

heavenly throne to judge the world. He personally investigated the Tower of Babel וירד ה' לראות את העיר ואת המגדל וfound them united and considerate of each other, he spared them eternal damnation. G-d once again descended into Sodom ארדה נא וראא הכעקתה הבאה אלי and cheating, trickery and disunity within the citizenry itself. Sodom lost its final appeal for survival, as the heavens rained fire and brimstone, utterly destroying its inhabitants and consigning them to oblivion.

On Yom Kippur G-d descends to judge the Jewish people. He sees them fasting, praying, pledging, promising, regretting, resolving. The air waves are filled with sounds of repentance from the beginning to the great finale, but none are as vital as the special sounds of the "Overture of Kol Nidre".

### A Resounding Barukh Shem by Rabbi Abraham B. Hecht

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Kol Nidre prayer is its conclusion with the blessing of the Shehehiyanu (Shulhan Arukh 619; 1). Recited by the entire congregation and by the cantor, it expresses a united vote of thanks to the A-mighty for having granted all the assembled a year of life.

It voices a silent prayer and wish that G-d will grant another year of health to all who are in the congregation; this is indicated by the words Mi Yom Kippurim Zeh Ad Yom Kippurim Habah Aleinu L'tovah, "from this Day of Atonement to next year's Yom Kippur which should come to us in goodness, we hope to be together again, sustained by the L-rd in health and happiness."

From the halakhic point of view, the reason for uttering this blessing at this particular time is explained as follows: On almost all holidays of the year, when Jewish law requires us to recite the Kiddush on the eve of the holiday, we then utter the blessing Shehehiyanu, for that is the official ushering in of Yom Tov. Yom Kippur is the only exception in that it is the sole holiday of the year when there is no Kiddush, because of course, we are fasting. The Shehehiyanu is then properly pronounced in our prayers as we thank the L-rd for granting us a happy and healthy year.

And thus each and every year on Yom Kippur eve, as we solicit A-mighty for forgiveness, we pray for a year of health and happiness in the service of the L-rd.

A really outstanding feature of the holiday prayers is the time-hallowed custom of exclaiming the words "Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto L'olam Vaed"—"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever," in a loud and clear voice. Although during the entire year these words, which follow the declaration of our faith, Shema Yisrael, are recited daily morning and evening in a low and hushed voice, on Yom Kippur the entire congregation proclaims these words in raised voices (Shulhan Arukh

619:2)

What, we may ask, was intended by our sages in the Code of Jewish Law, who recommended this procedure? What is its origin and purpose? What objective was being sought and what lesson was this rather strange custom to impart?

We find three theories surrounding the origins of this custom. The Rabbis in the Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 2:17) indicate, that when the L-rd uttered the words Shema Yisroel—"Hear O Israel," the people responded by exclaiming Hashem Elolenu, Hashem Ehad—"The L-rd our G-d, The L-rd is One." Thereupon Moses exclaimed the words Barukh Shem, etc.

A second theory is, that when Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to Heaven to receive the Torah, he overheard the angels praising the L-rd with these very words. Moshe Rabbeinu hastened to divulge this prayer of praise to the children of Israel (Midrash, *ibid.*, p. 18).

Since the words were originally recited by the angels, we fear to exclaim them out loud. However on Yom Kippur since we emulate the angels, by not eating or drinking and by separation from all things physical and corporeal, we may therefore utter the angelic prayer in a loud voice, having nothing to hide or be ashamed of.

A third explanation given by the Rabbis (Peshahim 56a) tells us that when our patriarch Jacob was about to depart from this world, he gathered his sons around his bedside, for final words of admonition, guidance and advice. As he was about to divulge to them future events and occurrences, the spirit of prophecy left him and he began to worry, "perhaps there is in my seed an impure element; Abraham had Ishmael, and from Isaac came Esau. Thereupon, all his children declared unanimously, 'Hear O Israel, The L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One.'" (Jacob was called Israel, see Genesis 35:10.) "Just as you serve only one G-d, so do we serve only one G-d." At that moment, the Talmud relates, Jacob joyfully cried out, "Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto L'olam Vaed."

Every individual Jew also, when he recites the Shemah is professing in effect his loyalty to Israel of old, repeating the identical words spoken by the fathers of the twelve tribes thousands of years ago at Jacob's bedside—the eternal belief in the eternal G-d of Abraham, Issac and Jacob.

Tonight, Jews universally assembled in congregations, are compared to the angels. Through their total self abnegation and willful withdrawal from their elementary human needs, such as eating and drinking, they have the right and perhaps even the duty to praise G-d loudly and clearly, as do the angels, through the recital of the prayer of Barukh Shem.

A beautiful Jewish custom, universally observed by Jews on Yom Kippur night, is the removal of the Sifrei Torah (Scrolls of the Law) from the Aron Kodesh (Holy Ark) to be held, embraced and kissed affectionately by the people, as the scrolls are carried aloft (Arukh Hashulhan 619:6)

The symbolic nature of this tradition is to impress upon all Jews their need to beg forgiveness from the L-rd for any infraction or transgression of any of the laws. We are called upon to reflect on the shining personalities of the two greatest Jewish leaders, each of whom symbolized the epitome of the study and practice of the Torah—Moshe Rabbeinu, who brought us the Torah from Heaven, and Jacob, the personification of the Torah scholar who "dwells in the tents of learning" (Genesis 25:27).

Before Jacob went to his uncle Laban's house, as directed and commanded by his parents, he first journeyed to the school of Shem and Eber, to fortify himself with the study of Torah for fourteen years (see Rashi, Genesis 28:11). Indeed Jacob feared for his own spiritual and moral integrity while in the presence and employ of Laban. He therefore prepared himself for the ordeal, which was to last for twenty years, by concentrating on the study and acquisition of knowledge of the Torah.

Once again, when Jacob had to wander down to Egypt to start life anew in a strange, alien, idolatrous and base society, he sent Yehudah, his trusted son and leader of the brothers (Bereishit

Rabbah 4:16), to establish a Yeshivah. Jacob sought to create and develop an antidote and protection against the pernicious philosophies of Egypt. He searched for a formula and a method to assure and secure the spiritual past, present and future of his children, and this formula was and is the study of our holy Torah.

And when he reaches the end of his days and is about to bid farewell to his progeny, Jacob exalts and is delighted by the unanimous and voluntary expression of loyalty to G-d by his numerous offspring, the product of a lifetime of dedication, amidst the severest trials and tribulations, to Torah and Mitzvot.

We too, when raising our voices in praise of G-d with the prayer of Barukh Shem, do also proclaim our joy and gladness of heart that our children and grandchildren, continue to believe and practice our ancient, yet vital and vibrant Torah and tradition.

Can we really feel secure in the belief that our children will continue to profess our faith? Can we actually foresee their loyalty to G-d and the teachings of religion? To these questions and mysteries there can be but one answer and solution. If and when our children will receive a thorough and complete Torah education, then and only then can we all rest assured that our religious and ethnic future is secure. Our thirty centuries of experience has proven that the only guarantee of wholesome Jewishness, is the study of Torah.

It seems strange that very few of our great Jewish philanthropists recognize the significance of Torah education. Many millions of dollars are donated for old age homes, hospitals, synagogues, founding and nursing homes and for a host of other related social welfare institutions and agencies. But rarely will we find contributors giving sums to Yeshivas and for Torah study, commensurate with the amounts allocated for other benevolent causes.

Our Talmudic sages made the striking statement that "Any city which does not maintain religious schools for children, will

eventually be destroyed" (Sabbath 119b).

Jewish history is replete with instances, where this truism actually happened. Many great Jewish communities in Babylon, Europe, Africa, Spain and in the Middle East, disintegrated completely through assimilation and ignorance. The basic cause of this total absorption into the non-Jewish masses and their consequent loss of Jewish identification, came about because there were inadequate or ineffective educational facilities.

In contrast, we find other Jewish communities, first in Western, then in Eastern Europe, where the Jew lived precariously, amidst great physical and financial impoverishment. The lot of the Jews in this part of Europe was one of political instability which on more than one occasion threatened their very existence. Pogroms, harassments, discrimination and a general state of instability, could not shake the faith of these people. Despite their hardships, these communities produced some of our greatest Torah luminaries, their Torah centers becoming world famous. Much of our Torah literature, responsa, and studies, were produced by the learned men who lived in such a climate for fear and want. Their high standards of learning and deep and penetrating research are envied by scholars the world over. Their success came from only one factor: the careful perpetuation of Torah-true institutions.

Regarding Moshe Rabbeinu, we read in the Bible, "Torah Tzivah Lanu Moshe Morasha Kehilat Yaakov"—"Moshe commanded us the Torah—an inheritance of Jacob" (Deuteronomy 33:4). We are the custodians of this inheritance. We must honestly ask ourselves, "Are we really protecting and cherishing this noble heritage?"

The answer will be reflected by the effort we are prepared to give for the perpetuation of Torah. The Midrash relates, "When Moses was about to receive the Torah, he first recited a blessing, "Blessed art Thou O L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who chose this Torah and sanctified it, and was desirous of those who practice it." Moshe Rabbeinu didn't simply say, "those who toil

in understanding of the Torah," but rather he praised those who do and observe—those who actually conduct their lives according to the dictates of the Torah. The Torah is not merely an intellectual exercise, but a vibrant, viable daily guide to life.

It is in the measure of doing and achieving for Torah, sacrificing, contributing and practicing the Torah, that we shall reap the fruits of devoted loyal traditional children, dedicated to G-d and to our eternal faith.

May we be worthy of the confidence of the originators of the prayer of Barukh Shem, our patriarch Jacob and our teacher Moses, who formulated Barukh Shem in the hope and belief that their children would forever perpetuate their commitment to our Holy Torah, Amen.

### Today Only by Rabbi Philip H. Singer

סימן לשון של זהירות קשור על פחוה של היכל וכשהגיע שיער למודבר הדין הלשון מלבין (יומא ס"ד)

Most impressive and awe-inspiring were the Yom Kippur Services in the Temple. The Kohen Godol, the High Priest had a most arduous task on this day. He performed many duties. He offered many sacrifices and prayers. He purified and sanctified himself with many ablutions as he changed his garbs. During seven days of seclusion he studied and reviewed the laws, procedures and ceremonies of the Holy Day. He was not permitted to sleep on the night of Yom Kippur and was kept awake by readings from the Scriptures. He was put under oath to fulfill his duties in accordance with the directives of the sages. He wept, the rabbi wept, all wept. What preparations! And with dread, love and inspiration, he approached the services. No wonder that his appearance was likened to the radiance of the heavenly bodies. He was angelic. And then he uttered the ineffable name, a reverential response was evoked from near and afar, and all knelt, bowed and prostrated and called out "Boruch Shaim".

The objective of this solemn and stirring service was to attain expiation and forgiveness for the High Priest, his household and the entire congregation of Israel. And it would be assumed that the service of the High Priest conferred this grace.

Simultaneously another service was performed. A scapegoat was sent into the wilderness. This service was entrusted to an unknown ordinary Jew. Who was he? What preparations did he undergo? None. No seclusion. No instructions. No ablutions. And most amazing, it was the service of this inconspicuous Jew which achieved G-d's pardon for all Israel. Even before his mission was completed, the heavenly sign appeared in the Temple to the ecstatic glee of the people. The Mishnah relates that a scarlet ribbon was suspended at the entrance of the sanctuary and as soon as the "Ish Eettee", the appointed man, reached the wilderness, the ribbon turned white. This was evidence that all