

YOM KIPPUR IS FOREVER

by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

A foolish nation, not a chacham.^[2]

Yom Kippur is forever. Its permanence lies in its source, which is the *sefirah* of *Chochmah*.

Properly, *Torah she-b'al peh* needs to work according to the original game plan. It needs to function the way it did at the time of *matan Torah*, which Hashem described^[3] as "the crown with which his mother crowned him." A midrash^[4] describes Hashem and His angels dependent, as it were, on the decision of *Klal Yisrael* as to when Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur would occur. Hashem subordinated Himself to the *piskei halacha* of *Klal Yisrael*. This dependence was like that of a child for its mother. Because of His great love for *Klal Yisrael*, He placed His Torah at the disposal of *Torah she-b'al peh* as understood and implemented by the Jewish people.

Because KY was not yet in possession of the *luchos* that were written directly by Hashem, our coronation of Him with this "crown with which his mother crowned him" was temporary. Like a flash in the darkness, it quickly faded. *Soton* capitalized on the giddy feeling of importance they felt, knowing that Torah had seemingly become theirs to interpret as they wished. They did not realize that the greatness of the moment of *maamad Har Sinai* had passed; they easily swallowed the foolish claims of *Soton* and fell prey to the *eigel*.

This sorry situation was reversed by the first Yom Kippur, when *Klal Yisrael* received a second set of *luchos*. Torah became permanent, including *Klal Yisrael's* acquisition of *Torah she-b'al peh*. The mother's crown was restored. (Thus, Chazal^[5] tell us that these second *luchos* contained *midrash halachah* and *aggadah*. *Torah she-b'al peh* became securely fastened once more to *Torah she-b'chsav*.)

This permanence of Torah owes to Yom Kippur's source in *Chochmah*. While we don't really have a grasp of *Chochmah*, through Torah (whose source is even higher – in *Kesser*) we gain some limited appreciation of it.

When *Klal Yisrael* gets it right, they access a Yom Kippur whose effects are permanent. If they prepare properly, they tap into the same *Chochmah* - source that restored Torah after its loss of durability through the sin of the *eigel*. When that happens, their *teshuvah* is also permanent. When, however, they experience backsliding later, it is only because they did not properly prepare for it,

and did not properly value Torah in the run-up to Yom Kippur. Failing to appreciate its relationship to Chochmah, it can be said of them, "*A foolish nation, not chacham.*"

1. Based on Mei Marom by R. Yaakov Moshe Charlop zt"l, Devarim 58:2 .
2. Devarim 32:6 .
3. Shir HaShirim 3:11 .
4. Midrash Tehilim 831 .
5. Shemos Rabbah 47:7 .