

Breslov Repair Kit – Yom Kippur Refreshes

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Got Life?

When you're a child, the minutes seem like hours and the hours like days.

Then, you grow up. And time flies.

Despite the fleetingness of time, if you're like most people, at some point in your life you've "killed time." Perhaps you've even killed a whole day. Or days. "Killed 'em dead."

What is a dead day? It's a day without good deeds and mitzvos. And what's an alive day, a day brimming with vitality? It's a day packed with good deeds and mitzvos.

Got Goodness?

Good deeds include acts of kindness as well as acts of duty. Good deeds are driven by the heart.

Mitzvos (the commandments of the Torah) are explicit good deeds—actions God has given us to do which help us connect to Him. When we choose to do mitzvos we reaffirm our awareness of God. We remind ourselves who we are and where we're headed.

Good deeds and mitzvos usually overlap. For example, visiting a sick person is both a good deed and a mitzvah.

Giving a minimum of ten percent of our income to charity is a mitzvah and a good deed. If we give it not only because God tells us to, which is very important, but *also* because we have feelings of concern for another's suffering, prompted by the kindness of our hearts, it is even better.

Apologizing to anyone you may have hurt is a good deed and a significant mitzvah, too. In fact, during this time period leading up to Yom Kippur, we seek out people we think we may have hurt and ask for their forgiveness. And we also forgive others who may have hurt us inadvertently—or even on purpose. Forgiving another is a very powerful personal rectification.

Mitzvos and good deeds like the ones above, bring life.

Got Blockages?

But a day without mitzvos or good deeds is a wasted day, a day without oomph. It's a day not fortified by the revitalizing, positive energy flow which comes from God.

Worse still is a day where we actively choose to run away from good deeds and mitzvos, seeking activities so empty we might even choose to “shut down” the highest parts of our minds and hearts in order to engage in them. Then, not only do we waste the gift of a day —24 precious hours of life!—we create blockages which prevent any potential positive energy flow

from reaching and sustaining us.

In a special prayer* often said during this period of time before Yom Kippur, Reb Nosson, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov's leading student, brings this concept home. He has a name for the days in which one "lives" without God-consciousness in the form of mitzvos and good deeds. He calls these "dead days." He explains that person engaging in negative acts "robs the life" from these days. He writes:

Because I committed a multitude of sins throughout my life, the corpses of dead days lie littered across my past. (Likutey Tefillos 103)

Get Revived!

Amazingly, the prayers, weeping, and most important, the fasting we do on Yom Kippur, have the ability to revive the past days and even erase the wasted potential.

Yom Kippur has the power to actually bring the dead days back to life!

Not only is the past brought back to life with spirit and sparkle, but Rebbe Nachman of Breslov tells us that "joy is formed."

By fasting and spending the day in heartfelt prayer, to the best of our individual ability, we weaken the negative power of the blemished days of our past. We instead take that adverse energy and use it for good. By using the energy for the mitzvos of serving God through fasting and prayer on Yom Kippur, we literally turn the past around, infusing it with goodness, bringing it back to life.

[Then,] the actual structure of joy-[which is] the vitality and core of all the mitzvos-is constructed. (LM 179:2)

This is reflected in the powerful emotions, including great joy we feel as Yom Kippur draws to a close. No, it's not

because in a few minutes we'll be able to quench our thirst and relieve our hunger. It's because our *teshuvah* is complete. It's because we've spent the day pouring out our hearts and singing to God—like the angels. We've also spent the day subjugating our fleshly desires (for food, drink, and relaxation) to something higher, our desire for purity and closeness to our Source.

We've returned to our true selves and God. We've done our part to bring ourselves back to life. We merit joy.

* [The Fiftieth Gate, Volume 4, Prayer 103](#)

For more posts about achieving joy, see BreslovWoman.org