

## Points to Ponder – Yom Kippur 5778

שהחיינו – How we recite this Beracha on Yom Kippur is amazing! It is a terrifying day? How can we be sure we will achieve Mechila? It is the final chance! The Vilna Gaon notes that there is a difference between Din and Cheshbon. Din is the judgement of a person's actions and Cheshbon is a reckoning of what we could have been doing otherwise with the time. This is a reckoning of the person's potential (As symbolized perhaps by the 2 goats). Meshech Chochma notes that one who uses the day properly can make it one of the most joyful on the calendar (See Gemara at end of Taanis) But one who falters with it will need to answer to a Cheshbon for that too.

כי אתה סלחן לישראל ומחלן לשבטי ישורון בכל דור ודור – One of the Major themes of Yom Kippur is the Mechilah for the sale of Yosef by his brothers. In fact, the Midrash Socher Tov notes that it is required in every generation. This became part of the Tefillas Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur. It also explains why when making this request it needed to be in the Kodesh Kodashim – the part of the Mikdash not in the portion of Yehuda but rather that of Binyamin who did not sell Yosef. It also was done in the Bigdei Lavan – which included a specifically expensive Ketones (See Rambam Klei HaMikdash 8:3) for that has the ability to be moichel even on murder – and was the thing dipped in blood at the time of the sale of Yosef. Rav Dovid Gross adds that this becomes our Kavana in each of our Tefillos on Yom Kippur – for selling Yosef and for the Eigel. He forgives us in each generation for these Avairos and will forgive us as well for our own shortcomings (See also Meshech Chochma – Achrei Mos).

על חטא שחטאנו לפניך ביצר הרע - Are there Avairos that are performed with the Yetzer Hatov? Rav Pam ztl. suggested that sometimes WE make the Yetzer HaRa entice us – by going to places where we will be tested . For this we say Al Cheit. In addition, we can be guilty for acting as someone else's Yetzer HaRa by schmoozing in Shul, during inappropriate times, or debating topics that cause ill-will or Machlokes. These actions are wrong and make us the Yetzer HaRa, making us Chiyav.

לפני ה' תטהרו – The Kaf Hachaim points out that one should not think that it takes Yom Kippur and the Avoda and the Sayir L'Azazel in order to be able to do the Avoda. What it takes is the reality that we are Lifnei Hashem – that Hashem is in front of us all the time. We need to take advantage of His relative closeness now if we are going to achieve Teshuva.

כורעים ומשתחוים - Rav Schachter Shlita would often remind us that in Lithuania the women did not bow during the Avoda while in Berlin they did. He would cite Rav Soloveitchik's understanding of this divergent practice. In the Beis HaMikdash the practice was that only those in the Azarah who heard the Kohein Gadol say the Shem Hamiforash would bow. Since the practice, to those in Lita, is a reminder of the practice back then, and the women did not bow back then, they would not bow today as well.

אחת אחת ואחת – My dear and eloquent friend Rav Meir Soloveitchik Shlita lovingly reminded me of how we would all watch and assist his grandfather HaRav Aharon Soloveitchik ztl. climb the stairs of what was then called Tannenbaum Hall in order to get into the building. Rav Aharon would call out achas, Achas V'Achas as he tried to move his body in order to inspire his beloved Yeshiva Talmidim. Rav

Soloveitchik reminded us that to every great person (and to those aspiring greatness) every act is an Avodah as we sacrifice our time and energy for the will of Hashem. Rav Aharon ztl. explained that when Chazal ask us Mah Yaaseh Haadam V'Yichyeh -- the answer is swift -- Yamis Et Atzmo -- the things we are willing to die for, we must be ready to sacrifice for -- Achas, Achas V'Achas.

אם יהיו חטאיכם כשנים כשלג יהיו – The Gemara notes that they used to hang this Lashon Shel Zehuris in the Azara but after the string stopped turning white, the rabbis stopped having it in the Azara opting to have it attached to the Azazel instead. Why would the Rabbis stop displaying such a miracle? Rav Sabato Shlita explains that the Rabbis feared that in the years that the strap didn't change and the people knew, they might come to give up. Giving up leads to a bigger danger to the people. Think of Kayin (and Acher) and the others who thought that there was no hope to live for. It is more important to have hope for a renewed relationship with Hashem than to have the possible guarantee that Teshuva was accepted.