

The Divine Purity of the Name of Hashem That Manifests as Yom Kippur

BY RABBI DANIEL GLATSTEIN

Parshas Acharei Mos begins with the Torah's instructions to be delivered to Aharon regarding his *Avodah* on Yom Kippur. However, the *pesukim* omit a crucial detail. In discussing the various *korbanos* and other aspects of the Service, the Torah does not mention that this *Avodah* is to be performed on the tenth of Tishrei! It is only at the very end of the *parsha* that the Torah finally states the date:

"This shall remain for you an eternal decree: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and you shall not do any work, neither the native nor the proselyte who dwells among you. For on this day he shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed" (Vayikra 16: 29-30).

This is the one *yom tov* for which the Torah first provides the instructions for the *Avodah* of the festival, and only later relates when to do it. This anomaly is pointed out by the Bnei Yissaschar, who asks why the Torah departs from its normal practice of discussing a *Yom Tov* after telling us when it is to be celebrated. It seems that the Torah telling us the date of Yom Kippur is an afterthought.

Rabbeinu Sherira Gaon authored a historical compendium of events, with a special focus on the lives of the Geonim who preceded him. He writes that Rav Achai b'rei d'Raba bar Avuha — namely, Rav Achai Gaon — passed away on Yom Kippur at a time of anger, followed four years later by the *petirah* of Rav Tachna

and Mar Zutra ben Rav Chinana. This addition — that Rav Achai Gaon passed away at a time of anger — is a deviation from his standard writing style. When recording the passing of the other Gaonim, he merely states the dates without commenting that they were "times of anger." Why does he add this description to the passing of Rav Achai Gaon?

In years gone by, observes the Bnei Yissaschar, *chassidim* and *anshei maaseh*, pious individuals, referred to Yom Kippur by the title *Yom HaKadosh*, the holy day. Why, asks the Bnei Yissaschar, wasn't it simply referred to by its proper name, *Yom HaKippurim*? Furthermore, he asks, the *masechtos* that deal with our holy days are titled *Shabbos*, *Rosh Hashana*, *Succah*, *Pesachim*. Why isn't there a *Maseches Yom HaKippurim*? The *masechta* that discusses Yom Kippur is called *Yoma*, the Day.

The Physical Manifestation of the Shem HaMeforash

The Bnei Yissaschar advances a dramatic idea. Yom Kippur is a day that comes from a hidden realm; it is, in fact, the Name of Hashem materializing and crystallizing as a day of the year. It is the *Shem Hashem* that manifests as a day. There is a Divine energy and power inherent in Yom Kippur. The essence of the day, is *kadosh* and powerful, so much so that we dare not utter its name, which is a manifestation of the *Shem Hash-*

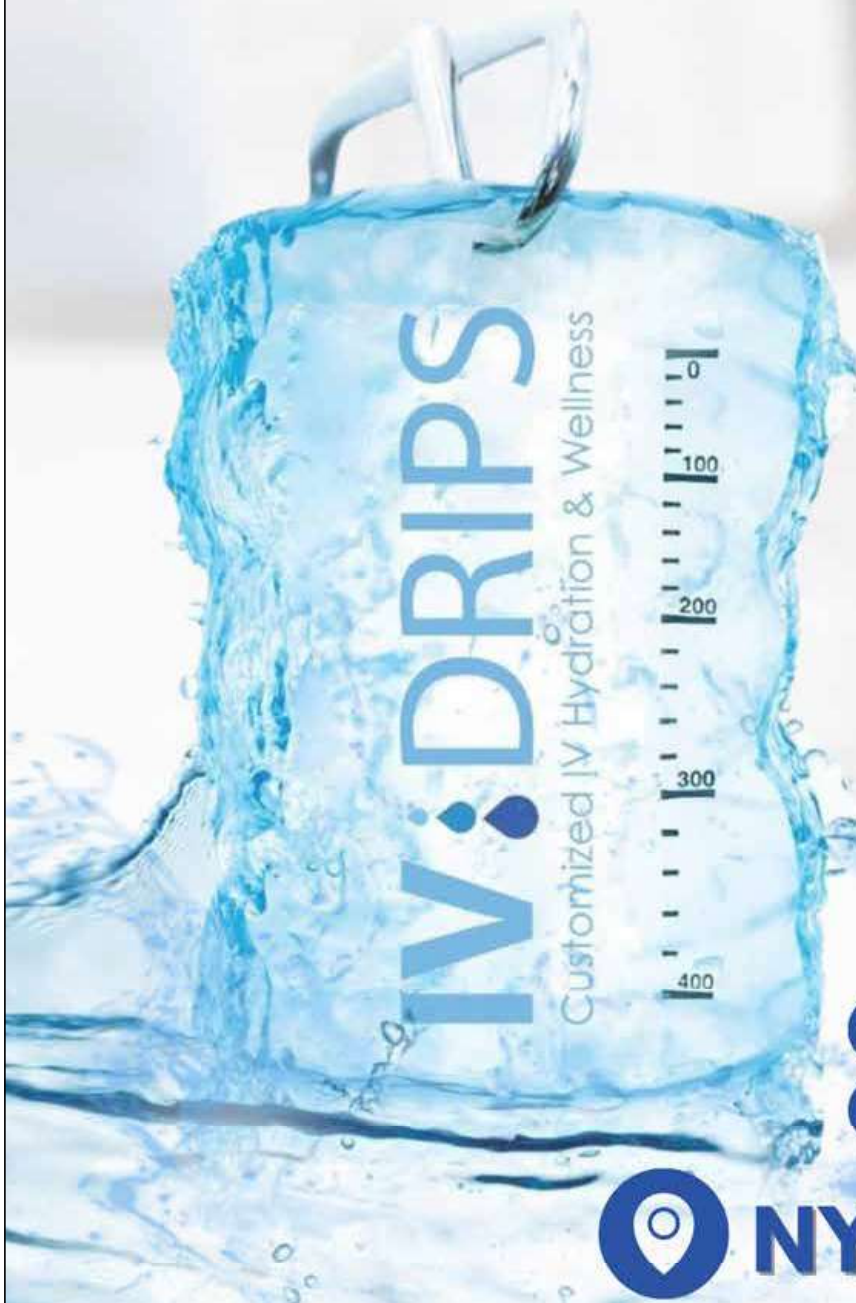
em. Therefore, we even call the *masechta* discussing Yom Kippur by the name *Yoma*. It is from a different realm altogether, as if it were beyond the Torah itself, and therefore the date is not mentioned in the Torah until the very end of the *parsha*.

Hashem allows His Name to become a day — and therefore we are reluctant even to verbalize the name of the day — because it is tantamount to saying the Name of Hashem. Out of respect we refer to Yom Kippur by a pseudonym: *Yom HaKadosh*. From here, we see that there is a supernatural quality to the day of Yom Kippur itself; it is the manifestation of the Name of Hashem.

The *sefer Az Yashir*, written by a dear friend and noted *talmid chacham*, Rav Moshe Schwerd, cites Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, who advances the same concept. He quotes the Bnei Yissaschar as he expands the idea further. During the *Avodah* of Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol says the Vidui, Confession, three times. First, he recites the Vidui for himself and his household. Next, he says Vidui for all of the Kohanim. Third, he recites Vidui for all of Klal Yisrael.

The Mishnah describes the procedure as the Kohen Gadol recites Vidui for himself and his family, in which he says, "*Ani u'beisi*, I and my household." The text that the Kohen Gadol recites includes two sentences that both begin with the words, "*Ana Hashem*, please, Hashem": First, "*Ana Hashem*, we have sinned," followed by "*Ana Hashem*, forgive us." The Mishnah subsequently describes the Vidui recited by the Kohen

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Gadol for himself, for his family, and for all the Kohanim. The same two sentences are recited, and both sentences begin with *Ana Hashem*. However, the third iteration of the Vidui, the one for all of Klal Yisrael, is slightly different. The second sentence begins with the words, *Ana BaShem*.

The Tosafos Yom Tov makes note of this, wondering why the language has changed and if, in fact, the version recorded is correct. He concludes that the correct text is actually for all three iterations to begin the second sentence with “*Ana BaShem*.”

Rav Soloveitchik addresses this question of the Tosafos Yom Tov. The relationship that Klal Yisrael enjoys with Hashem is unique and multifaceted. On the night of Yom Kippur, our relationship with Hashem is especially distinctive. On that night, Hashem serves as our Mother. The kittel we wear is comparable to a mother who swaddles her child in white. When an infant soils his garments, the mother cleans him and changes his clothing.

On the night of Yom Kippur, we are like the soiled infant, with *aveiros* sullyng our pure *neshamos*. Hashem, our Mother, yearns to help us. He cleanses us, He swaddles us, and He dresses us in white. It is not beneath Hashem’s dignity for Him to personally clean up our mess.

The process Hashem utilizes to cleanse us, as it were, is to take the *Shem Hashem* and manifest it as a day: the day of Yom Kippur.

We know that Hashem stands where there are three *dayanim*, where a *beis din* is being convened. At the onset of Yom Kippur, we want to bring the *Shechinah* to us, so we convene a *beis din*. This *beis din* does much more than just annul the vows in the form of Kol Nidrei; it serves as the conduit through which the *Shechinah* can come to forgive our sins. When the *beis din* is in place, the *Shechinah* comes down from the seventh *Raki’a*, the loftiest level of Shamayim. Hashem approaches each and every one of us to cleanse the filth that has polluted our *neshamos*.

Hashem accomplishes the cleansing process with the *Yom*, the Day, which is the manifestation of the *Shem Hashem*, the Name of Hashem. Therefore, says Rav Soloveitchik, the Tosafos Yom Tov is correct: The *kapparah* we seek — for the Kohen Gadol, for the Kohanim, and for Klal Yisrael — is the *kapparah* that is brought about *BaShem*, with the Name of Hashem. That is why we say, “*Ana BaShem, kapper na*, please, with Your Name, atone for me.”

The tefillah should be read as follows: *Ana*, Please, *BaShem*, with Your Name, *kapper na*, please atone! (And not as it is commonly read — *Ana BaShem*, Please, Hashem, *kapper na*) We are asking that through the power of the *Shem* of Hashem, He should cleanse us of all sin.

The source of the *kedushah* of Yom Kippur and the power of the *kapparah* of Yom Kippur are fueled by its manifestation as the *Shem Hashem*, by the Name of Hashem descending to us and concretizing as the day of Yom Kippur. Uttering the name *Yom Kippur* is considered to be akin to stating the *Shem HaMeforash*, the Name of Hashem. Therefore, it was customary not to refer to Yom Kippur by name but rather to call it *Yom HaKadosh*, the holy day.

During the final moments of Yom Kippur, we repeat the phrase “*Hashem Hu HaElokim*” seven times, thereby affirming that *Hashem, He is G-d*. What is the significance of these words and why do we say them as Yom Kippur is drawing to a close?

When Yom Kippur is over, the *Shechinah* departs, so to speak, and Hashem re-ascends the *Seven Rakios*. We recite, “*Hashem Hu HaElokim*,” seven times to escort, so to speak, the *Shechinah* to the highest heavens.

Hashem is *mechapper* our *aveiros* with His Name. As the Name of Hashem ascends the *Seven Rakios*, so too, the Day slips away.

“*Ki ba’yom hazeh yichaper al’eichem l’taher eschem mi’kol chatoseichem lifnei Hashem titaharu.*”

This *pasuk* is only one of six places in Tanach where the word “*ba’yom*” is vocalized with a *patach* under the *beis* rather than a *shva*. In fact, in this context, the word should really be *b’yom*, not *baYom*. *B’yom* means “during the day,” and *baYom* means “with the

When Yom Kippur begins, it is as if Olam Haba itself is coming down to This World.

day.” It would seem more logical for the verse to state, “In the course of this day, Hashem will atone for you.” The *shva* seems to fit the meaning of the *pasuk* much better than the *patach*. *B’yom* implies that the *kapparah* takes place on the day of Yom Kippur; *baYom*, on the other hand, implies that the Day *itself* is the tool with which the *kapparah* is affected. *BaYom*, it is with the Day, utilizing the Day, that the *kapparah* happens. In light of what we have learned, we can explain this vocalization. The word *baYom* is employed to indicate that the atonement does not merely transpire during the course of the day, but *Itzumo shel Yom mechapper*, the very essence of the day inherently atones. *BaYom*, with the day itself, which is the manifestation of the Name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Hashem atones for our sins.

Parenthetically, the words “*Ki ba’yom hazeh yichaper*” contain a *remez* to an important *avodah* of Yom Kippur. The *roshei teivos* of these words, when rearranged, spell the word *bechiya*, crying, conveying the importance of shedding tears on Yom Kippur. The *roshei teivos* of the words “*mi’kol chatoseichem lifnei Hashem titaharu*” when rearranged, form the word *chamalti*, I was merciful. Rav Chaim Palagi writes that if a person cries, shedding tears on Yom Kippur, he will merit mercy and forgiveness for his sins.

Does Yom Kippur Need Teshuvah?

From the above, we see the unique atonement pow-

er of the day of Yom Kippur itself. However, it would seem that this is not our halachic conclusion, because if someone fasts for the entire duration of Yom Kippur, but he does not do teshuvah, his Yom Kippur has accomplished nothing for him. We rule as the Chachamim do: *Ein Yom Kippur mechapper bli teshuvah*, Yom Kippur does not atone unless it is accompanied by repentance. Rebbe, however, differs with the Chachamim; he maintains that the very essence of Yom Kippur serves to atone for one’s *aveiros*, and this atonement is affected even if one does not do teshuvah. Thus, “*the very essence of the day [inherently] atones*” refers to this concept.

Despite the fact that we do not *pasken* according to Rebbe, the Rambam employs the expression, “*Itzumo shel Yom mechapper*.” This shows that this terminology does have halachic standing. The Rambam is teaching us that although Yom Kippur alone is not *mechapper*, and one must also do teshuvah to achieve atonement, nevertheless, the atonement does not come solely from one’s teshuvah. Rather, once one does teshuvah, then the *itzumo shel Yom* can, in fact, be *mechapper*. The process of teshuvah activates the power inherent in the day of Yom Kippur that allows one to be forgiven for his wrongdoings. However, it is interesting to note, as we shall present below, that there are some instances where we seem to *pasken*, like Rebbe, that *itzumo shel Yom* is *mechapper*.

The full and proper name of this yom tov is Yom HaKippurim. Why use the plural form? Why not use the singular, as we usually refer to it, Yom Kippur? The Darchei Moshe explains that not only is Yom Kippur a day of *kapparah* for those who are alive, it is also a day of atonement for those who have passed away. The plural form refers to the atonement of these two groups.

How can the day be a *kapparah* for those who already have passed away? As mentioned above, we *pasken* like the Chachamim that *ein Yom Kippur mechapper bli teshuvah*, and one who is no longer among the living cannot do teshuvah. So how can Yom Kippur effect *kapparah* for the deceased? If they cannot do teshuvah, then Yom Kippur cannot atone for them.

Rav Yaakov Orenstein, the Baal Yeshuos Yaakov, explains that most people do not pass away immediately after Yom Kippur, but rather some time during the course of the year. In that case, how do those people achieve atonement and forgiveness? Any sin that may have been committed between the previous Yom Kippur and the day he was *niftar* will not have been privy to the awesome forgiving power of Yom Kippur. How is atonement for these final months achieved? The answer is in the name Yom Kippurim. The Yom Kippur following one’s demise is *mechapper* for *aveiros* committed during the final months of one’s life, from the day after Yom Kippur until the day of *petirah*. This unique *kapparah* is effective even without teshuvah.

When we rule that the essence of Yom Kippur is not *mechapper* without teshuvah, that ruling applies only to one who is able to do teshuvah. If one is unable to do teshuvah, then the essence of the day can be *mechapper*, and the next Yom Kippur will affect a *kapparah* for the sins that may have been committed between the prior Yom Kippur until the *petirah*. Thus, for someone

who cannot do teshuvah, we do *passen* that *itzumo shel Yom* is *mechapper*.

Guaranteed Olam Haba

There is another illustration of the concept that *itzumo shel Yom* is manifest. The Gemara relates that at the time that Rebbe was *niftar*, a Heavenly voice proclaimed that anyone who had attended the *levayah* of Rebbe is *mezuman*, prepared, for *chayei Olam Haba*, life in the World to Come. A launderer had missed the *levayah*, and when he heard what was declared from Heaven, he jumped off the roof in despair. A *Bas Kol* then declared that he, too, merited *Olam Haba* even though he had not attended the funeral.

What was so unique about Rebbe's *levayah* that anyone who attended was *mezuman l'chayei Olam Haba*? Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spector gives an incredible answer.

Why do we read about the *Asarah Harugei Malchus* during the *tefillos* that we recite during Mussaf on Yom Kippur?

Chazal ask why the death of Miriam is juxtaposed to the instructions about the *Parah Adumah*. They answer that it is to teach us that just as the *Parah Adumah* is *mechapper*, so too the death of the righteous also provides *kapparah*. Miriam's passing away was *mechapper* for the Bnei Yisrael. That is why we read about the *Asarah Harugei Malchus* on Yom Kippur: Their deaths provided *kapparah* for the Jewish people.

We stated earlier that Rebbe and the Rabbanan disagreed about whether or not Yom Kippur itself is *mechapper* or if one must do teshuvah in order to activate the *kapparah* of Yom Kippur. Rebbe held that *itzumo shel Yom*, the essence of the day, is itself enough to provide atonement. The Rabbanan disagreed and maintained that it is only with teshuvah that Yom Kippur can provide atonement.

Extrapolating based on this *machlokes*, advanced Reb Yitzchak Elchanan, Rebbe and the Rabbanan would also disagree whether the death of a *tzaddik* on his own can provide atonement even without teshuvah. Rebbe maintained that it does, while the Rabbanan stated that the passing of a *tzaddik* can atone only if the person also did teshuvah and repented.

There is a mystical concept that on the day of an eminent sage's *petirah*, we *passen* in accordance with his opinions in halacha. Thus, on the day that Rebbe passed away, we *passened* as he did: One need not do teshuvah in order to acquire the atonement that can be achieved with the passing of *tzaddikim*. Therefore, a message was received from *Shamayim* stating just that. Today, in accord with Rebbe's *shitah*, opinion, all

in attendance receive automatic atonement through his passing, even without having done teshuvah. In honor of Rebbe, on the day he passed away, the

halacha was that *itzumo shel Yom* was *mechapper*, and all in attendance were *mezuman l'chayei Olam Haba*.

Even though we must do teshuvah to activate the *kapparah*, the day itself has great power to be *mechapper*: *ki baYom hazeh yechaper*, because *with this day*, Hashem forgives us.

When Does the Kapparah Happen?

We have begun to uncover the extraordinary power inherent in the day of Yom Kippur itself. The Gemara says that if one passes away on Erev Yom Kippur, it is an evil portent because he lost out on the atonement of Yom Kippur. However, if he passes away on Motza'ei Yom Kippur, the Gemara states that it is a good *siman* that his sins were all completely forgiven. What about someone who passes away on Yom Kippur itself? Is that a good or evil omen?

The process of teshuvah activates the power inherent in the day of Yom Kippur that allows one to be forgiven for his wrongdoings.

This question really hinges on whether the atonement of Yom Kippur takes place incrementally as the day progresses, or does it atone only at its conclusion? If it takes place incrementally, one who passes away on Yom Kippur at least achieved a degree of atonement. However, if the atonement is achieved only upon its conclusion, it would be a bad sign to pass away on Yom Kippur. Rav Elchanan Wasserman explains that Rav Sherira Gaon clearly held that Yom Kippur does not atone until the day is over, which would make it a bad sign to pass away on Yom Kippur.

Therefore, when he recorded the passing of Rav Achai Gaon, which happened on Yom Kippur, he was afraid that it would reflect poorly on Rav Achai Gaon, for he was *niftar* before the conclusion of Yom Kippur, and he had not yet been granted the *kapparah* that Yom Kippur would have afforded him had he lived another few hours. This would have led to a *p'gam*, defect,

in the honor of Rav Achai Gaon. Therefore, to explain why Rav Achai Gaon did not live to the conclusion of Yom Kippur, Rav Sherira Gaon wrote that it was "a time of anger" to convey the message that the *petirah* of Rav Achai Gaon was prompted by Hashem's anger toward the entire generation, rather than, *chas v'shalom*, a negative judgment that did not allow Rav Achai Gaon to achieve the *kapparah* of Yom Kippur.

This same idea can also be applied to the *petirah* of Rabbi Akiva, who, we are taught by Yalkut Shimon, was killed on Yom Kippur. In fact, it is suggested that we even recite a hidden *hesped* for Rabbi Akiva on Yom Kippur. On the night of Yom Kippur, our *davening* begins with *Kol Nidrei*, which starts with the phrase, "*Ohr zarua latzaddik u'lyishrei leiv simcha*, Light is sown for the righteous; and for the upright of heart, gladness" (Tehillim 97:11). Why do we begin the *davening* on the Yom HaKadosh with this sentence from Tehillim?


It is suggested that the reason we start this way is because the *pasuk*, "*Ohr zarua latzaddik u'lyishrei leiv simcha*" spells, with its *sofei teivos*, "Rabbi Akiva." Just as Rav Elchanan explained regarding Rav Achai Gaon, the death of Rabbi Akiva was not a *siman ra*, negative portent; rather, it was also a time of anger, as evidenced by the harsh decrees the Roman promulgated against us.

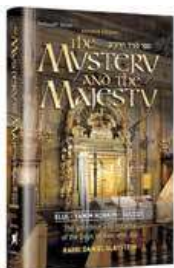
There is an inherent power of Divine atonement in the day of Yom Kippur. Bnei Yissaschar writes that the day of Yom Kippur and the concept of teshuvah come from a special, remote, and hidden place.

The Yalkut Shimon teaches that Hashem asked *Chochmah* (Wisdom) what should happen to one who sins. *Chochmah* responded that the offender deserves the death penalty. The *Neviim* (prophets) were asked the same question, and they offered the same response. Hashem asked the *malachim*, and once again the response was that the offenders deserve to be punished by death. Even when the Torah was asked, the only suggestion given was to bring an offering to gain atonement, but the possibility of teshuvah was not offered.

Only HaKadosh Baruch Hu could conceive the idea of teshuvah. It was beyond the scope of *Chochmah*, the *neviim*, and the *malachim* to comprehend that a sinner could be given a second chance.

The day of Yom Kippur comes from *Olam Haba*, from the hidden World to Come. When Yom Kippur begins, it is as if *Olam Haba* itself is coming down to This World. As in *Olam Haba*, Yom Kippur is a day, without eating or drinking, and we conduct ourselves like the Heavenly angels. And since it comes from a hidden source, the date of the Yom Tov is hidden until the very end of the Torah's discussion about it, when it is finally revealed so we will know when to observe it.

May we always be *zoche* to taste the Divine quality of this day that emanates from *Olam Haba* and may we return to Hashem with *teshuva sheleimah* and merit a *chasimah tovah*. 



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