



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner, Rosh Ha-Yeshiva

Yom Ha-Kippurim 5768

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The Hardest Part of Yom Kippur: Forgiving One Another

We devote most of our time on Yom Kippur to our relationship with G-d: in prayer and repentance. We all know, however, that the true obstacle to full repentance is in our relationship with other people, since Yom Kippur does not atone for sins committed against other people, unless they forgive us (Mishnah Yoma 8.9). There is certainly no one who has not hurt his fellow man, either intentionally or unintentionally. Everyone therefore has some tinge of bad feeling toward another person.

Text Message Responsa

Rav Aviner answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Here is a sample:

Q: Can I buy my High Holiday seats in shul with tzedakah money?

A: No. Tzedakah money is for the hungry and other poor people.

Q: Is it permissible to go out on Shabbat with sunglasses in a place that does not have an eiruv?

A: Some permit it, and others permit it only for a medical necessity.

Q: Is it permissible to wear clothes or shoes which belonged to someone who passed away?

A: Yes, besides shoes which he wore at the time of death.

To remedy this on a daily basis, the Arizal – Rav Yitzchak Luria – added a prayer to the Keri'at Shema before going to sleep, which everyone should recite. "I forgive everyone who has angered me, irritated me or sinned against me physically, monetarily, emotionally or in any other way, whether unintentionally or intentionally, accidentally or purposefully," If all Jews did this, we would all go to sleep pure and on good relations with others. The problem is that not everyone recites this text, and even those who do say it, do not always mean it. There is therefore an additional prayer which was established, the Tefilah Zakah, which is recited on the eve of Yom Kippur, but again not everyone says it. We must therefore gird ourselves with the strength of holiness, and decide that we all forgive each other. We – the children of the Nation of Israel – will make a type of holy "agreement". I am ready to forgive everyone, if I know that everyone will act in the same way. This action will also help in repenting and

gaining atonement from the Master of the Universe, since if someone overlooks those who wrong him, Hashem overlooks his sins (Rosh Hashanah 17a).

To bring about true forgiveness, one must do so wholeheartedly. There are three lines of thought which may help us to achieve this goal.

1. One must realize that he himself also sins, and he is quite often guilty of the same type of wrongdoing. Furthermore, there are times when we project our sins onto others: one who debases other people, he debases them with his own disqualification (Kiddushin 70a-b). We must keep in mind that other people are as human as we are.
2. We must realize that the other person is really a good person. He may have his faults, but we should not exaggerate them. There are certain people who may arouse feelings of antipathy, but we must keep things in proportion. We must train ourselves to look positively at other people.
3. We must take it upon ourselves in the future not to hate anyone: whether at work, in our community or in our family. This does not mean that we should never rebuke anyone, but not out of hate. On the contrary, "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Mishlei 15:1) and "They who fear G-d speak to one another" (Malachi 3:16). [From Tal Chermon vol.2, pp. 479-480]

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

A student approached our Rabbi on Erev Yom Kippur and asked forgiveness. He asked our Rabbi, "Have I injured you in any way?" To his answer that he did not recall a particular offense; the student said that it is nonetheless customary to ask for forgiveness. Our Rabbi responded, "If you did something, why have you waited until now? If you did not, has asking for forgiveness turned into some kind of refrain?"

Our Rabbi prayed as if this was the first and only time in his life that he prayed: By emphasizing every word, by enunciating every letter, deliberately, each syllable served as a source for thoughts, for intentions, as if he was not saying this prayer, in this version, for twenty years already, three times a day, every day. The words left his mouth as if new, a prayer which was not "commandments of people performing them by rote" (Yeshayahu 29:13).

Book of the Week Written by Rav Aviner



Tal Chermon PART 2 – Parashat Ha-Shavu'ah. Written in 5745 (23 years ago), this inspiring book includes philosophical talks about of each of the weekly Torah portions based on the teachings of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook. There are two parts: Talks given by on the weekly parashah and short articles on the parashah and holidays.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Q: Regarding the custom of kapparot (before Yom Kippur there is a custom to swing a chicken around one's head, symbolically transferring one's sins to the chicken, it is then slaughtered and given to the poor), many times a large quantity of chickens are held for hours, or even days, in tightly packed cages, where they wait without water or food, then they are removed from the cages and slaughtered. In light of all of this, is it not preferred to perform kapparot with money?

A: The custom of kapparot has been rooted among the Nation of Israel for a long time and no one has the power to prohibit it. It is nevertheless written in the Shulchan Aruch: "The custom that people have of kapparot on Erev Yom Kippur of slaughtering a rooster for each male and saying verses over it, we should stop this custom" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 605:1 in the name of the Ramban and Rashba), and the Mishnah Berurah writes (ibid. #1): "because it resembles the ways of the Emorites (Darkei Ha-Emori – black magic). But the Rama writes: "But some of the Geonim mentioned this custom, many later authorities mentioned it and people also have this custom in all of these countries, and one may not change it, since it is an ancient custom" (ibid.). This means that the Rama testifies that people acted this way in all of the Ashkenazic countries, as did the Sefardic Jews. Furthermore, there is no problem of "Darkei Ha-Emori" in this custom as the Mishnah Berurah explains: "And one thinks that whatever they do to this chicken should have been done to him, but it is acted out on this chicken, and the early authorities (Rishonim) gave the reason that it is similar to the sacrifice brought for an inadvertent sin" (Mishnah Berurah ibid.). The Chayei Adam, however, already wrote: "And even though some of the Geonim mentioned this custom, what is implanted in the heart of the masses is that all of the atonement of Yom Kippur depends of this, and it is almost as if kapparot and eating matzah is considered of equal weight by them. They think that they will not attain atonement on Yom Kippur without a rooster, but by acting in this way they come to the prohibition of eating a neveilah (an animal which died without proper slaughtering), G-d forbid, since they (the chickens) push each other in large groups and the slaughters are awake all night with grimaced faces and they do not even feel the knife. If they would listen to me, but would not want to nullify this custom, it is better for them to swing money around their heads, as is already rooted in the heart of the unknowledgeable, who swing money if it is not possible for them to attain a rooster. This, in truth, is also what we find was the custom of the earlier ones who would swing seeds (as the Magen Avraham writes in the name of Rashi 81:2). They consider it tzedakah and do not stumble in the prohibition of eating neveilah, G-d forbid (Chayei Adam klal 144 #4 and brought in the Mishnah Berurah 605:2 and Kaf Ha-Chaim #11).

The Chayei Adam therefore teaches us that it is preferable to perform kapparot with money when the chickens are cramped and there is a question about the kashrut of the slaughtering. It is also possible to add the concern of "tza'ar ba'alei chaim" (causing distress to animals), added to the distress that the chickens experience during their raising is the great distress before kapparot. This is based on what was pointed out in the name of Ha-Gaon Rav Chaim David Ha-Levy: "And why particularly on the eve of the holy day do we need to be cruel to animals, without any need, and to slaughter them without any mercy, at the time when we stand to request life for ourselves from the Living G-d" (Shut Aseh Lecha Rav vol 3, p. 67). In truth, however, there is no prohibition of "tza'ar ba'alei chaim" when a person uses an animal for a vital need, and a fixed custom of Israel is considered a vital need.

Nevertheless, since there is the possibility for us to use money instead, and it is also preferred when there is a huge quantity of chickens to slaughter, as the Chayei Adam wrote, there is reason to argue that this is not a vital necessity and there is an actual problem of "tza'ar ba'alei chaim."

To summarize: It is better to fulfill the custom of kapparot with money. (Iturei Cohanim #264)