

Sefer Devarim

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE MERON AND SURFSIDE TRAGEDIES,  
AND AS A ZECHUS FOR THE YESHUA OF KLAL YISROEL

יום כיפור

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## The Best Day in the Year

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## Part I. Happiness of Kaparah

### The Obvious Reason

לא היו ימים טובים לישראל בחמשה עשר באב וביום הכפורים - There were no days that were as good for the Am Yisroel as the fifteenth of Av and Yom Hakippurim (Taanis 30b). It means that of all the happy days that the Am Yisroel has on its calendar - and we have no lack of happy days - the two most joyous were Chamisha Asar b'Av and Yom Kippur. Now the fifteenth of Av, we'll omit that for now, but we're learning now that Yom Kippur was one of the most joyous days in the year. And actually it was the *happiest* as we shall soon see.

The truth is that we could list here more than a few reasons why Yom Kippur was such a happy day but we'll talk now about the most obvious one, the most important one, and that is **כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם** - *On this day Hashem atones for you* (Vayikra 16:30).

Now, when people first hear these words they understand it to mean that Hashem will forgive us for the wrong things we did and He'll give us a good year - we'll get another year of life in this world. And even though a good year is a very good thing to have - everybody should have a good year - but that's not the purpose of *yechaper*; *yechaper* means much more than the coming year. It means much more than the next 120 years too.

### Etymology and Restaurant Hygiene

Pay attention. *Yechapeir aleichem* means that Hashem wipes you clean. It comes from the word *kaf*. *Kaf* means a palm, and the *reish* is added to mean "wipe clean." In the olden days they didn't have much water to waste so they used to wipe a dish clean with the palm - they put some water on their palms and they wiped away the dirt.

I told you this once before - a man told me that he was in a restaurant and he peeked through the swinging doors into the kitchen and he saw a waiter spit onto a plate and wipe it clean with his hand. He didn't want to bother washing the dishes so he went inside the kitchen and he wiped it clean with his palm, with his *kaf*, and then he brought it out again.

So *kaper* from the word *kaf*, palm, because with your palm you wipe something clean.

### Your Inner Essence

But that cleanliness doesn't mean only that He's wiping the slate clean and it's going to be a good year for you. No, it's much more than that, much more important than that, because *yechaper* means that Hashem is wiping clean your *neshama*. Oh, that's

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already something else entirely – your *neshama* is being transformed on Yom Kippur.

And that is the most important of all the things that happen to a person in this world because the *neshama*, that's the only thing that we really have. Our bodies are like clothing that are only loaned to us to use for a short time – seventy, eighty years; if you're fortunate a hundred years, and then you have to give it back. The time will come when you have to take off that suit of flesh and bones and leave it in the ground, in Beth David Cemetery or wherever you bought yourself a plot, and it will turn to dust again. So your body, that's not you.

So who are you? You are the *neshama*. That's all you are! And that's forever and ever, until *techiyas hameisim* when you'll be clothed again.

Now this *neshama* when it removes its suit of flesh and bones and comes to the next world, it's suddenly exposed. Until that last day, the suit covering the soul kept it hidden away – it was easy to sometimes even forget about it – but now, it's standing naked, exposed entirely. And often it's covered with spots, very many stains of sin. And it's much dirtier than you imagined.

### **Embarrassing Stains**

I'm not telling you now *drashos*, things I invented in my own mind. Rabeinu Yonah explains in the beginning of *Shaarei Teshuvah* that every sin is a spot of stain on your *neshama*. And he's saying it from the *gemara*, from the *Tanach*. Everywhere it states that. **כִּי אִם תִּכְבְּסִי בַנֶּתֶר**, Yirmiyah says (2:22), *if you wash with nitrate*, a certain kind of chemical, **וְתִרְבִּי לָךְ בְּרִית**, *and you'll have much soap*, **נִכְתָּם עֲוֹנֶיךָ לְפָנַי**, *your sin is stained before me*. We see our sin is a stain.

Now, the fact that the body is covering it up today and you don't see these stains doesn't mean that it can be ignored. Actually that would be the most foolish thing you could do because these stains are the greatest problem in our lives! Not one of the greatest – *the* greatest. You know why? Because **הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְפָנַי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא** – *this world is only a vestibule before the world to come*; we're living in the hallway of this world *only* to prepare for *Olam Habo*, and it's impossible to enjoy the banquet of *Olam Habo* with these stains on the *neshama*.

First of all it would be very embarrassing if you went in. Suppose you walk into a *chasunah*, a banquet hall, and you have a blotch of mud on your head or you have dirt on your nose. Let's say you had an accident, and your pants are not clean. It's terribly embarrassing. Now, if you're in this world, you might try to wipe it off; you can go into the bathroom and wipe it off, you can change your pants maybe, but in the next world you can't. It's very embarrassing.

### **Tortures in Gan Eden**

But not only is it going to be embarrassing, it's going to be painful too because these stains in the *neshama* are not superficial stains; they're like abscesses. And so, when they bring out the food it won't be any fun at all. If you're suffering from a few abscessed teeth so when you bite down on anything, let's say you bite down on a potato or a piece of chicken, these teeth are going to protest loudly. "Ouch!" they cry out. So you're not able to bite; and if you can't bite down, you're not going to enjoy a banquet.

Suppose, in addition, you have other abscesses too – let's say you have ulcers in your stomach and your insides are too sensitive to take chicken. It can't take anything except for certain bland foods; certain things that have to be prepared in such a way that they lose all their taste. That's all that you could eat. But you're trying to get in now to a banquet where they will serve all types of viand; meats and pastries and delicious desserts. "Nothing doing," says the *malach*, "it won't work." You need healthy teeth to be able to chew and a good stomach to digest it.

Of course all these things are only parables, metaphors. In the World To Come, it's intellectual delights, but it's the same idea; if you would be let in with your stains, with abscess in your gums and with a sick stomach, it's not going to be fun when you sit down to eat. You'd be in *Gan Eden* but you'd be suffering the tortures that are beyond the inquisition tortures.

### **Questions Won't Help**

And so if a man didn't prepare himself in this world that he should have sound spiritual teeth and a healthy spiritual stomach, he won't be permitted to go to *Gan Eden* immediately – he must be processed

in *Gehenom* until he is ready to enjoy the delights of the World To Come.

Now don't ask me any questions afterwards in the question period, "Why should that be so?" You want the next world with all its privileges just for nothing?! Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives certain privileges to people who are smart enough to make use of their lives; and those people who are stupid enough to live with sin without rectifying, so they'll just have to take it despite all the questions.

They'll say, "Ribono Shel Olam, since You are so kindly, so benevolent, can't you have just treat us to Olam Habo without this pain?" So He'll say to them, "Why didn't you prepare yourself when you had the opportunity? You want something for nothing? Now it's too late." Your questions won't do much for you – if you come to the Next World with stains, they have to be laundered out before you can get into Gan Eden.

### **Coming Out of Surgery**

So the *neshama nebach* has to go to *Gehenom* where he should expect all types of treatments. Now, we were not given the opportunity to take a peek into *Gehenom*. Nobody ever saw it. It's only understanding, it's the teaching of our sages, it's logic. But whatever it is, it's a thousand times, or a million times more than you'll ever express it in words. There's nothing that we have, no words that are sufficient to describe *Gehenom*.

The most terrible of terrors that a person could imagine and even the wildest nightmares that he ever had would never equal the truth of *Gehenom*. And it's all for the purpose of removing the stains of sin. They use lye and detergents; chemicals that burn out all the stains and prepare the *neshama* for the happiness of Gan Eden. It's not a simple wash, it's a surgery to remove those deep stains that seeped through your clothing and permeated into your soul. And now you need an operation and it's not fun. The surgeons there have everything except anesthesia.

And finally when he comes out pale and worn out from the great ordeal, he limps into the next world. "Whoo!" he says. "That was something! It was a terrible experience! But it was worth it", he says, "it was worth it. I got rid of my stains finally". It was

some experience. Ooh wah, he says. Boruch Hashem, I'm finally rid of *Gehenom*.

### **The Right Type of Fear**

And that's why the worry about sins – or even one sin – should be most pressing on a man's mind; because there's only one real evil that can ever come upon a person. וְאִין רָעָה אֲלֵא גְהֵנוּם – There's no evil in the world except *Gehenom* (Nedarim 22a). It means that even if the stock market is tumbling and there's upheaval in the world, wars and famine, the biggest worry is still the stains on your *neshama*. You have to be concerned always, "what's going to be the result of my deeds".

Dovid Hamelech said that. לָמָּה אֵירָא בְיָמֵי רָע – "Of what should I be afraid in the days when there is what to fear?" (*Tehillim* 49:6). He's talking about his most difficult days; when he was hiding in caves in the forest being pursued by enemies. And what does he fear most? What's the greatest peril? עוֹן עֲקָבִי יִסּוּבְנִי, "I'm in fear of my sins," says Dovid Hamelech.

I'm not talking now about obsessions and phobias; of meaningless self-blame that comes because of a sickness of the mind. We're not talking about insane or abnormal reactions. But the healthy feeling of fear, to be aware always that your goal in this world is Olam Habo and that anything that will stain your *neshama* is the worst thing possible, that's the best type of fear you could have.

Because your *neshama* is everything – it's your future forever and ever. "I'll be there forever and ever in *Gan Eden*," you have to think. "I'll be sitting among all the righteous people with happiness beyond our ability to describe. All kinds of joy, all kinds of fun in *Gan Eden* forever and ever; but it won't be possible until I get rid of my stains."

### **The Happiest Time**

And that's why Yom Kippur is the happiest day of the year. It's the greatest opportunity in this world to get rid of your stains while you're still here! Of course if you don't wait until Yom Kippur it's good too. Let's say on Purim you want to do *teshuvah*. Good idea. On Purim you can be a *baal teshuvah* too but it won't have the same effect because when Yom Kippur comes, we have the special promise, כִּי בְיוֹם

הַיּוֹם יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם – On this day your stains are washed away. Without the laundry machine, without the chemicals of Gehenom, your *neshama* becomes clean again.

And how clean do you become? Perfectly clean! לְפָנַי הַשֵּׁם תִּטְהָרוּ – You'll become purified in the presence of Hashem. And when He inspects you and you pass inspection, it means you're perfect.

That's what Rabbi Akiva says (Yuma 85b), אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם, יִשְׂרָאֵל – How happy you are Yisrael, לְפָנַי מִי אַתֶּם מִטְהָרִין, – before whom do you have to pass inspection, וּמִי מִטְהָר, – and who is cleaning you? אֲתֶכֶם – Hashem is doing both jobs. On Yom Kippur He cleanses you; and He can do a good job, better than anybody else. He's an expert laundryman for your *neshama*. And then when He inspects you and He's satisfied with you then you're a lucky man. אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם, יִשְׂרָאֵל – For the Am Yisroel, who live for the next world, nothing could make us happier!

## Part II. Happiness of Teshuva

### Believing The Promise

Of course, to be *zocheh*, to merit such great happiness, you must cooperate. Let's say you have stains on your face and somebody wants to give you a good wash, you have to offer your face, you have to cooperate – you can't turn your face away. On Yom Kippur Hashem promises, "This day will wipe away your sins, *but you must help out.*"

What's the first step of cooperating with this great promise? *Believing* the promise! Nothing will help to have your sins forgiven on Yom Kippur unless you have a certain *emunah* in this principle that עֲצוּמוֹ יוֹם שָׁל, that the day itself is *mechaper* – you have to believe Yom Kippur is actually wiping away your stains and preparing you for Olam Habo.

It means you have to train yourself; you have to prepare your mind for the great event of Yom Kippur. You can't just walk into the *shul* on Kol Nidrei night and think that's enough. You have to spend some time thinking about what this great day means for you, for your *neshama*. Before Yom Kippur, on Yom Kippur, as much as possible you should put into your

mind an appreciation of the tremendous *chesed* of Hashem: וַתֵּתֵן לָנוּ אֶת יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הַזֶּה – He gave us a gift, וַתֵּתֵן. Yom Kippur is a *matanah*, a great gift, because on this great day He's going to remove my stains.

And the more you think about it, the more you believe it, then *middah k'neged middah* Yom Kippur will help you more. The happier you are with this opportunity, the more you want to clean yourself, the more it's *michaper*.

### Precious Minutes

Now, you'll note that I said to "clean yourself." And that's because included in cooperating with Hakodosh Boruch Hu's promise is that we have to do *teshuva*; we have to repent.

Not merely you're going to sit there and participate in the singing; you like the *nigunim*, a good *chazan*, a *frum chazan* singing nice *nigunim*; "Ay yah yay yay. Tra-la-la." Everybody is happy with the good *nigunim* and they're watching the clock, thinking about what's waiting for them in the fridge.

Oh no! If you know what Yom Kippur is then every second of Yom Kippur is precious to you. If Yom Kippur would last a month, it would be the best thing in the world! Of course we would die of starvation. But that's the truth – it's the best thing that could be for us. Every second is happiness, every minute is precious.

### Good Conscience?!

The *chazan* is singing and you're thinking about what you said every day in Selichos, נַחֲפֹשֶׁה דְרַכֵּינוּ, וְנַחֲקֹרָה – Let's search out our ways and investigate. So you have to get busy thinking over the past year; go back through the year since last Rosh Hashana. "If you have a good conscience it's a sign of a poor memory." Think back to all those mornings when you neglected to have *kavanah* when you said *kriyas shema*. Maybe sometimes you missed *zman kriyas shema* altogether. You have to do a big *teshuva* for that! It's a *mitzvah d'oraisa* that you missed.

Maybe you didn't have *kavanah* when you said the first *brachah* of *shemoneh esrei*. Many other things, even more important things. If a person by mistake was over an *aveirah* of *chometz* on *pesach*, that's *koreis*. Now's the time to do *teshuva* for

everything *bein adam l'makom*; if you missed *kiddush levanah* you have to do *teshuva*. Even for a *minhag* that you didn't do. Anything.

So as the minutes tick by You're thinking, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, please forgive me for this and for that." Say it out; in detail! Don't lump it all into one *al cheit*. "Ribono Shel Olam," you can say, "Forgive me for that time, and for the other time. I am terribly sorry," If you really mean it, at that moment, on Yom Kippur, you can atone for a lifetime of stupidity. And as the minutes tick by you are being laundered little by little; your sins go away from you. As the day goes by, little by little Yom Kippur is washing you clean of your sins.

Even for the best of people, a lot of things have happened since last Rosh Hashanah! There's a lot of *teshuva* to do!

### **Another Category of Sin**

Now, although we turn our face to Hashem and allow ourselves to be washed by means of *teshuva*, not always is it enough; sometimes we have to do more than that. Because if you did something wrong to a fellow Jew, you should also know there is no such thing as forgiveness unless he forgives you.

So go and fall down on the ground to your fellow man and ask him, "Please forgive me for the mean words I said to you." Sometimes it won't be necessary to fall down on the ground but whatever you have to do, do it! If you don't do anything, you should know it will be very, very unhappy what will happen to you.

You know that the wise man, Reb Itzele Peterburger, *zichrono livrocha*, on *erev* Rosh Hashana before he went out of his house to the shul, he turned back and said to his wife, "*Zeit mir moichel* – Be *mochel* me please." And she was a smart woman; she said, "*Un zei du mir moichel*."

Oooh that is wonderful. That's how the stains on your *neshama* are wiped clean. It is a tremendous thing. Ask your wife to be *mochel* you before you come to shul on Yom Kippur. If you don't do that there is a long list she has; she has a very long list against you! And so, whatever you do, you have to get forgiveness; you must get forgiveness or nothing will help.

### **Leaving Shul on Yom Kippur**

Sometimes it's not so easy. I once called a man to forgive me, he banged down the telephone on me. It's not easy but you have to do something about it; you have to get *mechila* because nothing will help; nothing will help. That is the *halacha*, it's a *halacha pesukah* (Shulchan Oruch OC 606); not *lifnim meshuras hadin*. You have to contact that person in some way to get forgiveness, otherwise it's terrible what is going to happen.

A man once insulted somebody and he left him over in Europe; he came to America. In those days, it was a long time ago, people couldn't call up long distance to Europe in those days. "What should I do? Should I travel to Europe?" Don't think the alternative is worth taking; it's not worth it. The alternative is *gehenom*. When we don't have a *kapparah* in this world it is *gehenom*, and *gehenom* is worse than travelling to Europe and asking for *mechila*.

That's why, in case in the middle of davening you remind yourself that you had insulted somebody but right now he's in a different synagogue, he's in Boro Park somewhere, so take a walk from here to Boro Park. And say, "Please, call out Mr. Sam Cohen for me."

I once did it. Many years ago on Yom Kippur I reminded myself, a man was once in my shul and I criticized him for a certain thing that he did. At the time I thought I was right. Later I thought, maybe I shouldn't have done it. So on Yom Kippur – he is not in my shul anymore; he went someplace else – I went out of shul in the middle of davening, and I walked all the way across the neighborhood to where he davened and I asked somebody to call him out. I said "Forgive me please. He said, "You know I forgive you." Ah! It was a great achievement. Do that! Yom Kippur is the day. **כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם**; on this day Hashem cooperates with you.

### **The Great Mikveh Controversy**

And *chas v'shalom* if the person passes away. Ooh *wah*, that's trouble. Ooh it is a problem now. You have to do something about that. I once had a case like that. I once insulted an old *rav*. There was a fight about a *mikveh*. He made a *mikveh kosher* from city

water; he said you don't need rain water. I said, "City water?! A *mikveh*?!" "You're a *rasha*," I said to him.

Then I was sorry I said it. It was very wrong of him. City water is a *mikveh*? But I was sorry. So I called him up and he wouldn't forgive me. Then he passed away. I was out of town by this time. I lived someplace else. I called up an old friend of mine. I said, "Get together a *minyán*. I'll pay you \$100 and go to the cemetery and stand in the front of the grave and say that we're *shluchim* for this and this person and say *הַטָּאתִי לְהַשֵּׁם אֶלְקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִפְלוֹנִי*. Say that. So he did it for me.

He made a cavalcade of cars and people came together and went to the cemetery. I paid the expenses to go to the cemetery and he stood in front of this old *rav*'s grave, and he made the declaration. If you want Yom Kippur to be a day of happiness for you, that's what you have to do before Yom Kippur.

### **Attaining Forgiveness**

Now, if it's already Yom Kippur, so you're in a bind now. Even if he's alive, maybe he lives in Eretz Yisroel and you can't walk over to beg for forgiveness. Oh! How can I get him to forgive me? That's a big problem. It's a very big problem because Yom Kippur is here already.

There is one little possibility, I'm not saying that it will solve the problem, but it's a possibility. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, *מִזְחֵל עָן וְעֵבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע* – *Who does Hashem forgive?* *מִי שֶׁעֹוֵבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע* – *Someone who himself forgives others* (Rosh Hashana 17a). If you make yourself a forgiving person, then Hashem will cause other people to forgive you.

You have to work on that. Think back to all the people that insulted you in your lifetime; you remember how he hung up the telephone on you. Another one called you a name and spoke against you. Say, "I forgive everybody. I am *mochel* everybody with *mechila gemurah*". Say it! And even though you really are not *mochel*; it's hard for you – could be you are not *mochel* in your heart, but say it anyhow. The *sefarim* say once you say, "I am *mochel*," even though you never mean it, too late! The *sefarim* say that; it's a good *mechila*.

### **Hashem On Your Side**

So pay attention. We should all say now as follows, say it together with me now, it's a good investment: "I am willing to forgive all the Jews who wronged me". Sometimes you remember, sometimes you don't, so you can say it in general: *הִנְנִי מִזְחֵל לְכָל מִי שֶׁחָטָא בְּנַגְדִי* – *I am mochel anybody that sinned against me*. My husband, my wife, my neighbors, my boss, my employees, all of them. Even though they hurt me and even though it stung; it still rankles in my mind but I'm going to forgive them with a full heart. *וְאֵל יַעֲנֵשׁ שׁוֹמֵם בֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּסַבְּתִי* – *And no Jew should be punished because of me*.

"Oh, if that's the case," Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "then I am going to be on your side! If you do that then I am going to work things out for you, that others should forgive you for everything too."

And even if you don't mean it with a full heart, it is a good beginning in the right direction. It means you're making good use of the happiest day on our calendar. Yom Kippur is the day when your *neshama* can be cleansed of its stains, there's nothing happier than that. And the more you understand the promise of Hashem *בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם*, the happier of a day it becomes.

## *Part III. Happiness of Life*

### **Becoming Happy**

Now, we can't go away from this subject of The Happiest Day of the Year without mentioning another happiness that Yom Kippur is expected to bring us. Of course, we're all very *frum* here and so it seems to us that if our *neshamos* are being cleaned on this day, then that's all we need – we're preparing for a happiness that's going to be forever in the next world and what could be more happy than that?!

But we'll see now that part of the *teshuva* we're expected to do on Yom Kippur is going to make us happy people in this world too. The *teshuva* you do on Yom Kippur means that it's the first day of a long year of good times!

Of course during the *aseres yemei teshuvah* the Am Yisrael is in a serious mode – Yom Kippur is very

serious – but included in this day of introspection is the important lesson of *simchu tzadikim ba'Hashem*, of how to become a happy person with all of the *chasdei Hashem*.

### **The Important Introduction**

Let's hear what we've been saying every morning. If you say *selichos* – which you should – so every morning you say as follows; they are the opening words. לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה – To you Hashem is the righteousness, וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם – but we are shamefaced.

Now, some people when they say those words, so they're waiting for the important words: "אָבֵל אֲנַחְנוּ – וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ הִטְאָנוּ – We sinned against You and our fathers sinned against You." But לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם, they think it's only an introduction.

Oh no! That line is everything! That one line is enough *selichos*. Stop there! Don't go any further! Let others gallop. They don't know where they're galloping to, and they're galloping along to a precipice. But we can't gallop, these words are everything! "To You Hashem is the righteousness, but we are shamefaced before You."

### **Shame At The Bank**

Now immediately those who think about what they're saying they understand it to mean like this. It's like when you come to the bank vice-president and ask for a big loan, so he says, "On what *smach*? What can I rely on to give you so much money?" So you promise him all types of things. You tell him you have plans, business plans, and they'll bring you a lot of money.

And then when the time comes and you have nothing left and you want another loan, otherwise your business will close, so you know he's going to say, "What's this?!" You're ashamed even to go to apply for the loan. You wouldn't go to the bank vice-president the second time.

But to Hakadosh Baruch Hu we come back every year – what choice do we have? Only we're supposed to hang our heads and say לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה – In Your righteousness You gave us this past year on credit, a year of *tzedakah*, so that maybe we would do better, but וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם – we are shamefaced because we haven't lived up to our side of the deal. Last Yom

Kippur we promised You all kinds of things and now we look back and we are ashamed because we didn't keep all those resolutions – maybe some, but it was a pretty poor job. And despite the mistakes we continue to make, the *aveiros* we committed, we're asking you for another loan. We're ashamed but we're asking anyhow.

### **A New Pshat**

That's how these words are understood and it's not wrong. It's certainly a right attitude but it's not enough because we must understand that all the processes of life that human beings enjoy are included in לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה. Hakadosh Baruch Hu continuously causes these processes to function and so it's up to us to feel that it's *tzedakah*, it's charity on His part – we're taking and taking and taking more.

And therefore, not only are we ashamed that we are coming back to ask for another loan before the first one is repaid, it's much more than that. לָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם means we are shamefaced because we didn't even think about what You've been giving to us. That's something new already. Not only that we didn't do enough *Torah* and *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim*, but we didn't even stop to thank you for what we were getting from You every single minute.

לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה means that during the past year we moved our bowels every day or almost every day. Isn't that an important thing to think about? You don't think so? I remember once a young man, his bowels didn't move for twelve days. It was an emergency. The *yeshiva* was saying *Tehillim* for him day and night, and they were using every kind of measure to save him. Finally, the miracle happened. Twelve days he waited in agony! But with us it happens always, day after day; that's a tremendous *tzedakah*! And if we never thought about that, if we didn't thank Him all the time, so וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם – we're embarrassed to be asking for more.

And so we see now that one of the first elements in *teshuvah* – before *oshamnu* and *bogadnu* and *gozalnu*, the first words of *teshuvah* are לְךָ הַשֵּׁם הַצְדִּיקָה וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִיִם. Yom Kippur is not only what we spoke about earlier, that we have to *teshuvah* from *cheit* of not doing this or that. That's very important but it's still only part of the story. One of the most important

elements in *teshuva* is that we have to regret that we didn't thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for all the *chesed* He is bestowing on us.

### **Living With Mindfulness**

But actually there's something even before that. In order to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for all the things that He did for us or He's doing for us, it's imperative that we actually *enjoy* them right now. Unless you learn to be happy when you move your bowels, your 'thank you' is meaningless. If you haven't learned to enjoy what Hashem is giving you, it's only lip service.

And so when we come now in front of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, He says, "My child you're coming to Me and you're asking for another year." *Kosveinu lechaim*. All day long, "Give me life, give me life." So Hashem says, "First of all, I want to know more than anything else, what are you going to do with that year? Are you going to make it a year of unhappiness for yourself? You'll live without enjoying the year?"

Suppose you made for somebody a luscious repast. You served him expensive food, and he sat down and he stuffed it into his mouth and he didn't even chew properly. He ate in a hurry, and in three minutes let's say he destroyed an expensive steak with trimmings that cost you a lot of money and a lot of time to prepare. So you'd be chagrined, disappointed. You wanted him to enjoy that repast. You wanted him to sit down and chew slowly, taste the aroma of that steak.

And therefore when we're coming and asking for life, Hakadosh Baruch Hu first of all wants to know, are we going to gobble up those days one after the other without appreciation, without happiness? In that case He may be reluctant to give us such precious gifts.

### **Carpe Diem!**

Do you stop to think that we already had four glorious days in this new year? How many people stop to think, four beautiful days! Such nice weather. Two days of Rosh Hashana and yesterday a glorious day, Tzom Gedalia, and another day today. Do you stop to think that during these four days you lived normally and healthfully?

Some people are only waiting for things to come yet. If You'll give me something else then I'll thank You. The fact that You gave me four days this year already, no thanks. That's how we're going to come Yom Kippur and ask for the rest of the year?! Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "That's how you enjoyed it? I gave you a sample. I gave you four days already. Did you enjoy them?"

No, this he ignores. He's asking for the rest of the year. And what will happen to the rest of the year? He'll ignore it too. So Hakadosh Baruch Hu might *chas veshalom* say it's a waste; it's a waste of good days and good years on this man.

And therefore, the way to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu for the ensuing year is with happiness. I'm learning now how to be a happy man. Every day I'm going to enjoy that day. Like the Romans used to say *carpe diem*, "snatch the day". Grab the day! Right now grab this day.

### **Happy Awakenings**

You woke up this morning, didn't you? If you're here now it means you were one of the lucky ones who woke up today. Boruch Hashem! Boruch Hashem! When you open your eyes in the morning, the first thing. "Good news! I'm alive." A lot of people *lo aleichem v'lo aleinu*, don't get that good news in the morning.

Here's a wife who woke up in the morning and she takes a look at her husband in the next bed, and she sees that his color is different today and she's alarmed. She says, "Jake get up!" And *ein kol ve'ain kashev*. She seizes him and shakes him, and then there's an emergency, an ambulance comes. It's too late. It's too late. And it happens again and again, in many homes.

And therefore the first good news in the morning is that you opened your eyes. "I'm alive! Ooh wah! I'm alive!" And that's as serious as could be. Practice it tomorrow morning. There's no good fortune like being alive but we thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu every day for it with meaningless words, with no feeling of happiness behind it.

## Happy Visions

Not only are you alive but when you open your eyes you can see! Did you thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu? So you say, "Yes, every day I say *pokeach ivrim*." That's nothing. It's in the siddur, so you have no choice, you say it. What a pity! *Baruch atah Hashem pokeach ivrim!* How can you say that blessing sincerely if you're not happy with your eyes?

Do you know what eyes are? The happiness of eyes? You have to read about people who lost their eyesight for some years and then suddenly by an operation they regained it. Ah! They didn't want to eat. All they wanted was to drink with their eyes. They feasted their eyes on their relatives, on the world. Such a beautiful world. It's such a happiness to be able to see.

## Happy Elimination

And then you walk to the bathroom. If you don't enjoy your normal natural functions, you'll never thank Him. Revel in it. You think it's a joke? Ask a man who is in a hospital waiting for an operation to restore his normal method of urinating. You know one morning he got up and his bladder was full but he just couldn't evacuate. And he told his wife, and they decided that they should call an ambulance. No choice. You can't wait any longer. They waited maybe an hour or two hours and now he's bursting.

And they hurried to the hospital and they're standing in line or sitting in a waiting room, but finally he sees that he'll collapse. He goes over to the nurse at the desk, he says this is an emergency and she says what it is. And he said it's three hours that I wasn't able to urinate. Oh, she said. You should have said that immediately. And she hurries him through a side door and they go straight to the operating room. He can't wait. But it's not simple. He has one operation and another operation and there was a week in between when he walks around holding a bottle in his hand in the hospital.

If that man could regain his natural elimination, he'd be intoxicated. He'd be so happy, he'd be delirious. He looks forward to that great day when he'll come home and once more he'll be like everybody else. He'll be like a millionaire when that happens.

But you, because you have it every day, you shouldn't be delirious?

## Real Teshuva

Here's a man in *shul* on Yom Kippur who gets up to *viduy*. *Ashamnu, bagadnu*. So he's wracking his brain to think of sins. Whom did he kill this past year? He didn't drive on Shabbos. He didn't eat lobster. For the most part he was a good Jew.

Here's the sin you should consider. Did I thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu with a full heart for the daily happiness that He gave me? Was I happy with a good night's sleep? Was I happy that I had a safe home and there wasn't a single fire in my house? That I wasn't mugged this past year. That I don't have arthritis. Was I happy that I could breathe? That I have two nostrils, not just one? You have two nostrils that breathe deeply of the air that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives you. Where you happy with normal elimination? Where you happy every day that your heart is pumping and your kidneys are functioning? You don't even feel the presence of the kidneys. They're working so well. Why aren't you happy with smooth functioning joints, no pains in the bone?

Oh, now he's making *teshuva!* *Ashamnu*, I am guilty of not enjoying my eyes. *Bagadnu* I rebelled against you by not enjoying my lubricated joints. *Gozalnu*, I'm guilty of taking Your food every day and not enjoying it. He's doing *teshuva* now for not enjoying his eyes and his feet and his meals and his heart and his nostrils.

## Hungry and Happy

And so if you make use of Yom Kippur, you start learning now how to make your days happy; you go away from Yom Kippur a happy Jew. At least he has a *plan* for how to become a happy Jew. Not artificially happy. He's walking home from *maariv* now – he doesn't have a nickel in his pocket, he's hungry – but he's enjoying life!

And that's why Yom Kippur is the most glorious day, the happiest day in the Jewish calendar. What a happy day it is! At the end of Yom Kippur you're a new person and you walk out cleansed and purified; you'll be able to enjoy the happiness of *Olam Habo* now to no end. כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם – on this day

Hashem will wipe you clean. The nation who understood the meaning of these words were so full of joy that it was one of the most happy days of the year. And if you do a real *teshuvah*, if you learn how to be happy with the *chesed Hashem*, you'll be happy for the rest of your life in this world too.

### Have A Gemar Chasimah Tovah

#### LET'S GET PRACTICAL

##### Making Yom Kippur The Happiest Day

Yom Kippur is the happiest day of the year. I will try to keep that in mind this year. As Yom Kippur comes in, I will *bli neder* spend a minute reflecting on how happy this day is, and I will resolve to make use of it.

During the day I will *bli neder* spend another minute rejoicing in the fact that Hashem is cleaning my *neshama* and sparing me from Gehenom.

I will take another minute to "search out my ways" and do *teshuvah* for my sins. I will also resolve to forgive anyone who may have wronged me so that Hashem will forgive me as well.

Finally, I will spend a minute realizing how happy Hashem has made me over the past year and resolve to appreciate it more and revel in the happiness of all these pleasures over the coming year.

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the Jews who keep *kashrus* and Shabbos and *taharas hamishpacha*. All the Jews who are busy keeping the Torah. We say, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, bless them all. The Slabodka Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel. And Chevron. And Mir. And Ponovezh." Say it; say it with your mouth. Not merely thinking. With your mouth say it.

And Hashem says, "Oh; now I see that you mean business. You're blessing My children. And now I'll get busy blessing you."

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Why do we wish people a *kesivah vachasima tovah*? Doesn't the judgment of Hashem on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur go according to your deeds? What's a *bracha* going to help?

A:

Absolutely a man is judged according to his deeds. But *tefillah* helps too. So you'll ask, why does your *tefillah* help? If you're judged according to your deeds, why do you pray? You're going to be judged according to your deeds and that's all, so why pray?

And the answer is, that's part of your deeds. When you pray, that's part of your deeds. And the deeds of somebody else can also help you. The *zechus* of other people can also help you, yes.

And that's why when you're praying on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and every day as well, you say שלום רב על עמך ישראל תשים לעולם. You pray for the whole Jewish nation, not only for yourself. You say it *b'lashon rabim*. You say *כתבינו* and *חתמינו* - "Write us in the book of life." And we're thinking, "Hashem, remember us. All the members of our *shul*. All the people who come to our *shiurim*. Our wives. Our children. Our grandchildren. All the *bnei yeshiva*. All the *yeshivos*. Satmar Yeshiva. Mir Yeshiva. Chaim Berlin. Bobov. Torah Vodaas. Passaic. All the *yeshivos* and all the girls' schools too. Beis Yaakov, Yeshiva of Brooklyn, Prospect Park, all the *frum* girls. Then, you think about all their fathers and mothers. All

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