

Yom Kippur – A Day Of Love

written by An Aspiring Breslover
October 2, 2022



The idea of sin and atonement brings up the question of God's role in punishing us. We often have the mistaken notion that God waits for us to slip and sin, and then coldly strikes us in an instant spur of retribution. For this reason, Yom Kippur is a dreadful day for many of us and amounts to little more than a mechanical self-defense process.

In *Likutey Moharan* II, 66, Rebbe Nachman explains our being punished as akin to someone attempting to tame a wild horse by pounding it with his fist; he's only hurting himself. When God punishes us, Rebbe Nachman teaches, the punishment does not end there; God is pained together with us.

God has attached His great name to ours. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni #17) explains that the Holy One said, "If I leave the Jewish people as they are, they will assimilate. Instead, I

will associate My Great Name with theirs and they will survive." Each one of us is therefore *a portion of God from above*, (a part of God's *Shekhina* or Divine Presence). This is also reflected in the name, IsraEL.

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe ascended to Heaven and begged for forgiveness on behalf of the Jewish people. Moses requested that God forgive us for the sake of His Great Name, which is associated with our name (see Exodus 32). Moshe was arguing that by punishing the Jews, God would be harming Himself. Therefore we say throughout the Yom Kippur service, "I (God) have forgiven according to your (Moses) word."

Throughout the *Likutey Moharan*, Rebbe Nachman constantly shows how things that we perceive as punishment are actually being done out of love, in order to bring about our *teshuvah* (repentance) and *tikkun* (rectification). (For example, *Likutey Moharan* I, 6 explains how helpful embarrassment is.) Reb Noson once said, "The Rebbe's whole essence is Rosh HaShanah. Mine is Yom Kippur!" (*Siach Sarfey Kodesh* 1-662). Even as he left the world, Reb Noson was mindful of his mission, repeating again and again, "*Chanun ha-marbeh lislo'ach*—Gracious and abundant in forgiveness." There is hope for all: God will forgive!

Reb Noson taught us that God is a compassionate God. On Yom Kippur, He waits for us to pick up on the cues we are being constantly being sent. As Moses revealed to us, God does not want to harm Himself. This is a day for us to realize the great love that God has for us, and for us to express and regret all the things that have held us apart until today. This year we will become aware of these roadblocks, and we will certainly be forgiven. Amen.