



**Acharei Mos/Yom HaShoah: Always There**

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Today, Yom HaShoah is a day in which we remember the 6,000,000 kedoshim; men, women, children who died al kiddush Hashem and whose loss continues to send tremors throughout our holy nation. Truth be told, we must remember the 6,000,000 every day. The Holocaust was a catastrophic event which changed the trajectory of our people. No matter how much we grow, succeed, and flourish, this loss will be felt until Moshiach comes and dries our tears. But mourning is never an ends – it must be used as a means. What do we do with this overwhelming tragedy? How do remember and yet find a way to grow? Amazingly, the answer is in this week's Parsha.

The Torah describes the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. It was a complicated service with many distinct parts and could only be performed by the Kohen Gadol. One of the spiritual highpoints of this sacred service was the Kohen Gadol's entry into the Kodesh HaKodashim (Holy of Holies) – only one man on one day of the year was permitted to enter. It was there in the Kodesh HaKodashim that the Kohen Gadol would offer the kitores (incense).

*And the Lord said to Moses: Speak to your brother Aaron, that he should not come at all times into the Holy within the dividing curtain, in front of the cover that is upon the ark, so that he should not die, for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud. (Vayikra 16:2)*

*“Ki b’anan ey’raeh al ha’kappores, for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud.”* What is the “cloud” referenced in the verse? It is the smoke created by the kitores (incense). Hashem conveys to Moshe that Aharon may not enter the Kodesh HaKodashim unless he is performing the kitores service. However, the Lubliner Rav, Rav Meir Shapiro (1887-1933) explains this verse in a different light. The cloud represents times of difficulty, despair, and adversity. During these types of trying times, it is normal to despair and give up. There are turbulent chapters of life that are so overwhelming that a person feels they simply cannot move on. At times, the cloud of sadness and difficulty hangs over the kappores, the lid of life. But even in those moments, “ey’raeh, I will appear (be seen),” for I am always with you. We cannot avoid the challenges of life for they are part of the fabric of existence. We cannot run from tragedy of loss, but we can gain strength from the fact that even when the cloud of adversity hangs over us – Hashem is always with us. We are never alone, we are never forsaken, we are never forgotten.

When we look at the strength and success of our nation, less than a century since the Nazis, may their memory be erased, and their evil cohorts tried to systematically annihilate us – it is nothing short of miraculous. Immigrants who came to this country and Israel with nothing and built families, lives, a State, businesses, Yeshivos and schools – how can one explain this strength and resilience? The Lubliner Rav whispers to us, “my dear children, the answer you seek is in one word, ey’raeh, I will be seen.” There were times when we thought God had forsaken us, there are times when we may have felt alone and abandoned. But we were wrong. You were always there. You are always here. This is the lesson for our people.