



Torah Bytes

A weekly Dvar Torah on the Parsha by Rabbi Dovid Horwitz
and the Rabbanim of the Ra'anana Kollel
Yom Kippur 5786



In the merit of our soldiers and hostages



Yom Kippur Times

18:05



19:00

Issue 104

There is a story about how the Baal Shem Tov once found himself in an unfamiliar town before Yom Kippur and he asked around as to the best place to pray in that town. Someone told him that the best place is a certain shul because the chazzan is particular good. When the Baal Shem Tov asked what was so good about the chazzan of this shul, the person replied how the chazzan would sing the Vidui, the confessional, to a happy tune, as opposed to in most places where they sing it with a somber tune.

The Baal Shem Tov sought out the chazzan and asked him why he sings the Vidui to a happy tune. The chazzan replied, "Isn't the Vidui a most wonderful gift from Hashem? By reciting it and confessing our sins, Hashem promises to clean away our sins, thereby enabling us to return to the original closeness we had with Him that we somehow lost along the way. It is like coming home!" The Baal Shem Tov was very pleased with this man's attitude!

Indeed, the gemara at the end of Taanit describes how Yom Kippur should be the happiest day of the year. Although when we were younger, perhaps teenagers with our lives in front of us, we may have looked at Yom Kippur as a difficult day, one where we couldn't do anything fun, one where we couldn't even eat or drink, one where we had to be in shul all day, today, as mature and thinking Jews, we need to look beyond the surface and embrace Yom Kippur with joy and excitement.

It behooves us not to look at what we cannot do on Yom Kippur, but rather to look at what we **can** do. On this day, we can concentrate on our souls, for we do not have the body to attend to. On this day, we can focus on our relationship with Hashem, the only true thing that can bring us real happiness in this world and eternity in the world to come. As the chazzan said, on this day we enter stained and dirty yet we leave clean and pure. There is a lot to sing about on this holiest of days!

However, as the gemara states in Yoma, the power of Yom Kippur needs to be accompanied by the mitzvah of teshuva, repentance. Without teshuva, Yom Kippur alone cannot cleanse us the way Hashem intended it to. So it is vital for us to clarify how to perform this mitzvah of teshuva and specifically what to do on Yom Kippur itself.

The Rambam explains that the mitzvah of teshuva is performed by doing Vidui.

But unlike conventional wisdom which understands Vidui as being the confessional of "Ashamnu Bagadnu..." in the Rambam's opinion it is the process of teshuva itself. He writes, in his Laws of Teshuva, that Vidui is the act of expressing verbally, all three major components of teshuva: *charata*, *hakarot* *hachet* & *kabala*; remorse, recognizing the sins we have committed, and promising not to commit them again. When we verbalize these three components, then we have performed the mitzvah of Vidui and have done teshuva. Only then, will the full power of Yom Kippur be unleashed upon the stains of our souls and we will exit clean after neilah. So if Vidui requires all three of these parts, where do we express, in the

liturgy of the Yom Kippur prayers, all three of these points?

As far as taking responsibility for our actions and confessing to Hashem that we were not exactly tzaddikim over the course of the last year and that we did many things wrong, this we verbalize just before the classic vidui of *ashamnu bagadnu*. We say to Hashem, "We are not so brazen and aloof to say to you that we were tzaddikim and have not sinned, **rather** we and our fathers **have** sinned." These words, "rather we have sinned" is the essential point of our vidui. Yes Hashem I have done things wrong! I am no tzaddik! But where do we verbally express remorse and resolve to not reverting back to sinning? It actually is found in a little paragraph just before the end of the Amidah. Right before "Elokai Netzor" we have the following amazing prayer. "My G-d, until I was created I was not worthy. Now that I have been created, it is as if I was not created. I am dust in my lifetime, all the more so after my death. I stand in front of you today as a broken vessel filled with shame and remorse. May it be Your will Hashem that I never sin again..."

What a wonderful prayer. In this little paragraph, we express our remorse and shame for having sinned before G-d. We then pray to Hashem for help that we should never sin again! By saying these words with sincerity and concentration, we will have successfully expressed *charata*, remorse, and *kabala*, by resolving to not sin again.

By focusing our thoughts on the vidui of *ashamnu bagadnu* and the *al cheit* prayer where we recognize our sins, and by focusing on this little paragraph at the end of the *amidah*, we will have fulfilled the vidui and will have done *teshuva* in the fullest sense. By doing so, we will unlock the cleansing powers of Yom Kippur and will have ample reason to sing happy tunes like the Baal Shem Tov's chazzan. May we use the upcoming 25 hour gift of pure mercy, that Hashem has given us, and let's take full advantage.

As we read in *neilah*, Hashem extends His hand, stretching it out as close as He can toward us. Hashem has already done ninety percent of the work by making Himself so accessible to us. Let's put in a little bit of effort to meet Him, to grab ahold of His hand by doing a proper *teshuva*, and by doing so, we will certainly merit a *gmara chatima tova* for us and for all of Am Yisrael!

WEDNESDAY EREV YOM KIPPUR

6:45 SELICHOT / 7:00 SHACHARIT
8:00 SELICHOT / 8:15 SHACHARIT
13:00 MINCHA

YOM KIPPUR NIGHT

18:05 CANDLE LIGHTING
18:10 KOL NIDREI
18:25 SHEKIYA SUNSET
18:25 DRASHA
18:50 MAARIV

Ahuza 198 Raanana

The Heimishe Neitz Minyan

WISH YOU A BLESSED

yom Kippur

THURSDAY YOM KIPPUR DAY

6:00 SHACHARIT
6:20 HAMELECH
6:35 NEITZ SUNRISE
8:40 MUSSAF
15:15 DAF YOMI
16:00 MINCHA
17:15 NEILA
18:24 SHEKIYA SUNSET
18:46 SHOFAR
18:50 MAARIV / KIDDUSH LEVANA
19:00 FAST ENDS