

DEEP HEAT THERAPY

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

It's the 7th day of Adar, 2488, the last day of Moshe's life. Exactly 120 years earlier the world was graced with the birth of a child who brought redemption to his people and the light of Torah to the world. He became a prophet of unparalleled greatness who led his nation through a miraculous 40 year journey to the edge of the promised land.

Trials and tribulations, rebellions and conspiracies, disillusionment and questions were his lot in life. Yet, Moshe never gave up. He nurtured the Jews "like a mother cares for her child". He confronted man and G-d in protecting his charges, and succeeded in bringing the people, both physically and spiritually intact, to the fulfillment of a 500 year old promise. Now he had to put his affairs in order, finish his work, and insure an unquestioned transition of leadership to his student Yehoshua. This is the focus of

Parshas Vayelech

1st & 2nd Aliyot: Moshe emphasized Hashem's continued presence and protection, even though, Moshe himself would not be with them any longer. Ever since assuming the leadership of Israel, Moshe had the conflicting job of fostering the nation's dependency upon Hashem while de-emphasizing their dependency upon him as a leader and provider. Now, as he prepared his final good-bye, it was clear that by day's end, with Moshe's death, the nation would have no other choice but to reassess their dependency on Moshe and direct their attention to Hashem.

However this was far more complex than it seemed. True, Moshe's death would be a definitive "cutting of the apron strings"; but, living in the Land by the laws of nature rather than miracles would de-emphasize G-d's overt role in all aspects of their lives.

3rd & 4th Aliyot: By writing the entire text of the Torah, entrusting it into the care of the Kohanim, and explaining the unique mitzvah of Hakhel, Moshe hoped that the people would retain the perspective of their dependency upon Hashem. The Kohanim represented the continued presence of "G-d in the midst of the camp". As teachers and role models, they kept an otherwise dispersed and decentralized nation focused on their national and individual missions.

Once every 7 years, the entire nation gathered in the Bais Hamikdash in a recreation of the giving of the Torah. This national expression of devotion would serve as an essential reminder that adherence to the Torah is the reason why the nation occupied and retained the Land.

5th, 6th, & 7th Aliyot: Moshe and Yehoshua were summoned to the Ohel Moed and told the harsh future of their charges. In spite of all the warnings, the people would sin and lose sight of their dependency upon Hashem. They would be punished, and instead of accepting responsibility for the consequences that their neglect of G-d's commandments caused, they would have the chutzpah to blame G-d's absence and neglect for the calamities and disasters that had befallen them.(31:17) It would then be the very words of this "Song" which would testify to the reality of their defection from Hashem and the inevitable consequences which occurred, as forewarned in this Torah.

Yehoshua was encouraged to be strong and courageous and lead the nation with the same devotion that Moshe had. The Torah, written by Moshe himself, was then placed in the Ark as proof of the conditions by which the Jewish people live or die.

Haftorah Summary

This Shabbos is known as Shabbos Shuvah because of the Haftorah that begins with the words, "Shuva Yisroel" - Return o' Isarel. Gleaned from both Hoshea and Yoel, the Prophets describes Hashem's desire to forgive His children, if only they will repent. The fast of Yom Kippur is mentioned, as well as the rewards awaiting us if we proclaim G-d in our midst.

Preparing For Yom Kippur - Review and Comment

The holiest day of the year is devoted to prayer and introspection. Although similar to Tisha B'Av as regards the restrictions against: eating, drinking, washing, using ointments, marital relations, and wearing leather shoes; the mood of Yom Kippur is totally different. Tisha B'Av is a sad day steeped in the memories of past tragedies and calamities. Yom Kippur is a solemn day, filled with the hope for forgiveness and the elation of a renewed relationship with both G-d and man.

Yom Kippur is the only biblically ordained fast day, and its origins began with the year 2248 following the Exodus from Mitzrayim. After the breaking of the first Luchos, Moshe re-ascended Sinai in anticipation of the second Luchos. After 40 days and nights, during which the Bnai Yisroel were immersed in prayer and repentance for the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe descended from Sinai, on the 10th day of Tishrei, 2448, bringing the 2nd Luchos and Hashem's love and forgiveness. Thereafter, the day of Yom Kippur has been designated, by the Torah, as the day on which Hashem will forgive his children for their yearly sins of "worshipping the Golden Calf". Allow me to explain.

The sin of the Golden Calf captured the essence of why we sin. Following the extraordinary events leading up to Revelation, it is difficult to understand how that generation could sin so quickly and severely. In truth, we are not any different. Acceptance of a Creator Who is intimately involved in directing every aspect of our personal, national, and universal destinies, carries the responsibility of listening to His commandments. To do any less denies the purpose that the Creator had in creating us and placing us in the setting of His universe.

Coming to terms with the awesomeness of G-d's power and control is not easy. Often we do not understand the rules by which He governs and judges, and more often, we aren't prepared to frame our lives by the restrictions of His demands. Instead, we either engage in the philosophical game of "is there truly a Creator who cares?"; or, we modify G-d to suit our limited needs and understanding. Either approach recreates G-d in a form that we are more comfortable with, because we control the rules of the game.

The Jews in the year 2448 knew that Hashem existed, but did not understand the degree of G-d's love and concern. As a result, they were unwilling to invest in a relationship that demanded complete obedience. To make such an investment would have required absolute trust that Hashem would continue to care and provide, even if His trusted servant Moshe was no longer present.

Today, we too are not sure if we can trust Hashem. If we could, we would be foolish not to listen to Hashem's rules and demands considering His promised rewards of health, wealth, and all good things. Instead, we create our own image of G-d, our own Golden Calf, that reflects the lack of trust and obedience in our relationship with the Creator. Some may feel that they have good cause to question His trustworthiness, others may admit that they simply are not prepared to do what He demands. In either case, we are implored on Yom Kippur to forego our limited understanding, and through fasting and prayer rise above the physical limitations of our mortality to recognize the greater picture of Hashem's continued and trustworthy providence. The mere fact that we have survived the past 3,000 years as a nation is a far greater miraculous revelation of G-d's presence than the Exodus or the giving of the Torah. Those were mere moments in history; the existence of the Jewish people is history itself. Yom Kippur should focus us on the need to trust Hashem, and accept His continued involvement in our lives.

The entire Musaf service is devoted to what had taken place in the Bais Hamikdash. The Kohain Gadol performed the entire service in the hope of exacting forgiveness from Hashem for the continued effect of the sin of the Golden Calf. He entered into the Holy of Holies to offer the nation's total acceptance of G-d and His Torah and to beg for compassion and mercy. During that time he was prohibited from wearing his "golden vestments", because they were reminiscent of the Golden Calf.

It is important to remember that the very creation of the Mishkan - Tabernacle was a consequence of the Golden Calf. Because the Golden Calf perverted the purity of a brand new world that had just received the Torah, we had to construct a micro-replacement of that pure world wherein which Hashem's presence could be openly manifest. This micro-replacement would be a symbol of what the world could have been if only we had not sinned. Therefore, the construction of the Mishkan had to mirror the creation of heaven and earth.

For example. The 39 Melachot - acts of work prohibited on Shabbos, are derived from the work required to build the Mishkan. Through keeping Shabbos we proclaim G-d's ownership of the

universe and accept His intended purpose for creating us. Therefore, just as Hashem rested on Shabbos from creating the universe, so too, we rested from doing the work of creating the Mishkan. Furthermore, our yearly attempt at correcting the sin of the Golden Calf had to take place in the Bais Hamikdash that represented the world that should have been if it had not been perverted by the sin of the Golden Calf.

On Yom Kippur, the Shabbos of all Shabdatos, all the elements of our intended relationship with Hashem come together. The holiest man on the holiest day in the holiest place comes as a representative of the holiest people to express absolute trust in the Creator and in His purpose for creating us and the universe.

The final moments of Yom Kippur underscore this concept. After davening and fasting almost 24 hours, we are prepared to embrace the realities of a Creator who is intimately involved in all aspects of our lives. This is publicly expressed when we all proclaim the final words, "Hashem is our G-d!" The seven-fold proclamation is our statement of absolute trust and acceptance in G-d. This is followed by the joyous prayer, Next year in Yerushalayim, when we will hopefully witness, first hand, the holiest man, serving on the holiest day, in the holiest of all places.

Rabbi's Notebook - Special Edition - The Yom Kippur Avodah

The Yom Kippur davening focuses us on the beauty and majesty of being the "Chosen People". The Tefilos are filled with the grandeur of G-d's power and the love and compassion of His mercy. The Musaf service projects us back in history to a time when this grandeur was manifest in the actual building of the Bais Hamikdash and the being of the Kohain Gadol.

This edition of the Rabbi's Notebook is devoted to a description of that Avodah - Service and the fervent hope that we all merit to personally witness the rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash and the Kohain Gadol performing the Avodah next year in Yerushalayim!

The Avodah

(Birmbaum - 811; ArtScroll - 554; Metsudah -533)

1. The Avodah begins with a magnificent description of the history of the world leading up to the birth of the Kohain Gadol. It reflects on the theme that all of creation finds its meaning in the setting of the holiest man, on the holiest day, serving the Creator in the holiest place. This is what humanity, and specifically the Chosen People, can aspire to become.
2. (B.813; A.558; M.538) The 7 days of preparation prior to Yom Kippur are then described as the Kohain Gadol was trained and purified to do the Avodah.
3. (B.815; A.560; M.542) Having stayed awake the entire night immersed in Torah study and prayer, the Kohain Gadol began the day at dawn. He immersed in the Mikvah for the 1st of 5 times that day, put on his Golden clothing, and prepared the daily sacrifice, incense, menorah lighting, mincha, and

wine libation.

4. (B.815; A.560; M.544) The Kohain Gadol removed his Golden clothing, immersed a 2nd time, put on his white linen garments, said the 1st confession for himself while leaning with both hands on the head of the bull which would be his personal sin offering.
5. (B.817; A.562; M.546) The lottery of the 2 identical goats was performed, and a scarlet wool string was tied between the horns of the goat selected to be sent into the desert.
6. The Kohain Gadol then confessed over his bull on behalf of his family and all the Kohanim, and then shechted - slaughtered the bull.
7. (B.819; A.564; M.549) The Kohain Gadol prepared the Ktores- incense offering and entered into the Holy of Holies. Leaving the burning incense behind, he exited, took the blood of his bull offering, reentered the H.O.H and sprinkled the blood. Exiting again he then shechted the goat offering and reentered the H.O.H to sprinkle its blood. He exited and sprinkled the blood of his bull a 2nd time in front of the Paroches - dividing curtain, and then did the same with the blood of the goat. Then the 2 bloods were mixed and sprinkled on the Golden Alter.
8. (B.821; A.566; M.553) The Kohain Gadol then confessed over the 2nd goat on behalf of the entire nation, and sent the goat into the desert to be killed at the Azazel. The bull and goat sacrifices were then prepared to be burned on the Mizbeach after which he immersed for the 3rd time and changed into the Golden garments. He then offered a second set of sacrifices, the Oleh, for himself and the people, along with the Musaf offering.
9. (B.823; A.568; M.556) The Kohain Gadol immersed a 4th time, changed into his linen garments and entered the H.O.H to retrieve the fire pan used for the burning of the incense. Exiting, he removed the linen garments, never to be worn again, and immersed a final 5th time, and put on his Golden garments. He then offered the daily afternoon offering along with the daily incense offering, and lit the Menorah.
10. The remainder of the Avodah describes the magnificence of the Kohain Gadol's triumphant appearance and celebration. This is followed by the mournful recognition that we are no longer able to witness the glory and majesty due to our sins and those of our ancestors.
11. Note that in addition to the 5 immersions that the Kohain Gadol underwent between changes of clothing, there was also 10 times that he "washed his hands and feet". He would wash his hands and feet before removing his garments and after putting on the change of garments. The 5 Tefilos that we recite are symbolic of the 5 immersions, and the 10 confessions are reminiscent of the 10 washings of hands and feet.
12. (B.837; A.586; M.575) A moving telling of the Ten Martyrs is part of our Musaf confession and is one of the emotional highlights of Yom Kippur. Although each story is historically accurate, the combined stories are not. The history spans approx. 150 years from before the destruction of the 2nd

Temple until after Bar Kochva's revolt. The Gemara tells us that the death of Tzadikim is a form of sacrifice and redemption. May it be Hashem's will that the need for all such offerings end, and that we will soon merit the coming of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos.

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