

One of the highlights of the *Selichot* prayers during the last few weeks--and, even more so, of *Ne'ilah* on *Yom Kippur*--is the recitation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. R' Shimshon Dovid Pincus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel; died 2001) writes:

Our Sages say, "Why do the Jewish People pray, but they are not answered? Because they do not know how to pray with 'the Name.' Thus it is written (*Tehilim* 91:14), 'I will elevate him because he knows My Name'."

R' Pincus explains: Calling out to someone in a personal way strengthens one's plea. For example, if a beggar calls out, "Kind-hearted person," he creates a feeling of obligation. It is as if he says: "You are a good person. It is only right that you help me." Likewise, *Hashem* has different Names that represent His different Attributes, *i.e.*, His different ways of relating to us. If we address Him by the correct Name, that is a reason for Him to answer us.

R' Pincus elaborates with a parable: If someone is being mugged on a dark street and he cries for help, passers-by may respond or may ignore him. But, if he sees a police car and he screams, "Police! Help!" he is likely to be answered. Why? Because he called for help using his savior's "name."

Similarly, R' Pincus writes, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are introduced in the Torah with the verse (*Shmot* 34:6-7), "*Hashem* passed before him and called out: *Hashem, Hashem* [etc.]" *Hashem* said: When I am passing before you, when I am near, you should call out My Name." Imagine, R' Pincus concludes, the power that our prayers would have if we understood, even a little bit, to Whom we are addressing them! (*Nefesh Shimshon: Tehilim*)

"G-tt's Nomen"

There was a custom in some parts of Europe to refer to the day after *Yom Kippur* as "G-tt's Nomen" ("G-d's Name"). R' David Cohen *shlita* (Rabbi of Congregation Gvul Ya'avetz in Brooklyn, N.Y.) cites several explanations for this custom, including the following:

- R' Nachman of Breslov z"l (1772-1810; Ukraine) writes: On the day after *Yom Kippur*, *Bnei Yisrael* were commanded to build the *Mishkan*. At the same time, they were commanded to observe *Shabbat* (see *Shmot* ch.35). The *Zohar* says that "*Shabbat*" is one of the Names of *Hashem*. Therefore, the day when the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbat* was given is called "G-d's Name." (*Likkutei Moharan* II 66:3)
- R' Avraham David Wahrman z"l (1771-1840; rabbi of Buchach, Poland; prolific author) writes that he heard the following reason: During the Ten Days of Repentance, we refer to *Hashem* in *Shemoneh Esrei* as "The Holy King." After *Yom Kippur*, we resume saying the standard language, "The Holy G-d," *i.e.*, we return to using one of G-d's Names. (*Eishel Avraham* 624)
- During the service in the *Bet Hamikdash* on *Yom Kippur*, the *Kohen Gadol* would utter *Hashem's* Ineffable Name ten times. Our Sages say that a miracle occurred, and anyone who heard the Name from the *Kohen Gadol's* lips forgot it immediately. Therefore, on the day after *Yom Kippur*, people would ask each other, "Do you remember G-d's Name"? (Quoted in *Ha'yom Ha'kadosh* III p. 239)

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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 (16th 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 takes 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."

"I am black [with sin] and yet beautiful, daughters of Yerushalayim, like the tents of Kedar, like the carpets of Shlomo." (*Shir Ha'shirim* 1:5)

Midrash Rabbah relates this verse to *Yom Kippur*. R' Raphael Breuer z"l (1881-1932; rabbi of Aschaffenburg, Germany) explains: This declaration is directed by *Yisrael* to "the daughters of Yerushalayim." The *Midrash* states that this phrase refers to those who dwell in the suburbs of Yerushalayim--specifically, the gentiles that will inhabit satellite communities around the Jewish capital. Those nations wish to know the secret of our special relationship with *Hashem* given that we, like them, are black with sin.

The answer, says our verse (as explained by R' Breuer), is that, throughout history, the Jewish People's betrayal of G-d was always an external matter that never eroded our inner core. Beware of judging a person's character by his ugly exterior! R' Breuer writes. We are like "the tents of Kedar," says the verse. A nomad's tent--"Kedar" in our verse was the name of one of Yishmael's sons and of a tribe of Arab nomads that descended from him--can be ugly, black, and torn, yet it may contain a treasure of diamonds and pearls within. Similarly, we may be black with sin on the outside, but within is a wealth of spiritual value.

Something that is purely external can be removed, R' Breuer continues. "Like the carpets of Shlomo," says that *Midrash*, which become dirty and are laundered, become dirty again and are laundered again--so, too, the Jewish People become dirty with sin but are cleansed on *Yom Kippur*. The cyclical return of *Yom Kippur* presupposes a cyclical sinking into guilt and sin and shows that *Hashem* did not expect to find moral perfection (which exists only as an ideal) in his human children, R' Breuer observes. There is no more appropriate metaphor for this than a carpet that gets dirty and is cleaned over and over again. *Yisrael's* cyclical resurgence from iniquity and sin, and its return to G-d in His great mercy, are founded upon the eternity of the Jewish People, R' Breuer adds. (Commentary on *Shir Ha'shirim* p.13-15)

Midrash Tanna D'vei Eliyahu relates: When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended *Har Sinai* for 40 days for the final time in order to bring down the Torah (*i.e.*, the second *Luchot*), *Bnei Yisrael* decreed a day of fasting. On the last day of the 40 days, they again fasted, and they went to sleep without breaking their fasts. On the next morning, they arose early and went toward *Har Sinai*. They cried as Moshe approached them, and he cried also. Their tears ascended to Heaven, and, at that moment, *Hashem's* Mercy was awakened and He accepted their repentance (for the Golden Calf). *Hashem* said, "My children! I swear by My Great Name and by My Throne of Glory that your crying will bring about great happiness and rejoicing, and this day (which was the tenth of *Tishrei*) will be a day of atonement, cleansing, and forgiveness for you and your descendants for all generations."

(*Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Zuta* 4:8)