

A Yom Tov of Outreach

Introduction

During each of the seven days of his inauguration, a Kohen Gadol (high priest) is required to wear the Eight Garments exclusive to his position.

"שבעת ימים ילבשם הכהן תחתיו ... אשר יבא אל אהל מועד לשרת בקדש"¹, '(During the) Seven days (of his inauguration) the Kohen that is his successor... shall wear [the garments of priesthood]; [the Kohen we are discussing here is] the one that enters the Ohel Moed – to serve in the sanctuary.'

Rashi explains that the words Ohel Moed, over here, refer not to the external part of the sanctuary - but to the Kodesh Kodoshim (holy of holies) –into which only the Kohen Gadol may enter only once a year on Yom Kippur.

The verse denotes that the Kohen – who is being inaugurated by wearing the Eight Garments exclusive for the Kohen Gadol - is the only one allowed to enter the Kodesh Kodoshim. However, the Kohen Gadol is actually forbidden from entering the Kodesh Kodoshim with the Eight Garments; he wears separate white linen garments when entering the Kodesh Kodoshim once a year on Yom Kippur.

The connection between the Eight Garment of High Priesthood and the Kodesh Kodoshim must be understood.

Last week, in Parshas Terumah, the Torah listed all the furnishings of the Mishkan (tabernacle). This week the Torah lists the priestly garments, and concludes with the Golden Altar which was used for the Ketores (incense).

The Golden Altar was in the inside of the sanctuary, in the same room as the Menorah and the Shulchan. It was of very important significance; the daily Ketores is a most supreme form of service. Why was it omitted from the parsha of the furnishings and relegated to the very last paragraph in the discussion of the Mishkan after the garments?

The Five Components of the Jewish Neshama (Soul)

There are five parts to the soul: Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya, and Yechida. Each part is more sublime and holy than the one before it and originates from progressively loftier heavenly worlds.

Each of these elements of the neshama are rooted in a different letter of the name of Hashem - ,ק,י and ק¹. The fifth and loftiest component of the Neshama – יחידה – is rooted in the point of the י.

The words, "ברכי נפשי את ה'" - 'My soul, bless Hashem!' - are repeated five times in Tehilim² to correspond to all five levels of the soul.

Yechida

Yechida is the hidden, most innermost essence of the soul. It is its point of origin, where it is fused with its maker. All Jewish souls, too, are united as one in the sphere of Yechida.

A person polishes his soul with the performance of Mitzvos. Conversely, he, heaven forbid, devastates it with sin. The point of Yechida, however, remains untouched by his actions. It is the place of his very essence.

In the level of Yechida our status as 'sons of Hashem' comes to fore. A son may be a better or worse son according to how he relates to his parents. However, his actions make him not less or more of a

¹ The ק is instead of the ה of the name of Hashem. This is in order to avoid writing this supremely holy name of G-d.

child. It is possible for his relationship with his parents to deteriorate; however, his being a child is immutable.

From the perspective of Yechida, the tzaddik (righteous person) of the generation and the worst rasha (evil person) are equal. A father and mother are equally parents to their most dedicated child as to their most aggravating, antagonizing, and rebellious one. (In fact, in a case of danger they would *instinctively* endanger their lives to save them both.)

Yechida is a world above logical faculties. The theories of the most brilliant philosopher are obsolete as he kisses his child in delighted joy. He has no, nor does he need any, theory that could explain why he should love his child; he just does.

The decisions rendered in the sublime heavenly sphere of Yechida are unrelated to mere logic. The holy will of Hashem is the only factor in this sphere.

The Five Senses

The five senses correspond to the five levels of the neshama. Sight, sound, touch and taste correspond to Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, and Chaya. The sense of smell corresponds to Yechida.

Adam and Chava corrupted their souls through the sin of eating from the forbidden fruits. The Torah relates that Chava *saw* the fruit, she *took* (touched) it, she *ate* (tasted) it, and they *heard* the chastising voice of Hashem³. These four senses were involved in the sin of the eating of the forbidden fruits.

However, the sense of smell is not mentioned in the narrative. The Bnei Yissaschor explains that this is because the sense of smell corresponds to Yechida, the part of the soul which does not partake in any sin.

The sense of smell is the most spiritual of the senses. In fact, there is an opinion in the Gemara that one does not recite a blessing upon smelling a pleasant scent. We recite a blessing only upon partaking of the earthly pleasures, and smell, which corresponds to the most sublime element of the soul, is a very refined sense; it is less physical than taste. (The final halacha, law, is that we recite a blessing on a fragrance that emanates from a physical entity, such as cloves; but not on a scent itself.)

Adar Corresponds to the Nose

Each of the twelve months corresponds to a particular organ. The month of Adar corresponds to the nose⁴.

The two heroes of the story of Purim, the rescuers of the Jewish people, are Mordechai and Esther. The Bnei Yissaschor notes that מֵרְדֵּכַי is etymologically related to the words מֵרְדֵּךְ, one of the fragrant spices of the Ketores. Another name for Esther is Hadassah, the aromatic myrtle branch.

In the month of Adar, on Purim, the great light of the hidden world of Yechida – which corresponds to the sense of smell - is revealed.

Before Purim every Jewish man is required to contribute a half-shekel toward the sacrifices. The verse directs; "הָעֶשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה וְהַדָּל לֹא יִמְעִיט"⁵, 'the rich man may not give more and the poor one may not give less.'

The essence of Yechida is hinted at in this verse: The spiritually affluent and the spiritually impoverished are equal on Purim. The man rich with mitzvos and the man poor in spiritual resources contribute the same amount to the Jewish people in Yechida, the world of Purim.

Purim, Yom Kippurim and Lots

The Zohar teaches that יום כיפורים, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, is כיפורים, like פורים. Purim is so great, that the holiest day in the year, Yom Kippur, is compared to it. The origin of both Purim and Yom Kippur, is in Yechida.

Yom Kippur and Purim share a crucial feature; the drawing of lots plays a significant role in both of them.

The word Purim means 'lots.' The Yom Tov was so named in commemoration of the lots that Haman drew to determine which day would be one in which he would carry out his evil scheme.

The entire spiritual cleansing process of Yom Kippur, in the times of the Bais HaMikdash, began with the drawing of lots between two identical animals. One of them was chosen as a sacrifice to attain forgiveness for the Jewish people. While the other one was rolled down a hill as a symbolic gift to the evil powers⁶.

When someone works hard and earns a lot of money, we can explain why he deserves to have it. We can also understand why a son should inherit a fortune from his father. However, we can neither explain, nor understand why a specific person should be the lucky winner of a lottery. What should Mr. Winner have won? Why didn't anyone else win?

The answer is – we don't know, it is above the rules of logic. The intelligent mind can determine the statistical chances of winning, but cannot explain why a specific individual should be the winner.

'Lots' are above logic; they are rooted in the world of Yechida - the world where everything is in accordance to the incomprehensible will of Hashem, which we cannot understand or explain⁷.

On both Purim and Yom KiPurim the radiant light of Yechida shines. However, there is a difference as will be explained.

Ketores is Rooted in Yechida

In the world of Yechida no evil exists. Therefore, on Yom Kippur the Satan has no power. The Ketores, too, is rooted in Yechida and therefore nullifies all evil forces.

An individual can sacrifice many types of sacrifices in the Bais HaMikdash, but not Ketores. Ketores is only accepted from the community. This is because the origin of Ketores is in Yechida. Yechida corresponds to the sense of smell and Ketores is a sacrifice of fragrant spices. In Yechida, the individual fuses with the nation.

An individual is judged according to his actions, but the entire Jewish nation is judged in accordance to Yechida. Ketores accomplishes regardless of merit - just as in Yechida merit plays no role.

It is Crucial that the Jewish People are United

Fortunate is the one who is judged in the courtroom of Yechida. He will definitely be vindicated because his evil actions do not penetrate Yechida. However, in order to merit being judged in Yechida, one must be unified with the rest of the Jewish people. Without unity one has no place in Yechida.

When Esther was made aware of the severity of the danger the Jewish people were in - and that the decree was issued because of their sins - she urged Mordechai, "כנוס את כל היהודים!"⁸, 'Gather all the Jews together!' When they are together, their fate is determined through Yechida and the Jewish people will be saved despite their sins!

"כנוס את כל היהודים" is gematria (has the same numerical value as) "הפיל פור הוא הגורל"⁹, '[Haman] drew the lot, that is the lottery' (they both equal 667). When the Jewish people are united, they are judged

through the divine 'lots' – a system completely above the dictates of tit-for-tat logic - and are showered with blessing even though they are completely undeserving

In our times, there is unfortunately much disunity among groups of and individual Jews. It is imperative that we erase hatred and resentment from our hearts and embrace our fellow Jews with love. We should also keep far away from any inter-group politics and pray for unity among all of the Jewish people.

A Quote from the Sefer (book) “Yesod Yosef”

The Yesod Yosef¹⁰ captures the essence of Purim in his holy sefer:

You should know that there is a new world above, a holy and very awesome world. It is not revealed because of its intense awesomeness, except for once a year [on Purim]. It begins to be unveiled during the reading of the Megilah. In this world the soul of Mordechai was rooted. This is the meaning of the blessing, "על מקרא מגילה", [literally translated: upon the reading of the Megilah, interpreted by the Yesod Yosef as] ‘to call [this new world and bring about its] revelation.’

The words על מקרא מגילה are gematria אור חדש (they both equal 519). With the reading of the Megilah we initiate the revelation of the light of this new spiritual world.

The World was Created in Triplicate form – Time, Place and Person

The Sefer Yetzirah states that everything was created in עולם; עשן – place, שנה - time, נפש – person. For everything that we find in time, we will find a corresponding point in geography, and it will be once again duplicated in a human personality. For every time there is a person and place that corresponds to it.

The Time, Place and Person of Yechida

The Kodesh Kedoshim is the place on this world where Yechida is manifest. Yom Kippur is the day of Yechida. The Kohen Gadol, the most elevated man of the Jewish people, is a person of Yechida. On Yom Kippur, the place, time and person of Yechida unite as the Kohen Gadol sacrifices the Ketores – which, too, is rooted in Yechida - in the Kodesh Kodoshim.

The Golden Altar - upon which the Ketores was sacrificed daily - should have been in the Kodesh Kodoshim, since Yechida is manifest in both them. Why, then, is the Golden Altar outside of the Kodesh Kodoshim, and is located in the outer room, together with the Menorah and Shulchan?

The Difference Between Purim and Yom Kippur

On Yom Kippur we elevate ourselves to the sublime, completely spiritual spheres of Yechida. We do not eat or drink; we behave like heavenly angels in order to be able to have a connection with Yechida.

However, on Purim, Yechida descends into the mundane and physical world¹¹. Purim is always on a weekday; we eat and drink on this day. On Purim, the great light of Yechida bursts forth and enlightens and elevates the mundane physical world.

During the era of the Purim miracle, the light of Yechida shone in an impure place; in Shushan, a profane environment outside of Eretz Yisroel. It glowed in a dark time; during the bleak era of the Persian exile. It enlightened the hearts of a people morally enslaved to the wicked Achashveirosh.

During an era, in a place and to a people of אסתר - הסתרה, when Hashem was hidden, the light of the most elevated spiritual realm burst forth to redeem G-d's nation.

It shone through the opaque veil of the natural world order. No open miracle occurred during the story of Purim. Hashem performed a miracle through and despite nature. The light of Yechida purified and refined the physical world until it reflected G-dliness, like black carbon which, when compressed, forms diamonds.

The Difference Between the Kodesh Kodoshim and the Golden Altar

The lofty spheres of Yechida are secluded in the Kodesh Kodoshim. The Golden Altar, on the other hand – upon which the Ketores is sacrificed daily – is designed to enlighten the outside world with the radiance of Yechida, Purim-style.

Furthermore, the Torah does not discuss the Golden Altar in its proper place. It sends the Altar of Ketores in exile, to shine forth there and reach out to those submerged in the quicksand of earthliness.

We can now clarify the difficulties we began with.

Eight is number corresponding to the supernatural world of Yechida. (This was explained on Chanukah.) The Kohen Gadol, when he is not in the Kodesh Kodoshim, shines the light of Yechida toward the outside world through wearing the Eight Garments of the High Priesthood.

The verse discussing the inauguration of the Kohen Gadol in his Eight Garments, explains that he is the one who goes into the Kodesh Kodoshim. Even though over there he wears only four garments; nevertheless, when he wears the Eight Garments outside, he spreads the light of Yechida that normally shines in the Kodesh Kodoshim. The verse refers to the Kodesh Kodoshim with the words Ohel Moed, which can refer to the outer chamber, too.

The light of Yechida shines into this earthly world.

The Importance of the Souls of Parshas Zachor

Every Jew corresponds to a letter in the Torah according to his essence. What kind of unfortunate soul corresponds to the letters "כל הנחשלים אחר־ך¹²", 'All the stragglers that trailed behind you' – that we read on Parshas Zachor? The poor souls that correspond to the word עמלק are those that are trapped by their evil inclination.

The Jews rooted in the words, "אשר קרך בדרך", 'he [Amalek] found you on the way' have different failings according to the different interpretations of the word קרך.

קרך can be interpreted as cold; there are Jews who are cold and indifferent to Judaism. קרך is similar to the word מקרה, coincidence. There are Jews who are weak in their belief in divine providence; they see interrelated events as mere coincidences in a haphazard world. קרך can also indicate impurity, and corresponds to people who are impure.

There are also lazy, tired people, who cannot get their act together in the service of Hashem. They are rooted in the words עיף ויגע, tired and exhausted.

These wretched souls are the ones which comprise the chapter of 'Parshas Zachor' - the chapter which exhorts us never to forget what Amalek did to us – which we read on the Shabbos before Purim.

However, it is the most important chapter in the Torah - it is the only one which we are biblically obligated to read from the torah scroll! All the other readings of the Torah are only rabbinically mandated.

Hashem calls out to the least worthy of his children and exhorts: Remember what Amalek did to you! Remember that you are my child and nothing can change that, including your actions. Grab onto Purim, onto the great powerful light of the Megilah and ignite your own soul from the new light which I dispense on Purim.

זכור is gematria וְתוֹסֵף אֶסְתֵּר, 'Esther added' – which is homiletically interpreted here as 'the generation when Hashem is הַסְתֵּר, hidden, has added [benefit]' (they both equal 1213). The Paragraph of Zachor adds holiness to the generation of הַסְתֵּר.

Purim is a Yom Tov for the Lowest Jews

We finish reading the parsha of Titzaveh with the description of the Golden Altar which is removed from its place to symbolize the light of Yechida shining outward. Then, for Maftir we read the Parsha of Zachor, the parsha which corresponds to the most wretched souls and the only one we are biblically obligated to read. At Mincha we read from next week's parsha about the commandment of giving the half-shekel coin. We are reminded – by the half-shekel coin and the juxtaposition of the Golden Altar and Parshas Zachor - that the greatest Jew and the smallest Jew are equal in the world of Yechida.

Purim is a Yom Tov - not so much for the elevated Jews of stature - but specifically for the evicted, sinful, lowly Jew. Adar is the last month; it straggles behind the year and contains the holiday which feeds the souls of the stragglers.

On Purim we become drunk. A drunkard has no awareness, and we, too, have no awareness of the greatness of Purim because it is rooted in the unfathomable world of Yechida.

With Purim we prepare for Nissan, the month in which we are destined to be redeemed

במהרה בהמרה בימינו בקרוב

¹ שמות כט:ל

² פרק ק"ג וק"ד

³ בראשית ג:ח

⁴ אריז"ל

⁵ שמות ל:טו

⁶ רמב"ן ויקרא טז:י

⁷ תניא

⁸ אסתר ד:טז

⁹ אסתר ג:ז

¹⁰ פרק פ"ד

¹¹ זוה"ק תיקו"ז כ"א

¹² דברים כה:יח