

The Torah reading on *Yom Kippur* morning describes the *Avodah* / Temple service that the *Kohen Gadol* performed on the Day of Atonement--most notably, his entering the *Kodesh Ha'kodashim* / Holy of Holies. Likewise, reading about the *Avodah* is one of the highlights of the *Chazzan's* repetition of *Mussaf* on *Yom Kippur*.

The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 26a) states that since blowing the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* brings atonement, it is as if it was sounded inside the *Kodesh Ha'kodashim*. R' Yisrael Lipkin z"l (1810-1883; "R' Yisrael Salanter"; founder of the *Mussar* movement) adds that when a person hears the *Shofar*, he remembers that he is being judged, and he is like the *Kohen Gadol* entering the Holy of Holies.

Why all this fuss about the *Kohen Gadol's* entering the Holy of Holies? asks R' Srayah Deblitzki z"l (1926-2018; Bnei Brak, Israel). Does the *Kohen Gadol* offer sublime prayers for the Jewish People while he is in the inner sanctum? No! He does not utter even one word of prayer. Rather, he burns the *Ketoret* / incense offering and leaves as quickly as possible! But, *Ketoret* was offered on the Temple altar every day, including on *Yom Kippur*. What is so special about the *Ketoret* offered in the *Kodesh Ha'kodashim*, and what are we meant to learn from it?

R' Deblitzki explains: The *Kohen Gadol's* offering *Ketoret* in the *Kodesh Ha'kodashim* is meant to teach us not to be satisfied with our routine service of *Hashem*. Yes, *Ketoret* is offered on the altar every day, but we should not be satisfied with that; we should seek a higher level of service. In the same way, we should we seek to raise every aspect of our Divine service to a higher level. That, too, was the *Shofar's* call on *Rosh Hashanah*: Wake up! Snap out of your routine! (*Ani L'dodi: L'nefesh Tidreshenu* p.290)

## After Yom Kippur . . .

R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005) writes: It is well known that the most dangerous part of a spacecraft's flight is reentry into the earth's atmosphere. If the craft does not enter the atmosphere at precisely the correct angle, it is very likely to burn up.

So, too, the most critical part of our *Yom Kippur* observance is our reentry into everyday life. Each of us becomes elevated on *Yom Kippur* to the best of his or her ability. Everyone comes closer to a life filled with spirituality. Hopefully, everyone thinks loftier thoughts on *Yom Kippur* than he thinks all year long. But *Yom Kippur* is not meant to be a day that stands in isolation. We are meant to take something from *Yom Kippur* that will positively affect our *avodah* / Divine service throughout the coming year. It may be that we strengthen our *avodah*, raise our *avodah* to a new level, or abandon some of our previous sins, but something of *Yom Kippur* must live on when the Holy Day ends. When we reenter the atmosphere of the mundane world after *Yom Kippur*, we must approach that atmosphere at the correct angle. This means not running away from *Shul* and from the Day itself, as a child escapes from class the instant the recess bell rings, for, if we do, then whatever we have gained on *Yom Kippur* will "burn up" on reentry.

This warning does not apply to *Yom Kippur* alone. The *Gemara* relates that pious men would prepare for one hour before praying and also would remain in *shul* for an hour after *davening*. Why? Because if we hurry to take off our *tefilin* and leave *shul* immediately after *Shemoneh Esrei*, we throw away some or all of the inspiration that we gained from praying. [Although we are not accustomed to remaining in *shul* for a full hour after the weekday *Shemoneh Esrei*, calmly reciting the various prayers that precede the final *kaddish* serves the same purpose.] This also applies to how we leave *Shabbat*--are we eager to throw it off, or do we allow the holiness of *Shabbat* to linger?

(*Ma'amarei Yemei Ratzon* p.105)

### Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-593-2272

Send e-mail to: [TheTorahSpring@gmail.com](mailto:TheTorahSpring@gmail.com)

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### ***On the Importance of Appeasing Those We Have Hurt***

Our Sages teach that one cannot achieve atonement unless he appeases those against whom he has sinned. Some say that one cannot achieve atonement even for his sins against G-d unless he has properly atoned for his sins against man and received forgiveness. (Kaf Ha'Chaim 606:3)

Why? Because atoning for only some sins is like immersing only part of one's body in a *Mikvah*. Obviously, one does not attain purity by doing so. (Mussar Ha'Mishnah)

R' Avraham Halevi Horowitz z"l (16<sup>th</sup> century; father of the *Shelah Hakadosh*) observes:

The obligation to ask forgiveness from those we have offended does not mean doing what is commonly done, *i.e.*, that shortly before *Kol Nidrei*, one approaches his friends and asks their forgiveness. Inevitably, the friend responds, "You didn't do anything for which I have to forgive you." Then, these two friends forgive each other, something that was not necessary at all, since they were always dear to each other and would never wish each other harm.

In contrast, R' Horowitz continues, enemies tend not to ask forgiveness from one another. Rather, each one says, "If he were interested in peace, he would come to me." A wise man, however, recognizes that the true sign of strength is humility, and he would take the initiative to appease his enemy, even if his enemy is in the wrong. (Emek Berachah)

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l writes: Requesting general forgiveness for all sins that one has committed against another is effective only for minor offenses. [If one committed a more serious offense, he must specify it when he requests forgiveness.] (Quoted in *Halichot Shlomo: Mo'adim* p.44)

If one who has sinned against you does not come to you to seek forgiveness, you should make yourself available to him so that he might ask forgiveness. (Mateh Ephraim)

**Because Yom Kippur does not atone until one appeases his neighbor, one should be certain to recite the following prayer (part of *Tefilah Zakkah*) which is printed in many *Machzorim*:**

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

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

**"For sins we committed before You with the *Yetzer Ha'ra* / evil inclination." (From the *Yom Kippur Vidui* / Confession)**

Many ask: Are not all sins committed as a result of the *Yetzer Ha'ra's* influence?

R' Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz z"l (the *Shelah Hakadosh*; rabbi of Prague and Yerushalayim; died 1630) explains: Since *Hashem* is good, and He created the world for His honor, why did he create the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, which seemingly is not good, and which detracts from His honor? *Hashem* did so in order that we may be challenged by the *Yetzer Ha'ra* and may vanquish it, and thus earn eternal reward. It follows that, when a person gives in to the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, he actually is misusing that Creation, for *Hashem* never intended a person to succumb to the *Yetzer Ha'ra*. The *Yetzer Ha'ra* actually is good, for it gives us opportunities to earn reward, and we turn it into something bad. It is that which we confess here.

The *Shelah* adds: This is the meaning of the phrase in *Selichot* and the *Yom Kippur* prayers (in the paragraph beginning "סִרְנוּ מִמִּצְוֹתַיְךָ"), "You are righteous in all that has come upon us, for You have acted truthfully, while we have caused wickedness." *Hashem* has acted "truthfully" towards us, *i.e.*, He has given us the opportunity to attain the truth and earn eternity, but we have turned the *Yetzer Ha'ra* to evil purposes.

In addition, this line of the *Vidui* confesses those sins which we never committed, but which we wished we could have—for example, thinking to oneself, "If I could, I would take revenge on so-and-so," or, "If I had the money to pay for it, I would commit such-and-such sin." (*Sha'ar Ha'otiot: Yud, Yetzer Ha'tov*)

*Another explanation:*

R' Yosef Stadthagen z"l (German rabbi; died 1715) writes: In this line of the *Vidui*, we confess that we performed *Mitzvot* without the appropriate level of joy. The Torah (*Devarim* 28:47) warns that terrible punishments await us "because you did not serve *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, with gladness and goodness of heart." Knowing this, how could one take the risk of performing a *Mitzvah* without joy? Indeed, reason says that if one is going to perform the *Mitzvah* anyway, he may as well perform it properly and completely, *i.e.*, joyously! It can only be because of the *Yetzer Ha'ra* that we perform *Mitzvot* without joy. (*Divrei Zikaron* p.53)

**"If one repents out of *Yir'ah* / fear of G-d, his intentional sins are counted as unintentional sins. If one repents out of *Ahavah* / love of G-d, his intentional sins are counted as merits." (Paraphrased from *Yoma* 86b)**

R' Mordechai Brif z"l (late 19<sup>th</sup> century rabbi of Lunno, Belarus) explains: If one repents out of fear, he does not regret the sins he committed; he merely fears punishment. If he could be certain that he would not be punished, he would have no regrets at all. Thus, he does not deserve complete atonement.

In contrast, when one repents out of love, he regrets that he put distance between himself and *Hashem*, and he would gladly accept punishment if that would repair his damaged relationship with G-d. Thus, he deserves to have his sins forgiven completely. Moreover, it turns out that his sins ultimately inspired him to come closer to *Hashem*; therefore, they are counted as merits.

(*Chakal Tapuchim: Drush* 4:16)