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## Yom Kippur - 031 Leaving Behind Evil

### *Two Ways To Leave Behind Internal Evil*

Generally speaking, there are two ways to leave behind the internal evil that we find in ourselves: [1- Identifying our essence as pure, and 2- separating from the world].

#### *The Atonement and Purity of Yom Kippur: Believing In Our Inherent Purity*

The main purity and atonement of Yom Kippur is for one to believe that his soul can receive purity from Hashem (*"Before Hashem, be purified"*), and thereby purify the rest of his physical body. One needs to believe that this purity *is* who he is. If after Yom Kippur one feels pure, it means that he has succeeded in identifying that this purity is who he truly is.

Yom Kippur is not merely about a spirit of purity that comes upon a person, which will come again next year. Rather, it reveals the purity of a Jew's soul. Certainly, the process of *teshuvah* is needed in order to reveal this purity, but when the purity comes, it is the revelation of the true self of a Jew.

Therefore, the perspective towards Yom Kippur should not be that we are merely trying to remove more and more evil from upon ourselves. Our sins are like "dirty clothing" upon us (as the *Maharal* taught), but our very essence always remains pure. That is the depth of the atonement of Yom Kippur.

The word for atonement, *kaparah*, is from the word *kofer*, tar, which covers something. This is a hint that our sins are only like a covering on top of us, but our essence always remains pure.

The Rambam says that a *baal teshuvah* is not the same person he was before. Why isn't he the same person? True, he has changed his deeds, but isn't he the same person? But if a person has done true *teshuvah*, he is *not* the same person anymore!! Change of action can reveal the person's true essence - as long as he one is aware of this perspective that *teshuvah* makes us pure and that it reveals our true essence as pure.

#### *Differentiating Our Essence From The Nations of the World*

The *Maharal* says that any sin of a Jew is always "*mikreh*", happenstance; it is not an intrinsic part of his being. But one must be aware of this perspective. If a Jew thinks that his very essence is no different than a gentile's, he does not receive the purification of Yom Kippur.

There must be a separation made between Jew and gentile. Today especially, we are mixed with the gentiles, whether we live outside Eretz Yisrael or in Eretz Yisrael. But even in this exile, a Jew must be

able to make the differentiation between Jew and gentile, in his own soul. On Yom Kippur, one is allowed to pray with sinners in the same *shul*, but if a Jew thinks that he is essentially the same as a gentile, he is not able to permit himself to pray with the sinners, because he has mixed himself with gentiles and he has not made himself separate from them. Only after one has separated himself from the gentile nations can he permit himself to pray with the sinners in the Jewish people.

Most Jews today are unaware of this perspective and as a result, they view sins as part of their essence. They do not feel like they are any different from gentiles, and it is really because they have not yet made the distinction between Jew and gentile. But when a Jew makes the separation, by understanding that he is essentially different in his very soul than a gentile's, the spiritual light on Yom Kippur will then shine for him. He will be enabled to leave behind the mixture of good and evil that fills the world, and he becomes purified, on Yom Kippur.

The soul of a Jew is then revealed in its purity. The separation between Yaakov and Esav becomes clear. And then the Jew can enter into the true spiritual depths of Yom Kippur, and to do *teshuvah* on a truer level, from that place of purity and separateness from the nations of the world. If one does true *teshuvah*, he will then feel the truth, which is that his soul is pure: "*My G-d, the soul You gave to me is pure.*" Then he will truly feel that he stands "before Hashem" on Yom Kippur, to be purified. One then reveals his true self, and he will see all evil in him as merely a "layer" upon him that he needs to remove, like dirty clothing. That is the true atonement of Yom Kippur. But if one feels that his sins are still attached to him and a part of his true self, then he cannot reach this level.

The depth of our *avodah* on Yom Kippur is to leave this day with a new "I" entirely, as the Rambam says, that a *baal teshuvah* is an entirely new being, and not the same person as before. This should not be felt by a person only on an intellectual level, but as an entirely new attitude and recognition that the person has, towards himself.

### *In Summary and In Conclusion*

May Hashem merit us, firstly, that we make the separation of the Jewish people from the gentile nations. If there are any non-Jewish elements that are in our homes, the first thing we need to do is to get rid of these influences. Then we should take notice of any non-Jewish elements that are in our own souls, and to "give a divorce" to all of these elements from within ourselves.

It is clear to any sensible person that the present situation in today's generation is a total antithesis to the distinction of the Jewish people from the gentile nations. It is exactly the "50 gates of defilement", which is the total mixing with gentile influences.

If one can separate himself from the world by realizing his that his Jewish essence is apart from that of other nations, and he enters Yom Kippur from awareness of the difference between the Jewish souls and the gentile souls, he can then merit on Yom Kippur to be purified and sanctified, and to be drawn closer to "*Before Hashem you shall be purified*", and then he can truly merit to stand before Hashem. Then he can reach the true recognition that his soul is pure, and that all sin is like a dirty garment upon us. And then he will be able to come to true regret, confession, and resolving not to sin<sup>[1]</sup> [1], now that he has made the separation between the mixture of good and evil.

May we all merit together, with this, to complete the Creation, and then perhaps we will all merit the complete Redemption, which will be the ultimate separation between good and evil. But here we have said the very least we can each do, on a personal level, within the Jewish people, amongst those who seek Hashem, to connect ourselves to good, as it is written, "*And as for me, closeness to Hashem is good*", and to separate ourselves from evil. And through this, we shall all merit to be written and sealed, for a good year.

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[1] [2] The four basic parts of the *teshuvah* process are: 1) *azivas hacheit*, abandoning the sin. 2) *charatah*, regret. 3) *viduy*, confession. 4) *kaballah al ha'asid* – resolving not to commit the sin in the future.

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