

# VAYOMER ELIYAHU

Inspiration and Encouragement on Topics of Trust and Faith in Hashem Yisborach  
Based on the Weekly Torah Portion

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In English



בס"ד

## When One Utilizes The Holy Day Properly, He Will Improve Himself And Enhance His Entire Year!

### » Grab The Holiness of The Day!

**The** verse states (Vayikroh 16:2): “Do not come at all times to the kodesh.” It is forbidden for the Kohen Gadol to enter the Kodosh Hakodoshim whenever he wants. The Kli Yakar asks why the verse says that he cannot go into the kodesh “at all times”, which makes it sound as if he can go at certain times, when, in fact, he is never allowed to go there besides for once a year on Yom Kippur.

**The** Kli Yakar offers an answer to this question that gives us a deep understanding of the holiness of the day of Yom Kippur. He says that on Yom Kippur, every member of Klal Yisroel reaches the level of a holy angel. Everyone is “above time” and is not bound to the laws of time and nature. Therefore, Yom Kippur is not considered a “time”. Every other day of the year is “a time”, but Yom Kippur is not. Therefore, when the verse says that the Kohen Gadol cannot go “at all times” into the Kodosh Hakadoshim, the intent is that he cannot ever enter on any day that is “a time”. However, he is allowed to go there on a day that is not “a time” – the day of Yom Kippur when Klal Yisroel is above time and is not subject to the regular rules of time.

**The** Be'er Heitiv (Orech Chaim 619:4) writes: “There is a widespread custom to wrap oneself in a talis while it is still daytime and to make a bracha on it. This is stated by the Arizal. If one wraps himself in the talis at night, he should not make a bracha.”

**The** Ramchal (Sefer Kitzur Hakavanos) explains this by saying that when the sun sets at the beginning of Yom Kippur, Hashem wraps a talis, so to speak, upon all of Klal Yisroel. He places us all under the protection of His garment. Since this happens on its own, without us doing anything, we do not make a bracha on the talis after nightfall.

**The** Chasam Sofer (Drashos, Chelek Aleph, page 16) says that a person’s body becomes uplifted and sanctified on Yom Kippur. He

proves this from the Gemara that says that if a pregnant woman smells food on Yom Kippur and feels faint from the need to eat, we allow her to eat until she comes back to herself. The Gemara then says that if a pregnant woman smells food on Yom Kippur, someone should whisper into her ear that it is Yom Kippur, as this may decrease her desire for food and remove the danger of her hunger. But, it says, if she still cannot come back to herself, she is allowed to eat because it is dangerous to force her to refrain from eating.

**The** Chasam Sofer asks why this halacha is only found regarding Yom Kippur. It does not say anywhere that if a pregnant woman smells trief meat, we whisper in her ear that the Torah forbids such food. Rather, she is allowed to eat it right away. Why is Yom Kippur different?

**He** answers that it is the baby in the mother’s womb that craves the food and which is in danger from being denied it. The baby is learning the entire Torah with a Malach and is very holy, but because it is wrapped in the earthly body of the mother, it desires the food. Therefore, if it desires trief meat, there is no point in telling it that the Torah forbids it. It desires it because it is in the mother’s body, and reminding it that this meat is forbidden won’t change anything. On Yom Kippur, however, even the mother’s body is purified and sanctified. Therefore, by being reminded that it is Yom Kippur, it is possible that the baby will stop desiring the forbidden food.

**Furthermore**, we see that the Tur (Orech Chaim 606) quotes Chazal (Pirkei D’Rebbe Eliezer 45) who say that the satan says to Hashem on Yom Kippur: You have one nation that are like angels. Angels go barefoot, and Jews are barefoot on Yom Kippur. Angels do not jump, and on Yom Kippur, Jews stand on their feet in one place and do not jump. Angels are free of all sin, and on Yom Kippur, Jews are free of all sin. Hashem hears the satan’s testimony and forgives Klal Yisroel.

**The** Drisha says about this: We are not completely barefoot, as are allowed to wear shoes that are not made of leather. However,

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it is possible that the intent is that we are “bare” in the sense that we have no connection to gashmius, just like angels, as we do not wear shoes made out of animal skin because we are separating ourselves from animalistic tendencies... So too, the fact that “we do not jump” symbolizes how we are not jumping here and there by being busy with gashmius. Rather, we stand in one place to serve Hashem, like angels who are always at His service.

In Toras Moshe, the Chasam Sofer adds another layer to explain the holiness of the day. The verse states (Vayikroh 16:24): “And he washes his body with water in the holy place.” Rashi explains that we learned from a previous verse (ibid:4) that the Kohen Gadol must immerse in water when he changes from his golden clothes to his white clothes. Here, the verse is saying that he must immerse when he changes from his white clothes to his gold clothes.

The Chasam Sofer asks why he has to immerse when we change from his white clothes to his gold clothes, as he is going from a higher level of kedusha to a lower one. Why does this require tevillah? He answers that after a person sanctifies himself and becomes holier, even the mitzvos that inherently are on a lower level than other ones are now loftier and more holy than the mitzvos he did before. Thus, after the kohen put on his white clothing and did the avodah in the Kodesh Kodashim, he is now on a holier level. Therefore, even though he is going to do the avodah in his gold clothes, which is the regular avodah he does all year, this avodah is now holier and more sanctified because the kohen has reached a higher level of ruchnius. That is why he must immerse before doing it.

### » The Two Immersions on Yom Kippur

The Mishnah (Yoma 82B) states: “Rebbe Akiva says: Praised are you Yisroel before whom do you purify yourselves? And who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven. As it is said: ‘I will sprinkle upon you pure water and you shall become purified’ (Yechezkel 36:25), and it is further said: ‘The mikvah of Yisroel is Hashem’ (Yirmiyahu 17:13), just as a mikvah purifies the defiled so too, does the Holy one Blessed is He, purify Yisroel.”

Tosfos Yomtov asks why Rebbe Akiva repeats himself by saying, “Before whom do you purify yourselves? And who purifies you?” Furthermore, why is it necessary to

bring proof from two separate verses?

He answers that the proper path for a person to choose is to sanctify and purify himself. When one does so, he receives Heavenly assistance (Yoma 38B). Regarding this, the Mishnah says, “Before whom do you purify yourself.” However, there are times when a person’s desires overcome him and he cannot overpower them to repent and purify himself. But the all-powerful and merciful One sends him a spiritual awakening and stands beside him to assist him to become purified. Regarding this, the verse states, “And who purifies you?”

This is the meaning of the first verse, “I will sprinkle upon you, pure water, and you shall become purified” – without the individual coming on his own to purify himself. This is also the meaning of the accompanying verses in Yechezkel 35, which speak of a person who desecrates Hashem’s Name even after He punishes him by sending him into exile. Still and all, Hashem sprinkles him with His purifying waters.

The second verse – “The mikvah of Yisroel is Hashem” – refers to the first manner of purification, when a person comes on his own to be purified. He himself goes into the mikvah to become purified, and Hashem then helps him to become fully pure.

Thus, we see that we have two ways of becoming purified on Yom Kippur. 1. Our own efforts to work on purifying ourselves. 2. The purification that Hashem sends down upon us. We also find this in the verse that describes Yom Kippur: “For on this day I shall atone for you to purify you from all of your sins, before Hashem you shall purify yourself.” The first part of the verse, “For on this day...” refers to the purification that is directly sent from Hashem, while the end of the verse, “before Hashem you shall purify yourself” refers to the purification we are meant to do for ourselves.

### » On Yom Kippur, We Can Reach The Highest Levels of Teshuva!

The Maharal (Gevuras Hashem, Perek 45) explains the avodah of Yom Kippur by saying that Hashem is our King and we are all His servants and Hashem forgives our sins because we belong to Him.

He explains that the yeitzer hara is also called a king. The verse (Koheles 9:14) says a parable of a small city that was taken over by a great king. The Maharal says that this

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“king” is actually the yeitzer hara, which rules over a person’s body. When a person sins, he is leaving Hashem’s domain and entering the domain of the yeitzer hara. Hashem wants us to remain His subjects and not to stray into the domain of another king. Therefore, He forgives our sins on Yom Kippur in order to ensure that we continue to belong only to Him and not to any other king.

**Accordingly**, the holiness we receive on Yom Kippur stems from the fact that, on this day, we return to be fully under the ownership of the true King, Hashem. During the rest of the year, we may do aveiros, which place us under the domain of another king, the yeitzer hara. On Yom Kippur, however, we are able to return to be fully under the kingdom of Hashem, with no ownership of any other king.

**This** is as the Gemara says in Yoma (20A): “On Yom Kippur, the satan has no permission to speak against us. How do we know this? Rami bar Chama says: ‘Satan’ has a gematria of 364. This indicates that he has power during 364 days of the year. But on Yom Kippur, he has no power against us.

**The** Maharal uses this concept to explain the purity of Yom Kippur. By returning to the full ownership of Hashem, one becomes cleansed of all his sins. Just by returning to close proximity with Hashem, one is purified and becomes clean from aveiros. This is a higher level of teshuva than one can reach at any other time of year. One can also draw close to Hashem through teshuva at other times of the year, but he is still not totally free from the kingdom of the yeitzer hara. But on Yom Kippur, one can draw so close to Hashem that the yeitzer hara has no rulership over him. In this way, he can become completely purified and can get much closer to Hashem.

### » Separating From Impurity All Year Long!

**We** see from all that we have stated that on Yom Kippur, Klal Yisroel reaches a level of being completely separated from animalistic tendencies and we reach the level of angels. If we accept the life we live on Yom Kippur as the life we will live in the future as well, we can live like this all year round. Rav Elya Lopian zt”l would, in fact, often say that one can live the life of Yom Kippur all year if his Yom Kippur was done on a perfect level and in the proper way.

**The** Sefer Hachinuch states (Mitzvah 185) about the essence of the mitzvah of Yom Kippur: “It is a kindness from Hashem to His creations to set aside for them one day of the year to atone for their sins through the repentance they do. For if their sins would collect from year to year they would fill a huge measure over a number of years, and the world would deserve to be destroyed. Therefore, in His great wisdom, He saw that in order to sustain the world He needed to establish one day every year to atone for sins, and from the beginning of creation

it was established and sanctified for this.

**He** continues: “After Hashem Yisborach established this day for atonement, it became sanctified until the day itself helps bring about atonement. This is as Chazal say in many places that Yom Kippur atones – meaning that the day itself has the power to atone for light sins.”

**This** power is inherent in the day of Yom Kippur itself. Even according to the opinion that the day alone does not provide atonement unless one also does teshuva on his own, the teshuva is only a condition that must be fulfilled for the atonement to take effect. However, the power of atonement is and has always been inherent in the day itself.

**In** the prayers of Yom Kippur we recite: “And Hashem our G-d gave us with love this Day of Yom Kippur for forgiveness...that is called holy, a remembrance of the exodus from Egypt.” According to the words of the Chinuch, we may ask: If Yom Kippur was established as the day of atonement since the time of creation, how can we say that it is meant to be a day to remember the exodus from Egypt?

**I** saw an incredible answer for this question in the name of Rav Aharon Grossbard zt”l. He explains that the events of the exodus from Egypt were extremely similar to what we go through from one year’s Yom Kippur to the next.

**Hashem** had told Avrohom Avinu that his children would be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years. However, Hashem was “chisheiv es haketz” (counted the end of the years) and deducted the numerical value of “ketz”, which is 190 years, thus deducting the years of bondage to 210 years.

**Hashem** did this because the nation had fallen to the 49th level of impurity, and had He not taken them out immediately they would have fallen to a level from which they never could have emerged. Therefore, in the course of just 50 days, Hashem took them out, sanctified them, and raised them to the lofty level of receiving the Torah and speaking directly to Him.

**This** same sequence of events occurs every year. Over the course of the year, we fall to a low level of impurity. In order to stop us from falling to such a low level that we would never be able to emerge from, Hashem gives us the day of Yom Kippur to atone for our sins and sanctify us. Thus, the day of Yom Kippur is certainly related to the exodus from Egypt.

**During** these holy days, our job is to internalize and understand that Hashem created this awesome day from the time of the creation of the world as a day of Divine kindness and mercy. It is a day to have our sins forgiven and to atone for our past. We must properly utilize this incredible gift to draw closer to Hashem and serve Him with full hearts.