**Preparing for Yom Kippur**

**AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT’L**

**“And you shall afflict yourself” (Vayikra 22:27)**

The word “V’Initem” (afflict) stems from ‘Ani’ which means “poverty” or affliction in general and fundamentally means ‘crying out’, because the afflicted man cries out.

The word ‘Anav’ which denotes ‘humble’ means “one that behaves like a poor man (Ani), despite

his lack of affliction. By fasting, men gain humility. “V’initem” (and you shall afflict yourselves)

creates in you Anava (humility) and makes you thereby acceptable to Hashem.

On Yom Kippur we strive to rid ourselves of the arrogance which causes men to be disobedient and ungrateful and selfish and reckless. The fasting is helpful for this purpose, but it achieves more when we

are aware of the purpose.

Yirat Hashem means Awareness of the Greatness of Hashem, and because of that a person is humble,anav.

Because of that he speaks politely to people; because of that he doesn’t speak against people; because of that he doesn’t hurt people’s feelings; because of that he tries to be kind and helpful to people.

Then Hashem says: ‘You are walking in the ways of Hashem; because I am holy you are trying to emulate Me’. That is the greatest beauty that you can give to Hashem. Just as He is merciful so you are merciful.

When people try to do good things because they are Aware of Hashem, then they are investing their efforts

into something worthwhile.

We can attain humility by expressing our deep gratitude in appreciating Hashem’s countless forms of kindliness which He is constantly bestowing upon us. These gifts weigh down on us and we are humbled since we cannot repay them. “How can I repay Hashem for all that He gives me” (Hallel)

Although Israel is fully aware of its superiority as Hashem’s chosen and holy and beloved and blessed people, yet no nation is as ready to admit its own faults as frequently and as profusely as does Israel, especially on this day. Without losing sight of Hashem’s supreme love for us, we afflict ourselves and gain

in Humility. And we thereby incur Hashem’s favor even more. “He adorns the humble (Anavim) with salvation” (Tehillim 149:4)

 **Adapted from “A Kingdom of Cohanim” by Rabbi Miller ZT’L**

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