

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 179

Yom Kippur | Atonement - Banishing the Spirit of Folly



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

פרשת יום כיפור | אנגלית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Publisher and Distributor of the Teachings of
Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l



500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47
Teaneck, NJ 07666



en@h-l.org.il



www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en



HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel



(954) 800-6526



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Yom Kippur

How To Repent

The heart-rendering prayer of Kol Nidrei was just about to begin.

Moshe stood in the synagogue, his head covered with a tallit, and his eyes fixed on the prayer book, unsuccessfully trying to calm his tumultuous emotions.

Just a few hours earlier, he had come across a book graced by Rabbi Yoram Abargel's image.

His curiosity was piqued, and he began to read:¹

"Yom Kippur is an opportune time for forgiveness and atonement for all one's sins.

The Rambam writes (Hilchot Teshuva 1:3):

The essence of the day of Yom Kippur atones for those who repent.'

Meaning that the power of Yom Kippur's atonement is specifically

extended to those who repent during that time, but not to those who don't.

Further on, writes the Rambam in the same vein (ibid. 2:7):

'Yom Kippur is a time of repentance for everyone, both individuals and the community. It is the time of forgiveness and pardon for Israel; therefore, everyone must repent and confess on Yom Kippur.'

The requirement is that one repent and regret their misdeeds in order for the powerful effect of the holy day to take hold.

This can be compared to a laundromat where dirty clothes are brought to be cleaned.

If someone brings their dirty clothes to the laundromat and places them in the center of the room, but forgets to put them in

Yom Kippur - How To Repent

the washing machine, they will, of course, remain dirty.

To clean the clothes, they must be placed inside the washing machine.

Similarly, regarding Yom Kippur:

The purpose of the day is to cleanse the souls of the Jewish people from the stains of their sins. However, for this to happen, one must enter the essence of Yom Kippur into their heart, meaning to be involved in the service of repentance.

Without this participation on the part of man, there is no way to achieve the cleansing and the purification of the soul."

From the moment he read these inspiring words, Moshe's insides began to churn.

He had always felt the magnitude of the revered day of Yom Kippur and looked forward to the cleansing effect it would have upon him, but repentance? How would he go about it? It

seemed daunting and unspecified.

In the few minutes he had in the busy afternoon before the onset of Yom Kippur, he called his scholarly friend Eliyahu.

"Eliyahu, how does one practically repent?"

Eliyahu replied:

"I happen to be currently studying the words of the Rambam on the laws of repentance, by Divine providence, where he explains four different elements that pertain to repentance:²

1. Abandoning the sin
2. Regret for the past transgressions
3. Verbal confession
4. A firm commitment to not to repeat the sin in the future.

"Do you understand?" continued Eliyahu.

"In other words, the work of repentance involves three elements

Yom Kippur - Repent While There's Still Time

in a person: emotion, speech, and intellect.

One who recalls the sins they committed, has the emotional feeling of shame - 'How did I dare rebel against G-d and violate His command?'

The next stage is when the person verbally details all the sins they committed, as the verse states:

"If a man or woman commits any sin of man, to sin before G-d, and that person is guilty. And they must confess the sin they have committed" (Numbers 5:6-7).

Finally, a person must resolve deeply and intellectually, not to repeat the sin again."

Moshe stood in the synagogue, recalling the conversation with Eliyahu, his head buried deep in the prayer book, trying to focus

his thoughts and recall the sins he committed over the past year.

Fragments of such memories surfaced in his mind:

The many arguments he had with Shlomi, his occasional failure to guard his eyes, and his habit of consuming unhealthy food with much desire.

Moshe decided to confess those sins that he remembered and clenched his fist as he beat his chest, reciting the 'Al Chet' prayer.

Moshe however, was not satisfied and felt quite disappointed.

He couldn't remember precisely when and to what degree he had transgressed.

Additionally, he didn't know how exactly to confess and what he had to say and think.

What was the idea behind confession anyway?

Repent While There's Still Time

Yom Kippur ended, and Moshe felt a certain sense of purity and relief.

At the same time, he felt he had lost, he did not achieve proper repentance.

Yom Kippur - Repent While There's Still Time

He decided at once to go over to visit his rabbi.

The entire walk, he repeatedly thought to himself:

"I am so terrible, I am a total failure and have no chance. I can't even complete the first step of repentance - recalling and verbalizing the sins I've committed."

When Moshe arrived, he blurted out: "Rabbi, how can I return to Judaism?"

"Moshe, what happened, why are you asking?"

"This Yom Kippur, I felt that in the most critical moments, in those few hours of sublime prayer and devotion, I was unable to do anything of any meaning or substance."

"Why?" asked the rabbi. "Why do you say that you couldn't do anything, you can always fulfill the obligation to repent?"

"That's precisely why I came to the rabbi.

To repent, one needs to be deeply connected to oneself, to their thoughts, words, and actions.

However, this year on Yom Kippur, it became clear to me that I am not connected to myself. I am not aware of my actions at all, so how can I possibly confess them?"

The rabbi looked at him and smiled: "You came at just the right time"

The rabbi opened the book of Psalms before him and read: "His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day, his thoughts perish" (Psalms 146:4).

"King David describes what happens at the time of death:

"On that very day, his thoughts perish" - on the person's last day in this world, when he feels that his end is immediate, he is told to recite the confessional prayers.

He then tries to confess and consider his deeds but discovers that throughout all of his life he was not connected to himself, and can't account for his deeds and repent.

Yom Kippur - Repent While There's Still Time

Thus, he doesn't properly confess, but instead 'his thoughts perish' - like flashes of lightning passing before his eyes, various

fragments of thoughts, darting before his eyes, and he dies with the terrible sense of missed opportunity, not having repented."³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

3. There is great virtue in even a single thought of repentance, through which a person is cleansed and rectified.

However, unfortunately, some people are quite distant from the thought of repentance.

On this matter, Rabbi Mordechai Gerfitz told the following story ('Kohen Gadol Mishaves', p. 239):

A Jewish peasant woman stood one day in front of the attendant of the holy Rabbi Zvi Hirsch of Riminov, with a strange request:

Her elderly father, a Jew who had already passed the age of one hundred, lived in her home in one of the surrounding villages, and was exhausted from life due to his old age.

Four years, he had been wishing for death, but all in vain, he kept on living on and on.

Her request, therefore, was to write on her behalf a note to the righteous man, asking him to pray for her father's speedy death.

Upon hearing these words, the attendant was horrified to his core and scolded the peasant woman in a loud voice:

"Woe to the ears that hear such things! What nonsense are you talking about?! Is this something that is appropriate to ask of the righteous rabbi?!"

Hearing the attendant's loud rebuke, which had successfully reached his ears, the rabbi summoned the attendant inside and asked to know what was happening.

The attendant told the rabbi the situation as it was.

"Let her enter!" - the rabbi instructed him.

The rabbi heard the words from the peasant woman and began to inquire if perhaps her father had performed a special mitzvah during his life, which might have merited him such longevity.

But she did not know how to answer.

All she could say was that her father was an ignorant, coarse, and violent person, whose only purpose in this world was eating and drinking.

"Such a rare wonder, I wish to see it with my own eyes!" - replied Rabbi Zvi Hirsch - "In a few days, I will come, G-d willing, to visit your father in his village!"

When he arrived at the village, the rabbi met a healthy and robust man, whose extreme old age had not marked him in any way at all.

His ignorance was clearly visible in his eyes, to the extent that even the visit of

Yom Kippur - Repent While There's Still Time

a holy man like Rabbi Zvi Hirsch did not bring him any joy.

'Have you ever visited a righteous man in your life?' - the rabbi asked the man.

'I have nothing to do with these people!' - the old man retorted rudely - 'I have never liked them, and I have never wanted to see them!'

'Nevertheless' - replied Rabbi Zvi Hirsch calmly - 'not everything in life always goes as one wishes. It is possible, therefore, that you have met or seen a righteous man, even if you did not want to!'

'Indeed, you are right!' - the old man suddenly confirmed - 'It was many years ago when I happened to see a righteous man - like you - whose name was Rabbi Elimelech, and he lived in Litzensk!'

'I was a wagon driver then' - the old man continued to dredge up details from his memory - 'and a group of Chassidim ordered a trip with me to Litzensk, to go and return. We traveled for Shabbat, and we returned right after it.

When we reached Litzensk, they went to Rabbi Elimelech, and I chose a good inn to rest in.

On Shabbat day, after I had already finished eating a hearty meal at my inn in Litzensk and topped it off with a few glasses of hard liquor, I went out for a walk in the streets of the town.

In this manner I came near the Beit Midrash of the Chassidim, and I heard powerful voices coming from it.

My curiosity was aroused, and I decided to see for myself what these Chassidim were doing together with their leader.

Well, what can I tell you - the old man burst into laughter - this was indeed some sight to see!

My friends always told me that all the Chassidim do is drink hard liquor, and now indeed, there I saw it with my own eyes!

The faces of the Chassidim were flushed and glowing - it must have been from drinking, of course.

Their shouts reached the heavens, they were jumping and dancing and waving their hands, and it was clear to day that they had consumed a good and hearty drink!

Don't be mistaken, I too had drunk a fair amount of liquor that morning. But it was nothing compared to what these Chassidim had managed to drink!

'And did you see the face of the righteous man, Rabbi Elimelech himself?' - the rabbi continued to inquire.

'What a question?' - the old man's voice echoed - 'I saw him too, and his face was even redder and more glowing than those of the other Chassidim, it seemed to me that he had drunk more than all of them combined.

When the old Jewish peasant finished uttering his foolish and disrespectful profile, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch began to speak to him in a gentle manner.

'Know, my brother, that when you were fortunate to have seen Rabbi

Yom Kippur - Repent While There's Still Time

Elinetech of Litzhensk, your eyes beheld
an angel of the G-d of Hosts!

Eating and drinking did not concern him at
all, but rather the service of his Creator with
all his might and self-sacrifice. This was his
way, and this was the way of his Chasidim
who traveled to be under his wing.

Now because you were intimate to
have seen the face of that righteous man,
you cannot die and leave this world until
you repent for all your sins!

'And what does it mean to return in
repentance?' - the old man asked with
great interest.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch began to explain to
him the history of the Jewish people,
from the creation of the world to the
giving of the Torah, and enumerated the
main principles of the Torah and the
commandments that apply to every Jew.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch spoke at length, and
the old man listened intently to every
word that came out of his holy mouth.

Suddenly, the old man's mouth twisted
and he emitted a deep and guttural cry,
and his eyes began to shed tears.

'More than a hundred years have passed
since I was orphaned from my parents!' -
he said, weeping quietly - 'I was a small
child, and I had to take care of myself and
earn my living with my own ten fingers.

I never had the chance to sit in a "cheder" and
learn something Jewish, even for a single
month, and everything you have just told me,
I did not know until this very moment.

Believe me, I never knew, nor did I
ever investigate, the difference between
a Jew and a non-Jew.

Now, in my old age, when both of my
feet are already firmly implanted in the
grave, I can no longer turn back the wheel
of my life! Woe to me, for I lived like a
non-Jew - and like a non-Jew, I will die!

'Know,' - the rabbi spoke to his heart -
'that the gates of repentance are never
closed, and it is never too late to return
in complete repentance before our
merciful Father in Heaven, whose hand
is extended to receive those who return.'

The old man's weeping grew stronger by
the moment, and his mouth did not cease to
utter words of confession and regret for his
sins. Seeing that the old man had reached
the highest gates of repentance, the rabbi
rose from his seat hurriedly and began
running towards the door, calling out:

'Wait, wait! I am a Cohen!'

Just as the rabbi managed to step outside
- to avoid becoming ritually impure from
being under the same roof as the dead - the
old man returned his soul to his Creator.

'As long as he had not repented,' - Rabbi Zvi
Hirsch explained to his companions - 'he was
prevented from dying, for he had merited to
spend a brief moment in the shadow of the
holy Rabbi Elinetech, who had promised
that anyone who saw him would not die
without committing repentance.

His last tears were emitted from the
depths of his heart, and a true spark of
repentance was kindled within him.'

Yom Kippur - Bringing Repentance Back to Repentance

"You see, Moshe, Heaven had mercy on you and allowed you to feel a bit of the helplessness of the last day of life, so that you would be awakened and correct course.

You must take advantage of this gift and from now on begin to work on repentance.

"But Rabbi," Moshe cried, "how does one repent?"

"The first thing we must do is 'return back to repentance.'"

"I don't understand what that means?"

The rabbi smiled: "Please let me explain."

Bringing Repentance Back to Repentance

In a lecture delivered by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, he said the following ('Olamot', p.188):

On Rosh Hashanah, the fate of each of us for the coming year is written, but until the day of Yom Kippur, the book is not yet sealed; it has not yet been completed and sent to be published.

Now, during the Ten Days of Repentance, we can still make changes, and even erase our negative verdict entirely and rewrite it.

It all depends on how much effort we put into changing our ways and repenting.

Therefore, the customary blessing for these days is 'Amar

Chatima Tova' - a good final sealing.

But what does it mean to repent or return in repentance?

Simply, repentance means returning to the original place we have strayed from.

To return in repentance means to leave the negative places where we got lost and return to G-d, which is also returning to ourselves, to our innermost and truest self, being that the soul of a Jew is truly a part of G-d above.

More recently, the expression 'returning in repentance', had been misused and abused.

From its broad and deep meaning, which includes and

contains all the processes a person undergoes in their self-correction journey and their search for their spiritual roots, it has instead shrunk into a limited and superficial expression meaning that someone started observing commandments outwardly, and has thus transformed from 'secular' to 'religious'.

From being a profound transformation in all aspects of a person's life, repentance has turned into a sociological phenomenon, and from a continuous and multifaceted process, into a sudden and one-dimensional step.

Transitioning from non-observance to observance of the commandments is undoubtedly a significant part of returning, and indeed there must be at a certain moment a decisive inflection point when one decides 'I'm going for it, and going to change my life,' but all this still constitutes only the external and most basic aspect of repentance. Above this external change, deep currents of repentance flow, which are primarily internal and gradual in

nature and that is where the essence of repentance lies.

Another common misunderstanding is that a 'penitent' is someone who has found final answers to all their questions and rests comfortably with certainty in all areas, while in contrast, one leaving the fold is depicted as someone heroically confronting and dealing with questions and doubts.

In truth, every genuine process, whether moving toward the Divine or toward the forces of impurity, is constantly driven by questions.

The opposite is true, standing upon the precipice of uncertainty swallows all questions without answering them, while standing before a Torah that provides many answers only raises the appetite for more questions.

The saddest part is that everyone has somewhat lost the true meaning of 'returning in repentance':

People who do not currently identify with Torah and the commandments may wish to constantly improve their ways in

Yom Kippur - Repentance Means Returning

small doses according to their understanding, but will avoid doing so in fear of being perceived as 'becoming religious.'

Returning in repentance, however, in its original and true sense, is a wonderful experience that every man and woman of truth longs for more than anything.

There is nothing more thrilling, exciting, and delightful than returning to our true selves and to our Creator.

Development, spiritual growth and enlightenment, self-correction - these expressions all are facets of and a part of what Judaism calls 'repentance'.

Repentance Means Returning

"These are all wonderful words," Moshe said, "but all this brings us back to the opening question: what does it mean to return in repentance? How is it done?"

The rabbi's face became serious, and he opened *Likutei Moharan* (Kama, 35:1), and read:

"Know that repentance is returning the thing to the place from which it was taken. This is the aspect of Zarka - 'thrown back to the place from which it was taken - that place being wisdom'.

This means that the very meaning of the word 'repentance'

is to return something to its original place (*Sfat Harachal* *ibid*).

The word 'repentance' has the meaning of restoring, as the Torah uses this expression regarding a thief - "When he sins and recognizes his guilt, he must return what he stole" (Leviticus 5:23).

Just a thief who wants to correct his theft must return what he stole, similarly, when a sinner wants to repent, he must 'return' what he 'stole' to its original place.

To better explain this concept in *Likutei Moharan*, we bring a passage from the Talmud.

Folly of Transgressions

In Parshat Naso, the Torah teaches us about the law of the

Sotah - a woman who deviated from the path of modesty and

was suspected to have been unfaithful to her husband.

The Torah says: "If a man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him." (Numbers 5:12). There is an entire tractate to dealing with this subject, the Tractate of Sotah.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

4. Our holy sages warned greatly against the sin of seclusion with a member of the opposite gender (*Avotah Zarah 33b*).

That is, it is forbidden for a man to seclude himself with a woman alone, and it is forbidden for a woman to seclude herself with a man alone, and one must be very careful and cautious about this, for this sin is very severe.

A man should not remain in a house alone with a woman, nor should a woman remain alone with a man, and people should not take this lightly or treat it leniently, for the severity of this prohibition is very great in the eyes of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Especially, one must pay attention to young girls wandering alone without supervision, as this could, Heaven forbid, lead to a situation of seclusion with a man.

Similarly, boys should not seclude themselves or be alone with girls, and both boys and girls must be educated to avoid being left alone in situations of seclusion.

The following story is told:

One of the main scenarios detailed there is the law of a Suspected 'Sotah' - meaning if the husband warned his wife not to be secluded with a certain man, and she nonetheless was secluded with him.⁴

Rabbi Yankov of Lissa, merited all his life to study Torah, and famously authored 'Netivot Habeshara', a fundamental volume in the world of yeshivas.

Some time after his passing, his granddaughter came of age, and prepared for marriage.

His daughter, who was a widow, had to organize all the dowry alone.

Once, she traveled with her daughter to the big city to buy clothes and jewelry for the wedding, and they traveled alone with a non-Jewish wagon driver.

In the middle of the journey, the driver veered off the main road and entered a forest valley, bringing them to an abandoned and dilapidated house where some drunken peasants sat.

The wagon driver said to his companions: 'Here, I have brought you two rich women,' and the drunkards rejoiced, and took their money, put it on the table, and tied the mother and daughter by their hands and feet, intending to slaughter them.

Yom Kippur - Folly of Transgressions

The husband must then bring her to the Temple, where the priest tests her status with bitter waters she must then drink.

If she had sinned, the water would cause her death, but conversely, if she had not sinned, she would be blessed with good children.

The Talmud expands on this:

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

However, soon a quarrel broke out among the peasants over how to divide the money, as each wanted a larger share, all while the two women lay on the floor, bound, trembling with fear, crying, and pleading to be released.

The non-Jews paid no attention to them, and continued their argument, saying that soon they would kill them anyway.

Suddenly, an official carriage with speedy horses stopped nearby, and a police officer with a weapon emerged.

Upon seeing the officer, the peasants fled, leaving all the money on the table undivided.

The officer untied the women's bonds, returned their money, and said: 'Come to my carriage, and I will take you back to your home.'

They returned home, in shock from what had happened to them, but otherwise safe and sound, and they thanked G-d for saving them and returning their money.

When Rosh Lakish studied these words: 'If a man's wife goes astray,' he explored as to why the Torah used the term 'astray', could it not have used the simpler terms 'turn away', 'deviates' or even 'sin'?

Rather, the Torah wants to teach us a fundamental principle:

That night, the widow's father, the author of *Netivot Hachishpat*, appeared to her in a dream.

He said to her: 'I had a hard time saving you from up above since you violated the prohibition of seduction by traveling alone with a man.'

I ascended to the heavens and saw that a death sentence had been decreed upon you, and I pleaded and begged, but they would not relent.

I ascended to a higher level and cried, but was still not offered forgiveness.

So I ascended to an even higher hall, where I pleaded and offered that I would give as a gift all of the Torah insights that I had innovated, all just to save my daughter and granddaughter.

Ultimately, Elijah the Prophet was sent from Heaven to save you, in the form of a police officer...'

(Sichot Mohamud, Part 12, p. 137).

Your Kippur - Three Powers That Govern Man

"A person does not sin unless a spirit of foolishness enters them."⁵

Before we continue, let's preface.

Three Powers That Govern Man

The Zohar states the following (Midrash HaNe'elam, Vayera 109a):

"Rabbi Yehuda said, there are three aspects that govern in a person:

1. The intellect and wisdom, which is the power of the G-dly soul.
2. The natural instincts that govern and strengthen the body, and are known as the bodily soul.
3. The desire and craving for all kinds of evil.

To explain:

The highest aspect that leads a person is the intellectual soul,

which serves as a throne and chariot for the divine soul, and from it comes divine insights.

This Divine abundance descends only when one is properly and suitably purified, only then does the intellectual soul become a proper conduit for revealing Divine light.

However, if one does not purify themselves, this intellectual soul becomes a chariot for the animal soul and heretical ideas.

The intermediate power in a person, the bodily soul, is composed of four elements: the silent soul, the growing soul, the living soul, and the speaking soul. (See Shaarei Kedusha, Part 3 - Chapter 3).

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

5. In the words of the Talmud (Sabb 3a):

Resh Lakish said, a person does not commit a sin unless a spirit of folly enters him, as it is written: "If a man's wife goes astray" (Numbers 5:12) - "וָאִשָּׁה" - "goes astray" is written with a 'sh' (ו), implying foolishness.

The Maharsha explains there:

If the intention of the verse was to imply a sense of 'turning,' it should have written "וָאִשָּׁה" - 'If she turns' with a tet (ו) alone, and if the intention was merely to imply 'straying,' it should have written with a samech "וָאִשָּׁה". Instead it is written "וָאִשָּׁה", which must therefore be interpreted as foolishness.

Yom Kippur - The Cause of Evil - Foolishness

The lowest aspect is the craving soul, and this soul requires one to wage a severe battle.

In the words of the Zohar (ibid.):

"When a person lies on their bed at night, the desiring soul awakens the evil inclination and

contemplates with it, and to it adheres every evil thought, and they penetrate the heart and cling to it.

The craving soul continues to influence until it awakens the body to rise and sin.

After this preface, let us return to the words of Resh Lakish.

The Cause of Evil - Foolishness

From heaven, it was revealed to Resh Lakish that the source of all sins is foolishness - "A person does not commit a sin unless a spirit of foolishness enters them."

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, asked on this two questions:⁶

1. Every person has within their heart the desiring soul, which causes them to commit sins. If so, why does Resh Lakish ignore it, and attribute all sins to foolishness?

2. The verse from which Resh Lakish derived his principle is said about a woman, "If a man's wife goes astray" (Numbers 5:12).

If so, seemingly, foolishness being a cause for sin, is only true regarding women, who are generally considered light minded.

Why then did Resh Lakish make this statement generally, including in his statement also men?

Before we answer, let's preface.

The Purpose of Shattering the Vessels

In a lecture given by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, he said:⁷

The Kabbalistic texts explain that the world was created in two



6. 'Igrot Baal HaTanya Uvnei Doro' (p. III).

7. 'Tikun HaMerim' (p. 22).

Yom Kippur - The Purpose of Shattering the Vessels

overall stages called the world of Tohu (chaos) and the world of Tikun (rectification).

The primordial world of Tohu was a powerful existence destined for collapse due to its instability.

This collapse is referred to in Kabbalah as the 'shattering of the vessels,' since the existence and sustenance of a world of existence depends on its ability to contain the light of the Creator.

A breakdown in this capacity means a collapse in its ability to contain, causing the concealment of the light of the Creator from His creation.

With the collapse and 'shattering of the vessels' of the primordial world of Tohu, a process of Tikun began, where new vessels were created, and a good and proper order began to emerge anew. This process established the world of Tikun.

The creation of the world of Tohu, destined from the start for collapse, was not, G-d forbid, in vain. Its consequences affect us

in areas central to our lives in this world.

Firstly - the experience of the shattering, where the presence of G-d was concealed from His creation, is a traumatic, but formative experience on the path to the development of the world of Tikun, and it is what allowed for the existence of free choice.

This phenomenon, which seemingly is a failure and downfall, is essential for G-d's desire to reign over a people that recognizes Him willingly.

Secondly - all those lofty and wondrous spiritual lights that shone in the world of Tohu were not lost.

In the shattering of the vessels, sparks of this light were scattered throughout reality.

Now, they exist within and around us, in the deep recesses of our reality, awaiting their revelation and rectification.

G-d did not 'abandon' the immense powers of the Tohu, and He did not entirely remove them from creation.

Yom Kippur - Failure After Failure.

This reservoir of power is available to us, and we can draw salvation from it for all our crises and weaknesses if we only learn and know how to use it wisely.

This is not a simple matter. The world we live in is more rectified and stable, which is possible only because the powers of Tolu are hidden away and do not appear openly.

The intent of this concealment is to enable reality as we know it to be built broad and strong enough to contain the abundant and powerful lights of Tolu.

It is therefore understood that these two worlds, Tolu

and Tikun, must reunite. This reunion is the rectification of the world in the simplest sense - to mend what was broken, to restore the lights of Tolu into the vessels of reality, this time in a sustainable way.

It is for this task of rectification, that G-d created the souls of Israel.

Through struggling in our lowest of worlds, and overcoming all obstacles and trials, the Jewish people remove and elevate these lofty sparks from their imprisonment in the mundane worldly existence.

Failure After Failure.

The evil powers try in various ways to seduce the people of Israel, but fail time and again.

Within every Jew resides a divine soul, which is truly a part of G-d from above.

This soul is completely untainted by any desire or bad trait.²

It is a pure, clear, and clean soul, for whom all matters of this world are truly meaningless, and to it, the evil powers have nothing to offer.

Wellsprings of Wisdom

² The Jewish people are one united entity, and a Jew who removes himself from the community, is unwanted in Heaven.

On this matter, Rabbi Sholom Schwadron told the following story ('Shul Avich Veyagidcha', Part 1, p. 45):

Yona Kipper - Failure After Failure.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz married the daughter of a wealthy man who gave him a dowry of three thousand gold coins.

After his wedding, Rabbi Yonatan devoted himself night and day to Torah study and prayer as before.

He studied in the Beit Midrash with a study partner, and it is easy to imagine what kind of great learning it was, and how much holiness permeated that Beit Midrash, having Rabbi Yonatan and all the other sincere Jews studying and engaged in serving the Creator.

As is known, the powers of impurity feel holiness and rise to oppose it, and this was manifested by the non-Jews of the town building a church right opposite this Beit Midrash.

Of course, this annoyed all the visitors of the Beit Midrash, especially the two righteous men who studied there all day and night.

Rabbi Yonatan's study partner was a lively and hot-tempered person, who could not tolerate the crudeness and wickedness of these non-Jews who dared to build a place of impurity right opposite the Beit Midrash, and in his heat and anger, he decided to take action.

At midnight, when the town was cloaked in darkness, he climbed onto the roof of the church and broke the cross that was atop it.

Despite being cautious, he was caught in the act and apprehended by the non-Jewish populace.

However, no one in the Jewish community knew about the matter, only

that he had disappeared, and they went out to search for him everywhere they could think of, but they did not find him.

Meanwhile, the church guard came secretly to one of the community leaders and told him that the missing Jew had broken the cross atop the church, had been caught in the act, and had been sentenced by the priests to be hanged at the stake.

However, he knew of a back alley exit in the church building through which he could be smuggled out, but for this service, he asked for a sum of three thousand gold coins.

It was indeed a vast sum - said the guard - but because the personal risk was very great, he demanded no less than this amount.

The community leaders understood that there was no choice and organized groups of people to visit the homes of the community members and collect donations for the great mitzvah.

When the news reached Rabbi Yonatan, he immediately decided that the matter was urgent and that every moment was vital, for who knows what might happen till they visit all the community members and raise the necessary funds - the incited masses may by then already carry out their evil plan and hang him.

Rabbi Yonatan ran to his house, took the entire dowry sum he had received - three thousand gold coins, ran to the guard, and handed over everything to him.

The guard indeed remained faithful to his promise, and smuggled the Jew out

Yom Kippur - Failure After Failure.

through the back door, from where he was secretly smuggled away by the Jews to another city and was saved.

Rabbi Yonatan returned to his home and the Beit Midrash, but in the meantime, the charity collectors continued their work and had reached Rabbi Yonatan's home.

He told them there was no longer a need, as he had given all the money necessary, and the captive had been redeemed and released.

The charity collectors turned to him and asked him to take the amount they had collected so far as reimbursement, for they too deserve a share in the mitzvah, after all, they volunteered and collected, and all the community members contributed.

"Take what we have collected, and with it, we will also have a share in the mitzvah, and the rest will be yours."

Rabbi Yonatan refused: "I have already given everything needed."

Some time passed, and Rabbi Yonatan began to worry. What will happen when his wife finds out that he had given away their entire dowry? She would certainly raise a storm, considering it was a vast sum, a real fortune.

Rabbi Yonatan decided to leave home for a few days until G-d granted him the wisdom to know what to do.

Meanwhile, at the church there was much noise and turmoil, the priests ran to and fro in agitation - the condemned man had escaped!

After investigation and inquiry, they discovered that the guard was involved in the escape, and he had smuggled the man out.

The guard, sensing the noose tightening around his neck, decided to flee.

He had been a guard at the church for forty years, and throughout this time, had managed to steal a lot of silver and jewels that Christians had donated to the church over the years.

He deliberated - what would he do with all this wealth? He couldn't carry all of it away with him?

Instead, he took all the barrels filled over the years with money, gold, and jewels, along with the three thousand gold coins he had just received, and went to Rabbi Yonatan's house.

He entered and asked Rabbi Yonatan's wife: "Where is your husband?"

She replied: "He is not home."

His time was running out, and he hurriedly told her everything that had happened, that he must flee immediately, and that he was not willing to leave all the wealth for the priests.

They are about to kill me - and I will leave such wealth for those scoundrels?!!

No, I will not leave it for them!

I discovered that your husband, Rabbi Yonatan, is a noble Jew who is willing to give his money to save his friend. I trust that if I return safely, he will return my wealth to me, but if I die, the money will be yours.

As the holy Rabbi Schneur Zalmen of Liadi wrote (paraphrased):⁸

"We have witnessed many simple Jews who gave up their

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

The guard then fled, but as soon as he stayed overnight at an inn, he was captured by the priests' envoys, seized, and drowned in the nearby river.

Rabbi Yonatan's wife knew the entire story; she knew that G-d had already repaid them for the noble and righteous act they had done. Now, not only had their money been returned, but they had been granted wealth twenty times more, and she was filled with joy and happiness.

Rabbi Yonatan, meanwhile, traveled to return home, pondering how to tell his wife what had happened with the three thousand gold coins of their dowry.

When he arrived home, his wife came out to meet him, joyful and exuberant:

I already know everything that has happened; G-d has rewarded us many times over!

She told him the whole story; confident he would also be happy about the good fortune that they had received from Heaven.

When she finished, Rabbi Yonatan burst into bitter tears, crying and wailing like a small child, streams of tears flowing from his eyes.

His wife asked in astonishment: Why

are you crying? G-d has given us a great reward for the mitzvah.

Rabbi Yonatan replied: That is precisely why I cry.

If I was immediately repaid for a mitzvah, this means that my mitzvah was not desired in Heaven, and was instead thrown back in my face.

If they had been pleased with me for this mitzvah, they would have left its merit for me in the World to Come, for it is known that the true reward for mitzvot is given only in the World to Come.

It is only if a person's mitzvah is not desired, that they give him its reward here.

Rabbi Yonatan decided to fast for three days after which he asked the Divine spirit a "question in a dream": Why was my large contribution to redeeming the captives rejected?

The answer came from Heaven: Indeed, you were justified to cry.

Since you were narrow-minded and did not let others have a share in this mitzvah, instead wanting the entire mitzvah for yourself; you were given its reward already here in this world, leaving no great and primary reward in the world to come.

S. 'Igrot Beal HaTanya Umnei Doru' (p. 89).

Yom Kippur - Failure After Failure.

lives in the sanctification of G-d's name and yet did not convert out of the faith to save their lives.

This is because G-d has ingrained deep inside of us that we are His people and a part of His inheritance.

As the verse states: "The spirit of man is the lamp of G-d" (Proverbs 20:27), meaning that just as it is natural for the flame to ascend upwards to its source, so too, the soul of a Jew naturally yearns to be united above, and pulls towards G-d, because it

was hewn from under G-d's Throne of Glory, and desires to be united with Him in oneness.

It is therefore, that a Jew will give his life for the sanctification of His name."¹⁰

When a Jew's soul shines in all its glory, all desires are considered void and naught before it, and he can easily overcome his animal soul.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov wrote similarly in *Likutei Moharan* (Kama, Torah 72):

Wellsprings of Wisdom

10. In the town of Medzibozh lived a man named Feivush, a light-hearted and wayward sinner. He had strayed from the proper path and there had not remained any sin that he did not commit.

Once, Feivush committed theft, was caught, imprisoned, and sentenced to death.

He was given only one option to save himself: if he would convert out of faith, heaven forbid, he would be acquitted.

Upon hearing this, the spark of Judaism within him flared, and he refused to convert under any circumstances, even when the judges threatened him with death.

He steadfastly replied: 'Feivush will

never trade the Eternal G-d for wood and stone.'

The cruel judges executed him in a horrible and cruel manner.

The Baal Shem Tov commanded that he be buried and that his gravestone be inscribed: Here lies Feivush, a light-hearted man who sanctified the Name of G-d publicly.

When Adel, the daughter of the Baal Shem Tov, heard this story, she was deeply moved and said: We did well to choose our G-d, and the Holy One, blessed be He, also did well to choose the Jewish people, for even Feivush, a light-hearted man, gave up his life in the sanctification of G-d's Name.

(*Kovetz Nachalat Tzvi*, Part 15, p. 242).

Yom Kippur - Foolishness of the Evil Inclination

"There are many levels of evil inclination.

Some people have a low, materialistic evil inclination.

For most, their evil inclination is simply their boiling lifeblood in the left side of the heart, which is powerful, and the main obstacles they face come from the clouding and disturbance caused by this blood.

However, in truth, to anyone with a bit of clear understanding and wisdom, the evil inclination is pure foolishness and madness, and requires no great effort to overcome it.

Even that which is considered a great trial by the masses, such as the test of lust, is foolishness and not a test at all for someone with any sense, and whoever knows a little of the greatness of our Creator, as the verse says: "For I know that the

L-rd is great, our Master above all gods" (Psalms 135:5).

This cannot be explained, neither in writing nor orally.

The greatness of G-d is only known to each individual according to what they grasp in their heart, as it says in the Zohar (Vayela 103b): "Her husband is known at the gates" (Proverbs 31:23) - "This refers to G-d who is grasped and understood by each one according to what they grasp in their heart."

Whoever merits to grasp the greatness of G-d will not consider anything to be a test and will not need any extraneous effort to overcome it."

Within every Jew burns a great fire and flame of the L-rd, and through this fire, they can overcome the lowly craving soul and all its desires.

Foolishness of the Evil Inclination

Having no choice, the evil powers turned to its subsidiary power, the evil inclination in man, and asked for its help.

"Please, help me, otherwise we are all doomed."

The evil inclination asked: How can I help you? If you, the

Yom Kippur - The Self-Destructive Evil Inclination

source of my power, the multi-faced expert, have failed, how can I succeed?

The evil powers leaned toward her and whispered in her ear: "You have a weapon that I do not, and therefore you can succeed."

"You are talking to me? I have a weapon? What is it?"

The evil powers smirked and said: "It's called - foolishness."

The evil inclination asked: "Please, do explain."

The evil powers gave a short lesson on the spiritual structure of a Jew:

The Jewish soul is composed of three levels, namely: the intellectual level (wisdom, understanding, knowledge), the emotional level (kindness, severity, beauty), and the natural level (eternity, glory, foundation, kingdom).

Corresponding to these three levels within a person, are the: nefesh, ruach, and neshamah.

You have the power to create a terrible storm within the emotions of man, to cast darkness and confusion, sadness and bitterness, depression and guilt.

"Wait. I don't understand. How do I have this power?"

"It's simple. G-d gave you the power to create within a person a 'spirit of foolishness' - to turn the emotions of man (which correspond to ruach) into foolishness."

The evil inclination set out at once on its mission.

This method succeeded beyond expectations. The spirit of foolishness that appeared in people's hearts, led people deep down into a dark, empty, and frightening reality, and into an immense and abysmal void.

The Self-Destructive Evil Inclination

Let us give a real-world narration of how this foolish spirit operates inside one's head.

"I was sitting in the study hall with my study partner learning Tractate Bava Batra.

As we were studying the section that deals with the prohibition of Lashon Hara (evil speech), I failed and spoke Lashon Hara.

Right there, in the section discussing the prohibition of speech, I failed in exactly this prohibition.

At that very moment, I hated myself so much, and I felt like a hopeless failure.

The 'study session' ended, and we rose and went to the dining hall for lunch.

As usual, a long line stretched by the hand-washing sinks.

Next to me stood Yossi, who, as usual, was in a good mood. He turned to me and asked: What's wrong? Why do you look like a sour pickle?

A terrible feeling of anger spread within me: What a chutzpah! How dare he call me a sour pickle?

This feeling of anger stirred and shook me; my thoughts bubbled, my nostrils flared, and a feeling of hatred emerged.

I sat by my plate and suddenly realized: Oh no, I failed with the grave sin of anger.

My heart fluttered within me, and tears of self-pity flowed. 'I am lost, I have no chance'.

This was the beginning of a long process of self-destruction.

I fought against myself like the greatest of enemies. At every opportunity, I disparaged myself and proved to myself repeatedly that I was hopeless, lacking appeal and importance, devoid of life and desire, just a useless nobody walking around.

Then one black day I woke up in the morning with a terrible feeling of being lost.

I sat at the edge of my bed, opened packages of chocolate, and started eating one after the other.

I don't remember how much I ate, but I do remember that despite being full of sugar, it tasted very bitter to me.

The chocolate mixed with disappointment and self-hatred.

Yom Kippur - There Are No Wicked People in Israel.

That morning I didn't go to prayers and didn't either go to eat.

Only toward the end of the day, after almost a full day of absence, the 'mashgiach' (spiritual supervisor) came to see what happened to me.

When he saw my sorry state, he said to me: Know, there is some spiritual 'terrorist' that has stirred your emotions in the worst possible way - what our Sages call 'a spirit of foolishness' - and you must stop

paying attention to this spirit, if you wish to return to yourself.

"How can I not pay attention to it?" I asked.

"You need to internalize that returning in repentance does not mean generating a feeling of hatred towards yourself. Returning in repentance means regretting, confessing, and praying to G-d to save you from failing in this matter again."

There Are No Wicked People in Israel.

To further extoll the great powers that are hidden within the soul of every Jew, we quote from the writings of the Arizal:

Rabbi Chaim Vital writes ('Shaar HaGanulin', Introduction 33):

I asked my teacher (the Arizal), why he says that my soul has such a high status, being that even the smallest person of the earlier generations was righteous and pious to a degree that I am not worthy of reaching.

He said to me, "Know that the greatness of the soul does not

depend on the actions of a person visible to one's eyes, but what is known to G-d who tests the heart and kidneys.

It is all according to the time and generation, for a small deed in this generation is worth several commandments in the earlier generations, since in these generations, the evil powers intensify greatly beyond measure and limit, unlike the earlier generations.

And if I were to live in those earlier generations, my

Yom Kippur - The Conclusion of the Matter

deeds and wisdom as well would have been more woodrous and exalted, even above many of the righteous of ancient days, Tannaim, and Amoraim. Therefore, do not despair."

If in the days of the Arizal, the intensification of the evil powers was so great, what can we say and speak in these bitter times?

Indeed, we should embrace every Jew and awaken love and merit for them, for all that the evil powers succeed, is all through falsehoods, for the souls of Israel are always ready to give their lives for G-d's sanctification, if not for the evil powers, who intensifies by necessity and force, to trap the Jewish souls in his snares.

The Conclusion of the Matter

Let us now return to the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (Likutei Moharan - Kama, Torah 35:1):

"Know, that repentance is essentially returning a thing to the place from which it was taken."

When a Jew has a settled mind, the divine part within them shines, and they have the strength to stand firm against all trials of the world.

When however, a spirit of foolishness enters them, and their emotions are turbulent and stormy, they lose their settled mind, leading to all sins, transgressions, and iniquities.

Therefore, 'repentance' means returning to a settled mind.

A person must do everything to achieve the peace and settled mind that will allow them to conduct self-examination and reflect on the days that have passed.

A person who does not weigh their actions cannot truly repent, since they lack the settled mind needed to realize that their days are passing in vanity and emptiness, and that their intellect is filled with external wisdom and to instead yearn for true wisdom.

This settled mind is greatly emphasized in the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, and to

Yom Kippur - Summary and Practical Conclusions

achieve it, he recommends practicing 'hitbodedut' - personal prayer said in a secluded place, where one tells G-d about their actions and needs, and asks for

advice and help to achieve a settled mind and to know what lies ahead.

'Hitbodedut' allows a person to look inwardly and then return to look outward to seek G-d.¹¹

Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, is a time of great favor to achieve forgiveness, pardon, and atonement for all sins. On this day, G-d cleanses the souls of the people of Israel from the stains of their sins.

However, the power of atonement on Yom Kippur is extended specifically to those who repent during this time.

Therefore, one must strive to enter into the inner essence of Yom Kippur, meaning the aspect of repentance, and only then will they be cleansed. Without this, it is impossible to achieve the cleansing and purification of the soul.

2. On Yom Kippur, every Jew is given the opportunity to purify their soul, to sanctify and illuminate it, and to return it to its place and root from where it was hewn at the beginning of creation. This is achieved by returning to G-d with all one's heart, regretting the past, and resolving firmly in one's heart and mind not to return to folly.

3. For this reason, it is appropriate and correct for every Jew to set aside a significant period on the eve of Yom Kippur for this exalted purpose of soul and spirit correction. During this time, one should free oneself from anything that distracts them from the matters and vanities of this world in all its layers. It is also advisable to distance oneself from the company of others and from anything that might distract them and to use this precious time to seclude oneself with their Creator for a few hours.

During this time, one should conduct a self-examination of the past year, considering how they have acted according to G-d's will, where they have erred, and the sins they have committed against G-d, and should then return to G-d and correct them.

Our Sages have established that sin creates a separation and barrier between a person and the Divine Presence. However, by returning to



11. See at length in 'Neinut Netzach' (Part 4, p. 329).

G-d with all their heart, these barriers are removed.

4. The essence of self-examination is: Firstly, to recognize the existence of sin and to know that when sinning, they anger and rebel against the Most High, Blessed be He, through their actions, speech, and thoughts, even when done unintentionally.

Additionally, they cause an immense and terrible defect in their soul, and uproot their soul and divine spirit from the Source of Life, Blessed be He, and bring it down to the place of impurity and death, the realms of the evil powers, until their soul becomes a chariot for the evil powers.

Just as a chariot is nullified to its rider and driver, so too, the sinner's soul is temporarily nullified to impurity and the evil powers, drawing life and sustenance from there. Consequently, all their deeds, even the commandments and good actions they perform, are connected to this evil source.

However, when they return to G-d with all their heart, they become pure and clean.

5. The essence of repentance involves four elements:

1. Abandoning the sin
2. Regretting the past
3. Confession

4. Resolving for the future not to return to folly.

Additionally, repentance consists of three parts: emotion, speech, and intellect.

After recalling the sins committed, the emotional part is the feeling of shame - How did I dare to rebel against the Holy One, Blessed be He, and violate His words?

Then comes the part of speech, where the person verbally details all the sins they committed.

Then, one finally resolves intellectually not to return to folly.

6. Within every Jew resides a divine soul, truly a part of G-d above.

It is a soul that is completely abstracted from any desire or bad trait.

It is a pure, clear, and clean soul, for whom all matters of this world are truly insignificant.

When a Jew's soul shines, all lowly worldly desires are considered void and naught to him.

Therefore, the only way the evil inclination can cause a person to fail is through a spirit of foolishness.

When a spirit of foolishness enters a person, and their emotions are turbulent and stormy, their mind becomes unsettled, leading to all sins, transgressions, and iniquities.

Yom Kippur - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Thus, 'repentance' means returning to a settled mind.

A person must do everything to achieve peace and a settled mind that will allow them to conduct self-examination and reflect on the days that have passed.

A person who does not weigh their actions cannot truly repent, since they lack the settled mind needed to recognize that their days are passing in vanity and emptiness and yearn for true wisdom.

May G-d grant us settled minds and true repentance.

Shabbat Shalom!





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Shabbat Times Yom Kippur 10th of Tishrei, 5785

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	5:57 pm	7:00 pm	7:31 pm
Miami	6:38 pm	7:30 pm	8:07 pm
Los Angeles	6:06 pm	7:00 pm	7:34 pm
Montreal	5:57 pm	6:57 pm	7:25 pm
Toronto	6:22 pm	7:21 pm	7:50 pm
London	5:57 pm	7:02 pm	7:25 pm
Jerusalem	5:56 pm	6:45 pm	7:24 pm
Tel Aviv	5:52 pm	6:42 pm	7:21 pm
Haifa	5:51 pm	6:44 pm	7:22 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:53 pm	6:45 pm	7:24 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

One who truly cherishes Shabbat, spends time at their table, singing the Zemirot and sharing words of Torah.

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Toronto	6:38 PM
London	6:17 PM

FIRST DAY OF SUKKOT

City	CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER	Rabbeinu Tam
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Miami	7:39 PM	8:17 PM
Los Angeles	7:11 PM	7:46 PM
Montreal	7:13 PM	7:42 PM
Toronto	7:36 PM	8:06 PM
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en@h-l.org.il

