YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**YOM KIPPUR 5781**

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

In tribute to Matityahu Moshe Ben Shlomo Mermelstein z"l

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Dedicated by Steven Weiner & Lisa Wise in tribute to

Mr. Yechiel Saiman of blessed memory.

His presence in our community was such a privilege and treat for us,

and he is very deeply missed.

We send our warmest wishes of comfort to his wife Chana

and to all of their children and grandchildren.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

[**On *Ne’ila***](https://www.etzion.org.il/en/ne%E2%80%99ila)

**Dr. Alan Jotkowitz**

**Introduction**

The culmination of the forty-day period from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Yom Kippur is the *Ne’ila* service. Throughout the generations, no matter where Jews have been scattered across the globe, they have gathered in their places of worship to pray fervently as Yom Kippur comes to a close, and to then celebrate joyously the attainment of God's forgiveness at the end of the day. Because of its importance, it is particularly crucial to study the text and the sources of *Ne’ila*; like any prayer service, it is a literary work of art with great theological and religious significance.

We concludethe *Amidah of Ne’ila*with quotations from three chapters in *Tanakh*. We recite the following twoverses from *Yeshayahu* 55:

6) Seek the Lord when He is found, call Him when He is near.

7) The wicked shall give up his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and he shall return to the Lord, Who shall have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.

We then read from twochapters in *Yechezkel*:

33:11) Say to them: As I live, says the Lord God, I do not wish for the death of the wicked, but for the wicked to repent of his way so that he may live. Repent, repent of your evil ways, for why should you die, O house of Israel!

18:23) Do I desire the death of the wicked? says the Lord God. Is it not rather in his repenting of his ways that he may live?

18:32) For I do not desire the death of him who dies, says the Lord God: so turn away and live!

These verses are certainly appropriate to read in the closing moments of Yom Kippur, as they emphasize the desirability of *teshuva* in the eyes of God, but the contexts of the chapters are very different, perfectly reflecting our conflicted emotions at *Ne’ila*.

**The *Ne’ila* of the Sword**

*Yechezkel* 33 begins with the parable of the watchman who is supposed to blow his shofar when he senses impending danger. In parallel, the prophet is supposed to sound the shofar to warn the people of the impending danger. Based on these verses, R. Sa’adya Gaon writes that one of the ten reasons for blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana is to exhort man to do *teshuva* in order to avoid doom and destruction. *Ne’ila* is our final chance to change our destiny; it is the culmination of the Ten Days of Repentance, as the Rambam writes:

Even though repentance and calling out [to God] are desirable at all times, during the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, they are even more desirable and will be accepted immediately, as the verse states (*Yeshayahu* 55:6): “Seek God when He is to be found.” (*Hilkhot* *Teshuva* 3:6)

The shofar*-*blowing at the end of *Ne’ila* is the final exhortation to the people to repent, and our emotional state should thus be one of fear and trembling.

This state of mind is expressed beautifully in the words of *U-Netaneh Tokef*:

And the great shofar will be sounded and a still, thin voice will be heard. Angels will be frenzied, a trembling and terror will seize them, and they will say, “Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to muster the heavenly host for judgment!” …. On Rosh Hashana will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed – how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created; who will live and who will die.

**The *Ne’ila* of the Renewal of the Covenant**

But apart from being the culmination of the Ten Days of Repentance, Yom Kippur is an independent entity. It is the day of the renewal of the covenant between God and the Jewish People, as the second *luchot* were given on Yom Kippur. In this vein, another reason we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana according to R. Sa’adya is to remind us of the shofar blown at Har Sinai.

*Yeshayahu* 55 paints an idyllic picture of the renewal of the covenant after the nation repents:

3) Incline your ear and come to Me, hearken and your soul shall live, and I will make for you an everlasting covenant, the dependable mercies of David.

12) For with joy shall you go forth, and with peace shall you be brought; the mountains and the hills shall burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap hands.

At *Ne’ila*, we stand before God in fear of the judgement, but also confident that God's eternal covenant with the Jewish People will be renewed and forgiveness will be achieved. We blow the shofar as a final admonition, but also as a triumphant sign of the renewal of the covenant.

From this perspective, Yom Kippur, and in particular *Ne’ila*, is a time of joy and celebration, as the *gemara* teaches us:

R. Shimon ben Gamaliel said: There never were in Israel greater days of joy than the fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement. I can understand the Day of Atonement, because it is a day of forgiveness and pardon and on it the second tables of the law were given. (*Ta’anit* 30b)

R. Lichtenstein has also written on the element of joy and love in the *teshuva* process:

Yom Kippur the time of the renewal of the covenant... is precisely the moment of the encounter [with God], the marvelous opportunity which is given to us. While we hope and strive to purify ourselves, first and foremost, we are eternally grateful for and animated by the very opportunity to stand *lifnei Hashem*, before God.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**The*****Ne’ila* of Personal Responsibility**

The theme of *Yechzekel* 18 is personal responsibility. There is a natural tendency for sinners to blame others for their failures and mishaps. The most obvious choice when assigning blame is one's family or upbringing. Yechzekel teaches us the perfidiousness of this claim:

Yet you ask, “Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?” Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them… Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. (*Yechezkel* 18:19-20, 31).

Rav Amital explains that this is also the meaning of the famous story of R. Elazar ben Dordaya (*Avoda Zara* 17a):

Perhaps R. Elazar ben Dordaya believed that what caused him to sin were external forces beyond his control. So he turns to others for help. Only at the end he realizes "that this depends on me alone." He understands that he himself is the cause of his sins and that there is immense potential strength within him. So he makes a full repentance… He assumed responsibility for his fate, galvanized his inner strength, and repented wholeheartedly.[[2]](#footnote-2)

*Ne’ila* is the moment to take control of our destiny and fate, without airs or excuses, as we stand alone before God.

**What is *Ne’ila*?**

The chapters quoted from the *Nevi’im* set the tone for the prayer service of *Ne’ila*, but what precisely is the liturgical nature of this service?

What [is the prayer at] “the closing of the gates” [*Ne'ila*]? Rav said: An extra prayer. Shmuel said: “What are we, what is our life, etc.” (*Yoma* 87b)

Rashi explains that according to Rav, we add another *tefilla* on Yom Kippur. The Ran (*Yoma* 6b in the Rif’s pages) agrees, but adds that it is called extra because in addition to the seven *berakhot* that we say in the *Amida* of Yom Kippur, we add the prayer, “What are we? What is our life?" Shmuel, in contrast, maintains, that we simplysay, “What are we? What is our life?”

The *Yerushalmi* (*Berakhot* 4:1) records another dispute between Rav and Shmuel regarding the time that *Ne’ila* is said. Rav maintains that *Ne’ila* refers to the closing of the gates of Heaven, which most *Rishonim* interpret to mean after sunset, close to nightfall.[[3]](#footnote-3) Shmuel maintains that “the closing of the gates” refers to the closing of the gates of the *Mikdash*, which occurred before sunset.

The Yerushalmi also records a dispute between the Sages as to the source of *Ne’ila*. R. Levi learns it from a verse in *Yeshayahu* (1:15): “And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you, even when you **pray at length**, I do not hear; your hands are full of blood.” We learn from here that in general, one who increases his prayers is answered. In the context of the chapter, that verse is clearly referring to the Temple service.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, R. Meir maintains that the source of *Ne’ila* is the verse in *Shmuel I* (1:12) that tells the story of Chana and the birth of Shmuel: “And it was, as she **prayed long** before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth.”

The debate over whether *Ne’ila* has its origins in the prayer of Chana or in the Temple service, as reflected in the prophecy of *Yeshayahu*, parallels another Rabbinic debate:

It has been stated: R. Yosi ben R. Chanina said: The prayers were instituted by the Patriarchs. R. Yehoshua ben Levi says: The prayers were instituted to replace the daily sacrifices. (*Berakhot* 26b)

If Avraham instituted *Shacharit*, Yitzchak instituted *Mincha*, and Yaakov instituted *Arvit*, one can argue that Chana is the originator of *Ne’ila*. Alternatively, if the three prayer services parallel elements of the Temple service, *Ne’ila* is also a reminder of a Temple service, as Shmuel maintains.

**The *Ne’ila* of Sin and Punishment**

What Temple service is *Ne’ila* coming to take the place of? The Ramah MiPano (*Sefer Avoda Ve-Musafin*) maintains that *Ne’ila* was instituted in remembrance of the removal of the spoon and shovel from the *Kodesh* *Ha-Kodashim*, which was the fourth and last time the *Kohen Gadol* entered the *Kodesh* *Ha-Kodashim* on Yom Kippur.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The Chizkuni (*Vayikra* 16:23, s.v. *uva* *Aharon*) questions why this “service” was necessary. Why did the *Kohen* *Gadol* have to enter the *Kodesh Ha-Kodashim* again? Why couldn’t he have simply left the spoon and shovel there until next year, or alternately dragged it out without entering? It seems that this “entering” is an integral part of the service of the day, entailing immersion and a changing of clothes.

Furthermore, what is the need for this extra encounter with the *Shekhina*? The children of Israel were already forgiven with the acceptance of the offering of the goat and the bullock, whose purpose was to act as conduits for the atonement of Israel.

We can suggest that this encounter was to remind us of the importance of requesting forgiveness from sins that we committed against our fellow man, as God alone does not have the ability to forgive these sins. The Rambam writes:

*Teshuva* and Yom Kippur atone only for sins between man and God – for example, a person who ate a forbidden food or engaged in forbidden sexual relations, and the like. However, sins between man and man – for example, someone who injures a colleague, curses a colleague, steals from him, or the like – will not be forgiven until he gives his colleague what he owes him and appeases him… [It must be emphasized that] even if one restores the money that he owes [to the person he wronged], he must appease him and ask him to forgive him. Even if one only upset a colleague by saying [certain] things, he must appease him and approach him [repeatedly] until he forgives him. (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 2:9)

R. Soloveitchik (based on the *Arukh* *La-Ner*, *Nidda* 70b) went even farther than the Rambam, maintaining that even forgiveness from sins between man and God cannot be achieved if one has not received forgiveness from one’s fellow man.[[6]](#footnote-6) The Rav's rationale is that the purity we desire on Yom Kippur cannot be partial, just like one cannot immerse partially in a *mikve*. Thus, one must obtain forgiveness from both God and man.

This is, in fact, the main thrust of *Yeshayahu* 1, from which R. Levi derives the origins of *Ne’ila* – the emphasis on repentance from interpersonal sins and the repeated mention that God does not desire one’s service if he is not just with his fellow man:

11) Of what use are your many sacrifices to Me? says the Lord. I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle; and the blood of bulls and sheep and he-goats I do not want. 12) When you come to appear before Me, who requested this of you, to trample My courts? 13) You shall no longer bring vain meal-offerings, it is smoke of abomination to Me; New Moons and Sabbaths, calling convocations, I cannot [bear] iniquity with assembly. 14) Your New Moons and your appointed seasons My soul hates, they are a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing [them].… 16) Wash, cleanse yourselves, remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes, cease to do evil. 17) Learn to do good, seek justice, strengthen the robbed, perform justice for the orphan, plead the case of the widow…. 27) Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitent through righteousness.

Nowadays, *Ne’ila* has an added significance. In the absence of the *korbanot*, the holiness of the day itself leads to atonement, as the Rambam writes:

 The essence of Yom Kippur atones for those who repent, as the verse states (*Vayikra* 16:30): “This day will atone for you.” (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 1:3)

The Tosefta (*Yoma* 4:15) teaches that atonement comes at nightfall. Thus, there is significance to saying *Ne’ila* even after the time that atonement was achieved in the Temple.

**The *Ne’ila* of Supplication and Petition**

While the chapter in *Yeshayahu* focuses on the need for *teshuva*, particularly regarding interpersonal sins, the chapter in *Shmuel* is not about sin and punishment, but rather about supplication and petition:

10) And she was bitter in spirit, and she prayed to the Lord, and wept. 11) And she vowed a vow, and said: To Lord of Hosts, if You will look upon the affliction of Your bondswoman, and You will remember me, and You will not forget Your bondswoman and You will give Your bondswoman a man-child, and I shall give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head. 12) And it was, as she prayed long before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth.

Chana prayed with all her heart for God to give her a son. There are two components to her prayer – crying and the taking of a vow. The Malbim notes that the gates of prayer are never closed to tears, and he also explains that the taking of a vow is a way to approach God when petitioning him. The two components of prayer taught to us by Chana, authenticity and commitment, can serve as a paradigm for our own personal *Ne’ila* prayers.

**The *Ne’ila* of *Yeshayahu* vs. the *Ne’ila* of *Shmuel***

As we have seen, the *Ne’ila* of *Yeshayahu* focuses on sin and repentance, while the *Ne’ila* of Chana focuses on petition and supplication to God.[[7]](#footnote-7) The Mordekhai (*Yoma* 735) records a dispute regarding whether we recite confession in the *Amida* of *Ne’ila*, which might reflect the disagreement between *Yeshayahu* and *Shmuel* on the nature of *Ne’ila*.

Even if we do confess, all opinions agree that the confession it is limited to the confession of “*Ashamnu, bagadnu*,” “We have become guilty, we have betrayed,” which focuses on our relationship with God, as opposed to specific sins. According to R. Soloveitchik, it is a confession whose purpose is to attain purity, as opposed to the absolution of sin. In the terminology of R. Lichtenstein, it is related to religious, as opposed to moral, *teshuva*: “The moral aspect of *teshuva* focuses on the sinful act as an incarnate, evil reality…the religious impact of sin, with reference not to the act but our relationship to the Almighty.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

This confession of purity is particularly appropriate to *Ne’ila*, which in the time of the Temple occurred after atonement from sin was achieved.

**Communal vs. Personal *Ne’ila***

There is also another difference between the *Ne’ila* of *Yeshayahu* and that of *Shmuel*. The prophecy of *Yeshayahu* 1 is addressed to the People of Israel: “Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked the Holy One of Israel; they drew backwards” (*Yeshayahu* 1:4). The emphasis in the chapter is on communal sin and the need for a collective repentance. The prayers and petitions of Chana, in contrast, are intensely personal. In accepting the *Ne’ila* of both Yeshayahu and Chana, we recognize the importance of solitary prayer as well as communal prayer.

However, as R. Soloveitchik explains, in order to receive forgiveness as part of the community, it is not enough to simply pray with the community; one must identify with the community and share and feel its joys and sorrows. In fact, one opinion in the Yerushalmi (*Berakhot* 4:1) maintains that only the community has the right to pray the extra *tefilla* of *Ne’ila*. The Jewish People have internalized this message; indeed, many Jews coming to the *Beit* *Kenesset* only once a year – for *Ne’ila*.

At the same time, being part of a community does not require one to lose his or her individuality. Halakha also recognizes the validity of crying for one’s personal needs and desires before God at the auspicious time of the closing minutes of Yom Kippur.

From both a textual and time perspective, the Halakha attempts to accommodate the positions of both Rav and Shmuel:

Ulla ben Rav came down [to the reader's desk] before Rava, commencing the *Ne'ila* prayer with, “You have chosen us,” and concluding with, “What are we, what are our lives” [implying that he recited an *Amida* of seven *berakhot*, fulfilling the position of Rav, and also added the extra paragraph of Shmuel], and he [Rava] praised him. (*Yoma* 87b)

Indeed, our *Ne’ila* includes both *vidui* and the prayer of “What are we? What is our life?” as the Ran suggested.

The Yerushalmi (*Berakhot* 4:1) relates that Rav would begin his *Ne’ila* while it was still day, thereby fulfilling the position that *Ne’ila* should be said while it is still day (before the gates of the Temple are closed), but he would extend his prayers until nightfall, when the gates of Heaven close.

**The *Ne’ila* of Despair**

Shmuel maintains that *Ne’ila* is simply the prayer of “What are we? What is our life?” apparently without the formal structure of the *Amida*. Why is *Ne’ila* different from all the other prayers of Yom Kippur and the rest of the year?

The Rambam writes regarding *Ne’ila*:

Similarly, they instituted a prayer after the *Mincha* prayer [to be recited] close to sunset on fast days only, its purpose being to increase supplication and pleading because of the fast. This is called the *Ne'ila* prayer, as if to say that the gates of Heaven are closed behind the sun, which becomes hidden, since it is recited only close to [the time of] sunset. (*Hilkhot* *Tefilla* 7:1)

Unlike all the other prayers, the origins of which the Rambam traces to the Temple, *Ne’ila* is independent of the Temple. In a sense, it is the polar opposite of *Musaf*, which does not have any antecedents except for the Temple service.

The Ramban goes further that the Rambam and maintains that *tefilla* under duress, of which *Ne’ila* is a prime example, is the only biblically-mandated prayer service, and perhaps for that reason one does need the formal structure of daily prayer. During times of catastrophe, God gave us the right to approach Him directly. In fact, according to the Ramban, *Ne’ila* might be the only biblically-mandated prayer service.

Rashi (*Yoma* 87b, s.v. *u-Shmuel*) explains Shmuel’s position as follows: “He **says** but doesn’t pray.” According to Rashi, *Ne’ila* is not a classic prayer service; it is an opportunity to speak directly to God. All of Yom Kippur, we are appropriately busy with *teshuva* and *vidui*, as these actions define the day, but as the sun is setting and we have hopefully been forgiven, it is now the time to speak directly to God.

According to R. Medan, this is the precise reason the *Kohen Gadol* entered the *Kodesh* *Ha-Kodashim* to collect the spoon and shovel – it gave him one last opportunity to pour out his heart and soul to God and speak directly to him without an intermediary, about his hopes, fears, and aspirations for the coming year. We should all take the opportunity and gift of *Ne’ila* to do the same. This idea was expressed beautifully and simply by Chana in her prayer: “And I poured out my soul before the Lord” (*Shmuel* I 1:15).

The text of Shmuel's *Ne’ila*, “What are we? What is our life?” is also illuminating. After forty days of repentance, self-introspection, prayer, and confession, we ultimately raise our hands in defeat before God and cry out, “What is our righteousness? What is our salvation? What is our strength? What is our might? What can we say before You, *Hashem*, our God and the God of our forefathers?”

At the closing minutes of Yom Kippur, as our fate is being decided, all we can do is place our faith and trust in God's benevolence and love, because man's ultimate destiny is defeat and despair: “The preeminence of man over beast is nonexistent, for all is vain."

**The *Ne’ila* of Tears**

But even after Yom Kippur is over and the gates of Heaven and the Temple have closed, God is not deaf to our prayers. Against all logic and expectations, the *gemara* in *Yoma* (87b) teaches us:

Rav said: The concluding prayer [*Ne’ila*] exempts one from the evening prayer [*Maariv*]. Rav follows his idea that it is an extra prayer, and since one has said it already, it is not required any more.

How can one say *Ne’ila* when Yom Kippur is over and according to all opinions the gates are closed? Perhaps this is a reflection of R. Soloveitchik's explanation of why the Rambam maintains, in contrast to the Ramban discussed above, that daily prayer is also biblically mandated. As R. Lichtenstein explains:

The Rambam fundamentally agrees with the Ramban. Indeed, *tefilla* is obligatory only "in times of trouble," but the Rambam perceives man as existing in a perpetual state of crisis. Were it not for God, he could not exist for a single moment, and there can be no greater trouble imaginable than a person who is, Heaven forfend, disconnected from God. Hence, we may deduce that the individual is in a constant state of crisis and needs God's contact and His mercy every day.[[9]](#footnote-9)

According to R. Soloveitchik, we can understand how *Ne’ila* can be said when Yom Kippur is over. *Ne’ila* is not fundamentally a Yom Kippur prayer; it is a prayer said in times of great distress and turmoil, as exemplified by the *Ne’ila* said on a communal fast day. And every day, man is, from a certain perspective, in a state of crisis.

But even if one is allowed to say *Ne’ila* after nightfall, how can it be efficacious when the gates are already closed and our fate has been sealed? Another *gemara* may help answer this question:

R. Eliezer also said: From the day on which the Temple was destroyed, the gates of prayer have been closed, as the verse states, “When I cry and call for help He shuts out my prayer.” But though the gates of prayer are closed, the gates of weeping are never closed, as the verse states, “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; keep not silence at my tears.” (*Berakhot* 32b)

The gates of Heaven are never closed to our tears. Authentic and heartfelt prayer, which is exemplified by our tears, is always heard. This is the essence of *Ne’ila* according to R. Amital:

We do not focus on our own private wants and needs, but rather seek to pour out our feelings before God. The pouring out of feeling should be spontaneous, emanating from the depths of the heart, with no structure or style. Prayer that issues from a sense of broken-heartedness is the pouring out of feeling before God. This does not require saying any specific words; it is a prayer like the crying of an infant who does not know what he wants, but knows that he lacks something, and his parent will hear his cry, and satisfy his need.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This may be why we blow the *terua* sound at the end of Yom Kippur, as it represents weeping and distress.

For many of us, this has been a year of tears. Many of us have tragically lost loved ones, and we have experienced other loses as well – employment, community, companionship, and a sense of security. This year, many of us lost faith in our ability to control our destiny and fate. We were no longer masters of our environment, but rather helpless and bewildered children. This year's *Ne’ila* will be one of tears and broken-heartedness.

But Yom Kippur does not end with a *terua*, but rather with a *tekia*, which is a reminder and prayer for our future salvation (reasons 8-10 of R. Sa’adya Gaon). Similarly, Shmuel's *Ne’ila*, the prayer of “What are we? What is our life?” also ends on a hopeful note: “Nevertheless, You set man apart from the beginning and You considered him worthy to stand before You." We fervently hope that our prayers and tears at *Ne’ila*, as we stand before our heavenly Father, will herald a speedy redemption and salvation for us, our families, the People of Israel, and the citizens of the world.[[11]](#footnote-11)

1. R. Aharon Lichtenstein, *Return and Renewal* (Maggid, 2018), p. 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. R. Yehuda Amital, *When God Is Near* (Maggid, 2015), p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, however, Rambam, *Hilkhot* *Tefilla* 1:7, and *Shulchan Arukh*, *Orach Chaim* 623:2, who rule that *Ne’ila*must be said before the setting of the sun. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example, see *Yeshayahu* 1:11: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices.” The Yom Kippur Temple service itself may be referenced in the chapter in the verse, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (ibid. 1:18), which may be referring to the red string tied around the scapegoat that would miraculously turn white if God forgave the Jewish People. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. I thank R. Yair Kahn for pointing out this source to me. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Quoted in *Return and Renewal*, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In truth, the two sources of *Ne’ila* are intimately related. The abuse of the downtrodden and the corruption of the leadership condemned by Yeshayahu are also two of the themes of the first chapter of *Shmuel*. Chana is mistreated by Penina and misunderstood by Elkana and Eli, and the story takes place in the context of a nefarious leadership, as reflected in the sins of Chofni and Pinchas. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Return and Renewal*, p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Available at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/prayer-teachings-rav-soloveitchik-ztl>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *When God is Near*, p. 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. I would like to thank Dr. Benjamin Taragin for his thoughtful insights and help in reviewing this essay. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)