



## The Incredible Revelation from Our Master the Arizal

# Yom HaKippurim Corresponds to the Sinew of the Luz Bone that Does Not Benefit from the Food We Eat and Is Not Subject to Death

We find ourselves in the midst of the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah. These ten special days are aimed at preparing us for Yom HaKippurim, which approaches auspiciously. On Yom HaKippurim, HKB”H grants us atonement and cleanses us of all the iniquities and transgressions we committed during the entire past year. Of this sacred day, it is written (Vayikra 16, 30): **“כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם לפני ה' תטהרו, -- for on this day, He shall provide atonement for you to purify you; from all of your sins before Hashem shall you be purified. It is a Shabbas Shabbason for you, and you shall afflict yourselves—an eternal decree.**

It is fitting that we examine some aspects of Yom HaKippurim that seem to be contradictory. On the one hand, it is the holiest day of the year, as it is written (Tehillim 139, 16): **“ימים יוצרו ולו אחד בהם”—these days are pre-fashioned and one among them was appointed for it also.** Rashi comments, based on the Midrash (Tanna D’Vei Eliyahu Rabbah 1): **This is the Day of Atonement for Yisrael.** Additionally, this is the only day of the year that the Kohen Gadol was permitted to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim to burn the ketores in the innermost sanctum.

Yet, on the other hand, it is prohibited to eat or drink on this day, as it is written: **“And you shall afflict yourselves.”** Five afflictions are enumerated in the Mishnah (Yoma 73b): **“יום הכיפורים אסור באכילה ובשתיה וברחיצה ובסיכה ובנעילת הסנדל -- On Yom Kippur, eating and drinking and washing and anointing and putting on sandals and marital intercourse are forbidden.** So, why is Yom HaKippurim different from all of the other holidays and festivals? On those days, we are commanded to celebrate and rejoice with meat and wine, as we have learned (Pesachim 109a): **“חייב אדם**

**—a man is obliged to delight his children and his household on the festivals, as it is written (Devarim 16, 14): “And you shall rejoice on your festival.”** It explains that he is to delight them with meat and wine. Nowhere else in the Torah do we find a day defined as **“Shabbas Shabbason”** on which we are required to fast.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile examining Chazal’s statement that the Satan has no power on Yom Kippur. For, we learn in the Gemara (Yoma 20a):

**“שטן ביומא דכיפורי לית ליה רשותא לאסטוני ממאי אמר רמי בר חמא, השטן בגמטריא תלת מאה ושיתין וארבעה הוי, תלת מאה ושיתין וארבעה יומי אית ליה רשותא לאסטוני, ביומא דכיפורי לית ליה רשותא לאסטוני.”**

**On Yom Kippur, the Satan is not permitted to prosecute. How do we know this? Rami bar Chama said: The gematria of השטן equals 364. On 364 days, it has permission to prosecute; on Yom Kippur, it does not have permission to prosecute.** So, on the 365<sup>th</sup> day of the year, Yom Kippur, the Satan is not allowed to accuse Yisrael or prosecute them. What is the significance of this restriction of the Satan?

### Yom Kippur Corresponds to the Sinew of the Luz Bone

We will begin to shed some light on these matters by introducing a tremendous chiddush found in our master, the Arizal’s, Likutei HaShas (Maseches R.H.). He asserts that Yom Kippur corresponds to the luz bone that is not subject to death or decay. Therefore, just as the Satan cannot kill or affect the luz; so, too, it has no power or effect on Yom Kippur. Here are his sacred words: **“אך בחינת עצם הלז, שהוא הגיד שבעורף, לכן אינו שולט שם נגד הלז, שאינו נהנה מאכילה ושתיה כלל סוד יום כיפורים, לכן אינו שולט שם המות בלז, ולכן אין השטן ביום כיפורים.”**



All of the commentaries on the Zohar are baffled by the fact that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai chose to name this unique bone, the basis for “techiyas hameisim,” “Besuel HaArami”: **“It is a fraud, and has always been a fraud.”** Why is it a fraud? Furthermore, if, indeed, it is a fraud, how does it merit remaining intact and constituting the building block from which the resurrection of the dead will begin? Additionally, the Zohar initially interprets: “בת בתואל,” “the daughter of Besuel,” as the granddaughter of G-d. The Hebrew name Besuel, spelled “לתואל” is broken down into the two words “לתואל,” meaning the daughter of G-d; hence, “the daughter of Besuel” is the granddaughter of G-d, which is certainly a title of honor. Why, then, does the Zohar conclude by referring to the bone as “Besuel HaArami,” implicating that it is a fraud?

### ל'וז Is an Acronym for the Three Names: ל'וז ב'תואל הארמי נ'סכוי

I had a wonderful idea that will help clarify Rashbi's teaching. We find that the luz bone has yet another name: “נסכוי”. Based on the Gemara (Shabbas 119b), the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch write (O.C. 300, 1): “לעולם יסדר אדם שלחנו במוצאי: — שבת כדי ללוות את השבת, אפילו אינו צריך אלא לכזית” **one should always set his table on motzaei Shabbas to accompany out the Shabbas, even if he only requires the amount of a “k'zayis.”** The Beis Yosef explains the reason for this practice, in the name of the Shibolei HaLeket (130): “אבר יש באדם ונסכוי: — שמו, ואינו נהנה באכילה אלא במוצאי שבת” **there is a human limb known as “niskoi”; it does not derive benefit from one's meals except on motzaei Shabbas.**

The Match Moshe writes that this is a reference to the luz bone in the spinal column, mentioned in the Midrash above. This bone survives for all eternity; it is the seed for man's resurrection; it receives man's reward and punishment after his death; this bone has heavenly origins. After discussing the matter at length, he concludes: Therefore, whoever conscientiously observes this practice — the “Melaveh Malkah” meal--and nourishes this bone, will enjoy the rewards and delights in store for the righteous.

Thus, we have learned that this unique bone has three appellations: (1) The Midrash refers to it as the “luz bone in the spine,” (2) the Zohar hakadosh refers to it as “Besuel HaArami,” because of its fraudulent, deceptive behavior and (3) our early

scholars refer to it as “niskoi”; it does not derive benefit from any of a person's meals except from the Melaveh Malkah meal on motzaei Shabbas. We find a very nice mnemonic for these three names in the writings of the Ben Ish Chai (Vayeitzei 27): The first letters of ל'וז ב'תואל נ'סכוי spell ל'וז.

It appears that this last tidbit helps us interpret the continuation of the passuk: “ויהי יצחק בן ארבעים שנה בקחתו את רבקה בת בתואל הארמי מפרן ארם אחות לכן הארמי לו לאשה.” We learned from the Zohar hakadosh that “יצחק” alludes to the neshamah that is destined to reenter the physical body, alluded to by “רבקה,” “**the daughter of Besuel HaArami,**” at the time of “techiyas hameisim.” The body is called “**the daughter of Besuel HaArami,**” because it is regenerated from the luz bone, known as “**Besuel HaArami.**” But this still doesn't explain the continuation of the passuk: “**the sister of Lavan HaArami.**” Yet, based on what we just learned, “Lavan” is an acronym for the three names of the luz bone. Hence, the body that will rise with the resurrection of the dead is aptly referred to as the “**sister of Lavan HaArami,**” seeing as it will be rebuilt from the bone known as **Luz, Besuel and Niscoi.**

### The Luz Bone Never Dies because It Did Not Partake of the Eitz HaDa'as

It is with great pleasure that we will now explore what the Eliyahu Rabbah (300, 3) brought down from the Shibolei HaLeket mentioned above—that the niscoi, which is the luz bone, does not derive benefit from any meals other than the Melaveh Malkah on motzaei Shabbas. Based on this fact, he explains wonderfully why the luz does not decay after death like the rest of the body. Seeing as the death decree was imposed on creation due to the “cheit Eitz HaDa'as,” and the luz did not derive any benefit from the eating of the forbidden fruit; therefore, it was not subjected to the death decree like the rest of the body.

We find a similar explanation from the Gra in the commentary Yahel Ohr on the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 152a): “והלזו של אדם לא טעם מעץ הדעת טוב ורע ולכן נשאר בסטרא “—the human luz bone did not taste or partake of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa; therefore, it remained untainted, in good standing. The Maor V'Shemesh also writes something similar (Vayeichi): **There is a small bone in human beings known as the “luz” that did not derive benefit from the Eitz HaDa'as; because it does not derive any benefit from**

**any food consumed on any of the six weekdays, but only from the meal on motzaei Shabbas, as we know. It lives forever and from it the entire body will be resurrected from the dead le'asid la'vo.**

Now, this enlightens us as to why Rashbi nicknamed the luz: “בתואל רמאה”—**Besuel the deceitful one**. For, the Tikunei Zohar (21) refers to the nachash hakadmoni as נחש “נחש—**the deceitful serpent**. This depiction is based on the following passuk related to the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as” (Bereishis 3, 1): “והנחש היה ערום מכל חית השדה אשר עשה ה' אלקים:” -- **now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field that Hashem G-d had made**. The Torah teaches us that the nachash in Gan Eden is the source of dishonesty and lies; it deceitfully caused Adam and Chava to sin.

This fact is evident from the brazen lie the serpent tells Chava (Bereishis 3, 5): “כי יודע אלקים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו:” “**כי יודע אלקים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו** — **for G-d knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad**. Here Rashi comments: “כי יודע, כל אומן שונא את בני אומנתו, מן העץ אכל וברא את העולם” — the serpent said that every craftsman hates others of his craft; G-d ate from the tree and created the world. We see clearly that the serpent spoke words of heresy and lies in order to deceive and trap Adam and Chava.

Now, the primeval serpent, who is the yetzer hara, and is also the Malach HaMaves, had one goal in mind. It wished to impose the death decree on Adam and Chava and all of their future descendants. It figured that if they ate from the Eitz HaDa’as, and all of their bodily limbs benefitted from the forbidden fruit, they would die a lasting, eternal death and would never be resurrected. As explained, however, HKB”H thwarted its plans by introducing the remedy prior to the illness — by creating the luz bone from which man would ultimately be resurrected.

Therefore, the luz cleverly foiled the serpent’s plan by employing the sound advice of the passuk (Tehillim 18, 27): “עם נבר תתברר, ועם עקש תתפתל” -- **with the trustworthy You act trustingly and with the crooked You act deceitfully**. Just as the serpent acted cunningly and dishonestly with Adam and Chava, so, too, the luz bone acted cunningly and dishonestly with the serpent. It pretended as if it partook from the Eitz

HaDa’as, and it fooled the serpent into believing that it died along with the rest of the body.

Thus, we have shed some light on Rashbi’s teaching. He taught us that the Torah’s depiction “**Besuel HaArami**” is an allusion to the luz bone, which is called “**Besuel the fraud**.” For, the luz adopted the ways of the serpent — deceiving the serpent into thinking that it also partook and benefitted from the Eitz HaDa’as. This, then, is the meaning and praise ascribed to the luz bone by Rashbi: “**It is a fraud, and was always a fraud; it is the colleague of the yetzer hara, which is a fraud**.” In other words, it adopted the ways of its colleague, the yetzer hara, learning from it how to be deceitful, in keeping with the tenet: “עם עקש תתפתל” -- **with the crooked You act deceitfully**. This also explains very nicely what the Zohar presents in the name of Rav Huna: “אמרו שצורתו כראשו של הנחש שהוא רמאי” — **they said that its shape resembles the head of the nachash, who is a fraud**. In other words, the luz learned how to employ the tactics of the nachash to triumph over it.

### **On Yom Kippur We Connect with the Luz which Is Guiltless**

Following this exalted line of reasoning, let us explore the implications of the Arizal’s assertion that we are prohibited to indulge in food and drink and other bodily pleasures on Yom HaKippurim, because Yom HaKippurim corresponds to the luz bone, which does not derive benefit from food or drink. In light of this comparison between Yom Kippur and the luz bone, we will endeavor to explain what is required of us on this holiest of days.

Let us propose an explanation. We’ve learned that the yetzer hara exerts its influence on every bodily limb except for the luz. Therefore, HKB”H designated one day of the year—Yom HaKippurim—corresponding to the luz, so that man will subjugate all of his 248 limbs and 365 sinews with the goal of uniting them with the luz bone. For, it is the body’s source of kedushah, seeing as it is free from the influence of the yetzer hara.

This is the underlying reason for HKB”H’s command: “וענייתם את נפשותיכם”. By prohibiting food and drink and all the physical pleasures of Olam HaZeh, the body that pursues physical pleasures all year long is subdued. As a result, the

body is influenced by the kedushah of the luz bone—that does not derive pleasure from Olam HaZeh--so that it, too, can serve Hashem and be sanctified with kedushah.

With this understanding, we can appreciate why HKB”H pardons Yisrael and cleanses them of all transgressions. For, when a Jew fulfills Hashem’s will—by conscientiously not eating and drinking in order to subjugate all of his bodily limbs to the influence of the luz bone—his entire being receives atonement and purification, extending from the luz bone.

It is apparent, now, that the Arizal’s assertion that Yom Kippur corresponds to the luz agrees magnificently with what the Shela hakadosh (Maseches Yoma) brings down in the name of the Ramak, zy”a. He explains that the reason it is prohibited to eat and drink on Yom Kippur is because it is a semblance of Olam HaBa—where there is no food and drink. As we have learned (Berachos 17a): **“העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה... אלא צדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה—in Olam HaBa, there is no eating and no drinking... Rather, tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Shechinah.**

As explained, this agrees magnificently with the assertion of the Arizal. Yom HaKippurim corresponds to the luz, from which HKB”H will resurrect all of the dead in Olam HaBa. For this reason, the Satan has no influence on Yom HaKippurim, as we have learned (Succah 52a): **“לעתיד לבוא מביאו הקדוש ברוך—le’asid la’vo, HKB”H will bring the yetzer hara and slaughter it in front of the tzaddikim and in front of the reshaim.** As we know, the yetzer hara and the Satan are one and the same; they will cease to exist le’asid la’vo.

### **The Kohen Gadol Enters the Kodesh HaKodashim to the Even Shesiyah the Luz of the World**

It pleases me to apply this concept to explain the reason the Kohen Gadol enters the Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur to burn the ketores (incense). Let us refer to that which is written (Bereishis 28, 19): **“ויקרא את שם המקום ההוא בית אל, ואולם לוז שם העיר לראשונה—and he called the name of that place Beis El; though, Luz was the city’s name originally.** Rabeinu Bachayei comments:

**The place they called Beis El, it is Yerushalayim . . . It is reasonable to suggest that Scripture is using this name to allude to the fact that the world began to improve and renovate itself from this location. For, it is the beginning of creation and the renewal. Therefore, it reveals to us that the city’s original name was Luz, related to the luz of man’s spinal column—from which man is destined to awake, regenerate and resurrect at techiyas hameisim.**

Clearly, he is referring to the Even HaShesiyah—the Foundation Stone—located in Yerushalayim, in the Kodesh HaKodashim. As we have learned in the Mishnah (Yoma 52b), when the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodashim in the first Beis HaMikdash to burn the ketores: **“When he reached the Aron, he placed the fire-pan between the two staves; he heaped the incense on top of the coals, and the entire chamber filled with smoke.”**

Regarding the second Beis HaMikdash, which lacked the Aron, it informs us (ibid. 53b): **“After the Aron was taken away, a stone was there from the time of the early neviim, and it was called Shesiyah.”** The Gemara explains (ibid. 54b): **“תנא שממנה הושנת העולם”—a Baraita taught: Because from it the world was founded.** It teaches us that the Aron was situated on top of the Even Shesiyah, as the Rambam writes (Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 4, 1): **“אבן היתה בקודש הקדשים במערבו, שעליה היה—the ארון מונח—there was a stone in the western portion of the Kodesh HaKodashim, upon which the Aron rested.**

This accords magnificently with what we have learned from the Arizal—that the day of Yom Kippur corresponds to the luz. For this reason, the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur to burn the ketores between the two staves of the Aron that sat upon the Even Shesiyah, from which the world was originated. Because this site represented the luz bone of the entire world—the bone from which HKB”H is destined to initiate “techiyas hameisim.”

Upon further consideration, it is evident that when the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodashim as Yisrael’s representative, the three aspects of the luz merged together. All things can be defined in terms of “olam, shanah and nefesh”—place, time and being. The luz of place is the Even HaShesiyah, seeing as the world originated from it. The luz of time is Yom Kippur; as we’ve learned it corresponds to the

sinew of the luz. The luz of being is the luz of every Jew; every physical limb submits to it by abstaining from food and drink. So, when the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodashim to burn the ketores on behalf of all of Yisrael on the Even Shesiyah, the three aspects of the luz merged in time, place and being—emblematic of Olam HaBa. As a result, Yisrael were afforded atonement and purification.

This explains magnificently why the Kohen Gadol wore only his white garments—“bigdei lavan”—when he entered

the Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur. For, as we’ve learned from the Ben Ish Chai, ל”ז is an acronym for the three names of the luz bone--ל”ז בתואל נ”סכו”ז. Thus, they allude to the avodah of Yom Kippur—the day representing the luz in the dimension of time. They were worn by the Kohen Gadol, who entered the Kodesh HaKodashim to burn the ketores on the Even Shesiyah—the luz in the dimension of space. From the luz, HKB”H will renew creation and resurrect the dead at the time of the future geulah—swiftly, in our times! Amen.



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To receive the mamarim by email: [mamarim@shvileipinchas.com](mailto:mamarim@shvileipinchas.com)