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Yom Kippur

Tshuva

RABBI BERNIE FOX

We are now in the midst of the Yom Tov season. This season begins with Rosh HaShannah and ends with the celebration of Succot, and specifically, Shemini Atzeret. What is the relationship between these three festivals or sacred days?

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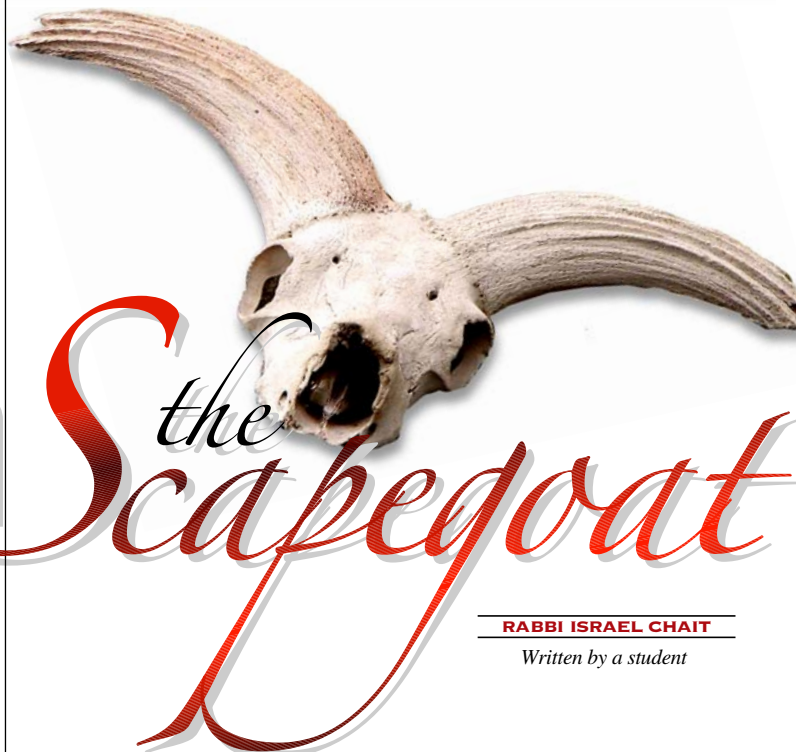


the Evolution of Yom Kippur

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Yom Kippur usually carries a dread – not “only” of a potentially fatal judgment – but the more commonly dreaded 25-hour period where we suffer from prohibitions against simple comforts: we cannot eat or bathe, and we stand many hours in prayer without shoes. These laws create an unfortunate and incorrect, negative association, to a day, which should be most celebrated: we are forgiven! Sadly, many of us focus on the lack of food, more than on how God will pronounce His justice over our life, health, success, and happiness. Our attachment to this Earthly existence is to blame for granting more value to immediate needs, than for our souls. Tell a person

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the Scapegoat

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Written by a student

The Scapegoat is a very unique sacrifice. All other sacrifices require slaughter and blood sprinkling, which is the fulfillment of the sacrifice and reflects the presence of atonement. However, the Scapegoat is brought to a desolate place and is brutally killed by being thrown over a precipice. Chazal teach us that the nations of the world criticize the B'nei Yisroel for its practice of the Scapegoat as being solely ritualistic and ceremonial. Although the gentiles have ritualistic practices, they are symbolic and their performances engender some emotional satisfaction unlike the Scapegoat. Judaism prides itself on the fact that ones commitment to the Torah is based upon his intellectual conviction and that its commandments are ethical and moral principles. We must therefore explain the significance of the Scapegoat and the intellectual insight the Torah is imparting to us.

The Eben Ezrah gives us a clue as to the secret of the Scapegoat. He states that a basic secret of the Scapegoat is after the word “azazel” and when you are 33 years old you will know this secret. If one counts 33 verses from the word “ha'midbarah”, the word after “azazel”, which appears in Leviticus, chapter 16 verse 10, one may get a clue. The verse

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(Tshuva cont. from pg. 1)

Yom Kippur

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The connection between Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur is well known. The process of judgment begins with Rosh HaShannah and is completed with Yom Kippur. But is there a relationship between the observance of Succot and the two prior holidays – Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur? I believe that the answer to this question is not only significant to our appreciation of the message of Succot, but also provides an important insight into our observance of Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur.

This issue is discussed by our Sages in the context of a different question. Our Sages were troubled by the observance of Succot in the fall. Succot recalls the sojourn of our ancestors in the wilderness. The succot we build, and in which we live, during Succot recalls the Divine protection our ancestors enjoyed during their travels in the midbar – the wilderness. The wilderness was a hostile environment. It was barren and dry. The environment was bereft of the elements necessary for survival and the climate was life threatening. As the nation traveled through the wilderness, it lived in flimsy huts similar to our succot. These insubstantial shelters were inadequate to protect the people from the assault of the elements. Hashem covered the nation with His clouds and these clouds protected the nation for the forty years of travel through the midbar.

Bnai Yisrael left Egypt and entered the wilderness in the spring and we would expect the festival of Succot to be celebrated in that season. Why is the observance of Succot postponed to the fall?

Our Sages offer a number of responses to this question. The most well-known explanation is offered by Tur. He begins with a premise. The commandment to dwell in the succah is formulated in a manner that demonstrates this activity is performed as a mitzvah. In other words, in formulating this mitzvah, the Torah wishes to demonstrate that we are dwelling in the succah in response to a commandment.

Based upon this premise, Tur explains the celebration of Succot in the fall. If Succot were celebrated in the spring, it would not be clear that we are dwelling in the succah in response to a mitzvah. Spring weather is

pleasant. We enjoy spending time outdoors in the spring. However, in the fall the outdoors is less inviting. The rainy season is beginning. It is damp and the air is crisp and cooler. The summer has ended and we now wish to return to the indoors. Dwelling in the succah in the fall cannot be mistaken for an act of leisure. It is clearly the response to a commandment.[1]

Tur's explanation does not suggest any relationship between Succot and the preceding holidays. According to his explanation, Succot is not observed in the fall because of any relationship with the preceding observances. It is observed in the fall in order to demonstrate that our dwelling in the succah is a response to a commandment.

However, it is possible to propose an alternative explanation for the observance of Succot in the fall. This explanation requires that we further consider the significance of Succot.

Maimonides explains that although we are required to rejoice on all festivals, Succot is especially associated with rejoicing. What is the nature of this rejoicing? Over what are we rejoicing? Maimonides explains that we should not perceive our service to Hashem as a burden. Instead, we should serve Hashem and perform His commandments with joy. The rejoicing we express on Succot is intended to convey this attitude of joy in the service of Hashem and



performance of His mitzvot.[2]

Let us compare this Succot "theme" with the dominant theme of Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur. These two holidays are associated with judgment. The emphasis is on Hashem's majesty and kingship. On Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur we experience a sense of awe. Yet, we are obligated to rejoice on Rosh HaShannah – even Yom Kippur has an element of rejoicing. However, this is not the dominant theme of these holidays. Our rejoicing is inevitably overwhelmed by the recognition that we stand before Hashem in judgment. Our sense of awe dominates.

However, the awe we experience on Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur is only one element of our relationship with Hashem. We are also obligated to rejoice in our relationship with Hashem. If the holidays ended with Yom Kippur, our expression of our relationship with Hashem would be incomplete. It would lack the second element of our relationship –

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(Tshuva continued from page 2)

Yom Kippur

our joy in serving Hashem and performing His commandments. The celebration of Succot complements our observance of Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur by focusing to the second element of our relationship with Hashem – the element of rejoicing and joy.

According to this interpretation, the celebration of Succot in the fall is linked to our observance of Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur. It completes the process of renewing our full relationship with Hashem.

Aruch HaShulchan offers a third explanation for the observance of Succot in the fall.

Before considering his comments, it will be helpful do reflect on another issue.

In Sefer Devarim, Moshe delivers his final message to Bnai Yisrael. He is addressing the generation that will enter and conquer the Land of Israel. His message begins with an enumeration of the various incidents in which Bnai Yisrael sinned against Hashem during its travels in the wilderness. Why does Moshe feel compelled to remind this generation of the various failings and sins of its parents?

The most obvious explanation is that Moshe is providing a warning. He is recounting the sins of the parents in order to admonish their children. He is warning this next generation against repeating the mistakes of its parents. Nachmanides accepts this explanation but he makes an important addition. He explains that Moshe was not only reminding the nation of the sins of its parents and warning it against repeating these behaviors, but he was also reminding this new generation that despite these sins and shortcomings, Hashem did not abandon its parents.

Nachmanides continues and explains the importance of this message. This new generation was charged with the role of conquering and possessing the Land of Israel. This was a role that they knew they could only fulfill with Hashem's assistance. Yet, sin is part of the human condition. This new generation would realize that regardless of its efforts, it would be inevitable that its conduct would not be perfect. When it predictably sins, will Hashem abandon it?

Moshe's address is designed to respond to this doubt. He reminds this new generation that their parents also sinned against Hashem. But Hashem's mercy is abundant. He never abandoned their parents. Instead, He helped them repent and return to His service. Moshe assured this new generation that it too would enjoy the same relationship with Hashem. They will make mistakes and sin. But Hashem – in His mercy – will not abandon them.[3]



Nachmanides' message is that we are not created as perfect human beings. We are each faced with a lifelong mission of gradual and steady self-improvement and self-realization. Teshuvah – repentance – is a lifelong process. In order to devote ourselves to this process and mission, we must feel confident that Hashem will indulge us by treating us with patience. If Hashem judges us according to the strict standard of din – justice – we cannot survive and fulfill our mission. In other words, we will only engage in the process of personal growth and teshuvah if we feel confident that Hashem will forgive our failings and provide us with the opportunity to grow and support our efforts. If we lack this confidence, it is likely we will dismiss the process of repentance as a wasted effort.

Aruch HaShulchan derives from Nachmanides' comments a further explanation of the celebration of Succot in the fall. He explains that on Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur we confront our failings. We devote ourselves to teshuvah and to the objective of securing atonement. But as we confront our shortcomings and failings, we may question – or even doubt – the efficacy of our efforts to restore our relationship with Hashem. We may question whether we deserve and can secure Hashem's forgiveness. These doubts can easily undermine our efforts to repent and change. We even may question whether the effort required to change is justified.

Succot responds to these doubts. Succot recalls Hashem's mercy and providence over our ancestors in the wilderness. It reminds us that our ancestors sinned gravely in creating and worshipping the egel – the golden calf. But their repentance and Moshe's intercession secured their forgiveness. Despite their sin, Hashem spread His clouds and protection over our ancestors and protected them during their sojourn in the midbar. In short, Succot reminds us of Hashem's forbearance, mercy, and the efficacy of repentance. As we observe Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur, we remember that Succot is approaching. We are struggling with the imperative to change and repent. But our knowledge that Succot is approaching encourages us and reminds us of the efficacy of our efforts. It communicates to us that Hashem is eager to forgive us. If we restore our relationship with Him, He will forgive us and redeem us.[4] ■

[1] Rabbaynu Yaakov ben HaRash, Tur Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 625.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Lulav 8:12-15.

[3] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Devarim, Introduction.

[4] Rav Aharon HaLeyve Epstein, Aruch HaShulchan, Orech Chayim 625:5.

sentenced to death that 25 hours of fasting and prayer will give him another year of life, and he will kiss you. We should feel the same way. If we can accept this brief period of fasting and discomfort, and get past the anxiety, we can discover some interesting ideas, which God has covertly conveyed to us in His Torah about this day. And with these new realizations, I feel we will welcome this day with an appreciation for God's intent, and minimal concern over the discomforts...that do have their place.

The Origin of Yom Kippur

Where did Yom Kippur come from: is it a day God planned from the outset during Creation, or something that evolved, responding to man's flaws?

All of creation typifies one of these two possibilities; for there is no other. Either something was part of God's original plan, or it was added later. For example, man was first created quite tall, with a lifespan of 1000 years. The Medrash says that man used to traverse the Earth in a few steps, uprooting cedars, and fierce beasts such as lions were as fleas to him: an exaggerated truism. But after man's ego directed him to sin (primarily due to these gifts of stature and longevity), God reduced his stature and minimized his years to address the very cause of his sin. Thus, man had an original design, that was later changed due to his sinful nature. Due to his sin, man was then to share the same food as his donkey, but God rescinded this decree and allowed him to have some ego satisfaction, in the act of working the ground for his food. Again, there was an original plan regarding man's food, and then a concession to man's nature.

However, in the Garden of Eden, there was not yet a Yom Kippur, only a Rosh Hashanah. This means that a day of judgment and a final verdict occurred simultaneously. But today, we experience a day of judgment (Rosh Hashanah) and a separate Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Why was there a change? The Ran says as does Maimonides, "The wholly righteous [even now] are written and sealed for life immediately on Rosh Hashanah." They need no Yom Kippur. This makes sense, as a righteous person is always reviewing his thoughts and actions. He probably does not even need a Rosh Hashanah. The Ran continues, "But average people like us (baynoni) are granted a stay of execution for 10 more days, so we might investigate our deeds and repent". We now understand that Adam did not require the 10-day reflection period. As Ibn Ezra teaches, "Adam was a great intellect". But as man slid in his perfection, the 10 Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur became a need.

The Ran states (Ran on Rosh Hashanah; 3a, "BiRosh"): "God desires to grant merit in the Jews' judgment, and He desires to judge His creations in a

time established for atonement and forgiveness". Here, Ran refers to the fact that Moses obtained atonement for the Jews' sin of the Gold Calf on this 10th of Tishrei, on Yom Kippur. Therefore, God judges us on the day in which He forgave Israel back then. But we wonder what this means, that God "desired to judge us in a time established for forgiveness". It was God who initially forgave man! So what is meant by God forgiving "when" He forgave? Whenever He wants to forgive, will also be a day when "He forgave"! In essence, our question is, "Why does God wish to copy Himself?" Sounds strange? But as always, the Rabbis are teaching profound insights.

My understanding of this phenomenon of God copying Himself means this: God's forgiveness is based on "Himself", i.e., His forgiveness is not based on "our claims", for we have no claim against God. "Copying Himself" (His forgiveness of the Gold Calf sin, and then following through for all Yom Kippurs) means that it is God's mercy alone that demands man to be forgiven. Without God's mercy, when man sins, he breaks his Torah treaty with God. And as is the case with all agreements, one who breaks his agreement must pay. But in connection with God, we have the good fortune of an additional aspect of "God's mercy", as we recited all week in Selichos, "For on Your abundant mercy do we trust" for forgiveness. Therefore, man has no rights once he sins, but God is merciful, and "this" is why we are forgiven. This is what the Ran means by God using His initial day of forgiveness, as a model for future forgiveness: His forgiveness is based on His nature.

Now let us turn our attention to the sin of the Gold Calf to better grasp its significance as the forerunner of Yom Kippur.

The Gold Calf & Yom Kippur

We now understand why God repeats His forgiveness, for this is His merciful nature, and His nature never changes. Therefore, man will always be forgiven...if he seeks God's mercy. Additionally, later generations who did not sin with the Gold Calf also require a Yom Kippur since we all share the same design as humans who sin.

Why was Moses' intercession necessary to obtain forgiveness for the people? Perhaps it was Moses' potential to educate the Jews back to a proper lifestyle that earned the Jews forgiveness. It was also Moses who had the greatest level of wisdom, enabling him to learn from God how to obtain pardon. But this area requires more study. What I wish to focus on in this section is the sin of the Gold Calf. How was this event so significant for all time? Furthermore, Rashi states (Exod. 32:34): "*When God punishes the Jews in the future for other sins, He will also require some punishment for the Gold Calf.*

For no punishment comes upon Israel, that doesn't contain some of the punishment for the Gold Calf". But why should the Gold Calf sin be required, when the Jews sin in other matters? What was this sin?

The Jews miscounted the day of Moses' descent from Sinai. They said to Aaron after seeing Moses delayed, "Rise, make for as elohim (governor) that shall go before us. For this Moses, 'the man' who took us out of Egypt, we know not what has become of him". The "man"? That's an odd statement.

The Jews thought Moses might have died. They created the Gold Calf – not as a representation of God – but of the "powers" they witnessed. (Ramban) The Jews displayed the inability to detach from the "man" Moses. So deep was this need for physical, religious life, that they created a gold, physical expression. And so deep was this need, that God allowed a concession for it. Sforno teaches that God only commanded Moses and the Jews in the Temple and in all its vessels, so the Jews might have the expression they sought: a physical means of religious expression. Without the sin of the Gold Calf, Temple would not be part of the Torah, and human life. Of course the allowed human expression in Temple service is highly regulated to insure no idolatrous venting.

Therefore, the Gold Calf sin, in essence, is the inability for man to approach God abstractly. In other words, all of man's approaches to God are severely compromised due to our feeble natures, and our over attachment to the physical. Thus, when we sin in the future, we are in fact expressing this same flaw, which that ancient generation expressed in building the Calf. Sin means that we cannot live 100% in line with God, we must deviate from Him. So the statement in Rashi that "all sins receive some punishment of the Gold Calf", means that all sins share the same crime, at their every root, as the Gold Calf. A wise Rabbi recently mentioned that the first Tablets were created during the Six Days of Creation. (Avos, 5:6) The idea, if I recall well, is similar to what we are saying: God initially desired the Jews to possess the first Tablets, i.e., He desired we live a more abstract and thus, more perfected existence, realizing Him from creation, indicated by those first stones being part of Creation. But after the Gold Calf sin, we received Moses' hewn tablets.

Rashi on Exodus 33:11 says that God forgave the Jews for the Golden Calf with a full heart and with gladness, and this occurred on the tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur. The sin of the Gold Calf epitomized mankind's central, religious flaw. But this is not all that occurs on Yom Kippur. We have so many unique services. From where or what are they derived?

(continued on next page)

Fatal, Ultra-Religious Emotions

The Torah outlines the Yom Kippur sacrifices and highly unique services at the very beginning of Parshas Acharay Mos. Sin offerings and Olah offerings are brought; the priests and Jews bring separate offerings; the High Priest clouded the Holy of Holies in the Temple with an incense; and the Scapegoat is hurled off a rocky peak from Azazel. Together, these acts form amazingly unparalleled and curious acts of worship, to say the least. But we also read that these services come on the heels of the death of Aaron's two sons. What is the connection? Let's first understand their sin for which God killed them, and then, why their story must be the intro to the Yom Kippur worship. At this point, the Gold Calf, Aaron's sons' deaths, these strange forms of worship, and the afflictions...all seem quite disjointed.

Acharay Mos commences as follows (Lev. 16:1,2):

"And God spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew close before God, and they were killed. And God said to Moses, 'Speak unto Aaron your brother, that he does not draw close at all time towards the Holy of Holies, behind the Paroches [curtain] facing the Cherubim that is on the Ark, that he not be killed. For in cloud do I appear on the Cherubim.'"

The Torah then describes all of the Yom Kippur sacrifices and services. When we read of the sin of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu (Lev. 10:1) the Torah says that they brought a "strange" fire that they "were not commanded" to bring. In other words, they sought to serve God with their own type of worship. God teaches us their sin above with the words "when they drew close to God". God is teaching us that our approach to Him must be exactly as He outlines in His Torah. Nadav and Avihu did seek to "draw close to God", but they allowed their instincts to run free in the religious sphere. They imagined they could worship God with unguided actions...actions God never prescribed. But this is impossible, and a fatal error. The correct formula is this: our approach to God cannot be by any means that God disagrees with. "Do not add to the Torah" is a command addressing this very ultra-religious emotion, and teaches exactly what God denounces: "all that is omitted from Torah is prohibited". The Talmud teaches that the religious sphere is where man's instincts are greatest. We see this today with jihads and Temple mount claims. And the Talmud metaphorically depicted the instincts as a fiery lion exiting the Holy of Holies. This teaches our very point, as a wise Rabbi taught, "the instincts are strongest in religious matters"...the Holy of Holies is where human instincts are as powerful (fiery) as a lion.

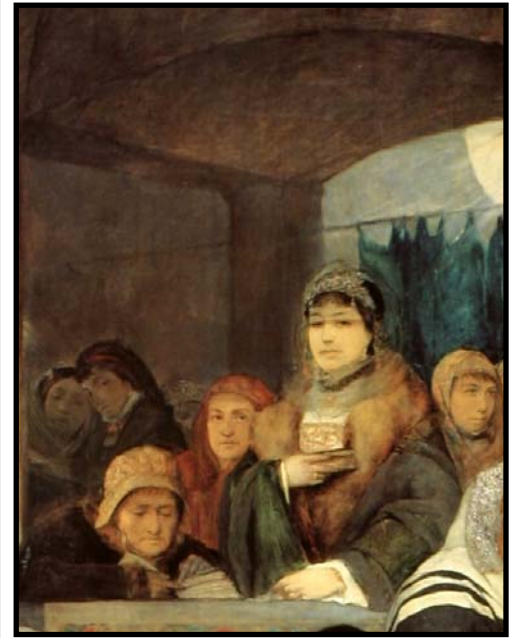
But why observe all of these services, on Yom Kippur? How do Nadav and Avihu tie into this Day of Atonement? It would appear, that as Temple is a response to the Gold Calf sin, and Nadav and Avihu erred in Temple worship, the tie is apparent. The very vehicle God compromised on – Temple – contains dangers, and explains why it was not a preferred institution! Even our very approach to God in Temple will be flawed, since man is flawed.

Therefore, the sacrifices on Yom Kippur actually come to atone for "sinful worship", as ironic as it sounds. Rashi teaches that the Yom Kippur sacrifices atone for the Jews and the Priests' errors in worship. Of course the Scapegoat atones for other sins, but a primary focus is on atonement for flawed, Temple worship. This explains why the Yom Kippur services outlined in the Torah come on the heels of Aaron's sons' sin. Just as they erred in approaching God in Temple, we do as well. In our very approach to God, our instincts do not let up. Amazing. How honest is our Torah! But again, be mindful that Temple is a 'concession', explaining why flawed worship is no surprise.

My friend Jeremy Koppel suggested this following idea many years ago: the reason there are sin offerings and Olah offerings, is to teach that atonement (sin offering) is not the final objective, but approaching God without the need to repent is: love of God is greater than fear of God. Another two ideas tie in now.

Why does the High Priest cloud the Holy of Holies? He does so as God says, "For in cloud do I appear on the Cherubim". This quote was God's response to Aaron's sons' sin. This means that God is imperceptible via human senses. In all of God's revelations and communications, cloud is present: cloud hovered over the Temple; at Revelation at Sinai there were clouds and fog; and the Temple has the incense altar that creates cloud. Why do we need cloud? This is to teach that a "veil" exists between God and mankind. "For man cannot know Me while alive" was said by God to Moses. And it was this truth that Aaron's two sons did not grasp, and assumed they could imagine how to approach God. However, not only is God unknowable, but also, so is man's approach to Him, unless we are taught how.

We also learn in Acharay Mos that the priests offer separate sacrifices from the Jews. This can be explained as a result of the priests' role. They worship in the temple daily, and have a greater danger of falling prey to religious emotions. Therefore, their atonement for Temple infractions is of a greater nature than the Jews', explaining why their animal sacrifice is a greater animal, a bull, while the Jews' sin offering is a goat.



Summary

We learn that Yom Kippur is God's merciful response to man's flaws, and that this day evolved due to the Jews' sin of the Gold Calf, and to Aaron's son's flawed worship. The Gold Calf sin demanded a day be devoted to addressing man's Earthbound, sinful nature; our inability to live 100% without sin. But the sacrifices brought on Yom Kippur were not based on this Gold Calf event. They were a response to Nadav and Avihu's sin. Yet, these sins are a direct result of Temple, which itself is a result of the Gold Calf. Due to our need to employ physical expression in our worship of God, God conceded with a Temple. And due to this concession, man inevitably sinned in his expression, embodied in Nadav and Avihu's sin.

Reflecting on these ideas, we come to realize our natures as humans: creations that are imperfect; creatures with dependent existences, and who rely on the Creator for our lives. But during our brief existence, we are so fortunate that God extends to man this Day of Atonement; where He wipes our slate clean. He encourages our renewed existence in the pursuit of learning more about Him and living properly. He gave us His Torah for us, not for Him, as God has no needs. So as we enter and exit this holy day, we must feel fortunate, not hungry or tired. We should truly search out from our Torah leaders what God truly wants of us, for our own good.

Yom Kippur equips us with a fresh beginning; and abandonment of old sinful ways, as a new "me" emerges revitalized with vigor. May we harness this new strength to grow ever stronger in our Torah lifestyles, remaining firm to what God teaches, without deviation. ■

Yom Kippur



Hashem's Justice and the Purpose of Life

MATT SCHNEEWEISS

The first three berachos of the Shmoneh Esreh are berachos of shevach - praise to God. The theme of the first berachah is Avos: Hashem's special providential relationship with the patriarchs (Avraham, Yitchak, and Yaakov) and their offspring (Bnei Yisroel). The theme of the second berachah is Gevuros: Hashem's omnipotence, which is exemplified by the resurrection of the dead. The theme of the third berachah is Kedushas ha'Shem: the Uniqueness of Hashem and the uniqueness of His Name (i.e. knowledge of Hashem).

During the Aseres Ymei Teshuvah (the ten days between Rosh ha'Shanah and Yom Kippur) the theme of Kedushas Hashem is viewed in the framework of Malchus Hashem, as expressed by an alteration of the berachah's conclusion: "ha'Melech ha'Kadosh" (the Holy King). In the tefilos of the Yomim Noraim (Rosh ha'Shanah and Yom Kippur), the third berachah undergoes a drastic transformation and expansion. Whereas the year-round version is a single-sentence declaration of the idea of kedushas Hashem, the Yomim Noraim version is a six-paragraph beatific vision of the ideal human civilization centered around the acceptance of Malchus Hashem.

This special version of the third berachah may be beautiful, but there is something about it that bothers me. I wouldn't call this a major problem, so much as a nagging one. Perhaps it will not bother you as much as it bothers me, but I hope that you will still find the idea enlightening.

According to the laws of berachos, the penultimate statement of a berachah must correspond to the essential theme of the berachah. Chazal refer to this requirement as "me'ein ha'chasimah samuch l'chasimah." In the tefilos of the Yomim Noraim, the penultimate statement of the third berachah is a pasuk from the prophet Yeshaya: "Hashem, Master of Legions, will become exalted through judgment, and the Holy God will be sanctified through justice" (Yeshaya 5:16).

The question is: How does this pasuk satisfy the requirement of me'ein ha'chasimah samuch l'chasimah? Sure, this pasuk says "the Holy God will be sanctified," but that doesn't seem to be the only theme of the pasuk. Equally prominent is the theme of Mishpat Hashem (Hashem's Judgment). One might even argue that Mishpat Hashem is the essential theme of the pasuk, and Kedushas Hashem is only secondary. My question is: How does the idea expressed in the pasuk correspond to the theme of the berachah, which is Kedushas Hashem as viewed from the perspective of Malchus Hashem?

This question can be answered simply by understanding the pasuk in its context. Rashi comments as follows:

"Hashem, Master of Legions will become exalted through judgment:" When He exacts judgment from them, His Name will be exalted in the world; "and the Holy God will be sanctified through justice:" He will be sanctified among the remaining tzadikim.

In other words, knowledge of Hashem will be spread throughout the world when He exacts judgment with the reshaim (wicked). The question is: Who are these reshaim? One might assume that the reshaim in the pasuk are murderers, thieves, liars, rapists, slanderers, tyrants, those who take advantage of the weak, etc. - in short, stereotypical reshaim. But does this theory stand up to the facts? Let us look at the pasuk in context. The underlined and bold phrases contain the answer to this question

Woe to those who arise early in the morning to pursue liquor, who stay up late at night while wine inflames them. There are harp and lyre and drum and flute, and wine at their drinking parties; but they would not contemplate the deed of Hashem, and would not look at the work of His hands. Therefore, my people is being exiled due to lack of knowledge; its honored ones dying of starvation, and its multitude parched from thirst. Therefore, the netherworld has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth wide without limit; and [into it] will descend her glory and her multitude and her horde, and whosoever revels within her. Man will be humbled and people will be brought lower, and the eyes of the haughty will be brought low. Hashem, Master of Legions, will become exalted through judgment, and the Holy God will be sanctified through justice. Then the sheep will graze in their usual way, and sojourners will eat of the ruins of the fattened animals.

Which reshaim did the Navi choose to discuss as the object of Hashem's judgment? Not evildoers, criminals, and villains, but (what we would call) drug addicts! People who drink liquor and wine from dawn to the wee hours of the morning, and whose lives revolve around drinking parties.

This leads us to an even bigger problem: Why are these the reshaim whose destruction by Divine Judgment best exemplifies the theme of Malchus Hashem? After all, these people don't seem like the biggest reshaim. They don't hurt anyone, nor do they harbor any malicious or hateful intentions. Not only that, but it is hard to see how the Name of Hashem will be exalted through their destruction. When Hashem destroys Paroh or Hitler, that is a Kiddush Hashem - not when He punishes the alcoholic.

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The solution to this problem rests on the Torah's definition of rasha. We are raised to believe that a rasha is a villainous character - like street thugs, mean bullies, or the bad guys in Disney movies. The Torah has a completely different idea. According to the Torah, a rasha is a person who lives contrary to his nature as a human being - a person who uses his bechirah to negate his humanness.

What does this mean? The Rambam explains the nature and purpose of man in his Introduction to the Mishnah:

Man engages in many different activities. Therefore, the philosophers investigated each one of his activities in order to know which one of them is his purpose. They found that his purpose is one activity alone, and the rest of his activities are only so that he can continue his existence in order to perfect within himself that unique activity: namely, the understanding of ideas and clear knowledge of reality. For it is impossible that the purpose of man is to eat, drink, have sex, built a house, or to be king - for all of these are accidents which pass over him, and do not add to his essence. Furthermore, man shares these actions with the other species of animals. The knowledge is the only thing which adds to his essence and elevates him from a lower level to a higher level, for he was only a potential man and [after acquiring knowledge] has become an actual man, for before man learns he is only like an animal, since man is only differentiated from other animals by virtue of his rational faculty. Man is the rational animal - by "rational" I mean the ability to understand concepts. The greatest of the concepts is an understanding of the Oneness of the Creator - may He be exalted and praised - and everything related to this from the sciences of metaphysics, for all other sciences only exist to prepare man to reach the metaphysical sciences - but this is a very extensive topic.

The nature and purpose of man is to pursue knowledge of reality, the highest level of which is knowledge of God. To the extent that a man exercises his free will to live contrary to his nature, he is a rasha.

Now we can understand why Yeshaya chose drunkards as the paradigmatic resha'im: their entire lives are an attempt to escape from reality. In the language of the Navi: "They would not contemplate the deed of Hashem, and would not look at the work of His hands. Therefore, my people is being exiled due to lack of knowledge." As soon as they wake up

in the morning, they get drunk so as not to have to face the reality of life. They go about their work in a drunken stupor. When they get home, they indulge in wine, staying up late into the night to revel in their escapism. When they get together, it is in the context of drinking parties; their social lives are nothing more than a mutual attempt to escape from reality.

The stereotypical rasha may be bad, but at least his life is an attempt to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. He must operate within reality to a certain degree in order to maintain this pursuit. In the eyes of the Torah, this could be transformed into a good *lo lishmah*. After all, as Shlomo ha'Melech says about the life of Torah:

Praiseworthy is a person who has found wisdom, a person who can derive understanding, for its commerce is better than the commerce of silver, and its produce than fine gold. It is more precious than pearls, and all your desires cannot compare to it. Length of days is at its right; at its left, wealth and honor.

Satisfaction of desires, length of days, wealth, honor - the very goods which the rasha desires are those which Shlomo ha'Melech uses to advertise the life of Torah! At least there is hope for the rasha. The drunkard, on the other hand, doesn't want to have the most pleasureable life - he just wants to escape life. He will never be interested in *yedias Hashem* because he finds reality abhorrent. The drunkard is the quintessential Anti-Man.

Now we are in a position to understand how this *pasuk* fits into the theme of *Malchus Hashem*. It is true that this *pasuk* is about *Mishpat Hashem*, but *Mishpat Hashem* aims at one goal: to bring mankind in line with its nature, which is the pursuit of knowledge of Hashem. So long as the *reshaim* described in the *pasuk* exist, *Malchus Hashem* will never be realized. They are an obstacle to the pursuit of *yedias Hashem* in mankind.

Thus, Hashem's exacting judgment from the drunkards - *moreso* than any other type of rasha - is a fulfillment of *Malchus Hashem*. This type of *Mishpat Hashem* not only teaches the idea of *Mishpat Hashem* (bringing mankind in line with its nature), but effectively brings about a *Kiddush Hashem* in mankind (by removing obstacles to *yedias Hashem*), bringing us one step closer to a full realization of *Malchus Hashem* on earth. ■



Hashem's "Attributes" of Mercy

MATT SCHNEEWEISS

Introduction

The cornerstone of *selichos* is the *yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*, commonly translated as "The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy." On Yom Kippur, recitations of the *yud gimel middos ha'rachamim* permeate all of our *tefilos*, especially *tefilas ne'ilah* - our last chance to beseech Hashem for atonement.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a widespread misconception of the *yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*. The pervasiveness of this mistaken notion is evident from the common translation of "middos" in this context as "attributes." Many people are under the impression that Hashem's mercy is an attribute or a set of attributes.

This error is not insignificant. In fact, according to the Rambam, a person who harbors such a belief is a *min* (heretic) and has no portion in the World to Come. The Rambam even goes so far as to equate belief in Hashem's attributes with belief in the Christian doctrine of the trinity (Guide for the Perplexed 1:53):

If, however, someone believes that He is one, but possesses a certain number of essential attributes, he says in his words that He is one, but believes Him in his thought to be many. This resembles what the Christians say: namely, that He is one, but also three, and that the three are one. Similar to this is the assertion of him who says that He is one but possesses many attributes and that He and His attributes are one.

One who approaches God with such a notion of His *middos ha'rachamim* will not only fail to obtain His mercy, but will be the object of His wrath. Therefore, before we review the correct idea of the *yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*, we must fully uproot the incorrect idea and understand why it is incorrect.

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The Incorrect Idea

According to the Rambam's formulation, the second fundamental principle of the Torah is Hashem's Oneness (Commentary to Perek Chelek):

The Second Fundamental Principle is His Oneness, may He be exalted. Namely, that this Cause of everything is One, not like the oneness of a species and not like the oneness of a class, and not like one unified composite, which can be divided into many unities, and not one like a simple body, which is one in number but is subject to division and subdivision ad infinitum, but He, may He be exalted, is One – a Oneness unlike any other oneness in any way.

Hashem is One; He is utterly devoid of any plurality whatsoever. Anything which has attributes partakes of plurality and is therefore not absolutely one. For instance, a red ball is not one because it has many attributes: color, weight, size, location, temperature, sphericity, and so on. If Hashem had an attribute or attributes of mercy, He would partake of plurality, and would therefore not be Absolutely One. It is impossible to believe "Hashem Echad" as defined by the Torah and to simultaneously believe that Hashem has an attribute or attributes of mercy.

Furthermore, the prophet states: "To whom can you compare Me that I should Be similar?" (Yeshaya 4:25). Hashem is not similar to His creations in any way whatsoever. Thus, according to the prophet, it is impossible to say that Hashem has an attribute or attributes of mercy in the same way as a human. When we ascribe middos ha'rachamim to Hashem, we do so only by way of metaphor.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that Hashem has no emotions. This somehow seems to escape the attention of many people, even though it follows from what has been said above. Humans have a natural tendency to ascribe human qualities and emotions to God. Indeed, pagan gods are nothing more than imagined beings with the same feelings and characteristics of the people who worship them. We must be very careful not to project our own qualities onto Hashem, as the prophet admonishes: "The Children of Israel ascribed things that were not so to Hashem their God" (Melachim II 17:9). Moreover, emotions imply change, and Hashem cannot change, as the prophet states: "I am Hashem, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

By now it should be clear that whatever we mean by middos ha'rachamim, we do not mean attributes of mercy.

**The Correct Idea**

The main idea in this post is from Rabbi Zucker's shiur entitled "Selichos." To see the idea in context (which I highly recommend), learn through the entire shiur: www.ybt.org/essays/students/svaros.pdf

The Gemara in Rosh ha'Shanah 17b states as follows:

"And Hashem passed before him and proclaimed" (Shemos 34:6). R' Yochanan said: Were this not written in a verse, it would be impossible to say it. This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed is He, wrapped Himself [in a tallis] like a prayer leader and demonstrated to Moshe the order of prayer. He said to him: "Any time that Israel sins let them perform before Me this procedure and I shall forgive them" . . . Rav Yehudah said: A covenant has been made regarding the yud gimmel middos that they never return empty-handed.

There are two basic questions we can ask on this Gemara:

Question #1: How does this work? Does Rav Yehudah mean to say that merely by reciting the yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim, God will forgive the Jews - as if (in the words of Rabbi Zucker) this is some sort of magical incantation?

Question #2: How can Hashem be merciful and perfectly just? For a human, this would be impossible. To the extent that man shows mercy, he

detracts from strict justice. For instance, when a judge reduces a criminal's sentence from 10 years to 5 years, his mercy is a detraction from justice. If Hashem's justice is perfect, then how can He also be merciful?

In order to understand the concept of the yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim, we must first understand the concept of the middas ha'rachamim. Rabbi Zucker explained this in his shiur on Selichos as follows:

After man fails to achieve [HYPERLINK "http://kankanchadash.blogspot.com/2007/09/has-hems-justice-and-purpose-of-life.html"](http://kankanchadash.blogspot.com/2007/09/has-hems-justice-and-purpose-of-life.html) his purpose, there are two rational possibilities of how to deal with him. The first possibility is to destroy him, since he failed to achieve the purpose of his existence. The second possibility is to correct him, thereby enabling him to achieve his purpose from then and on. From the perspective of man, the first possibility is perceived as strict justice whereas the second possibility is perceived as mercy.

In the language of Chazal, the first possibility is called "middas ha'din" and the second possibility is called "middas ha'rachamim." The word "middah" in this context does not mean "attribute," but "mode of behavior," as Chazal frequently say: "lo k'middas Ha'Kadosh Baruch Hu middas basar v'dam" ("the behavior of the Holy One, Blessed is He, is not like the behavior of [man who is] flesh and blood").

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Yom Kippur

The terms "din" and "rachamim" are utilized in accordance with the stylistic principle known as *dibra Torah k'lshon bnei adam* (the Torah speaks in the language of man). Chazal do not mean to suggest that Hashem's mercy is in any way similar to human mercy. A human act of mercy stems from an emotion - usually from some sort of identification with the other person. Hashem's act of mercy does not stem from an emotion, since Hashem has no emotions. For this reason, human mercy detracts from justice: the mind of the judge dictates a certain punishment, but he is overwhelmed with compassion and modifies his verdict.

This point must be underscored: Even though we refer to one behavior as "strict justice" and the other as "mercy," we are only speaking according to the way we perceive things. In reality, both possibilities are equally in line with justice. That is to say, a person will be punished in accordance with his sins and evil free-will decisions, and he will be rewarded in accordance with his mitzvos and his good free-will decisions. Everything will balance out (so to speak) in the final account.

Now we are in a position to understand what is meant by the *yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*. As we have explained (<http://kankanchadash.blogspot.com/2007/08/are-mitzvos-always-good.html>), Hashem does not act arbitrarily. He is the Ultimate Wisdom and Source of All Wisdom, and as such, He acts in accordance with systems. There are two systems of Divine conduct: there are laws of *hashgacha pratit* (particular Divine providence) just as there are laws of nature. Thus, the *middas ha'rachamim* operates in accordance with a system of laws which we collectively refer to as the *yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*. Each *middah* is a separate law or principle of *hashgacha pratit*. Thus, an accurate (though very cumbersome) translation of "*yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim*" is "the system of thirteen laws of *hashgachah pratit* through which Hashem administers justice in a manner perceived by us as mercy."

There is another point which must be emphasized: One must not think that God's capacity for *din* and *rachamim* indicates plurality in His Essence, as the Rambam explains (Guide for the Perplexed 1:53):

Now there need not be a diversity in the properties subsisting in an agent because of the diversity of his various actions . . . An instance of this is fire: it melts some things, makes others hard, cooks and burns, bleaches



and blackens. Thus if some man would predicate of fire that it is that which bleaches and blackens, which burns and cooks, which makes hard and which melts, he would say the truth. Accordingly he who does not know the nature of fire thinks that there subsist in it six diverse properties, by means of one of which it blackens, whereas it bleaches by means of another, cooks by means of a third, burns by means of a fourth, melts by means of a fifth, and makes hard by means of a sixth - all these actions being opposed to one another, for the meaning of any one of them is different from that of any other. However he who knows the nature of fire, knows that it performs all these actions by virtue of one active quality, namely, heat. If, however, such a state of affairs exists with respect to a thing acting by virtue of its nature, it exists all the more with respect to one who acts through will, and again all the more with respect to him, may He be exalted, who is above every attributive qualification.

How Does the Recitation of the *Yud Gimmel Middos* Work?

This explains the nature of the *middas ha'din* and *middas ha'rachamim*. It does not, however, explain how our recitation of the

yud gimmel middos ha'rachamim is a guaranteed method of eliciting a response of *middas ha'rachamim*.

Rabbi Zucker explained as follows: In order to benefit from the *middas ha'rachamim*, man must be adequate and qualified to be corrected through the bestowal of mercy; if he is not, the *rachamim* will have no effect. By understanding how the *middas ha'rachamim* operates, and by beseeching God from this understanding to relate to him according to the *middas ha'rachamim*, the acts of understanding and beseeching themselves will render man into a vessel fit to receive the *middas ha'rachamim* and to benefit from it.

An example (borrowed from Mortimer J. Adler) will make this clearer. In baseball, the pitcher throws the ball and the catcher catches it. In a sense, the pitcher is active and the catcher is passive. But this is not entirely true. The catcher doesn't merely sit there like an object and wait for the ball to come. He must anticipate the trajectory of the ball, skillfully position himself, ready himself for the pitch, and actively catch the ball.

Likewise, we cannot elicit Hashem's *middas ha'rachamim* if we are passive. We have to rise meet the *middas ha'rachamim* if we desire to benefit from it. In order to be affected by the *middas ha'rachamim*, we must strive to understand the laws of *hashgacha* through which the *middas ha'rachamim* operates - the *yud gimmel middos*. When we beseech God to show mercy, we must do so based on our understanding of these laws of *hashgacha*.

Only through such understanding - which is in line with the purpose of our existence, which is to know God - do we render ourselves meritorious of His mercy. Only through such understanding will we know how to benefit from that mercy when we receive it. If we understand the *yud gimmel middos* and beseech God properly, then He must respond. The laws of *hashgacha* necessitate it.

May we all merit to live in accordance with our purpose: to know God in accordance with our capacity, and to utilize our free will to do *teshuvah* and live a good life. This Yom Kippur, may we all merit to understand the *middas ha'rachamim* and benefit from Hashem's Goodness. *Kesivah v'Chasimah Tovah*. ■

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<http://kankanchadash.blogspot.com>

that is being referred to is 17,7. The verse states: "They should no longer sacrifice their sacrifices unto the satyrs that lead them astray. Rashi explains the word l'saerim to mean l'shaydim, unto the demons. The Eben Ezra is teaching us that if one desires an insight into the Scapegoat he [sic] must recognize that adhering to this practice will lead one to the practice stated in chapter 7 verse 17. The Israelites will no longer turn astray and sacrifice to the demons as the nations of the world. We will explain this insight after we examine several salient laws with respect to the Scapegoat. It is interesting to note that the Rambam holds that the Scapegoat renders atonement without repentance for all commandments that are not punishable by kares, excision. Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's position in the Talmud, although we do not rule like him, is that even the "day of Yom Kippur" itself effectuates atonement. We must appreciate how atonement works, if the sinner is not repentant. Halachically, Teshuva implies that one must return to God. His relationship with the creator must be rekindled as a result of his recognizing the cause of his sin and being able to elevate himself to a higher intellectual level. The individual is a changed person, one who is no longer drawn by the temptations of the instinctual nor the frailties of the emotional components of his nature, which causes him to commit the sin. We therefore must understand how does the mere practice of the Scapegoat grant atonement to a sinner?

The last Mishna in the tractate of Yumah quotes a statement of Rabbi Akiva, which states "Happy are you Israel before whom you are purified, and who purifies you, your Father in heaven." This is a puzzling statement. Anybody who performs Teshuva and returns to God, as a result of his own actions, is purified before God. This applies even to a Gentile. Why then does Rabbi Akiva specify a Jew; and furthermore it seems from his statement that Teshuva is extraneous to this purification process. We must try to comprehend Rabbi Akiva's teaching.

Nachmanides comments on the Eben Ezra, explaining the service of the Scapegoat discusses a Medrash. The Medrash says that the children of Jacob give Samael, their prosecuting angel, a bribe on Yom Kippur. This bribe is the sacrificial Scapegoat. It is given so that he should not annul their sacrifices. The Scapegoat has all the sins of the Children of Israel on its head, as set out in the verses in the Torah. The Medrash continues, "as a result Samael will see that there is

no sin on Yom Kippur and will explain before God, 'Creator of the world, there is one nation in this world which are akin to the ministering angels. Just like the ministering angels are bare footed, so too on this day the Jews are bare footed'." Samael makes similar observations when addressing God with respect to eating, drinking, standing all day, making peace amongst themselves and being free of sin. In all these activities the Jewish people on Yom Kippur are comparable to the ministering angels. The Holy One upon hearing these testimonies from the prosecutor Samael, makes atonement for the altar, the sanctuary, the priests of Israel and for all the people of the assembly of Israel. This is the Agadah that the Rambam quotes to help us understand the Scapegoat.

This Agadah raises several questions: Who is Samael and how is he bribed? Originally the purpose of the bribe is so that the sacrifices should not be annulled, however the seeming result of the bribe is that it is responsible for the entire atonement of Yom Kippur. Maimonides, in his "Guide for the Perplexed" states that Samael is the appellation applied by our sages to Satan. The derivation of the word Samael is "Sam-El", the blinding of God. Samael represents that part of human nature, which blinds the individual from perceiving the ultimate reality, God. The Yetzer Harah and Satan are used interchangeably by Chazal and represent man's evil inclination which is rooted in his physical nature. Chazal use the term Satan, which implies something external to man, to signify that this part of man is not his essence. Rather the tzelem Elokim – intelligence – is man's essence. Chazal use the term Yetzer Harah to teach us that although it is not man's essence, we are nevertheless responsible for this part of us. The key to understanding the Scapegoat is appreciating its inexorable connection to the atonement of Yom Kippur. There were two goats, which were subject to the lottery. One was designated for God and was brought upon the altar as a sacrifice. The second goat was designated l'azazel and was the saer ha'mishtaleyach, the goat that was sent away to meet its final destiny in the desert. The atonement of the day of Yom Kippur was really a result of the goat that was designated l'azazel and not the one that was brought as a sacrifice. The atonement of Yom Kippur is unique because it atones for many sins, kalot vechamurot, lenient and stringent sins. Whereas a korban chatas is brought for a particular maaseh aveira, act of violation, and atones for that particular sin. On Yom Kippur

"lifneh Hashem tetaharu", we are purified before God. The essential character of the day atones. This is a different type of forgiveness than a specific korban chatas, a sin offering. Yom Kippur is related to the state of the gavra, the individual. The day atones the individual. A person, who appreciates the sanctity of the day, demonstrates that he, as an individual, is worthy of forgiveness. Consequently, this new status results in the removal of the particular sins.

An understanding of the service of the Scapegoat gives us insight into the essential nature of the sanctity of Yom Kippur and its function as a purifier. The Scapegoat atoned for all the sins of the Jews. Leviticus Chapter 16, Verses 21 and 22 tells us that Aaron placed his hands on the Scapegoat and confessed all the sins of the Children of Israel and all their transgressions, and placed them on the head of the Azazel goat. How does this goat serve to forgive all the sins of the Jewish people? The Torah is teaching us that the sins of man are really separate and extraneous to his essential nature. Aaron was capable of removing all of man's sins and placing them on the head of the goat. The Scapegoat as stated, represents the Satan, man's evil inclination, the part of man driven by his fantasy. This service signifies that the part of man, which is based upon his emotions and fueled by his fantasy, is really not reflective of man's true essence, his Tzelem Elokim, his intelligence. This part of man, his instinctual nature, may be severed from his true nature. However, if man follows his fantasies and his evil inclination, he is doomed as the Scapegoat, to face a brutal and lonely death.

The Midrash quoted by Nachmanides can now be understood. We bribe Samael and give him the Scapegoat. We, as Torah Jews, recognize that the pursuit of the fantasy blinds us from perceiving "chachmas haboreh", the wisdom of our Creator. We acknowledge by the service of the Scapegoat, that there is a spiritually higher nature to man, his true essence that we value. As Torah Jews, we thereby attempt to lead our lives based upon the Tzelem Elokim. By bribing Samael, we acknowledge that there is a part of man's nature, which is overpowering. However, we cannot deny our instinctual nature, but must acknowledge that it stems from the lower part of man's being, and as such, must be dealt with. If we deny our instinctual nature "Samael", it can have tragic consequences. On the contrary, we recognize the instinctual part of man's nature but acknowledge our life long struggle as Torah Jews to separate that

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part of our nature from the Tzelem Elokim. Only by "bribing" Samael and recognizing the potent powers of fantasy, can we hope to ever be successful in combating these forces and removing them from overwhelming our actions as Torah Jews. We demonstrate that ultimately if one is led astray by the powers of the fantasy, he will surely perish and be doomed to spiritual genocide.

The Scapegoat was taken to the desert by the "ish iti", a specially prepared man. This demonstrates that the ultimate destruction of the Scapegoat is not fortuitous. Rather, it is a necessary result that the pursuits of the fantasy will lead to ones downfall. That is why the ish iti was mezuman l'kach, was prepared for this job, to ensure and guarantee that the Scapegoat would meet its eventual destruction. This recognition by Klal Yisroel that we appreciate the overwhelming force of man's instinctual nature and constantly strive to overcome it and elevate our lives to a higher spiritual plane, makes us akin to the mal'achey hashares, ministering angels. This causes Samael to remark that on Yom Kippur the Children of Israel are like the Ministering Angels. The Ministering Angels are not under the influence of the instinctual, they are not swayed by emotions. Similarly on Yom Kippur the Jewish people demonstrate through the prohibitions of the day (eating, drinking, cohabitation, and wearing leather shoes etc.) that we abstain from these physical pleasures to demonstrate that there is a higher part to man's existence.

This explains how the Scapegoat atones for all sins. Since man recognizes this concept and appreciates that his physical existence leads him on the path of Samael, he must strive through chachma, wisdom, to live life based upon his Tzelem Elokim, and thus become a different type of person. Yom Kippur is a day of reality whereby he recognizes the dangers in his daily existence of Samael, but elevates himself on this day to be purified before Hashem. This explains that although a person did not do teshuva on a particular maeseh aveira, act of sin, but since he recognizes the consequences of Samael and that man's true essence is chachma, he has elevated himself to higher spiritual level and he is a being worthy of forgiveness.

We can now understand the reason why there are two goats, one for Hashem and one for azazel. This represents man's dual nature, his intellect that is l'Hashem and his instinctual which is l'azazel. In order to have the sacrifice to Hashem, you must have the Scapegoat. One cannot be successful in his



struggle as a talmid chachom unless he recognizes the lower part of human nature. Intellectual perfection cannot be achieved if one simply represses his instinctual nature. By repressing one's instinctual nature it still remains an influential part of his personality.

The many meticulous details with respect to the performance of the Scapegoat also evidences this concept. A person is driven to the life of the physical by many powerful forces. Each of these drives is shattered by the method of performance mandated by the Torah by bringing the Scapegoat. A person is drawn to the life of the material because of the enticements of the physical pleasures that one imagines is comforting when living an instinctual existence. This is why the Scapegoat is brutally thrown over the cliff to a torturous death. This represents that visions of physical pleasures are illusory and transitory and ultimately will result in a painful shattering of such false emotions. A person is also drawn to the life of the physical because he feels that material success garners respect and popular acceptance by the masses. Therefore the Scapegoat is sent out with one man, alone without any fanfare, to a desolate and lonely place in the desert. This demonstrates that leading a life of materialism will ultimately

and invariably result in a lonely and desolate existence. Lastly, a person is fooled by the entrapments of a physical existence in order to insulate himself from the limited nature of such an existence and to cater to his fantasy of immortality. Thus the Scapegoat always meets the same destiny, a harsh and cruel termination, to help emasculate any such fantasies that a person may harbor.

We can now appreciate Rabbi Akiva's statement quoted in the last Mishna in Tractate Yumah. "Happy are the Children of Israel because they are purified before God." Although it might be possible in isolated cases for individuals to come to the true recognition of God, however, for a nation of people, on such a large scale, it is impossible. How fortunate are we Torah Jews who have a system of Torah and Mitzvos, (that contains the abstract and beautiful practice of the Scapegoat), a system based upon chachma that allows us to recognize man's true nature and remove ourselves from living a purely physical existence, the life of fantasy that ultimately leads to man's downfall. Therefore Rabbi Akiva exalts "how happy are we the nation of Israel that we are fortunate to such a blessing." ■

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A MARINE,
**YEHOSHUA AHARON
BEN EPHRAIM FISHEL**
WILL BE STATIONED IN IRAQ STARTING
MID-AUGUST FOR 8 MONTHS.
WE ASK YOU TO HAVE HIM IN YOUR TEFILOS
FOR A SAFE MISSION AND RETURN.

American to save Israeli Solider: How you can partake in this Mitzvah



This summer a 19 year-old Israeli Solider will get a new lease on life due to a selfless gift from Yosef Chiger, of Harrisburg Pennsylvania. Ayelet Katz, of Moshav Be'er Tuvia had been stationed in Tel Nof Air Force Base, where she worked as an assistant to the head of human resources, until she was forced to leave the IDF because of kidney failure and begin fulltime dialysis. Often Israelis in need of kidney transplants wait for years because of the shortage of organs; however with the help of the Halachic Organ Donor Society (HODS) Ayelet will be fortunate to receive an altruistic donation that will allow her to resume a healthy life in a matter of months. Chiger, married and the father of a five-year old daughter, will be traveling to Israel to donate his kidney and thereby giving Ayelet the ability to resume a full and healthy life. It was especially significant to Chiger that she is an Israeli and a solider, and that the transplant means that she will have a long productive life ahead of her.

The transplant is being facilitated by the Halachic Organ Donor Society, which facilitates altruistic kidney donations and educates Jews about organ donation and halacha.

HODS is raising \$15,000 to bring Chiger and his family to Israel. Contributions can sent to the HOD Society at 49 West 45th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY or via their website at www.hods.org.