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G'Mar Chasimah Tova

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September 18, 2010 – 10 Tishrei, 5770

1138: YOM KIPPUR

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Prayers & Good Deeds

In the midst of the Yom Kippur services, the Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, interrupted his prayers and departed from the synagogue. Left behind was a room filled with stunned worshippers, who wondered what awesome and lofty mission had prompted the Rebbe to leave in these spiritually uplifted moments.

The Rebbe made his way to the nearby forest. There, he collected dry wood and branches. He carried them to a small house. He knocked on the door and then entered. Once inside, the Rebbe kindled a fire from the wood he had brought. He prepared a soup and he fed it, spoon by spoon, to the woman in the house who had just given birth.

It is easy, even comfortable, to read stories such as the one about Rabbi Shneur Zalman, and be inspired to enhance our fulfillment of the mitzvot (commandments) between ourselves and each other. At the very beginning of Jewish history, we are told of our ancestor Abraham, who showed us the importance of tending to the needs of others. In the midst of a Divine "conversation," he asked G-d to "wait" while he greeted and provided for tired wayfarers who approached his tent.

If we look at the story of Rabbi Shneur Zalman what distinguishes it from other examples of selflessness and caring? First, that the Rebbe chose to go himself although he could have sent his assistant, a son, or one of his Chasidim to tend to the new mother. But to fully appreciate the significance of the Rebbe's actions, we must take into account

the magnitude and intensity of the Rebbe's Yom Kippur prayers which were on behalf of all the Jewish people. Yet, he saw that caring for a new mother was more precious before G-d than his exalted prayers.

Society encourages and sometimes even takes the time to applaud humanitarian deeds, acts of goodness and kindness, volunteerism, etc. However, the Jew's compassion and caring is driven by the fact that these mitzvot are an integral part of his/her relationship with G-d.

In the words of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, when asked which is the superior Divine service, love of G-d or love of the Jewish people, "Both love of G-d and love of the Jewish people are equally engraved in every Jew's soul. It follows that love of the Jewish people is superior, for you love whom your beloved loves."

Ultimately, then, these mitzvot are also an expression of our love of G-d. We are not enjoined to fulfill mitzvot between ourselves and our fellow humans because they "feel good" (or we "feel good" after doing them) or because they are politically correct. We are to perform them as a Divine imperative, a part of what our Creator demands of us.

Yom Kippur is the day when G-d gave the second set of the tablets containing the Ten Commandments, after the Jews were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf. On one tablet were those mitzvot between a person and G-d. On the other tablet were those between a person and his fellow. This teaches us that both types of mitzvot are parallel parts of our relationship with our Creator, to be approached, performed and carried out equally. ■

Living with the REBBE



On Yom Kippur, a Jew fasts. He realizes that a lightning bolt will not come down from heaven and strike him if he eats, but he is not concerned with reward or punishment. He refrains from eating because he understands that G-d wants him to. He knows that a Jew does not do that on Yom Kippur.

A day before, he may not have felt this way. He may have been lax in the observance of one mitzva (commandment) or another. But on Yom Kippur he feels that he has to do what a Jew should do.

Why? Because there is something special about this day. Our Sages explain the idea using gematria, Torah numerology. The Hebrew word for the evil Satan is numerically equivalent to 364. During 364 days of the year, Satan has the power to tempt the Jew. On one day, Yom Kippur, he has no power. A Jew is simply not interested in what he has to offer. Yom Kippur is a day for being Jewish.

What would happen on Yom Kippur? The High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, at which time he was alone with G-d. No human or spiritual being was permitted to intrude upon his connection with Him.

Each year this sequence is replayed in our own hearts. The essence of the Jewish soul is one with the essence of G-d. This bond is constant; it is not the product of our efforts. Consequently, neither our thoughts, our words, nor our deeds can weaken it. At this level of essential connection, there is no existence outside G-dliness, no possibility of separation from Him.

This connection exists above time. But within time, it is revealed on Yom Kippur. On this day, we each "enter the Holy of Holies," and spend time "alone with G-d."

This is the heart of Neila, the final prayers recited on Yom Kippur. Neila means "locking." This name is generally understood to mean that the gates of heaven are being locked and there are a few moments left when our prayers can enter. According to Chasidic thought, the meaning is that the doors are locked behind us. Each one of us is "locked in," alone and as one with G-d.

At this level of essential connection there is no existence outside G-dliness, no possibility of separation from G-d, no possibility that the soul could be affected by sin.

The revelation of this level of connection removes the blemishes that sin causes. This kind of cleansing is a natural process, for the revelation of our inner bond with G-d renews our connection with Him at all levels.

This is the meaning of the saying of our Sages that "the essence of the day atones." On Yom Kippur, our essential bond with G-d is revealed, and in the process, every element of our spiritual potential is revitalized.

This affects also our lives in the material sphere, endowing us with blessing, for a good and sweet year in all our concerns. ■

Adapted by Rabbi Eli Touger
from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Important Times					September 17 – 22, 2010				
	<i>Shacharis</i>	<i>Mincha</i>	<i>Maariv</i>	<i>Other</i>					
Friday September 17	7:00 am	2:30 pm @ Chabad	Kol Nidrei 6:15 pm @ Embassy Suites	Light Candles and Fast Begins at 6:14 pm					
Yom Kippur/Shabbos Saturday September 18 @ Embassy Suites	9:30 am <i>incl. Yizkor</i>	4:30 pm	Neilah immediately following Mincha	Yom Kippur, Shabbos, and Fast Ends 7:08 pm					
September 19–22 <i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am/Sun.8:00am/Mon.6:45am					<i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 6:15 pm				

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If Once Happened *Rabbi Betzalel Schiff was born in the former Soviet Union. Today, he resides in Israel and does much on behalf of the Jewish people. He relates:* While still a young boy in second grade my father passed away. My mother also died at a young age as a result of a tragic incident. This happened a week before my wedding.

Those days were fraught with persecution and much suffering. The fear in keeping mitzvot (commandments) was tremendous. Any action taken on behalf of Torah and Judaism involved actual danger. Since I no longer had parents and I lived alone, I took on various missions on behalf of my fellow Jews, including many which were fraught with danger.

One of my jobs was to procure arba minim (the lulav, etrog, etc.) for Jews in Samarkand. I traveled to Georgia in order to pick them for the Sukkot holiday. I left right after Rosh Hashana so that I could return for Yom Kippur.

One year I arrived in Tbilisi in Georgia where the usual policeman awaited me. He knew me, and he brought me to the place where palm trees grew in an area alongside the sea. Since I paid him handsomely, the policeman waited respectfully and even made sure I had a ladder and a saw. I cut down ten lulavim (palm branches), which was enough for all the members of the congregation. Then I went on to Kutaisi where I cut down hadasim (myrtle), which grew plentifully in the courtyard of the synagogue. That is what I did each year.

One year, when I finished my job and wanted to return home to Samarkand before Yom Kippur, I discovered that no tickets were available. I offered large amounts of money, triple the usual price, but not a single ticket was available. I knew a Jew who had a pharmacy. I figured he might be able to help me. "If there is no ticket to Samarkand, then at least get me to Moscow where my brother is," I begged. I hoped that I would be able to spend Yom Kippur there with him.

The man tried his best but he too failed. In the end he arranged accommodations for me at a special motel near the airport, hoping that perhaps the next morning, Yom Kippur eve, I would be able to get on a flight to Samarkand or at least to Moscow.

When I entered the room I saw a young man asleep on his bed. I got into the other bed and fell asleep. The next morning I got up early and ran over to the airport to see whether there were any flights. I saw that I had time until the flights would be leaving, so I returned to the room. The other man was awake and was sitting up in bed. I wanted to take out my tefilin and pray, but his presence bothered me. I asked him whether he was leaving soon or would be staying on in the room.

"I'm in no rush and I will be staying here," he said with a shrug. "Why, do you need something?" he asked.

"Yes, you're disturbing me," I said honestly and bravely. "Tonight we have a great holiday and now I want to pray."

"So pray," he said, "I'm not bothering you."

I had no choice and so I turned to the wall, put on my tefilin and began praying. Afterwards I turned around and saw that the young man had gotten dressed in the meantime. He was wearing the uniform of an officer in the Red Army. When I saw his medals and rank I realized I was in deep trouble. I thought to myself, "Well, that's that. Now I'm in for it."

I didn't know what to do for I had been caught red-handed putting on tefilin. I was still in shock and wondering what to say when he quietly said to me, "What holiday do we have today?"

For a moment there I didn't realize what he had meant, and I said, "Tonight is Yom Kippur." I looked up and saw him sitting on the bed. His head was down and he was deep in thought. Then I heard him sigh and say to himself, "Ah, Moshe Moshe, what's with you? Even things like this you don't remember?" and he burst into tears.

After he calmed down he said, "What do you want now?"

"I want to return home before the holiday," I said.

"Where do you want to go?"

"To Tashkent," I answered.

"So come with me," he said abruptly, and he got up and left the room.

We went outside where I saw a military vehicle and driver. He told the driver to take us to the airport. When we arrived there he inquired as to where the planes to Tashkent were (which is near Samarkand). We went out to the runway and nobody dared to stop him or say a word. His high rank aroused the respect of all. When he found the plane to Tashkent he said to the pilot, "Where are you going?"

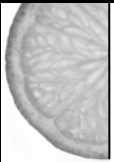
"To Tashkent." "Take him," he ordered.

The pilot had no choice. I boarded the plane and managed to reach home before Yom Kippur. Before we parted the officer asked me, "If I want to find you in Tashkent, how will I do that?" I told him to come to the shul and ask for Betzalel. A few months later he actually came to Tashkent and looked me up. ■

by Menachem Ziegelboim, reprinted from Beis Moshiach Magazine

Moshiach Matters G-d will surely fulfill the inner will of every Jew - and the will of the Jews reflects the inner will of G-d - and that inner will is for the Redemption to come. This is particularly true, because "all the appointed times for Moshiach's coming have passed." As the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe explained, all that is necessary is to "stand together prepared [to greet Moshiach]" and that has also been accomplished. All that is necessary now is one turn to G-d. That will come naturally, there is no need for miracles. ■
(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, eve of Yom Kippur, 5752)

What's In A Name?
AVRAHAM means, "father of a multitude." Avraham (Genesis 11:26) was the first person to recognize, on his own, that G-d is Creator of the whole world. Avraham was tested ten times by G-d to determine how strong his faith was.
AVITAL means "father of dew" - referring to G-d as sustainer of all creation. Avital (II Samuel 3:4) was one of King David's wives. Her son, Shefatia, was born in Hebron.



SLICE OF LIFE

Strength from a Sermon

The following is a letter received by Rabbi Moshe Bryski of Chabad of the Conejo, California.

For the past several years you have been the thread that has kept me connected to Judaism. I want to thank you, because this connection helped me through a most difficult time.

Every year I look forward to listening to your sermons on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Each story you've told has always moved me and brought me closer to Judaism. The most poignant story is one that you've told both as part of a High Holiday sermon and in your lecture series:

One night a woman has a dream that she is going to meet G-d the next day. She wakes up in the morning and gets ready for her big meeting.

She is interrupted three times by people at her door in need of help. She turns them away explaining that she is too busy to help because she has to get ready for her meeting with G-d.

The day passes and there is no meeting. The woman dies and when she finally meets G-d she says to Him, "I prepared all day for our meeting and You never showed, what happened?" G-d's response is, "What are you talking about? I came to visit you three times and you ignored Me each time. I guess you didn't recognize Me." Such a simple story with such a powerful message.

My mother has been in poor health for the past 10 years. I live in California and my parents live in Florida and I don't see them as often as I would like. Having recently joined the ranks of the unemployed I expanded my job search to include Florida. I received a call from a company in Florida asking if I would be willing to travel for a job interview. To Florida? Of course!

My flight was booked with a stopover in Atlanta. As soon as the wheels touched the ground in Atlanta I turned on my cell phone. There was a voicemail from my wife. As I retrieved the message my heart sank:

"Dad called and wanted me to let you know that Mom is in the hospital, she collapsed. He

didn't give me any other details and said he would fill you in when you get to Florida."

My heart was racing and tears started to roll down my face. The call that I had always dreaded finally came. At that moment two things came to mind. The first was I needed help from Above and the words of the Shema slowly rolled off my lips. The second thing was that this trip wasn't random; I was supposed to be in Florida at this time.

Seeing my Mom in the ICU was very difficult for me. She was semi-comatose, extremely thin, and hooked up to machines that beeped continuously. I wasn't sure if she even knew I was there, but I kept talking to her. I would ask her over and over again, "Mom how ya feelin?" Finally her lips moved; I awaited her reply. She clasped her hands on her chest and said, "I want to die."

My heart ached and tears filled my eyes. I told her that the doctors said she's not sick enough to die. "The Guy upstairs isn't ready for you yet and you have six grandchildren who are expecting you at their weddings. So forget about leaving!"

I visited Mom every day with my dad. If you listened closely you could hear me reciting the Shema over and over again asking for His help and guidance. The vision of you, Rabbi Bryski, on the bima at the close of Yom Kippur reciting the Shema with the congregation and then with a clenched fist rotating around and around as you got the congregation to sing together and connect to the moment, gave me the strength and courage to believe help would come.

This went on for almost three weeks: every day shlepping to the ICU with my dad; making sure he was taking all of his medication; talking with doctors to find out the latest on my mother's condition and their plan for treatment. But every day, I would sit by her bedside and recite the Shema, and relive those closing moments of Yom Kippur. It gave me strength and hope.

It was Friday. My younger brother, my dad and I, decided to go for lunch near the hospital.

As we were exiting the strip mall where the deli was, I noticed an elderly man standing under the marquis. The only reason I noticed him was because he was wearing a beige jacket and baseball cap in 98 degree weather. I wondered how long he was standing there in the sweltering heat. As I approached the exit the old man raised his hand waving at our car. I slowed down and opened the window to see what he wanted.

"Farshtaist [you understand] Yiddish?" he asked. I said "no" so in broken English he said that he missed his bus, the next one doesn't come for an hour and he asked if we could give him a lift to the hospital to see his wife who is a patient.

Of course we told him to get in. He said he didn't know how much longer he could stand in the heat and thanked us for stopping. He told us that his wife has been in the hospital for several weeks and he goes every day to visit her.

"We've been married for almost 65 years" he said. "We are from Poland and I never missed a day being with my wife in all these years." My brother said, "It's our pleasure to help you. Our mother is in the hospital too and we are going back to be with her. She's also from Poland."

As I was listening all I could see was you, rabbi, on the bima, telling the story of the woman who was supposed to meet G-d and couldn't be bothered with the people who came for help. I thought to myself, "Can this be the angel sent to help? Has He really heard my cries for help?"

A moment later I pulled up to the entrance of the hospital to let the man. We wished him well and a speedy recovery for his wife. He shook all of our hands and as he got out of the car he said, "Thank you for the ride, it was a mitzva. And don't worry, everything will be okay." A chill ran through my body and tears filled my eyes.

A week later my mother was released from ICU to another facility where she spent four months in rehab. The doctors were amazed at her turnaround and her dramatic recovery. Multiply their amazement by 1000 and you get the sense of how amazed we were with her recovery.

That's my story. Again, thank you for being my thread. □

☞ For the sin that we have sinned

When confessing our sins it is customary to beat the chest just over the heart as a symbol of repentance as each transgression is enumerated. Yet logically the opposite would seem to make more sense: Should not the heart strike out at the hand that actually committed the sin? Our intention, however, is the source of all transgression - the lusts and desires of the heart that lead to sin. (Hegyonot Shel Ami)

☞ For the sin that we have sinned with an insincere confession (literally "a confession of the mouth")

This type of sin is one to which we have already confessed, but have only given lip service, as it states in Psalms, "For my transgression I will tell; I am worried that I not sin." Although the lips may have declared their concern, the heart does not participate... (Torat Yitzchak)

☞ (He) forgives our sins, year after year A human being, if wronged by his neighbor, will forgive him after that person apologizes and begs for forgiveness, but will find it more difficult to forgive a second time if the very same thing happens again. How much more so is this true if it occurs a third or a fourth time. To G-d, however, there is no difference between a first and a thousandth offense committed against Him. G-d's attribute of mercy has no limit or boundary, as it states, "For his mercy endures forever." (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

Thoughts that Count

**MEZUZAH
DID U
KNOW???**
☆☆☆

Even kosher Mezuzah scrolls can't necessarily stay kosher forever. The delicate ink can flake off over time. Since an unkosher mezuzah can be the source of bad mazel, G-d forbid, *you should have all your mezuzah scrolls checked by a scribe twice every 7 years*, at minimum. Email mezuzahfund@gmail.com to get yours checked right away!

The Rebbe Writes

Free translation of a letter of the Rebbe
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh, Shabbos Teshuvah
6 Tishrei, 5739 [1978]

Greeting and Blessing:

...Teshuvah [repentance] enables a person to rectify completely all that should have been achieved throughout the past, in matters of Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] - "with one 'turn' and in one moment."

Parenthetically, it is surely needless to emphasize that the above must not, G-d forbid, serve as an excuse for wrongdoing, as our Sages warned, "Whoever says, 'I will sin and repent later,' is not given an opportunity to do Teshuvah."

On reflection, it can easily be seen that, all things added up, the world contains more quantity (materiality) than quality (spirituality), and more by far. Indeed, the more corporeal and gross a thing is, the greater is the quantity in which it is found. Thus, for example, the world in inanimate, (inorganic) matter is much greater in volume than the vegetable kingdom, and the latter is quantitatively greater than the animal kingdom, which, in turn, surpasses by far, in quantity, the highest of the four kingdoms, mankind (the "speaking" creature).

Similarly in the human body: the lowest extremities, the legs are larger in size than the rest of the body, and the latter is much greater in bulk than the head, wherein are located the organs of speech and the sense of smell, hearing and sight, as well as the intellect, etc., which animate the entire body and direct all its activities.

On further reflection, a person might also become disheartened, G-d forbid, wondering how is one to fulfill adequately one's real purpose in life on this earth, which is, to quote our Sages, "I was created to serve my Creator" - seeing that most of one's time is necessarily taken up with materialistic things, such as eating and drinking, sleeping, earning a livelihood, etc. What with the fact that the earliest years of a human being, before reaching maturity and knowledge, are spent in an entirely materialistic mode of living.

The answer is, first of all, that even the so-called materialistic preoccupation of the daily life must not become purely materialistic and animal-like, for we have to be always mindful of the imperative, "Let all your doings be for the sake of Heaven," and "Know Him (G-d) in all your ways."

This means that also in carrying out the activities which are connected with the physical and material aspects of life (which, as mentioned, take up the greater part of a person's time) a human being must know that those material aspects are not an end in themselves, but they are, and must serve as, the means to attain to the higher, spiritual realm of life, namely, physical aspects with spiritual content, and utilize them for spiritual purpose. Thus, all these mundane, and in themselves trivial matters, are elevated to their proper role, perfection and spirituality.

But in addition to the above, there is also the unique effectiveness of Teshuvah, which has the power to transform - "With one 'turn' and in one moment" - the whole past - the very materiality of it into spirituality.

Time is, of course, not measured simply by duration, but by its content in terms of achievement. Thus, in evaluating time there are vast differences in terms of content, and, hence, in real worth, of a minute, an hour, etc. Suffice it to mention by way of example, that one cannot compare an hour of prayer and outpouring of the soul before G-d with an hour of sleep. And to use the analogy of coins, there may be coins of identical size and shape, yet different in their intrinsic value, depending upon whether they are made of copper, silver or gold.

With all the wonderful opportunities that G-d provides for a person to fill his time with the highest content, there is the most wonderful gift from "G-d who does wonders" of the extraordinary quality of Teshuvah, which transcends all limitations, including the limitations of time, so that "in one moment" it transforms the whole past, to the degree of absolute perfection in quality and spirituality.

The Alm-ghty has also ordained especially favorable times for Teshuvah, at the end of each year and the beginning of the new year, together with the assurance that everyone who resolves to do Teshuvah - he, or she, can accomplish it "in one moment." Thus, the person transforms the quantity of the materiality in the past, into meritorious quality, spirituality and holiness. At the same time, one prepares for the future, in the coming year and thereafter, in a proper manner.

This is accomplished through Torah and Mitzvos in the everyday life, thereby elevating himself (or herself) and the environment at large to the highest possible level of spirituality and holiness, thus making this material world a fitting abode for G-d, blessed be He.

May G-d grant that everyone actively strive for the above, in accordance with the prayer of the Prophetess Channah, which we read on the first day of the New Year: "My heart rejoices in G-d, my strength is uplifted through G-d...I rejoice in His help... and He will exalt the reign of His Moshiach."

With blessing for success in all and for a Chasimoh uGmar Chasimoh Toivoh [that you be sealed and completely sealed for good], both materially and spiritually, □

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

Yom Kippur is the only day of the year with five prayer services. On a regular weekday we pray Shacharit in the morning, Mincha in the afternoon, and Maariv at night. On Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Yom Tov, the Musaf (additional) prayer is added. Ne'ila, however, is said only on Yom Kippur.

According to Chasidut, these five prayer services correspond to the five levels of the Jewish soul:

The lowest level, "nefesh," animates the body, enabling the Jew to keep Torah and mitzvot (commandments);

"Ruach" is associated with the emotions, and allows the Jew to experience love and awe of G-d;

"Neshama" relates to the soul's intellectual powers. It enables us to understand G-d's greatness, which results in a longing and desire to cleave to Him;

The higher levels of "chaya" and "yechida" are associated with the soul's super-intellectual qualities, which are limitless and infinite. "Chaya" relates to the "pull" a Jew feels from Above, an attraction to the Infinite that cannot be explained rationally;

The highest level of "yechida" is identified with the soul's essence. Because it is so sublime, it cannot be perceived by the senses.

The aspect of "yechida" is so-called as it is completely united with G-d, Who is termed "Yachid," meaning singular and alone. Immutable and unchanging, the level of "yechida" exists above all external influences, and cannot be damaged or affected by sin. A Jew's "yechida" is always bound to G-d, regardless of his actions.

In general, the level of "yechida" is rarely manifested, bursting forth only when a Jew's essential connection to G-d is threatened (such as when a Jew is asked to deny his Jewishness). Indeed, it is this aspect of the soul that explains why a Jew is willing to give up his life for the sake of heaven.

On Yom Kippur, however, the "yechida" is openly revealed, particularly during the Ne'ila service. In fact, when the Jew proclaims, "Hear O Israel" and "G-d is the L-rd" at the conclusion of the service, this highest level of his soul is revealed and illuminates. □

News

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