you had occasion to deal with the question of the age of our universe and the Torah view on this, etc. I am, therefore, enclosing a copy of my correspondence on this and related questions, which I wrote in reply to an inquiry. I trust you will find it interesting.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Does G-d Ignore My Prayers?

Question: I am on a high from Yom Kippur. I was truly moved by the prayers and the songs. But the little skeptic within me has one niggling question. There is something very important to me that for many years I have been praying for, and it has still not materialized. Are my tears wasted? Can I believe in the power of prayer when, in my experience, it hasn't worked?

Answer: No prayer is ignored and no tear goes unnoticed. But the response is not always in the form we expect it to be.

At the high point of Yom Kippur, toward the end of the day in the Neilah prayer, we address G-d with the following plea: "You who hears the sound of weeping, store our tears in Your flask, and save us from all cruel decrees."

This seems to be a strange expression. Why would G-d store our tears? It doesn't seem to be of any use to keep our tears in a flask.

The meaning behind this is profound. Not always are our prayers answered in the way we want them to be. Sometimes, in His wisdom, G-d does not grant us our wishes at the time we demand them. Instead, He stores away our tears and files away our prayers, to be taken out and answered at another time.

We are not privy to G-d's timetable, and we don't get His system. But every word and every tear is accounted for, and makes an impact. When and how that impact is felt by us is up to G-d. A prayer said today for someone's health may take effect only many years later. We are depositing our request, but we don't know when it will be withdrawn.

In physics, the law of conservation of energy states that energy can never be destroyed, it just changes from one form to another. There is a similar law in metaphysics. No prayer is ever lost; no tear is ever wasted. Your request will be granted; it just may be in an unexpected form. So keep praying, because every word is stored away. It will rebound back to you when you need it most.

A WORD

from the Director

Forty days after they received the Torah at Mount Sinai and committed to be G-d's chosen people, the Children of Israel worshipped a Golden Calf. Moses pleaded with G-d not to destroy His errant nation, and on the tenth of Tishrei G-d said, "I have forgiven." Ever since, we observe this date as the "Day of Atonement"—a celebration of our indestructible relationship with G-d. It is the holiest day of the year, when we reconnect with our very essence, which remains faithful to G-d regardless of our behavior.

The teshuva one does on Yom Kippur is of a different nature than the teshuva that is required as a result of one's transgressions, and is an obligation that falls equally on every single Jew, regardless of his spiritual standing.

Throughout the year, the mitzva of teshuva is dependent on the individual's personal circumstances.

If a Jew sins he must do teshuva in direct proportion to the severity of the transgression.

A person who never sins is logically exempt from this obligation.

On Yom Kippur, however, the obligation to return to G-d stems from the holiness of the day itself. On Yom Kippur, it doesn't matter whether a Jew transgressed, G-d forbid.

For those Jews who may have committed a sin and not properly repented during the year, Yom Kippur offers atonement simply by virtue of its holiness.

At the same time, those individuals who have already corrected their behavior can reach an even higher level of teshuva on the holiest day of the year.

The uniqueness of Yom Kippur -- a "time of teshuva for all" -- lies in the special bond between the Jew and G-d that is revealed on that day, a connection that transcends the limitations of the natural world.

Integral to this special relationship with G-d is the obligation to do teshuva in an ever-increasing and ascending manner, both for those who may not yet have done teshuva in the most basic sense and those who stand on a higher spiritual plane.

With true teshuva, every Jew can renew his commitment and attachment to G-d on Yom Kippur, and be blessed with a good inscription in the Book of Life for the coming year.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



The Cantonists' Minyan

By Tuvia Bolton

Reb Mordechai, a follower of the third Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789-1866) had been dispatched by his Rebbe to wander the countryside of Russia, journeying from town to town and inspiring the Jews scattered there with the teachings of Chassidism.

But one day -- it was the day before Yom Kippur -- he arrived at some town in the middle of nowhere only to hear that all its Jews, about one hundred altogether, had left the day before to the city of Vitebsk to pray in the large synagogue there on the Day of Atonement. Suddenly, only a few hours away from the holiest day of the year, he found himself without a minyan -- the quorum of ten Jews required for communal prayer.

"You won't find any Jews here, Rabbi," one of the townspeople told him. "But about two hours away there's a small village of Cantonists. They're a strange bunch, but that's the closest thing to Jews you'll find around here now."

(The Cantonists were Jews who, by decree of Czar Nicholas I, had been snatched from their families when they were young children for a 25-year term of "service" in the Czar's army, where every cruel means had been employed to force them to abandon Judaism. The few that survived were so emotionally and psychologically destroyed, when they left the army decades later, that they were never able to live normal lives. So they lived together in little villages, apart from the rest of the world.)

Immediately, Reb Mordechai started walking, but after over an hour he still saw nothing. No... wait! There seemed to be something on the horizon.

Sure enough, there it was. There were only a few old wooden houses, but this must be the village he was looking for.

The first resident that saw that the rabbi enter the village called everyone else, and in no time they were all lined up with shining faces, taking turns shaking the newcomer's hand.

They were overjoyed. Such an honor to have a real rabbi as their guest! Suddenly they stepped back, formed a sort of huddle, and began whispering to one another. Then they fell silent, looked again at the rabbi, and one of them stepped forward in great humility, cleared his throat, and announced:

"Excuse me, Rabbi, but we would be very honored if His Excellency the Rabbi would please honor us with leading the prayers of Yom Kippur."

All the others stood staring at the Rabbi with wide pleading eyes, nodding their heads beseechingly.

Reb Mordechai nodded in agreement, and the joyous hand-shaking ritual was repeated once again.

"We only have one stipulation," the man continued. "That one of us leads the closing prayer of the holy day, Ne'ilah."

An hour later, in the solemn atmosphere of Yom Kippur, they were all seated in their little shul (synagogue), listening to the beautiful heartfelt prayers of the Chassidic rabbi, Reb Mordechai.

A very special feeling overcame Reb Mordechai. He had never quite experienced a Yom Kippur like this. He had never been in such a minyan; comprised of Jews each of whom had been through hell, things that he could never even dream of experiencing, only for the sake of G-d. And although he had studied all the holy books and they knew nothing, he felt dwarfed by these simple folk.

His soul flowed into the prayers, and it seemed to him that he had never sung so beautifully in his life. First Kol Nidrei, then the evening prayer. On the following day, he prayed the other three prayers, and read twice from the

Torah.

But finally, at the end of the day, came their turn; it was time for Ne'ilah. Reb Mordechai stepped back, took a seat in the small shul with everyone else, and waited to see what was going to happen. Why did they want this prayer for themselves?

One of the Cantonists rose from his chair, took a few steps forward and stood at the podium, his back to the crowd.

Suddenly, before he began to lead the prayers, he started unbuttoning and then removing his shirt.

Reb Mordechai was about to say something, to protest: You can't take your shirt off in the synagogue!

But as the shirt fell from the man's shoulders, it revealed hundreds of scars; years upon years of deep scars... each one because the man refused to forsake the G-d of Israel.

Reb Mordechai gasped and tears ran from his eyes.

The Cantonist then raised his hands to G-d and said in a loud voice.

"G-d... Send us Moshiach! Redeem the Jewish people now!"

"I'm not asking for the sake of our families, because we don't have any families.

"I'm not asking for the sake of our futures, because we have no futures.

"I'm not asking for the sake of our livelihoods or our comfort, or our children, or our reputations, because we don't have any of those things either.

"We're just asking: Assey I'maan shemecha -- Do it for Your sake!"

And then he put on his shirt and began the prayer.

HAFTARAH OF YONAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-d ordered the prophet Jonah to travel to Nineveh and present its wicked inhabitants with an ultimatum: repent or be destroyed. Jonah refused to comply with this directive, and fled on a boat. Strong winds threatened to destroy the ship, lots were cast among the crew and passengers and the lottery indicated that Jonah was the cause of the turbulent storm. He admitted his guilt and requested to be cast into the sea. Jonah was thrown into the raging sea and the storm abated.

Jonah was swallowed by a big fish, and while in its belly, was moved to repent. The fish regurgitated Jonah.

Jonah proceeded to Nineveh and broadcasted G-d's word that Nineveh would be overturned in forty days. The people fasted and repented and the divine decree was annulled. When Jonah expressed his displeasure with this result, G-d taught him a lesson. As Jonah sat on the outskirts of the city, the kikayon plant which was providing him with shade was destroyed by a worm, and Jonah was very upset. "And G-d said: You took pity on the kikayon, for which you did not toil nor did you make it grow, which one night came into being and the next night perished. Now should I not take pity on Nineveh, the great city, in which there are many more than one hundred twenty thousand people?..."

The haftarah concludes with a brief portion from the Book of Micah, which describes G-d's kindness in forgiving the sins of His people. "He does not maintain His anger forever, for He is a lover of kindness. He will have mercy on us, He will grasp our iniquities and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Micah concludes with an enjoiner to G-d to remember the pacts He made with the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

YOM KIPPUR • 9 TISHREI • 29 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT: MINCHA: 6:10 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 6:40 PM

SHABBOS DAY: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9:02 AM
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 6:00 PM
FAST ENDS: 7:03 AM

SUKKOS TIMES:
WEDNESDAY
EREV SUKKOS: MINCHA: 7:15 PM
MAARIV: 7:50 PM

THURSDAY 1ST DAY
OF SUKKOS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9:57 AM
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 7:15 PM
MARIV: 7:50 PM

FRIDAY 2ND DAY
OF SUKKOS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9:56 AM
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 7:20 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 7:45 PM

WEEKDAYS: SHACHARIS: 8:00/9.15/10.00 AM
MINCHA: 6:05 PM
MAARIV: 6:55 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos/Yom Kippur		Sukkos	
	29th Begins	30th Ends	4th Begins	5th Lighting
Melbourne	6:05	7:03	7:09	After 8:07
Adelaide	5:59	6:56	7:03	After 8:00
Brisbane	5:29	6:22	5:32	After 6:25
Darwin	6:25	7:14	6:25	After 7:14
Gold Coast	5:28	6:21	5:30	After 6:24
Perth	5:59	6:54	6:03	After 6:58
Sydney	5:38	6:34	6:42	After 7:38
Canberra	5:47	6:44	6:51	After 7:48
Launceston	5:57	6:58	7:02	After 8:03
Auckland	7:05	8:03	7:09	After 8:07
Wellington	7:06	8:07	7:12	After 8:12
Hobart	5:57	6:59	7:03	After 8:05
Byron Bay	5:27	6:21	6:30	After 7:24