

דרכים

בשנה

יום

הכיפורים

והיתה זאת

לכם לחקת

עולם לכפר

על בני ישראל מכל הטאתם אחת בשנה

ויעש כאשר צוה ה' את משה (ויקרא

ט"ז:ל"ד)

*This shall be to you a chok for all time: to make atonement for the Bnei Yisroel for all their sins once a year. And Moshe did as Hashem had commanded him. (16:34)*

As the possuk describes the greatness of the day of Yom Kippur, the Torah characterizes it as a “once a year” occurrence. It is a day that is special and unique, and if it is not taken advantage of, before one realizes, כי פנה היום - the day has slipped away and the great opportunity is lost. Just as the Kohen Gadol only entered לפני ולפנים once a year, wearing his בגדי בד - his white, linen garments, so too we enter into the holiest moments of time and mind-space wearing our white clothing as well. As we do so, we picture ourselves entering inside a place where literally everything is on the line, just as it was for the Kohein Gadol. We must enter fully prepared to receive and be completely willing to accept the great gift that Hashem is shining upon us during these twenty four hours.

If we look a few pesukim earlier, there is an interesting lesson that we can learn from the *bigadim* of the Kohen

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ובא אהרן אל

אוהל מועד ופשט את

בגדי הבד אשר לבש

בבאו אל הקודש והניחו

*And Aharon shall come into the Ohel Moed and take off the linen garments he wore when he entered the Kodesh Kodashim, and leave them there (16:23)*

Rashi comments that the *bigadim* were locked away, never to be used again. Sforno explains that because these *bigadim* were used inside of the *kodesh kodashim*, it would be improper to use them again for something else. מעלין בקודש ואין מורידין - when it comes to holiness, we must always go up, and never downwards. Therefore, to use them for another task, even a non- mundane one, would be a downgrade.

Based on this rule, the following question presents itself: Why must we put away the *bigadim* to never be used again? Can't we allow the *Kohen Gadol* to wear them again on the following *Yom Kippur*, as this would not be a downgrade to the level of *kedusha*? Rav Gifter *zt"l* (Pirkei Torah) explains that man's nature is such that the second time he performs a task, he does not do it with the same energy and feeling as the very first time. The Torah is worried that if the *Kohen Gadol* wears the same garments as he wore in the previous year, upon entering the *kodesh*

*kodashim* he may experience a one thousandth of a percent of familiarity. Such feelings could be a serious impediment to *Klal Yisroel's* attaining *kapara*. Hence, each and every year required brand new *bigadim*.

If we think about the circumstances for a moment, we can understand the novelty a bit more. The *Kohen Gadol* had the fate of the entire *Klal Yisroel* riding on his shoulders. Furthermore, his family's life and livelihood depended on his mission as well. Even more daunting was the fact that his own life hung in the balance. If we look at the history of the *Beis HaMikdash*, we learn that during the 420 years of the second *Beis HaMikdash*, more than 300 *Kohanim Gedolim* served. This means that for the majority of the years, the *Kohen Gadol* did not make it through the year. During all the years, there were only four righteous *Kohanim Gedolim*. With this perspective in mind, even a hint of "been there, done that" would be seriously detrimental.

Similarly, from our own seats in shul, we must realize that last year's judgement on Yom Kippur is no guarantee at all for what this year brings. One should not fall into the trap of Satan's voice telling us that there is no need to be so serious because last year was fine and this time it will be as well.

Perhaps we can offer another answer to our original question of why the *Kohen* is not allowed to wear the same *bigadim* the following year. Possibly, the rule of *maalin bakodesh ve'ain moridin* is teaching us that even if the same exact level can indeed be obtained the following year, it is merely a lateral move. It is not enough to keep moving sideways, we must constantly move upwards. One would never buy a stock that does not grow, and we too should not be satisfied without accomplishing new things. If we are not growing, we are slowing. Did we grow in the previous year? Even regarding our good deeds, do we plan on doing the same things again or will we try and pick it up a notch or three?

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**כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם  
מכל הטאתיכם לפני ה'**

*For on this day He will make atonement for you, to cleanse you, from all your sins before Hashem.*

The gemara in Masechta Sukkah (52a) explains the nature of the *Yeitzer Hara*: אמר רב אסי יצר הרע בתחילה דומה לחוט של - בוכיא ולבסוף דומה כעבותות העגלה - *Rav Asi said: Initially, when it begins to entice someone, the Yeitzer Hara is like a strand of a spider's web [buchya]; and ultimately it is like the thick ropes of a wagon. Initially, the enticement is*

almost imperceptible, like a thin strand of a cobweb that can easily be knocked away; however, after one sins, it is like wagon ropes tied tightly around him.

The gemara offers many more analogies: (52b) אמר רבא בתחלה קראו הלך וּלְבָסוּף קראו איש - Rava said: Initially, the possuk called the Yeitzer Hara a traveler coming from afar. Subsequently, the possuk calls it a guest, as one welcomes it. Ultimately, the possuk calls it man, indicating significance, as it became the *baal habuss* in one's own home.

The nature of a passerby is that he has no rights or claims on anything in your home. A guest at least has an invitation to be there but still must be on his best behavior. The owner of the home is the one that is fully in control.

The recurring theme in the gemara is that what begins as a casual non-threatening occurrence graduates into a full blown life of its own, fully controlling its captive.

The seforim explain that Yom Kippur is the opportunity to gaze at the brilliant light that Hakadosh Boruch Hu shines upon us as we cleanse ourselves, finally releasing the strong grasp that the yeitzer hara has on us. Through this day, we can become new people that are no longer bound by the shackles that tied us down. We can disconnect from our previous actions and proclivities.

Yom Kippur is the proverbial pressing of the hard reset button.

We find this concept in *Parshas Vayeira*. Upon hearing the news that she will have a child, Sarah laughs. When questioned, she denies this and says that she didn't laugh. The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l asks: How can we to understand Sarah Imainu's response? The Torah clearly states that she laughed. This is not the type of behavior that one would expect from a matriarch!!

The Kotzker explains that when Sarah was asked why she laughed, her response was, "I am not connected to the Sarah that did that action. That was someone else." As one of the *Imahos*, Sarah displays a lightening quick teshuva. More importantly, she teaches us the importance of moving on, and not living in the past.

What happens the day after Yom Kippur? We will go to wherever it is that our schedule takes us and surely, we will only see and hear beautiful things. Without a doubt, the *Yeitzer Hara* has been vanquished forever. But alas, that is not the case. He is once again right there waiting for us, laying down the exact same traps.

But what about the whole *schmuess* we just discussed? What did Yom Kippur accomplish? What about the *taharah*

and transformation we all went through?

Rav Yosef Elefant shlita beautifully explained as follows: On that first day when the Yeitzer Hara showed up as a traveller; when we saw a hanging thread that looked like a spider web, we were in control. It is true that temptation was there, but we were calling the shots. We could have easily told the visitor that he is no longer welcome and should not come back again. The cobwebs as well would have been so easy to clean up and say goodbye to. But we didn't and completely lost control allowing the snowball effect to occur.

The day after Yom Kippur we are once again in control and can easily say no to all temptations. Once again the Yeitzer Hara will appear but only as a thin strand and a passerby. The only question that remains is will we welcome it in this year as we may have in the past or will this year be different and we will easily push it aside remaining in control.

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**אור זרוע לצדיק**

***“A light is sown for the Righteous”***

Kol Nidrei night has finally. It is now the moment that we have all been waiting for. The Yom HaDin that we

have all eagerly counted towards is upon us. The shul is full and the chazzan stands at the bimah flanked by the Rav and another prominent member both holding sifrei torah all dressed in white. By now emotions are running high as every member of Klal Yisroel has finished wishing each other forgiveness and well wishes for the New Year. It is at this point that the Chazzan begins his intro to the Kol Nidrei with the holy words אור זרוע לצדיק – “A light is sown for the Righteous”.

What can we learn from these *hailigeh* words that will inspire us to truly live a better life, and why is this recited just before the awesome moment of Kol Nidrei?

Rashi and the Radak (Tehillim97) explain that the reward for mitzvos and the personal perfection that is their result is like seeds sown in fertile soil. This is an optimistic message of inspiration that can be focused on as we prepare to climb the “Har HaShem” this coming year.

Perhaps we can offer another explanation that will connect Kol Nidrei with these words:

The Pirkei D'Rabi Elazar shares with us the incredible story of what transpired with Yonah while he was inside of the fish during those three days. It was as if he had walked into a huge shul. The

eyes of the fish were like the glass windows, all lit up brilliantly like the sun, with a dazzling stone hanging from its innards providing a special light. Upon the stone, the words אור זרוע לצדיק – “A light is sown for the Righteous” were written. Through that stone he was able to see everything in the Lower and Upper Worlds.

There are a few parallels that we can mention. At this point, Yonah announced that נדרתי אשלמה – *What I have vowed, I will fulfill.* For now, our first connection with is that we say Ohr Zarua leading into Kol Nidrei to think of Yonah’s final decision to keep his *neder*/word.

Although on a basic level this fits well, there have been many other great people that have kept their word. Perhaps there is a deeper lesson.

The Abarbanel tells us that Yonah’s entrance into the stomach of the fish is reminiscent to a baby’s existence in the mother’s womb; Yonah was being reborn at that moment.

The gemara in Mesechta Niddah (30b) teaches that a candle is lit above the head of the fetus which allows the baby to look from one end of the world to the other. We also know from the gemara in Masechta Chagiga (12a) that the original light of the world carried this same feature. However, that light was hidden away for the Tzaddikim. From

here we can derive that it was this very light that Yonah in his rebirth was utilizing, hence the possuk, אור זרוע לצדיק – “A light is sown for the Righteous”, referring to this special light that is reserved for the tzaddik.

The gemara in Masechta Niddah (30b) also tells of the very first *shavua*/oath that each and every one of us take. We are all adjured to swear that we will be a tzaadik and not a rasha.

I would like to suggest that as we enter into the holiest moment of the year, angelic and completely pure; we are reminded of these events. We are told, אור זרוע לצדיק – at our very beginning, we looked into the light that is reserved for the tzaadik, envisioning a glimpse of the possibility of what our future may entail. We then say the Kol Nidrei- at that moment we are reminded that while looking into the candle, we made a promise to strive to greatness, righteousness and holiness. These were the dreams hopes and aspirations of each and every one of us before coming into this world.

כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא – *For there is no righteous man on earth who does good and sins not (Koheles 7:20).* But of course, life happens. Dreams are dashed and promises are broken. The clouds form and our clarity is gone with the wind.

It is specifically now at the clearest moment of the year, we are told “gaze again at that light”. Let the light of the tzaddikim be a vision of greatness that is within our reach and can be achieved. The goals that we set shall not just be enough to “get by”; we must think big! We must think tzidkus.

Let us keep in mind that HaShem only asks us to make this promise because He knows that we can.

This year, let us not sell ourselves short by taking aim at a goal that is low. Let us set our sights on greatness and in that case, as the saying goes, “if you aim for the moon and fall short, you will still end up in the stars”.

**וסמך אהרן את שתי ידו על ראש השעיר  
החי והתודה עליו את כל עונת בני  
ישראל ואת כל פשעיהם לכל חטאתם  
ונתן אתם על ראש השעיר ושלה ביד  
איש עתי המדברה**

*And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat's head and confess upon it all the willful transgressions of the Bnai Yisrael, all their rebellions, and all their unintentional sins, and he shall place them on the he goat's head, and send it off to the desert with a timely man (16:21)*

The פסוקים discuss the avodah of Yom Kippur performed by the Kohen Gadol. One of the more enigmatic rituals was the sa'ir la'Azazel – the “scapegoat” sent into the desert by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur.

In fact, there were two male goats featured in the avodah of Yom Kippur. Ideally, they would be similar in appearance, height and value, and purchased together in a single transaction (Mishnah Yoma 6:1). The first goat is brought as a chatas – a national sin-offering. The Kohen Gadol then says vidui/confession for Klal Yisroel on the second goat, which is then escorted out to the desert by a designated person (the “ish iti”) who pushes it off a cliff to its death.

The entire avodah defies easy explanation, and many meforshim discuss its meaning and what we are meant to learn from it.

According to the Kli Yakar, these two goats allude to the two goats prepared by Rivka for Yaakov, in order to receive the brachos from Yitzchak (Bereshis 27:9).

Similarly, the Abarbanel compares the two goats to Yaakov and Esav, signifying that two brothers can be raised in the same home with the exact same values, and ultimately proceed on divergent paths in life depending on the choices they make. This parsha should

serve as a warning that choosing the right path in life is not at all an easy task and requires vigilance (Rav Shamshon R. Hirsch notes that the goral-lottery by which each goat was selected for its chosen avodah alludes to the ability of man to choose between good and bad).

Another part of the avodah was the sending of the goat with the designated person (“ish iti”) who would then push it off a cliff to its death. This was done with great fanfare as the ish iti would be accompanied by the most important people of Yerushalayim (Yakirei Yerushalayim), pausing along the way from one sukkah to another.

It is interesting that these great people would accompany him on the holy day of Yom Kippur as if they had nothing better to do with their time. Wasn't this the most exciting day to be a spectator at the Beis Hamikdash? Only once a year could one see the way the Kohen Gadol ran to and fro, changing from one set of garments to the other and immersing in the mikvah five different times, the gold garments, and the linen ones, the burning of the ketores and offering the korban; this was true glory and excitement happening in front of everyone's eyes that no one wanted to miss. Think of all the hisorerus that one could glean from such a sight! And yet, these people went to accompany the ish iti so that he should not go alone, thus

underscoring the importance of chessed being greater than even witnessing the avodah on yom Kippur. At the same time gives us an insight as to why these people were called the “Yakirei Yerushalayim” (Lachzos Binoam HaShem).

We can suggest perhaps another limud from here. This person was called *ish iti* because he was designated for this purpose. These people went along with him to teach us that any person that truly fulfills their mission can be just as great as a kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur (respectively).

True that Reuven may not possess Shimon's talents, but he must know that he is also not expected to accomplish Shimon's mission. As the famous story of the rebbe Reb Zeesha goes: Reb Zusha was on his deathbed, surrounded by his talmidim. He was crying and no one could comfort him. One talmid asked him: “Rebbe, Why do you cry? You were almost as wise as Moshe and as kind as Avraham.” Reb Zusha answered, "When I pass from this world and appear before the Beis Din Shel Maalah (Heavenly Tribunal), they won't ask me, 'Zeesha, why weren't you as wise as Moshe or as kind as Avraham,' rather, they will ask me, 'Zeesha, why weren't you Zeesha?' Why didn't I fulfill my potential, why didn't I follow the path that could have been mine? That is why I am crying."

One last limud from the ish iti is that while being accompanied by the others, he would make pauses along the way stopping from one sukkah to another. Perhaps this can be a lesson to us for when we are ridding ourselves of something bad. Each step of the way, we must check to make sure that our motives are correct and that the mission will be accomplished without missing anything. Furthermore, sometimes the job is so dangerous that we must ask others to stay involved so that we don't become harmed along the way.

### ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדבריך

*And HaShem said, "I have forgiven according to your words."*

Throughout the selichos and davening we recite the possuk that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu at the climax of his appeal for forgiveness on behalf of Klal Yisroel. This possuk bears such great importance that it is set right at the beginning of the Yom Kippur davening. In essence, what we are saying is that just as HaShem forgave Klal Yisroel then, we hope that He will forgive us this Yom Kippur as well.

Let us think back for a moment to a time when we were children and in shul right before Yom Kippur. We would run over to our friends and with a half-smile, we would say, "are you moichel

me?" And they would respond, "sure". Then we would run to the next friend and do the same, perhaps, not really even thinking about why we may be asking for mechila. If we are being honest with ourselves, we may wonder, "How much is that forgiveness really worth?" I am not claiming that it is worthless, but my assumption is that this would not be enough if true and proper mechilla was necessary. Perhaps we can say that the mechilla is worth as much as the thought that went into the request.

Similarly, on Yom Kippur, at the time when we ask HaShem to forgive us for our actions, we should keep this in mind. ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדבריך - *And HaShem said, "I have forgiven according to your words."* **According to your words-** if our request is a sincere request, the response will be a sincere response. However, if our entire approach is lackadaisical and insincere, the response will be "**according to your words**".

*It is up to us to set up the manner in which we want HaShem to respond.*

*Wishing everyone a גמר חתימה and gebentched yuhr!*

**מרדכי אפפעל**