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יום כיפור תשפ״ז

The Fast That Begins With Eating

Why the Torah legislates the tenth before the ninth, and what a meal has to do with עינוי

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The Difficulty

There is a familiar מאמר חז״ל (*teaching of our Sages*) about ערב יום כיפור that has always bothered me. חז״ל say in יומא that whoever eats and drinks on the ninth is reckoned as though he had fasted on both the ninth and the tenth:

כל האוכל ושותה בתשיעי מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו התענה תשיעי ועשירי

At first glance, the question is obvious. Why should eating receive the reward of fasting? Fasting is difficult. Eating is easy. Why should a person sitting down to a meal be treated as though he had undergone an additional day of תענית (*fasting*)?

But the longer you sit with the statement, the stranger it becomes. חז״ל do not tell us merely that eating on the ninth is a מצוה, or that a person receives great שכר (*reward*) for preparing properly. They describe the eating itself in the language of עינוי (*affliction*). The Torah takes the act that is the precise opposite of fasting and calls it fasting.

One might answer that Hashem wants us to prepare physically for the fast. We eat on the ninth because we will not eat on the tenth. That is not a modern rationalization. It is רש״י. He writes: התקן עצמך בתשעה שתוכל להתענות בעשרה — ready yourself on the ninth so that you will be able to fast on the tenth.

But notice that רש״י does not stop there. He continues: ומדאפקיה קרא בלשון עינוי — since the פסוק expressed it in the language of affliction. רש״י felt the difficulty exactly where we feel it. And what he gives us is that the Torah called the eating עינוי. He does not tell us how eating becomes עינוי.

There is something else that preparation does not explain. Where does the מצוה to eat on the ninth actually come from? It has no independent source. It is derived from the פסוק of עינוי itself. A הכנה (*preparation*) is not usually directly obligated; rather, something that must be performed in order to fulfill the mitzvah itself. Here, the Torah directly specifies that there is ענוי on the ninth.

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Four Questions

Eating is also only one of the five עינויים. We refrain from washing, from anointing, from leather shoes, and from marital relations. Yet nobody says that on the ninth we should wash with extra care because tomorrow we cannot wash. Nobody suggests wearing especially comfortable shoes on the ninth so that their absence on the tenth will somehow count twice.

The Torah singles out eating. And the הלכה singles it out too: of the five, only eating carries כרת. The other four are drawn out of the term שבתון; the punishment attaches to eating alone. But the sharper point is the counterpart. Of the five, only eating is given a day of its own beforehand. There is no counterpart day for washing, none for anointing, none for the other two. The Torah built one for eating and for nothing else. So אכילה (*eating*) is not functioning here as one item on a list of five equals. It is the עיקר (*central element*) of the עינוי of the day.

But then the question only grows. Is the כפרה (*atonement*) of יום כיפור proportional to how much we suffer? If the purpose of fasting is that Hashem wants us to experience pain, why would He command us to eat on the ninth? Had He wanted two days of suffering, He could have commanded two days of fasting.

He commands the opposite, and does more than merely permit the meal. חז״ל in פסחים record that מר בריה דרבינא fasted the entire year, breaking only three times: on שבועות, on פורים, and on ערב יום כיפור. Whether there is a formal איסור to fast on the ninth is discussed by the פוסקים; what they show plainly is the practice.

And that same סוגיא does something worth noticing. It has just finished listing three days on which all agree that a person must take a portion of the day לכם, for himself: on עצרת, because it is the day the Torah was given; on שבת, because of וקראת לשבת עונג; and on פורים, because ימי משתה ושמחה is written of it. When it then explains why מר בריה דרבינא broke his fast on his three days, the first two come straight off that list. The third does not. For ערב יום כיפור it has to reach for something else entirely, and what it reaches for is our מאמר. Two of the three are days of לכם. The third is in that list for a different reason, and demonstrated by the change in the kind of answer given.

Four questions. And they will turn out to have one answer, though it takes a long road to reach it.

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The Order of the Text

Begin with how the Torah legislates the day. It opens with a reversal:

> אַךְ בֶּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים הוּא מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשֶּׁה לַה׳
> (ויקרא כג:כז)

But on the tenth of this seventh month, it is יום הכפורים.

Every מועד in this פרשה is a day of מקרא קדש, and such a day is sanctified through food and drink. Our פסוק calls the tenth a מקרא קדש as well — and then writes אך. The day is set apart like the others, and the eating that ordinarily creates sanctity is withdrawn from it. Where that eating goes is the business of the closing פסוק.

The Torah then legislates the tenth completely — the עינוי, the prohibition of מלאכה, the כרת for one who does not afflict himself. Only after all of that is finished does it come back, in the closing פסוק of the section, to the ninth:

> שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן הוּא לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּתִשְׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בָּעֶרֶב מֵעֶרֶב עַד עֶרֶב תִּשְׁבְּתוּ שַׁבַּתְּכֶם (ויקרא כג:לב)

It is a שבת שבתון *for you, and you shall afflict your souls on the ninth of the month in the evening; from evening until evening you shall rest on your* שבת.

Read plainly, we have just been given two days of עינוי. The tenth in the first פסוק, the ninth in the last, under one command word. And notice what חז״ל do not do with that reading: they do not reduce the count. The conclusion is כאילו התענה תשיעי ועשירי — the same two days the plain reading produced. Nothing is subtracted. The only thing that changes is how the עינוי of the ninth is carried out.

The מאמר is not overturning the simple reading. It is confirming it.

One caution before building on this. The Gemara has another use for בתשעה in that פסוק, darshening it as the source of תוספת יום הכיפורים — that we add onto the holy day from the weekday before it. The two readings belong to different אמוראים, and only on one of them is the פסוק free for our מאמר. I am standing on that side.

Now look at the order. A הכנה is legislated first. That is what preparation means; it comes earlier in the text because it comes earlier in time. Here the Torah does the reverse. It establishes the tenth entirely, and only then returns to the ninth.

Textual order is not tracking the calendar. It is tracking dependence. The tenth is קובע (*establishing*) the צורה (*form*) of the day. The ninth has no standing on its own; it becomes what it is only from within the צורה that the tenth sets. Chronologically, the ninth comes first; conceptually, it is derived. The Torah writes it in the order of derivation, and that ordering is itself the statement that the ninth is not a preliminary to the מצוה but a part of it.

One מצוה, then, spanning two days. That much the Rishonim already reach: once the Torah expressed the eating in the language of עינוי, the eating is itself חשיבא כעינוי (*reckoned as affliction*), as though the command had been given on an עינוי of the ninth and the tenth together. What they do not tell us is why the Torah writes the tenth first. The ninth has a מעשה (*action*) of its own, and that מעשה is אכילה, while its קיום (*fulfillment*) is עינוי. That is what מעלה עליו הכתוב (*the Torah reckons it for him*) is telling us. The הכתוב does not reckon מעשים. It reckons the קיום. On the ninth the act is eating, the קיום generated is עינוי, and so the ninth is counted among the days of עינוי. And this is what the סוגיא in פסחים could not do with our day. Dividing a יום טוב into חציו לה׳ וחציו לכם (*half for Hashem and half for yourselves*) assumes that eating is the לכם and that the רוחניות of the day is the לה׳. Here the same act is both. There was no half to assign.

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The Measure

But this only sharpens the question. How can an act of eating generate a קיום of עינוי?

The answer is in the שיעור (*measure*).

How much must a person eat on יום כיפור to be liable? Not כזית, and not כביצה — the measures that govern the Torah's prohibitions of eating almost everywhere else — but כותבת הגסה, a large date. And the Gemara says why: בכותבת מייתבא דעתא ובכביצה לא מייתבא דעתא. A large date settles the mind. An egg's volume does not.

One might think the larger measure is a leniency, a margin of safety drawn around a כרת so that a person is not easily caught. It is not. רש״י says it outright. The word אכילה ordinarily implies a כזית, he writes — והתורה לא חייבה עליו אלא ביישוב הדעת. The Torah did not attach the obligation of this day to an act of eating at all. It attached it to a settling of the mind. A few lines further on, the Gemara rules that one who chews peppers on יום כיפור is exempt, and רש״י explains אין זה יישוב הדעת — this is not a settling of the mind. He may chew far more than a כותבת and remain exempt; there is no quantity of peppers that makes him liable. That case illustrates the principle, though it does not prove it on its own, since the exemption there may rest partly on שלא כדרך אכילתו (*not the normal manner of eating*), which is a general rule and not special to our day.

That is not the relaxing of a threshold. Any threshold, however generous, is crossed eventually. This is a different criterion altogether.

Everywhere else, the Torah measures the act. Here the Torah measures the effect. כזית and כביצה are quantities of what entered a person's mouth; כותבת הגסה is a measure of what happened to the person as a result. Quantity is serving as the estimate, but the thing being estimated is יישוב הדעת (*settledness of mind*).

Then the עינוי of יום כיפור was never a quantity of suffering. It is the withholding of a state — the גוף (*body*) at rest, at home in itself, quietly satisfied.

And that is what gives the ninth a new role. The Torah does not leave the contrast of the tenth to whatever condition a person happens to bring into the day. A person may know hunger as an ordinary fact of life; another hungry day can simply continue what was already normal. On the ninth, the Torah deliberately establishes יישוב הדעת. On the tenth, it asks us to relinquish precisely that physical settledness. The ninth gives the tenth something to withhold.

So the מצוה of עינוי forms one structure across two days. The ninth settles the גוף while leaving the דעת open. The tenth withdraws the settlement of the גוף as well.

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Where the עינוי Comes From

That much is available from the הלכה of our day. But we have not yet asked where חז״ל learned that the עינוי of יום כיפור is an עינוי of food at all. The Torah never says not to eat. It says only ועניתם את נפשותיכם (*and you shall afflict your souls*).

The Gemara in יומא עד ע״ב supplies the source, and it is a גזירה שווה (*a derivation linking two places in the Torah through a shared word or phrase*):

דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא: נאמר כאן עינוי ונאמר להלן עינוי – מה להלן עינוי רעבון, אף כאן עינוי רעבון

The Gemara itself says only “here” and “there.” רש״י supplies the other: the פסוק of ויענך וירעיבך (*He afflicted you and made you hunger*), and with it the place, the מדבר. He explains why the two are

comparable: both are an עינוי דרבים, an affliction of the whole of כלל ישראל, and both are an עינוי בידי שמים, decreed rather than self-imposed. So the paradigm from which we learn what the עינוי of this day means is the forty years of the מן.

This produces an immediate difficulty, raised by the Gemara. How was the מן an עינוי? They ate. The Torah says so in the same breath: וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ אֶת הַמָּן (*and He fed you the manna*). And more pointedly still:

> הַמַּאֲכִלְךָ מָן בַּמִּדְבָּר ... לְמַעַן עַנֹּתְךָ (דברים ח:טז)

Who fed you מן *in the wilderness ... in order to afflict you.*

He fed them in order to afflict them. רש״י's phrase for it is אוכל ומעונה — eating, and afflicted.

The Gemara answers twice:

אינו דומה מי שיש לו פת בסלו למי שאין לו פת בסלו

אינו דומה מי שרואה ואוכל למי שאינו רואה ואוכל

Stop here, because on this hinges everything. The Torah's own paradigm case of עינוי is a case in which כלל ישראל ate — and it counted as affliction. That is the exact mirror of our מאמר, where we eat and it counts as fasting. The same מן that teaches what עינוי means also gives us the model for how eating itself can belong to עינוי.

And the Gemara tells us what the affliction consisted of. Not simply hunger in the stomach. The מן came day by day, so there was no bread in the basket for tomorrow; the מן had no fixed form, so a person did not see what he was eating. They were fed and unsettled. עינוי was never identical with an empty stomach. It is a matter of having and yet lacking, as a person experiences it.

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What Settles a Person

Now look closely at what settles a person and what does not. Bread in the basket does not nourish anyone. It sits in the basket. What it provides is the knowledge that tomorrow is accounted for. And seeing one's food adds no calories either; it provides the knowledge of what one is receiving.

So יישוב הדעת is not simply a product of nourishment. It is a state of דעת (*knowing*).

That is the bridge, and now the פסוק the Gemara is quoting can be read to its end:

> וַיְעַנֶּךָּ וַיַּרְעִבֶךָּ וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ אֶת הַמָּן ... לְמַעַן הוֹדִעֲךָ כִּי לֹא עַל הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל כָּל מוֹצָא פִי ה׳ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם (דברים ח:ג)

He afflicted you and made you hunger, and fed you the מן*, which you did not know and which your fathers did not know, in order to teach you that a person does not live by bread alone; rather, a person lives through everything that proceeds from the mouth of Hashem.*

The עינוי of the מן was administered through a lack of settled knowing — no bread in the basket, no fixed sight of the food. And its stated purpose was למען הודעך. In order to make you know.

The affliction was in the דעת, and the goal was in the דעת. Not suffering. Knowledge. And the knowledge is named: bread is not what keeps a person alive.

So the source of our עינוי, and the measure of our עינוי, turn out to be the same thing. חז״ל derive the day's affliction from the מן, whose experience and whose purpose were bound up with דעת. And the הלכה measures the day's affliction by יישוב הדעת.

The עינוי begins in דעת and ends in דעת.

חז״ל have a phrase for the deepest form of poverty: אין עני אלא בדעה — there is no poverty like poverty of דעת. That is not the halachic derivation of our עינוי, but after what we have seen it is difficult not to hear the language. The עינוי of the day is not finally about how empty the stomach is. Its own שיעור tells us to look toward דעת.

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The First Eating

This already begins to answer why eating is different from the other עינויים. The command is ועניתם את נפשותיכם. The other עינויים withhold forms of comfort from the גוף; eating alone withholds the supply by which the נפש is sustained — כי הדם הוא הנפש. That is why אכילה is not merely another item on the list.

But there is a deeper reason, and it goes back much further than יום כיפור.

The first thing that ever went wrong with a human being went wrong through eating. And the tree was not called the tree of food, or the tree of pleasure:

וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע

Read the פסוק that describes the moment itself, because it contains the whole structure:

> וַתֵּרֶא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תַאֲוָה הוּא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכַל
> (בראשית ג:ו)

And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating, and that it was a desire to the eyes, and the tree was pleasant to contemplate.

Three things in one act of seeing: eating, תאוה (*desire*), and the reach for understanding. The Torah is describing one moment in which appetite and the pursuit of knowing become bound together.

And notice what was actually offered. The נחש did not promise them Hashem's own place. He said: **וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע** — you will be like divine beings, knowing good and evil. The offer is named, and what is named is a faculty for telling טוב from רע.

And the נחש is not incidental to the story. In the language of חז״ל and the מפרשים he is the יצר הרע (*evil inclination*), and the characteristic move of the יצר is not usually to argue openly for what is low, but to mislabel what is low as though it were high.

Here I want to suggest something of my own. Look again at what the woman saw: the tree was good for food, desirable to the eyes, precious for understanding. Every one of those is the tree judged in itself — as desirable or undesirable, fitting or unfitting — rather than seen in light of its purpose. If that is right, what was lost at the tree was a way of seeing the כלי together with its purpose. The גוף had been unclothed before and produced no בושה (*shame*). After the חטא the

same גוף is suddenly seen as exposed. Separate a כלי from its purpose and it stands there as bare fact. בושה is what it feels like when the joining has broken and a person sees in halves what ought to be seen together.

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How a Person Falls

That helps explain another striking description of חטא:

> אין אדם עובר עבירה אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות (סוטה ג ע״א)

A person does not commit an עבירה *unless a* רוח שטות *has entered into him.*

חז״ל do not say merely that a sinner makes a bad calculation. They say a רוח שטות enters him. Their language tells us that a person in the full possession of his דעת would not simply choose the עבירה as עבירה. Something שוטה-like has entered the picture.

And the word חז״ל chose is רוח. A wind. A רוח comes in. Which means someone allowed it to enter; someone opened the window.

The deeper responsibility begins earlier, at the quieter moment when a person gives that רוח room to enter — when תאוה is allowed to detach what he knows from what he is about to do. Once desire takes possession of the field, the outcome can feel almost inevitable. The battle was already being fought before the visible עבירה.

This also tells us what דעת is, and it is not merely a store of information. A person may know perfectly well that the עבירה is an עבירה while committing it. What fails is not the information. What fails is the joining of the knowing to the act. דעת is the מיזוג (*fusion*) — knowledge and action held together in one motion — and a חטא opens in the gap when they come apart.

Which is why בושה so often arrives afterward. The knowledge did not have to be recreated; it had to reconnect. When it reconnects, it reports honestly on what was done. The shame is not itself the damage. It is דעת functioning correctly once again.

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The מן as תיקון

And now the מן looks like something other than a way of feeding people in a wilderness.

At the עץ הדעת it was דעת that was seized — reached for through the mouth, taken as a possession. In the מדבר, eating was rebuilt in the opposite mode. Day by day, with no basket to store it in and no fixed form to grasp, every meal could only be received. Forty years of retraining the very act through which דעת had been taken.

And this is why the מן stands where it does in the Torah's history. The מדרש says:

> לא ניתנה תורה לדרוש אלא לאוכלי המן (מכילתא דר״י, בשלח, מסכתא דויסע ב; תנחומא, בשלח כ)

תורה *was given to be expounded only to those who ate the* מן.

The Torah was given to be expounded only to those who ate the מן. The מדרש gives its own reason: a person who must wonder where tomorrow's food is coming from cannot sit and learn. I want to hear something further in it. The familiar shortened form is לא ניתנה תורה אלא לאוכלי המן. The מן did not merely sustain the generation that happened to receive the Torah. It formed them into people capable of receiving it. A person who believes that bread sustains him by itself has already located the source of life in the vessel. The מן taught otherwise, in the body, every day, for forty years:

> וַיְעַנְּךָ֙ וַיַּרְעִבֶ֣ךָ וַיַּאֲכִלְךָ֙ אֶת הַמָּ֣ן אֲשֶׁ֔ר לֹ֥א יָדַ֖עְתָּ וְלֹ֣א יָדְע֑וּן אֲבֹתֶ֗יךָ לְמַ֤עַן הוֹדִיעֲךָ֙ כִּ֣י לֹֽא עַל הַלֶּ֤חֶם לְבַדּוֹ֙ יִחְיֶ֣ה הָאָדָ֔ם כִּ֚י עַל כָּל מוֹצָ֣א פִֽי ה׳ יִחְיֶ֥ה הָאָדָֽם׃ (דברים ח:ג)
>
> *A person does not live by bread alone; rather, a person lives through everything that proceeds from the mouth of Hashem.*

Not by bread alone does a person live, but by everything that issues from the mouth of Hashem.

The כלי is real. The כלי is simply not the מקור (*source*).

And Torah is itself the repair of the force that stood behind the tree:

בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין

The נחש corrupts דעת through desire. Torah is the תבלין of that יצר. The מן stands between them, retraining אכילה until a person can receive rather than seize, and know the מקור behind the כלי.

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The Second Receiving

But that first קבלת התורה did not hold.

כלל ישראל did at the עגל what had been done at the tree: something physical and visible was granted an independent power, the כלי was allowed to stand in place of the מקור. The same mislabeling, in the same direction. The לוחות broke.

So the תיקון (*repair*) of דעת was not finished by מתן תורה. What was needed now was Torah received a second time, after the חטא — a קבלת התורה by people who already know that they are capable of breaking what they receive.

And that second receiving required תשובה.

There is one more thing worth noticing before we turn back. חז״ל hear בינה in ויבן ה׳ אלקים את הצלע (*and Hashem built the side*), and the direction of the תיקון is not merely back to the old place but upward — אשת חיל עטרת בעלה (*a woman of valor is her husband's crown*). The first failure passed through חוה and the tree; what broke can return through תשובה at a higher level than it stood before.

And the second לוחות carried more than the first did. The מדרש says that Hashem consoled משה over the shattered tablets. The first held the עשרת הדברות and nothing further. Into the second He was putting everything that would have to be derived, argued, and learned. The Torah that comes back after the break is the Torah that has to be worked out. Not a lesser Torah handed to a

diminished people, but more than they had before, and reachable only on the far side of the failure.

That is the register the אשת חיל belongs to. She is heard as תורה שבעל פה, and the fit is exact: she is the part of Torah that is not simply handed over but built, and what is built by the one who receives it becomes עטרת בעלה — a crown to the one who gave it. The first לוחות were His work through and through. What comes back the second time is Torah that lives only through our יגיעה (*effort*).

And there is something further in how that portion was first taken. At הר סיני the mountain was held over them כגיגית, like a barrel, and the acceptance was under compulsion. The מדרש tells us which portion was forced. The written Torah they took readily. The כפייה fell on תורה שבעל פה, because it is demanding and תלמודה מרובה (*its study is vast*). The part that requires our work is the part that had to be imposed.

And it did not stay that way. In the days of אחשורוש they upheld what they had already accepted, and this time of their own will — קיימו וקבלו. The same Torah, received twice. Once out of יראה. Once out of אהבה.

That is the axis תשובה runs on as well. תשובה out of יראה turns deliberate sins into unwitting ones. תשובה out of אהבה turns them into merits. The failure is not merely forgiven. It is elevated into the thing that lifts him. This is why a בעל תשובה reaches a place a צדיק גמור cannot. Not because the צדיק lacks something, but because he has no failure to elevate.

But all of that still leaves us with the two days we began with.



The Four Questions Answered

Now the four questions answer themselves.

Why should eating count as fasting? Because the ninth and the tenth are not two unrelated מצוות. They are one מצוה in two movements, and the ninth constitutes the physical יישוב הדעת that the tenth relinquishes.

Why does the Torah call that eating עינוי? Because עינוי is not a synonym for pain. The Torah's own paradigm of עינוי — the one חז״ל use to define our day — was a case of eating. The מן was eating that afflicted; the ninth is eating placed inside the same structure of עינוי. The category was never reducible to an empty stomach.

Why is only eating singled out among the five? Because eating is the עינוי the Torah itself uses to teach us the category, and because eating is where the original breakdown of דעת first entered human life. The תיקון returns to the place of the קלקול.

Could the purpose of the day really be suffering? No. The Torah says outright what an עינוי of food is for: למען הודעך. The purpose is דעת. Suffering was never the currency, which is exactly why the Torah can command a meal on the ninth without contradicting itself.



What the Ninth Asks

So what does the ninth ask of us?

To receive. Not to consume, and not merely to fuel ourselves for tomorrow, but to receive the physical world deliberately, as a מצוה, and to let it settle us. At the tree, דעת was seized. The מן taught a generation to receive. On the ninth we eat under a command, in the mode of the מן rather than the mode of the tree.

Normally the עבודה (*service*) of a person is to take the physical and lift it. We eat, we make a ברכה (*blessing*), we take the strength the food gives and spend it on עבודת ה׳, and the physical becomes a vessel for קדושה (*holiness*). That is the ordinary דרך (*path*).

Once a year, even that is not enough. Even a perfectly pure act of eating — the right ברכה, the right כוונה (*focused intent*) — is still an encounter with Hashem through the physical world. It is mediated. On יום כיפור there is a level of קדושה at which even that mediation falls away.

The גוף grows quiet. The נשמה (*soul*) enters the day.

But the quiet is not contempt. A day that began in withholding would teach us that physical existence is the enemy, and that holiness means having less of it — which is precisely the error the מן spent forty years undoing. The כלי is not the מקור. The כלי is also not the adversary. The Torah does not let us enter the day having despised it. It commands a meal first.

Think about where a person is standing on the ninth.

The judgment has been written. It has not been sealed. Tomorrow it closes. Today he does not know what it says — not whether this is a year of health or of illness, of building or of burying.

And on that day, with the seal one night away, he is told to sit down and eat.

Not in fear. Not because he will need the strength tomorrow. To eat gladly, with nothing in the world forcing him to.

A person who knew the verdict was good could eat easily. A person who knew it was bad would have no appetite. To eat with joy when you do not know is neither. It is the statement that you do not need to know. That whatever stands written there was written by Someone whose love for you is the reason the world is here at all.

That is the מן, exactly.

They were fed every day and forbidden to keep any of it back. אִישׁ אַל יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד בֹּקֶר — let no one leave any of it until morning. No storing. No hedging. No securing tomorrow against tomorrow. Eat the portion and let the morning bring what it brings. Forty years of being fed and not knowing. אוכל ומעונה.

On the ninth we are standing in that same place. Fed, and not knowing. And we finish the portion.

Now hold that against the tree.

There a person looked at what was in front of him and judged it good in itself. He reached, and he took, and he made it his. Every failure since has had that shape — something weighed on its own, torn loose from what it is for, and seized.

The ninth is that same act done correctly. The same mouth. The same food. The same appetite. Only now the thing is not judged in itself and not taken. It is received, from a hand that gives it for a reason.

The instrument of the fall becomes the instrument of the repair. That is what it means for a failure to be elevated, and not merely forgiven.

And it has to be today. It cannot wait for tomorrow.

Tomorrow the day itself cleanses. עצומו של יום. A person is carried whether or not he brought anything with him, and the gates close whether or not he is ready. There is יראה in that, and there should be.

Today nothing is closing. No כרת. No נעילה. No gate. Nothing on the ninth compels a person to do anything at all. Whatever he does with this day, he does because he wants to.

Work done when nothing is pressing on you cannot be done out of fear.

That is the whole distance between מיראה and מאהבה, and the Torah gave us a day for each.

And the deepest עבודה was always the early work — the state a person builds before the moment arrives, before anything has closed in on him. That is where a רוח finds an open window. That is where it is shut.

So what is he trusting, when he eats?

Not that the year will be easy. He was never promised that and does not need it. He is trusting that the world was given to him for one purpose — that he should have something to choose with. ובחרת בחיים. Whatever the year holds is the material he will be handed for choosing, and for drawing close, and there is no other good than that one.

Hold that, and there is nothing left to fear at the table.

> אוֹר זָרֻעַ לַצַּדִּיק וּלְיִשְׁרֵי לֵב שִׂמְחָה (תהלים צז:יא)
>
> *Light is planted for the* צדיק*, and* שמחה *for the upright of heart.*

אוֹר זָרֻעַ לַצַּדִּיק — the light is planted with the צדיק (*righteous person*). Planting is not harvest. What is planted is not what is seen. The ninth is not the revelation; the ninth is the planting. וּלְיִשְׁרֵי לֵב שִׂמְחָה. The שמחה (*joy*) is not the meal. The meal is the planting. The שמחה is יום כיפור itself.

Which is why, on the threshold of the holiest day of the year, we do not spend the ninth manufacturing misery before the fast.

We eat.

✦

Into the Day

Then we enter the day. The משנה says:

> אשריכם ישראל לפני מי אתם מטהרין ומי מטהר אתכם אביכם שבשמים... מקוה ישראל ה׳ מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מטהר את ישראל (יומא פ״ח מ״ט)

> *Fortunate are you, ישראל! Before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven ... מקוה ישראל is Hashem — just as a מקוה purifies the impure, so too does the Holy One purify ישראל.*

רבי עקיבא does not only tell us that we are purified. He gives the image of a מקוה (*ritual bath*).

We do not go to the מקוה on יום כיפור. The day is the מקוה.

We step into it. Its קדושה closes over us. The physical world that ordinarily mediates every encounter with Hashem falls silent, and the נשמה is immersed directly. The tenth repairs how we see, not by making distinctions disappear, but by loosening appetite's hold on the way we make them. For one day, the physical כלי stops insisting that it is the whole picture.

We will not enjoy everything we see. That is what בושה is for, and it is a sign that דעת has reconnected. But we cannot enter that מקוה by despising the world we are leaving behind. First comes the ninth. First we receive everything Hashem gives us and show that the physical world can belong to Him entirely. Then we hand it forward.

The meal may make the fast easier. Or harder — the צל״ח argues that two consecutive fasts weigh more than two that are separate. Either way, it does not matter. The מצוה was never measured in difficulty.

The goal was never to plant pain. It was to plant אור (*light*).

And now we can finally name what that אור becomes.

On יום כיפור it is כלל ישראל that receives the לוחות שניות (*the second tablets*). It is not only a day of forgiveness. It is a new קבלת התורה after failure. The first לוחות belonged to a people who had not yet broken them. The second are received by a people who have fallen, returned, and learned how to receive again. And the second set are made differently. Of the first, the Torah says they were His work entirely; of the second He says פסל לך — carve them for yourself. The stone became ours and the writing stayed His. The כלי is now our own work, and the מקור never moved.

So the two halves of this drasha meet. The ninth trains a person to receive the physical world without seizing it. The tenth returns the Torah that can only be held by someone who has learned to receive it that way. And what broke comes back not to the place where it stood, but above it.

Everything now stands in one line. The first corruption of human דעת came through eating at עץ הדעת. The מן rebuilt eating around למען הודעך, teaching that the כלי is not the מקור and forming אוכלי המן into people who could receive Torah. And it did not stop when they received it. The מן fell for the whole forty years — before הר סיני, through the עגל, and on past the לוחות שניות. They were eating it on the day they built the calf. Which tells us that the retraining of אכילה was never sufficient by itself. The עגל broke that קבלת התורה anyway, and what the מן could not finish, תשובה had to. And on the day of the לוחות שניות, the עינוי itself is measured by יישוב הדעת and learned from the very מן that had been falling all along.

This is not a series of coincidences. It is one structure, and it has been the same structure since the tree.

On יום כיפור, the תיקון of דעת is renewed in קבלת התורה after failure.

יהי רצון that we should merit to eat on the ninth the way it was given to be eaten — receiving and not seizing, settled and not grasping, glad at the table without needing to know what is written about us.

Just as we prepare for the מקוה without חציצה (*an interposition*), we must remove all external factors from ourselves. The day will cleanse us if we let it.

May the אור we plant on the ninth come up as שמחה on the tenth. May what we have broken be elevated into קדושה and not merely forgiven. And may the Torah we receive this year be the Torah that comes only after the breaking — carved from our own stone, written by His hand.

גמר חתימה טובה.

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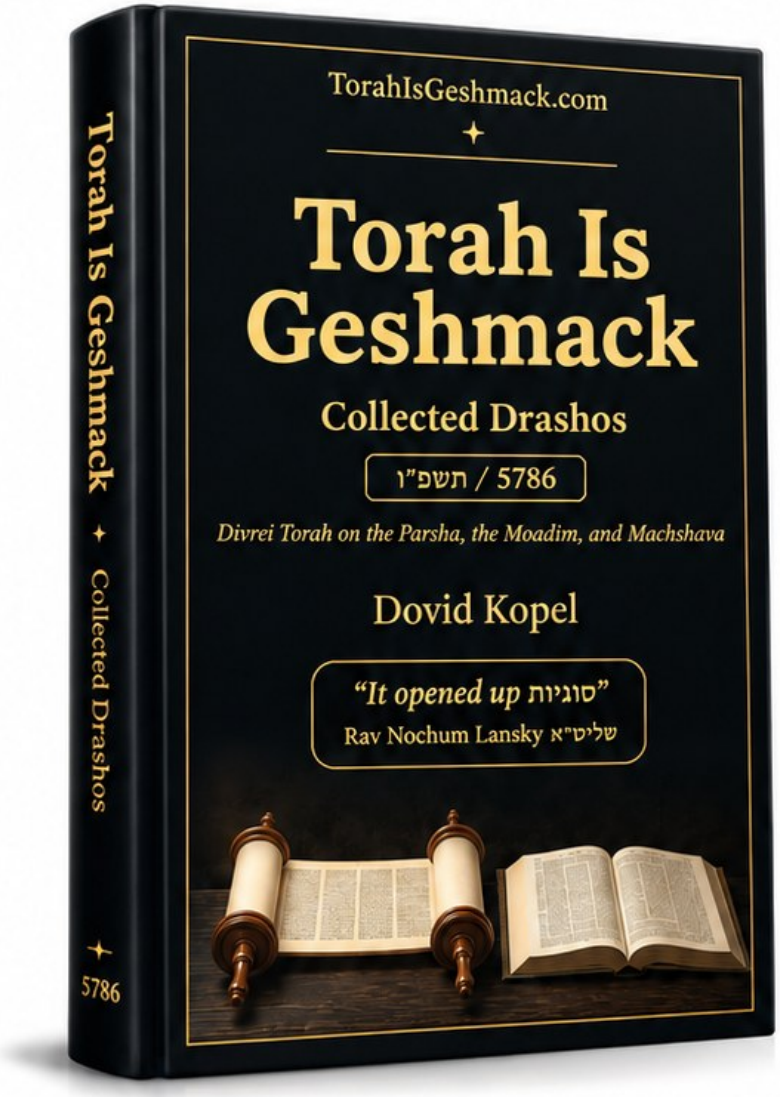
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