

the Kohen Gadol to make sure he remained ritually pure and had every aspect of the service down pat. It was also an opportune time for introspection, when he could finalize his spiritual preparation for representing the Jewish people on the holiest day in the holiest place on earth.

The Rabbi Reads About What?

In the late afternoon, before sundown, while exhausted and painfully hungry, we read chapter 18 of Leviticus, which details the prohibitions against incest and other forbidden sexual behaviors. This is a seemingly inappropriate passage to be read at such a lofty and pivotal moment in our journey of repentance. The reason we read this passage at this moment is that it serves as a reminder that however high we try to ascend, we are still mortal beings with lowly urges and desires. Mentioning the lowliest sins serves as a reminder as to how important our daily actions are, and how meaningful the daily struggle with the evil inclination truly is.

The Final Blast

The blowing of the *shofar* at the conclusion of Yom Kippur is the culmination of a day spent fasting and praying for a sweet new year and is followed by the proclamation, "Next Year in Jerusalem."

The blast is reminiscent of the *shofar* blasts that rang out when the Divine Presence departed from Mount Sinai. It also serves to remind everyone that the night following Yom Kippur is a quasi-holiday, replete with a festive meal. To help everyone remember this, it is also appropriate to wish each other a "good *yom tov*!"

What We Do After Yom Kippur

We then partake of a festive after-fast meal, making the evening after Yom Kippur a *yom tov* (festival) in its own right.

Indeed, although Yom Kippur is the most solemn day of the year, it is suffused with an undercurrent of joy; it is the joy of being immersed in the spirituality of the day and expresses confidence that G-d will accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and seal our verdict for a year of life, health and happiness.

There is a custom that after Yom Kippur, we immediately begin (planning) construction of the sukkah, which we will use for the joyous holiday of Sukkot, which follows in just five days.

Live & Laugh

Last Shabbos my wife served me food from last year. When I complained, she told me this Shabbos I won't get anything to eat! When I asked why, she got very angry and told me that next week I will have to eat in the street!

Calendar

Saturday 30 Sep - Yom Kippur

- ◆ Shacharit: 7:30 am; Shtibl: 8:00 am
- ◆ Yizkor ± 10:30 am
- ◆ Fast Ends: 6:38 pm

Wednesday 4 Oct - Erev Sukkos

- ◆ Eiruv Tavshilin
- ◆ Candles: 5:51 pm (Blessings for Yom Tov & Shehecheyanu)
- ◆ Evening Services: 6:00 pm
- ◆ Eat in Sukkah tonight

The Rabbis, Officials and Shul Council wish you all
G'mar Chasima Tova - Well Over the Fast.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO BUY A SUKKAH AND/OR A LULAV & ETROG THIS YEAR.

Simchas Torah Dinner
Thursday night 12 Oct.
Full Course Dinner Catered by
Stan & Pete.
Rousing, *Lebedig*, Spirited and Inspiring.
Booking at Shul office or
www.sydshul.co.za

SIMCHAS TORAH LADIES PROGRAMME
Rebbetzin Rochel: You Are Beautiful!
Rebbetzin Estee: Why Do We Dance?
Followed by Delicious Breakfast
Friday 13 October 10:15am
Sydenham Community Centre

- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org, Rabbi Stern

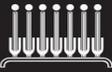
7"ב



NOW IN OUR
75TH
YEAR OF INSPIRATION

Good Yom Tov SYDENHAM!

Published by the
Sydenham Highlands North
Hebrew Congregation
Johannesburg, South Africa



30 Sep 2017 Yom Kippur 10 Tishrei 5778

Yom Kippur Without Guilt On Memory, Remorse & Returning By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

Q: I want to know, what does the process of examining one's past deeds undertake for someone who abandoned a religious lifestyle because she was abused by the authority figures of that system?

Or someone who grew up in a world where there was no moral standard, and just now is starting out on a path guided by Torah and mitzvahs?

Or for someone struggling with trauma or depression? Someone who already feels rotten about herself?

In all these cases, beating your chest and crying out, "I have sinned! I have sinned! Forgive me!" seems a mockery at best, and could even be self-abusive.

A: You've latched onto a common fundamental error concerning Yom Kippur: That it's about the past.

Get this straight: The past is done with. What happened happened. A moment of time came as a lightning bolt out of nowhere, did its thing, and retreated back into the void. Gone.

Life is about where you're at right now. Don't waste a precious moment now messing around with what was then and exists no longer.

Memories, on the other hand, exist in the now. They haunt you, they nag you, they drag you down. They dictate who you must think you are and what you must believe you are incapable of. But since they exist in the now, you can reframe

them. Just rewrite the narrative, using the same elements, but leading along a different path. Like taking a long, wriggly string, and pulling it from the end to straighten it out. So too you can straighten out the story of how you got here.

Listen to the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi in chapter 29 of Tanya (italics are my own):

You return with your heart.

And the heart has many facets and layers.

Everything is measured by who you are at this time in this place.

If now the fire of your soul is not burning bright, it's time to return yet higher.

Who are you now, here, in this place? How much deeper has your heart become? How much higher have you learned to reach? And what are the memories that hold you down, prisoner to your past self?

So you were justified in what you did back then. It wasn't your fault. You had no other choice. You made the right decision, given the dark and smelly junk they were throwing at you. You didn't sin. You didn't sin.

Or maybe you did. We all have choices. Maybe you took a bad turn.

Who cares? None of that matters. All that matters is where you want to get now.

What's holding you back from getting there? That you identify with the past.

Drop It

Try this: Imagine you're hurtling through distant space on a rocket ship. There's a module attached that held fuel. It was real useful. In fact, it got you to this point. But it's empty now.

So what do you do? You jettison it. And now you move even faster.

Or imagine yourself drifting above, carried in the basket of a hot-air balloon. All you had to do was cut the rope that tied you down, and you soared upward towards the heavens. But now, you've reached a plateau. You're no longer rising.

What do you do? You throw over a few sandbags, and rise yet higher.

Those sandbags were useful at one time. Without them, you would have risen too high too quickly. But now, they've gained a new purpose. They've become a means for you to elevate yourself—by throwing them overboard.

Even your rebellion—maybe it came from outrage and indignation with hypocrisy, All your experiments with life—maybe they were part of your journey, your search for truth and meaning.

But now it's time to move ahead. That indignation, that search, that struggle, it needs a new context. You need to see past the persona who did those things, you need to see inside. Because, otherwise, you're stuck in the ditch at the side of the road.

You are a Lamborghini sitting still on the highway, because you haven't noticed the rush-hour traffic has past.

You are the heir to a magnificent estate living on the street, because that's all you know. That's who you believe you are.

Fly High

But you're not. You are a divine soul. And

Sydenham Shul 24 Main Street, Rouxville, 2192.

Telephone: 640-5021, Fax: 485-2810

E-mail: sydshul@sydshul.co.za

Website: www.sydshul.co.za

www.facebook.com/sydenhamshul

the only way to turn around your self-concept is to look back in those memories, look deeper, with the maturity and depth of insight you've gained, to find within those stories an innocent child of G-d, one who never really was any of those things you did—and to rescue that spark of innocence from there.

It will taste bitter. Those sandbags—they're holding you down. But only for a moment. A single tear of bitterness, and the sandbag falls to oblivion.

On Yom Kippur, a Jew says, "Master of the Universe, Infinite Light, You made such amazing creations, You are such mystery, so awesome, so beautiful—and yet You want to unite with puny, little me, regardless of all my flaws and failures."

"Yes, I sinned. I was standing before You, and I was not aware. How could that be? You were always there with me, and so I was with you. And I want to be always together with You."

You jettison your baggage and hurtle into deep space.

Yom Kippur 2017

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, when we are closest to G-d and most connected to the essence of our souls. It's the holiest day of the year, when Jews come together, fasting and praying as one. The day is spent in the synagogue, where we hold five prayer services:

Beyond specific actions, Yom Kippur is dedicated to introspection, prayer and asking G-d for forgiveness. Even during the breaks between services, it is appropriate to recite Psalms at every available moment.

Kol Nidre Is Just the Beginning

The first prayer of Yom Kippur, known as Kol Nidre, is often thought of as the quintessential prayer of the day. In fact, it's not even a prayer! It is simply a declaration that all our vows be considered null and void.

To the Power of Five

It is well known that we do not eat or drink

on Yom Kippur. But did you know that it is just one of five things we eschew on this holy day? Here are the other four: conjugal relations, washing, applying lotions or oils and wearing leather footwear.

A Day to Forgive

More than 3,300 years ago, after hearing from G-d at Sinai, the children of Israel sinned by creating and worshipping a golden calf. Moses came down from Mount Sinai, saw what had happened, and smashed the two tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved. Moses then ascended the mountain once again, and stayed there for 40 days, and then another 40 days. On the tenth day of the month of Tishrei he came down with a complete pardon as well as a second set of tablets.

Ever since, the day of Moses's descent has been known as Yom Kippur, the day of forgiveness, an appropriate day to ask G-d (and others) to forgive us for anything we may have done wrong. We are all human, and we occasionally slip. Is there anyone you may have offended or otherwise hurt? Go ahead and ask for their forgiveness. Are you carrying any grudges? Now is the time to sincerely and wholeheartedly let them go.

Pure White

There is an ancient custom to wear white on Yom Kippur. This reminds us of the burial shrouds that all people wear eventually. But the white garments also remind us of the pristine angels to whom we are compared on this most sacred of days.

Yom Kippur Is for Every Jew

It's a day of unity. No matter what you do all year long, there is a place for you in the synagogue—just as we were at Sinai, "as one people with one heart."

The 10 Martyrs of Yom Kippur

The narrative of the Ten Martyrs graphically depicts the horrific death of ten sages at the hand of an evil Roman king nearly 2,000 years ago. Notable among the victims were Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamliel. This heart-rending account describes deaths that were brought about on the altar of senseless hatred. Ashkenazic Jews read the account of the Ten Martyrs in the Yom Kippur liturgy

after the description of the High Priest's service in the Temple on Yom Kippur.

Five Prayers

On an ordinary day, there are three daily prayers: Maariv (evening prayer), Shacharit (morning prayer) and Minchah (afternoon prayer). On Shabbat and holidays, we add Musaf (additional prayer). Yom Kippur is the only day of the year when we pray Ne'ilah, the closing prayer, which is said as the sun is sinking in the west and this special day is coming to a close.

Dip, Drip, Dress, Repeat!

In the Holy Temple, Jews didn't pray with prayer books on Yom Kippur (in fact, prayer books weren't even invented yet). Instead, the focus of the day was to watch the High Priest perform Yom Kippur's sacred duties in the Temple. There were animals to slaughter and sacrifice, incense to burn, and much more to do before the day was done. Some of his duties would be carried out in his ornate, colorful gold-trimmed uniform. Others were done wearing a plain outfit of white linen. Every time he needed to change, he would slip behind a screen, disrobe, dip into the purifying waters of the *mikvah*, towel off, and then get dressed again. Now, the floors weren't heated, and it can get chilly in Jerusalem in the fall, so he needed to be in tip-top form!

The Two Goats and the Red String

Two goats were brought to the Temple. The High Priest would draw lots, one bearing the words, "to the L-rd," the other, "to Azazel." The goat for which the words "to the L-rd" fell was offered as a sacrifice. The High Priest confessed the sins of the nation over the other goat, and it was then taken away into the desert hills outside Jerusalem to plunge to its death, taking the sins of the people with it. Tradition tells us that a scarlet thread would be attached to its horns, and half of the thread was removed before the animal was sent away. If the rite had been effective, the red thread that remained would turn to white, symbolizing Israel's purity.

A Week to Prepare

The Kohen Gadol (High Priest) would be separated from his family and community for a week before Yom Kippur, holed up in the "Lishkat Parhedrin," a special chamber in the Holy Temple. This isolation process served as a way for