



The Path To Follow

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GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

Cleave to His Attributes

Just as Hashem, may His great Name be blessed for all time, spreads out His attribute of mercy, just as He makes strict justice disappear from before Him, just as He harbors neither bitterness nor vengeance in His heart for the Children of Israel, regardless of where they are, and just as He does not remove the words of the Torah from them, so too must the Children of Israel act with one another, as it is written: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You will surely reprimand your fellow and not bear a sin because of him. You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people. You shall love your fellow as yourself" (Leviticus 19:17-18). What does the expression "in your heart" teach us? It deals with hatred that dwells in the heart [i.e., true hatred] (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabba). Let us accustom ourselves to welcoming hardships and forgiving wrongs.

- Avoth D'Rabbi Nathan 41

THE GREATNESS OF AARON (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

On the verse, "Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you kindle the lamps...' " (Numbers 8:2), the Sages say: "Why is the passage on the Menorah juxtaposed to the passage on the leaders? It is because when Aaron saw the dedication of the leaders, he felt distressed over not joining them in this dedication, neither he nor his tribe. Therefore G-d said to him, 'By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps.' "

This means that Aaron was distressed over the fact that all the other tribes brought offerings, which drew them closer to the Holy One, blessed be He, whereas Aaron and his tribe were not called upon to bring offerings and come closer to Hashem. He therefore consoled Aaron with the responsibility of kindling the lamps ("yours is greater than theirs"). This raises three questions that need to be explained: (1) Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, not inform Aaron from the outset that his tribe would kindle the lamps? In that case, neither he nor his tribe would have been hurt by not having been invited, along with the other tribes, to bring offerings! (2) The book Beit Av also asks why Aaron waited for an invitation from Hashem. Why did he not have a desire to go and bring offerings for his tribe, since he was the leader of the tribe of Levi? In that case, he would not have been distressed. (3) How was Aaron consoled by the fact that Hashem gave him the order to prepare and kindle the lamps, since his distress was caused by the fact that all the other tribes brought offerings, whereas he and his tribe were not? How would kindling the lamps be better than bringing an offering?

To explain, let us first cite the words of the Sages on the verse, "Moses was pasturing the flocks of Jethro" (Exodus 3:1). They ask why this verse needs to tell us what Moses did before attaining greatness. The answer is that it is simply an introduction to tell us exactly how Moses deserved to become the deliverer of Israel (Zohar II:20b-21a). The reason that Hashem chose him above all others is obviously because of his deeds. In fact when Moses was pasturing the flocks of his father-in-law in the desert, a small lamb escaped, and he went looking for it until he arrived at a place with a pond. The lamb drank its fill, and Moses said to himself: "I didn't know that it fled because it was thirsty. It must certainly be tired." He then carried it on his shoulders and brought it back to the flock. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: "Since he shows compassion to animals, he is worthy of pasturing My people Israel." We also find that the Holy One, blessed be He, did not appoint David as king until He saw how he acted with the flock (Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot 169; Zohar II:21a). Likewise, before the Holy One, blessed be He, accords greatness to any tzaddik, He first tests him to see if he can resist the trials of this world, as it is written: "The L-RD tests the righteous" (Psalms 11:5).

This may be why the tribe of Levi was not invited along with the other tribes to bring offerings, namely that Hashem wanted to test Aaron and his tribe in order to see if they would complain to Him or not. In Aaron, Hashem found a vessel that was filled with the fear of G-d, which is what earned him a love greater than that of the other tribes, for not only did he not protest, he was even afraid that he was somehow to blame! Aaron thought that this was why Hashem considered all the other tribes to have attained perfection, and in his mind that was why they were chosen by Hashem to bring Him offerings. Similarly, the members of the tribe of Levi were afraid that they would have to repent for having killed people (during the incident of the golden calf) who were not worthy of death. Hence they thought that they had lost the right to bring Hashem offerings. With such thoughts in mind, Aaron and his tribe demonstrated that they were more worthy of greatness than the other tribes.

This is why the tribe of Levi deserved to be the only tribe to constantly serve Hashem in the Sanctuary and bring Him offerings. Furthermore, great teachers of Israel emerged from the tribe of Levi (Pesikta Zutah, Vayechi 49:7), for the Torah only enters the heart of the humble (Taanith 7a). It was for this reason that a desire did not arise in Aaron's heart to take the initiative of bringing offerings on his own, even though he was the leader of the tribe of Levi. He believed that if he had not been invited to bring offerings to Hashem, it was a sure sign that he was not worthy of doing so (see Berachot 60a). Due to his modesty, as well as the extreme humility required to have said, "And what are we" (Exodus 16:7), he merited the task of kindling the lamps. In other words, by kindling the lamps he would enable a divine influence to descend upon all lights - upon all the souls of the Children of Israel, as it is written: "A man's soul is the lamp of the L-RD" (Proverbs 20:27) - and upon all the mitzvot, which are also lights, as it is written: "For a mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light" (ibid. 6:23).

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Aaron, "Yours is greater than theirs." Actually, the fact of not having been invited by Hashem to bring an offering was solely meant to put him to the test before choosing him for such a lofty task. When Aaron overcame this test, it turned out that the last was the most beloved, and that the kindling of the lamps was certainly more valuable than bringing an offering, for in this way he would have an influence on all the worlds.

Hashem therefore told Aaron that he certainly possessed good deeds, for he would prepare and kindle the lamps. This meant that he had always been a tzaddik and performed mitzvot to perfection. Furthermore, in the future "the seven lamps shall light" (Numbers 8:2), for by Aaron's merit a miracle would take place in the era of the Hasmonians, when a flask of oil would be discovered that could burn for only a single day, yet by his merit it will burn for seven days more.

From all that has been said, we must realize that a person does not have the right to protest against Hashem or complain about His deeds, despite not understanding them and feeling that he is suffering unjustly. In his anguish, a person should instead see a sign that he must reflect upon his conduct to see whether he can somehow better himself. Maybe, in proportion to his level, there is something lacking in how he serves the Creator, something that is bringing this suffering upon him, for the Holy One, blessed be He, is very strict with the tzaddikim. The Sages have said, "If a man sees that painful sufferings visit him, let him examine his conduct" (Berachot 5a). This means that if a person thinks that his suffering is unjustified, since his conduct appears to be flawless, he should still examine his ways. He must look into the smallest details of his conduct, for although his actions may be correct, perhaps Hashem sees some fault in them. A person must therefore examine his ways very carefully, for in doing so he may find something that will be to his advantage to improve. As a follow up to the words of the Sages, if a person has reflected upon his deeds but finds nothing for which to attribute his suffering, he should attribute them to a negligence in Torah study. This is because Torah study has no fixed limit (Peah 1:1), as it is written: "You shall meditate on it day and night" (Joshua 1:8). It may be that a person has neglected his Torah study for a brief moment, which is what led to his suffering. As such, we may explain the statement of the Sages on the Torah: "Behold, it is rolled up and lying in the corner. Whoever wishes to study, let him go and study" (Kiddushin 66a). This is because the Torah is light, as the Sages have said: "Light means Torah" (Megillah 16b). It lies in a corner, and no vessel contains it. Thus anyone who wants to study and forge a vessel for it can do so, meaning that by studying Torah he can fulfill mitzvot, lights that will enable the Torah to shine.

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

A Craving for Desire

It is written, "The mixed multitude that was among them had a strong craving, and the Children of Israel also wept again and said, '...We remember the fish...the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is parched. There is nothing; we have nothing before our eyes but the manna!'" (Numbers 11:4-6).

At first glance, it is difficult to understand what this mixed multitude craved. After all, what did they lack? They could taste every flavor they wanted in the manna, including the flavor of cucumbers and melons! Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra clarifies the situation for us by saying that it contains a practical and instructive lesson. It is true that in the manna, people could taste all the good things of the world. However the desire that accompanies food, and which gives it flavor, is what the soul craves. That is what is satisfied by savory food, all of which they lacked. Hence they said, "Our soul is parched. There is nothing." The truth is, here they touched upon the very reason why the manna was created with all its particular characteristics, for what they did not want is precisely what Hashem wanted by bringing them the manna. The basic need to eat and drink is composed of two opposing interests. Food sustains the soul, which is why it is necessary to eat. On the other hand, this need also doubles as a desire that is liable to be a source of all kinds of sins. Benefiting every day from a desire to eat only reinforces such a desire, a situation that is liable to have negative repercussions. Hence it is necessary to keep the pleasure of eating within reasonable bounds. We must consider, according to the wonderful definition of the author of Chovot HaLevavot, that "Hashem gave desire the role of pushing man to eat and drink." In other words, the mix of desires that accompany hunger and the satisfaction of eating have a role to play. Desire has been given the role of pushing man towards food and drink. Without this impulse, he would be liable to forget about eating. The desire to eat is therefore something that is necessary. However once it has loyally fulfilled its role, it must give up its place. Food is not here so we can quench our desires, for a meal is eaten on the table that is before Hashem!

Eating the manna enabled the Children of Israel to maintain the proper attitude towards food. The manna's form did not change, and its permanence did not allow them to make an adventure out of food. People ate to live, not the other way around, meaning that they did not want to eat whenever they saw food. A fine line exists between the "satisfaction" of eating and the "adventure" of food, the manna being what maintained this line.

The mixed multitude, however, had a craving for desire. They wanted their souls to constantly and actively desire things, not to remain satisfied. For this they needed cucumbers and melons, colorful food that stimulated their desire to eat even when they were not hungry, food that transformed all their meals into an adventure.

A Pearl From the Rav:

Protection From the Evil Inclination

It is written, "When you kindle the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the Menorah" (Numbers 8:2). A person must sense that he is devoting and elevating his soul with each mitzvah that he performs, raising it before the Creator as a pleasing burnt-offering. As we know, the lamps of the Menorah allude to the mitzvot, as it is written: "For a mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light" (Proverbs 6:23). We must kindle them "in front of the Menorah," in front of the Shechinah. Or we may say that a person must offer himself as a sacrifice before Hashem

by performing each mitzvah to perfection and in every detail, doing so in order for the seven lamps to burn. In other words, each day must bring abundance into the world.

This is what constitutes, "When you kindle the lamps" – by means of the mitzvot that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to the Children of Israel to perform during the six days of the week, and even more so on Shabbat, a person can elevate himself until he reaches the level of being "in front of the Menorah," in front of the Shechinah. When he gets this close to the Holy One, blessed be He, the evil inclination will certainly be unable to reach him. And not only will it not reach him, when he attains the level of being in front of the Shechinah, the evil inclination will not even dare to approach him. This is what happened at the giving of the Torah, when all the Children of Israel were standing before Hashem. Their impurities left them by that point, and the evil inclination no longer had a hold on them (Zohar II:94a, III:162b).

The Sages have said, "If this repulsive wretch meets you, drag him to the Beit Hamidrash" (Sukkah 52b; Kiddushin 30a). We need to understand why the Sages used the term pagah ("meets you") here.

From this we learn that meeting the evil inclination is like a pegiah ("wound"), meaning that it already wounds a person. Actually, if a person's thoughts had been pure and he had cleaved to Hashem, he certainly would not have met the evil inclination, nor would he have needed the advice of the Sages to drag it to the Beit Midrash. In any case, even if a person is already being influenced by the evil inclination, he must immediately drag it to the Beit Midrash before it is too late. This not only applies to a regular individual, but to a tzaddik as well. If the evil inclination comes to disturb him, this will harm the tzaddik, even if he conquers the evil inclination and elevates himself to a higher level. It is still better not to encounter the evil inclination, for doing so constitutes a wound in and of itself.

Perpetual Light

It is written, "When you kindle the lamps" (Numbers 8:2).

Rashi states, "Why is the passage on the Menorah juxtaposed to the passage on the leaders? It is because when Aaron saw the dedication of the leaders, he felt distressed over not joining them in this dedication.... Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps.'" How was the kindling of the lamps greater than the offerings of the leaders? The Midrash states, "The offerings shall remain in force only as long as the Temple stands, but the lamps shall always give light" (Bamidbar Rabba 15:6). This is still difficult to understand, for when there is no Temple or offerings, there is no Menorah either! The Ramban states that here Hashem promised Aaron that through his descendants the Hasmoneans, a miracle would occur during a dedication to take place in the Second Temple, when the Menorah would be lit for eight days with a flask that contained only enough oil for one day. The kindling of the lamps would remain a mitzvah for all the generations, for the Chanukah lights are lit even when the Temple does not stand. These are the lights that the Midrash refers to by saying, "But the lamps shall always give light."

Good Comes from a Person of Merit

Aaron sensed the sin of the golden calf in himself, and he was therefore upset that he was not called upon to bring an offering, lest his sin cause a delay in the arrival of the Shechinah. Hashem therefore showed him the Menorah, whose western lamp was miraculously always lit, even though it did not receive more oil than the rest. This testified to the fact that the Shechinah rested upon Israel (see Shabbat 22b). Hence automatically it was the clearest proof that the sin of the golden calf had been forgiven. Since the western lamp always remained lit solely on account of the High Priest's merit (for after Shimon HaTzaddik, there were other extraordi-

nary High Priests who were tzaddikim, but this miracle stopped), it also proved that even Aaron's sin had been forgiven. After all, it was precisely by Aaron's merit that this miracle occurred, a miracle to proclaim that the Shechinah rested on Israel. Hence the fact that "you will light and prepare the lamps" served as a convincing proof that he had nothing to fear from the sin of the golden calf.

– Avnei Ezel

My Heart Did Not Grow Proud

It is written, "Aaron did so" (Numbers 8:3).

The Sifrei states, "This shows Aaron's virtue, in that he did not change." Although Aaron merited such greatness, he did not change in his own eyes. He did not grow proud in any way, but remained as modest as before.

– From Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa

Why the Menorah?

It is written, "This was the work of the Menorah, hammered out gold; from its base to its flower it was hammered out according to the vision that the L-RD showed Moses, so did he make the Menorah" (Numbers 8:4).

Rashi states, "As G-d had shown him with His finger, for he had difficulty with it. That is why it says, 'This was the work of the Menorah.'" Why did Hashem show Moses the Menorah, as opposed to the other vessels of the Sanctuary? The answer is because "he had difficulty with it." This teaches us that when something is difficult to understand, we must employ other means to make things clear to us and get a better grasp of the subject. Likewise the Torah, when it wants to warn us not to veer off the right path, usually describes in great detail incidents such as the episode of the spies and Korach, although it would have been enough to briefly describe our duty to distance ourselves from Lashon Harah and disputes. In such a case, however, our minds would not fully grasp the danger and gravity of things, and we would be left thinking that strife comes from lesser people, and that elevated individuals are completely exempt from it. Hence the Torah clarifies the great danger that exists even for great men such as the spies, and even for those who are as intelligent and versed in Torah as Korach and his followers. This teaches us that we must be careful with Lashon Harah regarding any Jew.

– Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna

EISHET CHAYIL

I Will Feed You

Rebbetzin Freha Abuhatzera, the wife of Rabbi Israel, saw to the material requirements of the Boudnib yeshiva in Morocco, acting as a devoted mother with all the yeshiva students. She would cook their meals, wash their clothes, sew and mend what needed mending, and see to all their needs, just as a devoted mother would do for her children. When they needed new clothes, she would make them herself. If a new student arrived with inappropriate clothes, she would immediately find him suitable ones. She often gave the garments of her own son, Rabbi Meir, to a student who had little to wear. She was extra careful to ensure that students arriving from another town had enough food and clothes. Regarding students who came to Morocco from Algeria in order to study Torah, she ordered that they be given extra food for their meals, saying: "Give them an extra portion, since they have to place to go and eat here, whereas the other students go to their parents and eat whatever the yeshiva's kitchen lacks."

– Hi Tithalal

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

The Power of the Tongue

In Hilchot Tumat Tzara'at (ch. 16), the Rambam writes: "Reflect upon what happened to Miriam when she spoke about her brother, whom she, the firstborn, had raised on her knees, and for whom she had put herself in danger to save from the waters. She did not speak ill of him, but simply erred by comparing him to other prophets. Furthermore, he was not angry with her for what she said, as it is written: 'The man Moses was exceedingly humble' [Numbers 12:3]. Nevertheless, she was immediately punished with leprosy! How much more will the wicked and foolish be punished when they utter stupidity in abundance! Hence it is fitting for one who wants to take the right path to distance himself from their company, and to avoid speaking with them, so as not to be caught in the trap of the wicked and their foolishness."

The Psalms states, "Who is the man who desires life, who loves days of seeing good? Guard your tongue from evil" (Psalms 34:13). The commentators have explained that "who desires life" refers to eternal life in the World to Come, while "who loves days of seeing good" refers to life in this world, which is like days in comparison to eternal life. This is surprising, for why does the verse specifically tell us to guard ourselves from this sin? The Torah gives us 248 positive and 365 negative mitzvot, and in regards to all of them Hashem says: "See, I have placed before you today life and good.... I command you today to love the L-RD your G-d, to walk in His ways, to observe His commandments, His decrees, and His ordinances" (Deuteronomy 30:15-16).

The answer is that King David wants to tell us by allusion how, in general, we can guard ourselves from sinning against others and also against G-d. King David advises a person who desires life to guard his tongue from speaking evil in every possible way, in which case he will automatically pay attention to all other sins between man and his fellowman.

This is simple enough. We must accustom ourselves to ensuring that we never speak ill of others, even when what we say will not harm others, and especially when what we say will make them lose their livelihood. We must never use our words to shame people, nor wrong them in a dispute. All these and similar things represent the evil of the tongue. If we pay careful attention to this area, and to all the other positive and negative mitzvot regarding this subject, we will then automatically not steal. This is because we will have already taken it upon ourselves to be careful in areas where we are not actually harming people, and therefore how much more will we be careful in areas that involve an actual action [i.e., not just words]. Thus with time, we will become pure of all sins regarding our fellowman.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTARAH

The Soul's Garments

It is written, "Remove the filthy garments from him" (Zechariah 3:4).

Just as the body needs garments and cannot go without them, likewise for the soul. As long as the soul exists in this world, however, its garments are flesh and blood, clothing that does not last forever. Hashem therefore gave us the Torah, so that by performing its mitzvot we can create glorious garments for the soul. When a sinner dies, his soul will return to G-d, Who gave it to him, and he will have to render an accounting. The soul will obviously want to be allowed into Gan Eden, but angels of destruction will clothe it with repulsive and impure garments that were created by its sins. Who can imagine the intense suffering, the tremendous shame and scorn that he will have to endure because of these garments? He will be forced to descend into Gehinnom as a result, a place of darkness and gloom, to be cleansed of these sins. What can this be compared to? It is like a groom who is being accompanied to the wedding ceremony by his close friends. On the way, he encounters some scoundrels who sling manure, slime, and all sorts of repulsive things at him, covering him from head to toe with filth. The groom's friends will shout at them and say, "You scoundrels! What you doing? Why are you throwing all this muck at him?" The mud-throwers will then tell everyone that the groom is their friend, and that he was the one who prepared all this muck for them to throw! The same applies to the soul: It is a person himself who, through his sins, creates his own vile and impure garments. He dons such garments in spite of himself, and he cannot get rid of them because he was the one who made them.

Scripture alludes to this in speaking of the High Priest Joshua, the son of Jehozadak. As we read in the haftarah, "Then He showed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the L-RD, and the Satan was standing on his right to accuse him. ... [He said,] 'Remove the filthy garments from him'" (Zechariah 3:1-4). Filthy garments point to the impurity of sin, which is repulsive. The Torah briefly mentions this by stating, "You shall not defile yourselves with them, lest you become unclean through them" (Leviticus 11:43).

– Shmirat HaLashon 2:2

A TRUE STORY

Goodness and Humility

It is written, "The man Moses was exceedingly humble" (Numbers 12:3).

In his book Kav HaYashar, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kaidanover writes: "I will give you an example of what humility is. Rabbi Menachem (the son of Rabbi Avraham Galanti) told me that he once bought a bag of flour from the market and was carrying it on his shoulders. Rabbi Shlomo Shagig was following him, and he removed the bag from Rabbi Menachem's shoulders and firmly ordered him not to exhaust himself with it. All of Rabbi Menachem's supplications were useless, for he tried to say that it was not fitting for the honor of Rabbi Shlomo, who was great in Torah and also very rich, to carry it himself. Rabbi Shlomo refused to listen, until finally he carried the bag of flour to Rabbi Menachem's home."

He continued: "One day, Rabbi Avraham Galanti came to the village of Ein Zeitim, where he bought a pitcher and filled it with water from the local well. On the way, he met the pious Rabbi Messod, who said to him: 'Rabbi, give me a little water, for I'm thirsty.' Rabbi Avraham immediately tilted his pitcher and poured him some water. After he drank a little, Rabbi Messod took the pitcher and brought it to Rabbi Avraham's home. All the members of the group, when they saw Rabbi Avraham from afar, rose before him. When he came closer, they kissed his hand and said: 'If only we could be a carpet under your feet in the World to Come!' In fact Rabbi Avraham was pious and humble, and he always said that there should be peace, love, and fraternity among us. May his merit protect us, as well as all Israel."

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

Piety and Humility

Rabbi and Rabbi Chiya were once traveling together. Upon arriving in a certain town, they came to an inn and asked: "Is there a talmid chacham here? If so, we would like to meet him." They were told, "There is a talmid chacham here who is blind." Rabbi Chiya said to Rabbi, "Stay here at the inn, for it is not fitting for the Nassi to go and visit him. I will go alone." Rabbi did not agree, and therefore he took hold of Rabbi Chiya and they went together. After their visit, as they were about to leave the blind talmid chacham, he blessed them by saying: "You visit those who are seen but do not see, and by this merit you can welcome the Shechinah, which sees but is not seen!" Rabbi said to Rabbi Chiya, "You see, if I had listened to you to preserve my honor, I would not have received this blessing!"

When Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi was about to ascend to Heaven while still alive, Eliyahu heralded his coming by announcing in Heaven: "Make room for the son of Levi, make room for the son of Levi!" Yehoshua ben Levi found Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai sitting on thirteen thrones of gold. "Are you the son of Levi?" asked Rabbi Shimon. "Yes," he replied. "Has a rainbow ever appeared in your lifetime," Rabbi Shimon asked. "Yes," he replied. "If so, then you are not the son of Levi. A rainbow is the sign of the covenant that the world will never be destroyed, and if there is a perfect tzaddik in his generation, there is no need for a rainbow, since the merit of the tzaddik is enough to defend the world." In fact a rainbow never appeared in Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's lifetime, but he lied about it so as not to appear as the tzaddik of the generation (from Ketubot 77b).

Those who are perfect will lie in order to diminish their glory and avoid being spoken of, even in the World to Truth. As for people in this world, even with regards to things that they are not asked about, they claim virtues that they do not even possess.

– LaAnavim Iten Chen

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Amnon of Mayence

The pious and saintly Rabbi Amnon, who was sanctified through martyrdom, was the greatest figure of his generation, being wealthy, honorable, and of fine appearance. The local nobles and archbishop began asking him to convert, but he refused to listen to them. One day, as the archbishop greatly insisted that he convert, Rabbi Amnon replied: "Let me think about it for three days." He had barely left the archbishop's presence, when he bitterly regretted having expressed any doubt as to whether he would deny the living G-d. He therefore refused to eat and drink upon returning home, where he subsequently fell ill in bitter regret over his words. On the third day, as he was suffering and in great distress, the archbishop had him summoned, but he refused to come. The archbishop therefore had him brought by force. "Why didn't you return to answer my question and do what I requested?" he asked. Rabbi Amnon replied, "I will decree my own sentence: May the tongue that spoke wrongly be cut from my mouth!" Rabbi Amnon wanted to sanctify the Name of Hashem for having spoken incorrectly, but the archbishop said: "No, the tongue has spoken correctly, but the legs did not come to me on time. I will cut them off." This evildoer ordered the digits of Rabbi Amnon's hands and feet to be cut off, and with each digit they severed, he was asked: "Do you want to convert?" He said no each time. When they finished cutting off his digits, the evildoer ordered Rabbi Amnon to be placed on a shield along with all his digits, and he was sent away. It is for this reason that he was called Rabbi Amnon, for he believed (he'emin) in the living G-d and endured horrific suffering for his faith, solely on account of what he had said. He asked people to bring him to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and to be placed on the podium where the Sefer Torah was located. There he recited the poem that begins with the words U'Netaneh Tokef Kedushat HaYom, devoting all his strength to the sanctity of Rosh Hashanah, a fearsome and awesome day. He recited words that humble the heart the man, breaking it and leading a person to repent before Hashem. Some say that upon finishing this poem, he vanished from the midst of the congregation and was never seen again. The ministering angels brought him before the Throne of Glory, for he had been invited to partake of life in the World to Come, along with those martyred by the Romans, Rabbi Akiva and his companions.