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Rosh Hashanah: Knowing the Teruah-Blast Rav Kook Torah

The order of the shofar blasts on Rosh Hashanah may be understood as corresponding to major stages in the history of the universe. There are two basic types of shofar blasts:

- Tekiyah - one long, constant blast.
- Shevarim-teruah - several short blasts followed by numerous staccato blows.

The shofar blasts are organized in sets of tekiyah, shevarim-teruah, tekiyah. First we blow one long blast, then several broken and staccato blasts, and then a long concluding blast. What do the different blasts symbolize, and why this particular order?

Past, Present, and Future

All of history may be divided up into three stages, corresponding to the three parts of the prayer:

“God reigns; God reigned; God will reign forever.”

“God reigned.” This refers to God’s absolute sovereignty in the past, before the sin of Adam. This is the first tekiyah, the pure clarion call of a pristine world. The word tekiyah comes from the root taku'a, meaning ‘set’ or ‘fixed in place.’

Likewise, in the end of days, the era of the tekiyah will return. After all the tribulations over time, the simple, unwavering tekiyah will be heard once again, as the entire world will recognize God’s rule. This is the future era of “God will reign forever.”

Knowing the Teruah

In between the two constant tekiyah blasts, however, comes the complex intermediate stage. This is the current reality, a world that struggles to implement the ideal of “God reigns.” This difficult stage is represented by the broken shevarim blows and the sobbing of the teruah blasts (“shever” means ‘broken’ and ra’uah means ‘shaky’). It is a time of volatility and uncertainty, an era characterized by advances and setbacks, progress and failure.

This is the meaning of the verse, “Fortunate is the nation that knows the teruah” (Ps. 89:16). Fortunate are those who know how to cope with the challenges of this world, who know how to transcend the teruah blasts of uncertainty and hardship. Despite the doubts and confusion, they are able to “walk in the light of Your Presence” (ibid.), in the knowledge that the future era of “God will reign forever” lies ahead.

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torahweb.org ***Selfless Tears: The Sounds of the Shofar*** ***Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky***

There is a halachic principle that governs mitzvos that one fulfills by hearing from someone else, such as the mitzvos of shofar, megillah, and kiddush.

That is, the one who enables others to fulfill their obligation must himself be obligated in that particular mitzvah. If the person blowing the shofar, reading the megillah, or saying kiddush is not required to perform the given mitzvah, such as if he is under the age of bar mitzvah, the listener does not fulfill his obligation and must perform the mitzvah again. Nevertheless, one who

already fulfilled his obligation may still blow the shofar, read the megillah, or recite kiddush for others. The halacha does not view him as an individual who is totally exempt; rather he is still labeled halachically as one who is obligated. How do we understand this distinction? If practically he no longer has to do this mitzvah because he has already done it, how can he enable others to fulfill their obligation?

Rashi in (Maseches Rosh Hashanah 29a) explains that the previously obligated individual is still viewed as being in a state of obligation because it does not suffice merely to fulfill one's personal mitzvah. As long as there is any Jew who has not heard the shofar, megillah, or kiddush, every Jew is still "obligated" in these mitzvos. This halachic principle is an extension of the concept of arvus, "kol yisrael arevim zeh lazeh - all Jews are responsible for one another." This principle is introduced in Parshas Nitzavim. Moshe Rabbeinu is instructed to tell the Jewish People that once they enter Eretz Yisrael they will be held accountable for one another. Torah is not just a covenant of individuals with Hashem, but rather with the entire Jewish Nation is one unit. It is this relationship that enables one Jew to assist another since in a very real halachic sense, one has never completed one's Avodas Hashem if there are others who have not yet completed theirs. This unity of the Jewish People impacts on our fulfillment of tekias Shofar in another significant manner. The broken sound of the shofar is described by the Torah as being a Teruah which is translated to mean a crying sound. It is for this reason that we blow different forms of this sound. The Shevarim, Teruah, and Shevarim-Teruah are all different forms of crying, and because of the different possibilities of which one we should blow, we blow all of them. The very sound of the shofar highlights the emotional prayer that is symbolized by the cries of the shofar, which is an integral part of Rosh Hashanah. What should our focus be on as we pour our hearts and present our shofar cries to Hashem on Rosh Hashanah? There are two individuals who are referred to on Rosh Hashanah as crying and neither of them are appropriate models for us to emulate. In the Torah Reading of the first day of Rosh Hashanah we read about Hagar who cries when she was in great distress. Her son, Yishmael, was sick and the Torah describes how she left him alone and just cried. Rather than comforting her ill child, she is entirely wrapped up in her own sorrow. The mother of Sisra who cries when her son doesn't return from battle also plays a role on Rosh Hashanah. Our custom is to blow one hundred shofar blasts corresponding to the one hundred cries of the mother of Sisra. Perhaps our custom is highlighting the fundamental distinction between our hundred sounds and the sounds of crying of Sisra's mother. The mother of Sisra is described in Sefer Shoftim as sobbing for her son whom she is concerned about because he hasn't yet returned. She is comforted by the assurances that he must be delayed because he is still involved in his murderous battles. She who at first appears to be a sensitive, caring mother who is crying for fear of her child's fate is actually one who shows no such compassion for the victims of her son's barbaric behavior. The mother of Sisra cries for her own pain but is oblivious to the pain of others.

In contrast to the tears shed by Hagar and Sisra's mother, the tears of Rachel also play a prominent role on Rosh Hashanah. In the haftorah on the second day of Rosh Hashanah we read of Rochel's tears that were shed as her children were exiled from Eretz Yisrael. The majority of the Jews exiled during the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash were not technically Rochel's children, rather they were mostly from the tribe of Yehuda who was Leah's son. Nevertheless, in Rachel's eyes, her sister's children were like hers. Chazal note that it was the sensitivity that Rochel had for Leah in helping her avoid embarrassment on the night that Lavan switched Rochel for Leah that ultimately merited Rochel's prayers being answered. Rochel symbolized the total selflessness of prayer. She cried for any Jew as she would for her own children.

As we blow the shofar and our prayers and tears ascend to heaven, we should look at others around us. What are their needs? What can we ask Hashem on their behalf? If we can elevate our prayers to include the needs of others, we

are truly fulfilling "Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh", we are responsible for one another. As we beseech Hashem as a nation this Rosh Hashanah, may we merit that of our prayers be answers.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Netzavim
Worrying More About Our Souls Than Our Bodies During the Ten Days of Repentance

There is a halacha in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, Siman 603: "Even someone who is not meticulous about abstaining from bread baked by non-Jews (the rest of the year), should be careful about this during the Asseres Yemei Teshuva (Ten Days of Repentance)." Many people do eat "pas akum" ("non-Jewish bread") throughout the year. The Talmud discusses whether or not the Rabbis formally adopted such a rule on a permanent basis. The bottom line is that if one buys kosher bread from a non-Jewish baker, it is permissible to eat it. Nevertheless, between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Shulchan Aruch says that we may only eat Jewish baked bread. This ruling is somewhat anomalous. Which way is it? If pas akum is forbidden, it should be prohibited the whole year and if it is not forbidden, it should be permissible the whole year!

The Tolner Rebbe tries to explain this strange halacha in Shulchan Aruch. Many times, the Shulchan Aruch uses the terminology "A baal nefesh (e.g. – a person concerned for his soul) should be strict in the matter." This means that something can be perfectly permissible, but there exist certain spiritually sensitive souls who should shun any practice that is in any way questionable. The term baal nefesh is not synonymous with "chossid" or "tzaddik", both of which are terms that express righteousness and piety beyond the norm. What exactly is a "baal nefesh"? Where does it come from?

Rashi (Niddah 16b) defines a baal nefesh as someone who is "fearful and abstains from even a question of transgression." It is the type of person who is diligent when it comes to avoiding even a doubt of prohibition, even though according to the bottom line halacha, the action is 100% permissible. The Sefer HaManhig defines a baal nefesh as "one who rules over his soul." In short, a baal nefesh is a person who is worried about his soul. There is constant tension between a person's body (guf) and soul (nefesh). Most people worry about their bodies more than their souls. Regarding ruchniyus (spirituality), we say, "Nu, I have bitachon (confidence)." Regarding gashmiyus (materialistic matters) – we are not so religious that we always say, "I have confidence." We are worried more about our materialistic needs than our spiritual needs. A baal nefesh is a person who is concerned about his nefesh, concerned about his soul.

The Rambam writes in Hilchos Teshuva 7:6 as follows, "How exalted is Repentance. Yesterday he was separated from Hashem, the G-d of Israel... he cries out and is not answered... and today he clings to the Divine Presence... he cries out and is immediately answered."

When a person repents, he becomes a different person. Just yesterday, he was distant from the Ribono shel Olam and today he is close to Him. That is why the Shulchan Aruch says that during the Ten Days of Repentance, we should be particular about eating only pas Yisrael. During these holy days following Rosh Hashanah, we become different people – baalei nefesh. At least during these 10 days, we are worried about our souls. Let our bodies take care of themselves – we will worry about that later. Our main concern during this period of time is "What is going to be with our souls?" A baal nefesh is a person who is worried about his ruchniyus (spirituality).

Therefore, once a person experiences Rosh Hashanah and is transformed into this different person, an entire new set of halachos in Shulchan Aruch apply.

The rest of the year, kosher “Pas Akum” is perfectly permissible. However, for a “baal nefesh,” throughout the year and for every one of us during the spiritually auspicious time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur when we become “baalei nefesh,” the Shulchan Aruch provides us with a more demanding standard.

The Link Between the “End of the Field” and the “Beginning of the Year”

As we all know, the Mussaf of Rosh Hashanah consists of Malchiyus, Zichronos, and Shofaros. We recite ten Biblical pesukim related to Kingship (Malchus) – the coronation of the Almighty and accepting him as our King; ten pesukim related to Recollections (Zichronos), in which we hope that saying these pesukim will cause the memory of our merits to ascend to the Almighty with positive results; and ten pesukim related to Shofar blasts (Shofaros).

The Talmud (Rosh Hashana 32a) marshals pesukim, seeking a source for the obligation to recite these three categories of Biblical pesukim. Some of the pesukim are from Chumash, some are from Neviim, and some are from Kesuvim. According to Rebbi, the Biblical justification for reciting Malchiyus on Rosh Hashanah is because the pasuk in Parshas Emor states “...I am Hashem Your G-d” (Vayikra 23:22) and then it continues “...In the seventh month...” (Vayikra 23:24)

What exactly is Rebbi saying? Parshas Emor contains the “Chapter of the Holidays” (the Torah portion that is read on most Yomim Tovim). The Torah goes through the Jewish calendar and tells us about the various Biblical holidays starting with Pesach, followed by Shavuos, followed by Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and finally followed by Succos / Shemini Atzeres. Stuck in the middle of these pesukim cataloging the holidays – between Pesach and Shavuos on the one side and Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Succos on the other side – is inserted another brief section: The section of leaving agricultural gifts for the poor. That section ends off with the words “...to the poor and the proselyte you shall leave them; I am Hashem your G-d.” This is the section dealing with leket (gleanings), shikcha (forgotten sheaves), and peah (leaving the corner of a field unharvested for the poor to take from).

Then the Torah continues, “And the L-rd spoke to Moshe saying. And on the seventh month...” Therefore, Rebbi says that since it says the words Ani Hashem Elokeichem by leket, shikcha and peah and following that, it immediately continues with the pesukim about Rosh Hashanah, lo and behold – we need to mention Kingship (Malchiyus) on Rosh Hashanah because Ani Hashem Elokeichem implies G-d’s Monarchy!

In all honesty, doesn’t this seem like somewhat of a stretch? The fact that it happens to say by the section of agricultural gifts for the poor “Ani Hashem Elokeichem” and it is just prior to the section dealing with Rosh Hashanah – that is the entire source for reciting Malchiyus as part of Mussaf on Rosh Hashanah? It seems far-fetched. Should there not be a more relevant exegesis?

This suggests that there must be something fundamental about leket, shikcha, and peah that is fundamental to the concept of Malchiyus on Rosh Hashanah. At first glance, that connection is not apparent.

If we look further in Chazal, we see how they made a ‘very ‘big deal’ about leket, shikcha, and peah. In fact, Rav Avdimi b’Rebi Yosef says ‘Why were these laws inserted in the middle of the chapter of holidays – Pesach and Shavuos on the one side, and Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succos on the other side? It is to teach you that anyone who distributes leket, shikcha, and peah to the impoverished as appropriate — Scripture treats him as if he built the Beis HaMikdash and offered sacrifices inside it.’

Those are powerful words! The Torah does not make such a comparison by regular charity gifts. Leket, shikcha, and peah must be very special to rise to the status of “offering sacrifices in the Beis HaMikdash.”

Furthermore, the Medrash in Vayikra says that Klal Yisrael will be saved by merit of fulfillment of the mitzvah to not completely cut down the corner of their field (but rather leaving what grows at the end of the field for the poor). Chazal explicitly say that in the merit of leaving over “peah” for the

impoverished, people will receive positive Divine Judgment on Rosh Hashanah.

Unquestionably, we must explain that there exists a fundamental difference between leket, shikcha, and peah and regular tzedaka. What is it?

When a person gives regular tzedaka – not to minimize the importance of general charity, as that is the last thing we want to imply, but – there is a satisfaction that “I am giving tzedaka!” There is a personal pride, satisfaction, and ego involved. “It is MY money and I am giving you MY money.” Therefore, I can give charity to whomever I want to give and I can give as much as I want to give. I am giving and you are beholding. That is regular charity (and I am not minimizing it).

Leket, shikcha, and peah are different kinds of mitzvos. Regarding these agricultural mitzvos, the Torah is emphasizing to us “This is not yours.” This part of the field over there does not belong to you. It belongs to the poor person. Whatever you forgot and whatever you dropped belongs to the other fellow. It is not yours! You need to leave it for him because it is as though he is a partner in your field. The satisfaction and personal pride that a person can take in giving tzedaka is absent when a person gives leket, shikcha, and peah.

What does all of this say? It says that this part of the produce is not mine. Whose is it? It is the Ribono shel Olam’s! He is in charge. He is the King. It does not belong to me. To Hashem belongs the earth and all of its contents. That is what Malchus is all about.

For us, living in the twenty-first century, it is very difficult to think in terms of Monarchy (Malchus). What does it mean “He is the King?” There are no kings today. What does it mean to say about someone “I coronate him – I make him my king?” In our language, it means, “I am not in charge. He is in charge.” For modern day man, that is a very difficult concept to swallow. We are so efficient and we are so proficient and we control so much, that is is very challenging for a person to come to the recognition “I am not in charge; I do not run the world.” That is the spiritual task of Rosh Hashanah.

That is why there is a strong connection between peah, about which it says, “I am the L-rd your G-d” and the juxtaposed pasuk “And on the seventh month...” This is not some arbitrary joining of disconnected pesukim. It is fundamental. If you observe peah and you recognize “It is His field” and “It is the poor person’s produce just as much as it is mine, because G-d gave it to me and G-d gave it to him” – that is what Malchus is all about. And that is why it is in the merit of peah – “Do not cut down the corner of your field when you harvest”, that we can hope to achieve salvation in Judgement. G-d tells us – “In the merit that you do not destroy the corner of your field, I will not destroy you.”

That is why “whoever fulfills the mitzvah of peah, it is as if he built the Temple and offered sacrifices.” They have in common accepting the Sovereignty and the Kingship of the Ribono shel Olam. This is an attribute of these specific agricultural products left for the poor that does not exist by regular charity.

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Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Rabinowitz

Edited by Matthew Garland

Rosh Hashana

Erev Rosh Hashana

We do not blow the shofar on Erev Rosh Hashana as we do throughout the month of Elul in order to differentiate between customary Shofar blowing that we do during Elul and obligatory Shofar blowing that we do on Rosh Hashana. Although the Day of Judgment is a very serious day, we celebrate Rosh Hashana as we do on Shabbat and Yom Tov (holiday), to show that we

put our trust in G-d, that He will bless us with a good year. Therefore, we make our preparations for this special day on the day before, such as food preparation, bathing and hair-cutting.

In order to free ourselves from the sin of violating a vow/promise, we recite "Hatarat Nedarim", the annulment of vows, after Shacharit in front of three people who act as a court. We also declare that any promise we make in the future should not have the force of a vow. The text for this can be found in a machzor (High Holiday prayer book) or in the Artscroll siddur (prayer book) on page 762, and should be said in the language that you understand. When doing "Hatarat Nedarim", you should notify the court that you are doing so for your spouse as well.

New Year's Days

Rosh Hashana commemorates the creation of the world and begins the Jewish calendar year. It is a day of intensive prayer that acknowledges G-d's sovereignty over the world. All things pass before Him for judgment on this holy day. When we greet one another on the first night of Rosh Hashana, we greet a man with the new year wishes of "L'shana tova tikatev v'tchatem" and a woman with "L'shana tova tikatevee v'tchatemee" - "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year". During the evening meals, we eat foods that serve as "simanim" (signs) for a good year, such as challah and apple dipped in honey, and the head of a fish. Many machzorim include the procedure, blessings and prayers for the different foods that we eat as "simanim". We do not eat foods that are bitter or have a vinegar taste.

Shofar

On Rosh Hashana, we have the mitzvah of sounding the shofar (ram's horn). It is symbolic of the blowing of the trumpet at the coronation of a King, which on this day means that we reaffirm our belief in G-d's sovereignty over the world and our commitment to serving Him. (We should have these thoughts in mind while hearing the shofar blow.) The three basic sounds of the shofar are: 1. Tekiah: a long drawn-out sound. 2. Shevarim: three broken, plaintive sounds; and 3. Teruah: nine short, staccato sounds. We blow 30 sounds before Mussaf, 30 during the repetition of the Amidah, and 40 after the Amidah on each day of the holiday. We do not blow the shofar on Shabbat. You must intend to fulfill your obligation through the blessings and blows of the Ba'al Tokeah (shofar blower). You must remain silent from the time the blessings are made before the blowing of the shofar until all the blows are completed at the end of the Mussaf service.

Tashlich

On Rosh Hashana, we recite Tashlich, the prayer expressing our hope that Hashem will forgive our transgressions on the Day of Judgment. We do not recite Tashlich on Shabbat, so on those years it is recited on the afternoon of the second day of Rosh Hashana. At the conclusion of Tashlich, it is customary to shake out our pockets as a symbol of casting away our sins. We are forbidden to feed any animals or throw stones into the water at Tashlich. If you are unable to recite Tashlich on Rosh Hashana, you may do so up until Hoshana Raba (the seventh day of the holiday of Sukkot).

The Second Night

On the second night of Rosh Hashana, we place a fruit that we haven't eaten for a year on the table while Kiddush is recited, so that the "Shehechyanu" blessing in the Kiddush should also be recited over the fruit. After drinking the Kiddush wine, we make the blessing "boreh p'ri ha'etz" on the fruit and eat some of it. We then wash our hands, say "Hamotzi" and continue with the meal.

The Ten Days of Repentance

The period from Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur is called Aseret Yemai Teshuva - The Ten Days of Repentance. During this period there are changes made in our prayers. a) In Kaddish, we say "...l'ayla u'l'ayla mikol birchata..." in place of "...l'ayla min kol birchata..." b) In the first bracha (blessing) of the Amidah, we add "zochrenu l'chaim". In the second bracha, we add "mi khamocha...". If you forget these, you need not repeat the Amidah. c) In the third bracha of the Amidah, we conclude with "...haMelech haKadosh" instead of "...ha'Kel haKadosh". If you forget and

conclude the bracha without this change and don't immediately correct yourself, or if you are in doubt about whether you made the change when you recited the third blessing of the Amidah, you must repeat the Amidah. d) In the bracha of "ha'shiva shoftenu", we conclude with "...haMelech hamishpat" instead of "Melech ohev...". At the end of the bracha of "Modim", we add "u'chtov l'chaim...". And at the end of the bracha of "Sim shalom", we add "B'sefer chaim...". If you forget any of these, you do not repeat the Amidah. e) We recite Avinu Malkenu after the repetition of the Amidah by shacharit and mincha.

Tzom Gedalya/ The Fast of Gedalya

After the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash (the Holy Temple) at the hands of the ancient Babylonians, the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, appointed Gedalya son of Achikam as governor over the remaining Jews in Israel. On this day Gedalya was assassinated. Nebuchadnezzar retaliated by killing thousands and exiling the last remaining Jews in Israel. This day was therefore proclaimed as a fast day.

from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> via em.secureserver.net

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subject: Meaning of Rosh Hashanah; Authors Snubbing Israel; Embracing Your Inner Greatness

What Rosh Hashanah Says to Us by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

10 essential insights that go to the heart of Judaism.

An excerpt from Ceremony and Celebration: Introduction to the Holidays by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

What then does Rosh Hashanah say to us? How can it transform our lives? The genius of Judaism was to take eternal truths and translate them into time, into lived experiences. Rosh Hashanah, the anniversary of the creation of humanity, invites us to live and feel the human condition in graphic ways. The first thing it tells us is that life is short. However much life expectancy has risen, we will not, in one lifetime, be able to achieve everything we might wish to achieve. Untaneh Tokef tells the poetry of mortality with haunting pathos:

Man is founded in dust and ends in dust. He lays down his soul to bring home bread. He is like a broken shard, like grass dried up, like a faded flower, like a fleeting shadow, like a passing cloud, like a breath of wind, like whirling dust, like a dream that slips away.

This life is all we have. How shall we use it well? We know that we will not finish the task, but neither are we free to stand aside from it. That is the first truth.

The second is that life itself, each day, every breath we take, is the gift of God:

Remember us for life, O King who delights in life, and write us in the book of life – for Your sake, O God of life. (Zikhronot)

Life is not something we may take for granted. If we do, we will fail to celebrate it. God gives us one gift above all others, said Maimonides: life itself, beside which everything else is secondary. Other religions have sought God in heaven, or in the afterlife, the distant past or the distant future. Here there is suffering, there reward; here chaos, there order; here pain, there balm; here poverty, there plenty. Judaism has relentlessly sought God in the here-and-now of life on earth. Yes, we believe in life after death, but it is in life before death that we truly find human greatness.

Third, we are free. Judaism is the religion of the free human being freely responding to the God of freedom. We are not in the grip of sin. We are not determined by economic forces or psychological drives or genetically encoded impulses that we are powerless to resist. The very fact that we can do teshuva, that we can act differently tomorrow than we did yesterday, tells us we are free. Philosophers have found this idea difficult. So have scientists. But Judaism insists on it, and our ancestors proved it by defying every law of history, surviving against the odds, refusing to accept defeat.

Fourth, life is meaningful. We are not mere accidents of matter, generated by a universe that came into being for no reason and will one day, for no reason, cease to be. We are here because a loving God brought the universe, and life, and us, into existence – a God who knows our fears, hears our prayers, believes in us more than we believe in ourselves, who forgives us when we fail, lifts us when we fall and gives us the strength to overcome despair.

The historian Paul Johnson once wrote: “No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny.” He concluded: “The Jews, therefore, stand right at the center of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose” (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, Prologue). That too is one of the truths of Rosh Hashanah.

Fifth, life is not easy. Judaism does not see the world through rose-tinted lenses. The sufferings of our ancestors haunt our prayers. The world we live in is not the world as it ought to be. That is why, despite every temptation, Judaism has never been able to say the Messianic Age has come, even though we await it daily. But we are not bereft of hope because we are not alone. When Jews went into exile, the Shekhina, the Divine Presence, went with them. God is always there, “close to all who call on Him in truth” (Ps. 145:18). He may hide His face, but He is there. He may be silent, but He is listening to us, hearing us and healing us in ways we may not understand at the time but which become clear in retrospect.

Sixth, life may be hard, but it can still be sweet, the way the challah and the apple are on Rosh Hashanah when we dip them in honey. Jews have never needed wealth to be rich, or power to be strong. To be a Jew is to live for simple things: the love between husband and wife, the sacred bond between parents and children, the gift of community where we help others and others help us and where we learn that joy is doubled and grief halved by being shared. To be a Jew is to give, whether in the form of tzedaka or gemilut hasadim (acts of loving-kindness). It is to learn and never stop seeking, to pray and never stop thanking, to do teshuva and never stop growing. In this lies the secret of joy.

Throughout history there have been hedonistic cultures that worship pleasure and ascetic cultures that deny it, but Judaism has a different approach altogether: to sanctify pleasure by making it part of the worship of God. Life is sweet when touched by the divine.

Seventh, our life is the single greatest work of art we will ever make. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in one of his earliest works, spoke about *Ish HaHalakha*, the halakhic personality and its longing to create, to make something new, original. God too longs for us to create and thereby become His partner in the work of renewal. “The most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself.” That is what teshuva is, an act of making ourselves anew. On Rosh Hashanah we step back from our life like an artist stepping back from his canvas, seeing what needs changing for the painting to be complete.

Eighth, we are what we are because of those who came before us. Our lives are not disconnected particles. We are each a letter in God’s book of life. But single letters, though they are the vehicles of meaning, have no meaning when they stand alone. To have meaning they must be joined to other letters to make words, sentences, paragraphs, a story, and to be a Jew is to be part of the strangest, oldest, most unexpected and counterintuitive story there has ever been: the story of a tiny people, never large and often homeless, who nonetheless outlived the greatest empires the world has ever known – the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, the Greeks and Romans, the medieval empires of Christianity and Islam, all the way to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. Each in turn thought itself immortal. Each has gone. The Jewish people still lives. So on Rosh Hashanah we remember and ask God to remember those who came before us: Abraham and Isaac, Sarah, Hannah and Rachel, the Israelites of Moses’ day, and the Jews of every generation, each of whom left some living legacy in the prayers we say or the melodies in which we sing them.

And in one of the most moving verses of the middle section of Musaf we recall the great words said by God through the prophet Jeremiah: “I remember of you the kindness of your youth, your love when you were a bride; how you walked after Me in the desert, through a land not sown” (Jer. 2:2). Our ancestors may have sinned, but they never stopped following God though the way was hard and the destination distant. We do not start with nothing. We have inherited wealth, not material but spiritual. We are heirs to our ancestors’ greatness.

Ninth, we are heirs to another kind of greatness too, that of the Torah itself and its high demands, its strenuous ideals, its panoply of mitzvot, its intellectual and existential challenges. Judaism asks great things of us and by doing so makes us great. We walk as tall as the ideals for which we live, and those of the Torah are very high indeed. We are, said Moses, God’s children (Deut. 14:1). We are called on, said Isaiah, to be His witnesses, His ambassadors on earth (Is. 43:10). Time and again Jews did things thought impossible. They battled against might in the name of right. They fought against slavery. They showed that it was possible to be a nation without a land, to have influence without power, to be branded the world’s pariahs yet not lose self-respect. They believed with unshakable conviction that they would one day return to their land, and though the hope seemed absurd, it happened. Their kingdom may have been bounded by a nutshell, but Jews counted themselves kings of infinite space. Judaism sets the bar high, and though we may fall short time and again, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur allow us to begin anew, forgiven, cleansed, undaunted, ready for the next challenge, the next year.

And finally comes the sound of the shofar, piercing our defenses, a wordless cry in a religion of words, a sound produced by breath as if to tell us that that is all life is – a mere breath – yet breath is nothing less than the spirit of God within us: “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7). We are dust of the earth but within us is the breath of God. And whether the shofar is our cry to God or God’s cry to us, somehow in that *tekia*, *shevarim*, *terua* – the call, the sob, the wail – is all the pathos of the Divine-human encounter as God asks us to take His gift, life itself, and make of it something holy by so acting as to honor God and His image on earth, humankind.

For we defeat death, not by living forever but by living by values that live forever; by doing deeds and creating blessings that will live on after us; and by attaching ourselves in the midst of time to God who lives beyond time, “the King – the living, everlasting God.”

The Hebrew verb *lehitpalel*, “to pray,” more precisely means “to judge oneself.” On Rosh Hashanah we stand in judgment. We know what it is to be known. And though we know the worst about ourselves, God sees the best; and when we open ourselves to Him, He gives us the strength to become what we truly are. Those who fully enter the spirit of Rosh Hashanah emerge into the new year charged, energized, focused, renewed, knowing that to be a Jew is to live life in the presence of God, to sanctify life for the sake of God, and to enhance the lives of others – for where we bring blessings into other lives, there God lives.

This article can also be read at: <https://www.aish.com/h/hh/rh/theme/What-Rosh-Hashanah-Says-to-Us.html>

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subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur - Audio and Print Version

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman - Parshas Netzavim 5779

An Erev Rosh Hashana Drasha from Rav Yisrael Salanter

I would like to share with you an Erev Rosh Hashana Drasha from Rav Yisrael Salanter. In the back of the *Sefer Kehilas Yitzchok* there is a section called Erev Rosh Hashana and in it he brings a number of Erev Rosh Hashana Drashos that he had heard. Apparently it was the *Derech* in Vilna to have Drashos on Erev Rosh Hashana and he brings a number of such Drashos. In one of them, he brings the following from Rav Yisrael Salanter.

It says in Maiseh Rav of the GRA, that the GRA said that a person is not supposed to cry on Rosh Hashana. In Nechemiah 8:9 it says (וְאַל-תִּבְכּוּ) 8:10 (וְאַל-תִּעֲצִבוּ). Don't cry and don't be sad and the GRA understands that a person is not supposed to be sad on Rosh Hashana. On the other hand, the B'air Heiteiv in Siman Taf Kuf Pei Daled S'if Kotton Gimmel quoting the Arizal, says that the Arizal wept on Rosh Hashana. Not only that, he said if you don't cry, your Neshama is not good, your Neshama is not proper. Rav Yisrael Salanter is coming to offer some type of Peshara between these two Hanhagos, the Hanhaga of not crying and the Hanhaga of yes crying. The Yesod of Rav Yisrael Salanter is that it depends on the person. But it is not what you are thinking. Listen to what Rav Yisrael Salanter says. Some people have a nature that they cry very easily, they weep easily, their tears are close to their eyes. Their emotions are strong. Some people find it difficult to cry. Zagt Rav Yisrael, the one who cries easily, his Avoda on Rosh Hashana is Al Tivku because we Ta'ke find in the Posuk the GRA is quoting in Nechemia, (כִּי בּוֹכִים כָּל-הָעָם, בְּשִׂמְעָם אֶת-דְּבַר יְהוָה) it says everyone was crying. Nechemia tells them (לָכֵן אָכְלוּ מִשְׁמָנִים וּשְׁתוּ מִמַּתְקִים, וְשָׁחֲזוּ מְנוּחַ לְאֵינִי) לָאֲדַנְיָו (בְּכֹן לוֹ--כִּי-קָדוֹשׁ הַיּוֹם, לְאֲדַנְיָו). So someone who finds it easy to weep, his Avoda is not to cry, to celebrate the Yom Tov properly. Someone who finds it hard to cry, he should try to be M'oreir tears on Rosh Hashana. On Rosh Hashana the Gemara says in 26b (4 lines from the bottom) (בַּר"ה כַּמָּה דְכִיּוּרִי) (אִינִישׁ דְּעִתִּיהּ טַפִּי מְעַלִּי (בראש השנה כמה דפשיט איניש דעתייה טפי מעלי). There is another Man D'omar who says (אִינִישׁ דְּעִתִּיהּ טַפִּי מְעַלִּי). Zagt Rav Yisrael Salanter it depends on the person. How worthy these words are for the one who started the Mussar movement. Tenu'as HaMussar is to be in control of your emotions and to use your emotions in serving Hashem. Zagt Rav Yisrael Salanter, you have to break your Middah. If your Middah is crying easily, serve Hashem with not crying. If your Middah is to not cry then serve Hashem with crying. That is Rav Yisrael Salanter's Peshara. It is a difficult one for most people. In Kehillas Yitzchok he then brings from Rav Tzvi Hersh the Dayan of Vilna, who said a second Mehaleich as a Peshara between them. He makes an important point. He says that the Hatzlacha, the lasting impression of Rosh Hashana does not come from weeping or inspiration, it comes from the brain, it comes from the Seichel. If a person understands in his mind what his obligation is, he stops and understands, (וְרָצָת יְרוּר, מִסַּר הַקְּמָה) says in Mishlei 15:33. Yir'as Hashem is a Mussar of wisdom. Something that in their head clicks and makes a person understand. He says and I quote from Rav Tzvi Hersh, Ki Hadavar She'yasmid B'seichel, Hu Yasmid L'olam. Something that you are able to have on your mind on a regular basis, that will remain forever. If you understand something intelligently, it will be permanent. Lo Kein Hadavar Habo Min His'pai'lus, not so something that comes from a moment of inspiration of His'pai'lus. Zagt Rav Tzvi Hersh, a person should have His'pai'lus on Rosh Hashana, a person should be moved, a person should cry. A person hears a Drasha and hears His'pai'lus that is wonderful, but it is what you do with it. You have to then go and do with it a Davar Chochmo. You have to then go and use your wisdom to see how the His'pai'lus, the understanding you have about the significance of the time that we are passing through, the Yomim Noraim, how significant it is and something will remain if you put it to your Seichel. So that is the Middah of crying and the Middah of not crying. Says Rav Tzvi Hersh, Yagi'a Shnei'hem Mishkachas Aven, to use them both together then you will be successful. A wonderful insight. People get inspired, use it for something. People feel the day, use it for something. Once I have shared with you a part of the Erev Rosh Hashana Drasha in Kehillas Yitzchok let me tell you one more also from Rav Yisrael Salanter. Rav Yisrael Salanter asked a Kasha, Rosh Hashana is the Yom Hadin, the day of judgment, Yom Kippur is the day of forgiveness, the day of Selicha. It should be the other way around. HKB"H should be Ma'tiv to Klal Yisrael, should first give them a day of Selicha, a day of forgiveness and then the Yom Hadin, then the day of judgement. Why is it backwards, you have the

day of judgement and later the day of forgiveness? It should be Farkert? A Gevaldige Kasha. Zagt Rav Yisrael Salanter, the main thing of these days is to affect a person, to have a Roshem on a person. It is very difficult for a person to have a Roshem, to have an impression for spiritual growth as we are physical people. It is very hard. So HKB"H put Rosh Hashana on the calendar, a day on which we are judged for physical things. We are judged on life, on Parnasa, Mi Yai'ani Umi Yai'asheir. Mi Yis'yasor, who Lo Aleinu will have Yissurin, Umi Yishaleif, who will live in Shalva and with peace and harmony. Rosh Hashana warms us up, it gets us in the door. Because it is a call to judgement for our physical lives, it is easier to connect. Once we are in the door, now we are ready to work on Ruchnios. Aseres Yemai Teshuva are the days that we work on Ruchnios. It is interesting. I would think Shabbos Shuva should be the Shabbos before Rosh Hashana, why is it the Shabbos before Yom Kippur? Avoid the last minute rush, do Teshuva early. Have Shabbos Shuva before Rosh Hashana. The answer is no. You have to get warmed up to be able to connect spiritually, to be able to connect in a Ruchniodika way. There is a Gemara in Shabbos 53a (15 lines from the bottom) (חַמְרָא אִפִּי (בתקופת תמוז קרירא לה). Means literally that wine even in the summer cools the body. It says (חמרא) the Guf of the body even in Tekufas Tammuz which are the days leading up to Rosh Hashana. Tammuz, Av and Elul is Tekufas Tammuz, the season of Tammuz. (קריירא לה) the person is still cold to Ruchnios. It is only after Rosh Hashana when a person gets warmed up by being Mamlich HKB"H on the Yom Hadin then a person has the optimum and best opportunity to improve himself in a spiritual way. That is the Avodah. The Avodah is to get into Rosh Hashana even if we do it by worrying about Gashmios and then to use it to grow spiritually. That is the Avodah of these days. And so, we have our work cut out for us. Boruch Hashem before Rosh Hashana this year there is a Sunday when most people don't work and a Shabbos when none of us work, except the Rabbanim. Two days for introspection. To think about the days which are coming upon us. To make them meaningful, to make them Choshuv. Erev Rosh Hashana is a day of intense devotion to HKB"H. In Halacha it says that the Minhag B'chol Chutzos Yisrael is to fast at least half a day on Erev Rosh Hashana. Some people find it hard to do on a working day. On a Sunday if you don't go to work it should be easier to do. A day of closeness to HKB"H. May we all be Zoche that this last Shabbos of 5779 should be a Shabbos of Aliyah, of forward movement towards Rosh Hashana, Aseres Yemai Teshuva and a Yom Kippur that is meaningful, that lasts. A Gut Shabbos and a Gut Gebenched Yar to one and all!

Rabbi ELI Reisman - Parshas Netzavim 5778
Is it better to learn in a Beis Medrash or at home?
 There is a Gevaldige Maiseh which was printed in one the "Maggid" books and the original source of the story is from a Rav in Calabasas, CA named Rav Yakov Vann who tells about a time when he went to be Menachem Avel on the passing of an older man and left a family who was pretty far from Yiddishkeit and Frumkeit. He found that in the house there was a study and in the study there was some Seforim and from looking at the Seforim it was clear that they had been studied by someone who knew how to learn and seemed to be a Talmid Chochom. He asked about the study and was told that the Niftar, the Grandpa had closed himself up in that room and learned and had sort of given up on ever bringing up his own descendants with Frumkeit and closed himself up there. Rabbi Vann said that he thought of an original reading of a Posuk in this week's Parsha that is found in 29:28 (וְהִגַּלְתָּ לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ, (עַד-עוֹלָם--לְעֹשׂוֹת, אֶת-כָּל-דְּבַר יְהוָה הַזֹּאת he said, someone who is Oved Hashem in private that is between him and HKB"H but doesn't teach anything to the next generation. (עַד-עוֹלָם) וְהִגַּלְתָּ לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ

If someone Oved Hashem in public, in the open, that teaches a lesson to the next generations. This is an extremely important lesson for the kids. I have spoken to Talmidai Chachamim over the years about a dilemma that I have, on the one hand learning in the house when you have a bunch of kids running around is very hard and you can't get so much done. Every time I have an opportunity to learn I can go to Shul even if it is only to open a Sefer for a few minutes. But on the other hand the children will never be exposed to the fact that their father sits and learns when he has time. This Gadol told me that to a certain extent you have to sacrifice the quality of your learning for exposing children to the idea that in fact that this is what Jewish parent's do.

In fact I realize that the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah is expressed in the Torah as (וְשִׁנְתֶם לְבָבְכֶם) in the context of teaching your children. So many times parent's when they are home and they have kids, when they can they go to Shul, they have a Chavrusa but at home they caught up in all of the administrative things which a modern household requires a lot. There is an excruciating dilemma here, are we going to have our children's memory of us answering emails, paying bills, printing out coupon codes and all the rest of the things we have to do. In fact I would suggest and maybe this is a little too extreme, that maybe people should learn at home and when they need to get on the computer they should go to Shul and go do that. Make a room for that.

I heard from somebody who was a Lawyer whose children are all Bnei Torah, one of his children told me that his father worked tremendously hard and he remembers waking up in the middle of the night and finding his father at 1 o'clock in the morning learning the Daf. It left a tremendous impression on him. His father told him you should know that I came home after midnight after working very hard and I knew that I wanted to learn a Daf. The words were swimming. Half the time I had trouble following. I don't know what kind of learning it was. But I knew that the day I say I am too tired and I am giving up that will be the last day that I have a learning Seder. So he kept at it.

The children have a tremendously good memory of how he exerted himself to fight and squeeze some Torah learning out and now this Yid is either retired or semi-retired and he is sitting and writing Seferim with that Mesiras Nefesh. We have to keep in mind that if we have children at home, we are forming their memories. They are going to have very fond memories of us being their parent's but of doing what? Are they going to see us working on our Avodas Hashem or are they going to see us doing everyday things. A very powerful lesson from this Posuk.

Rabbi ELI Reisman - Parshas Netzavim 5778

Topic - A riddle in Hataras Nedarim

Let's finish off with one interesting Ha'ara and I will leave you with a little bit of a riddle. We are going to do Hataras Nedarim on Erev Rosh Hashana. It is K'dai for everyone to go through the Nussach of Hataras Nedarim because it is not a Tefilla and you have to know, what you are saying and doing. Someone who doesn't understand the language of the Nussach should say it in a language that he does understand.

At the end of Hataras Nedarim we say, Hinai Mitzad Hadin, Hamischareit V'hamivakeish Hatara Tzorich Lifrot Haneder. Halacha requires that someone who does Hataras Nedarim to tell the Bais Din what the Neder is. Ach D'u Na Rabosai, Ki E' Efsher L'fortam Ki Rabbim Heim. But I want to tell you that I may have many Nedarim and there are too many for me to remember all of them and mention all of them. Now if Halacha requires you to tell the Bais Din what the Nedarim are and you are saying that you don't know what they are, Ki E' Efsher L'fortam then why don't we stop there, checkmate and there is no possibility for Hataras Nedarim.

The explanation is if you go a little further, you see the reason why you have to tell the Bais Din what the Neder is, is so that can decide if they should do the Hatara. So what we say to the Bais Din is if I was requesting Hataras

Nedarim on a specific Neder I would have to tell you what it is and you would judge and you would say Muttar Lach, if this deserves Hatara. What we are doing is that we are doing a generic Hataras Nedarim and if it is possible to get a Hataras Nedarim on a Neder I made then you should do Hataras Nedarim. We then continue and say. V'ain Ani Mevakeish Hatara Al Osam Hanidarim She'ain L'hatir Osam. So we say, if there is a Neder that I am not able to have Hataras Nedarim from then I am not asking you to do Hataras Nedarim. So it is sort of conditional. We are saying really I should tell you what it is but I don't remember what my Nedarim might be, so I am asking you to do Hataras Nedarim on the possibility that I did a Neder which does have Hatara, which the majority of Nedarim probably could have Hatara.

This Halacha leave us with a little bit of a riddle which I am going to leave you to think about. In Mikeitz and Vayeichi we have an interesting give and take (as is brought in Rashi to Beraishis 50:6) where the Gemara in Sotah 36b (starting 10 lines from the bottom) tells us that when Yosef met Pharaoh he started to talk to him in Lashon Hakodesh and he didn't understand. Really Pharaoh was supposed to be able to speak all of the languages, so Pharaoh made Yosef swear that he wasn't going to tell anybody about this. Later on, Yaakov Avinu asks Yosef to swear to bury Yaakov in Eretz Yisrael when he is Niftar.

It says that there was a give and take like this. Yosef came to Pharaoh and said I have to take Yaakov my father to Eretz Yisrael and he didn't want to let. So Yosef said I swore. So Pharaoh says go get Hataras Nedarim on your Shevua (זיל איתשיל אשבועתך). So Yosef said so then I will go get Hataras Nedarim on the Shevua that I made that I won't tell anyone about you not being to speak Lashon Kodesh. So therefore, Yosef was able to corner him into being able to take Yaakov to Eretz Yisrael to be buried.

The question is what is the possibility that Yosef could get Hataras Nedarim on this Shevua that Pharaoh didn't speak Lashon Kodesh because the Shevua was that he wouldn't tell anybody that he doesn't speak Lashon Kodesh. The Halacha is that if you want Hataras Nedarim you have to tell the Bais Din this is what the Shevua is and I want you to give a Hatara on it. So what was he supposed to do? He goes to the Bais Din and says I made a Shevua. Bais Din says what was the Shevua? What can he say now? He can't say I made a Shevua to Pharaoh that I won't tell anyone that he can't speak Lashon Hakodesh because until he gets Hataras Nedarim he didn't have a Heter to say that Pharaoh doesn't speak Lashon Hakodesh. So it would seem that Pharaoh got the better of him and that Yosef in fact was stuck. What is the answer to this riddle? I will leave you until Parshas Vayeichi to figure it out. Good Shabbos and a Gut Gebentched Yar to everybody!

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ROSH HASHANA

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The concept of beginning a new year, of giving the new year a different number than that of the year just past, is an essential part of human nature. All human beings desire the ability to begin anew as well as to have an opportunity to reflect on accomplishments and achievements. If we live in a constant cycle of time without the blessings of new beginnings, life would be depressing and almost hopeless. We would always be carrying with us the baggage of previous times and errors of judgment and behavior. It would be like having a book that would not allow us to turn its pages.

As such, we find that in all societies of humans that inhabit this globe, the concept of a new year has taken a strong hold. Original humans and many indigenous tribes and peoples did not have the concept of a yearly calendar. Time was an unending stream that knew no boundaries or limitations. Such a view of life and events limits one's ability to gain introspection into the

behavior patterns of life and of entire societies. One of the great contributions of the Torah was to establish a calendar based on the measurement of time in terms of years, months, weeks and even days. The author of Psalms taught us that we are to number our days so that we will be able to obtain a heart of wisdom. For without the ability to measure the passage of time, there can be little reflection or deep understanding of life's events and a true appreciation of the learning process which life itself represents. Perhaps this is the basic lesson that the great holiday of Rosh Hashana teaches us. It marks a fine delineation in our life experience, and it points the way not only to a review of the past but also to a renewed commitment for a better future.

The sound of the shofar awakens us to the reality of the passage of time and challenges us to make proper use of this great gift. There are different notes that are sounded by the shofar, as they represent different experiences of past life and indicate the challenges that future life always encompasses. Human beings, by nature, are reticent to face up to past errors or to contemplate future challenges even though they are often predictable and many times unavoidable.

The nature of this great holiday is to counteract that reluctance and force us to have a realistic view of the past and future, to adjust ourselves to these realities and to create solutions that will enable us to overcome difficult problems in our personal and national life. The holiday itself is a hybrid creation of contentment, good food, family gathering and confidence as to our future. But it is also a day of awe and inner concern, of uncertainty and tension and one of deeply felt intense prayer. All these emotions, contradictory as they may seem and perhaps really are, are combined in our celebration of this great day that the Lord has granted to us.

There are many customs related to the holiday of Rosh Hashana that have evolved over the millennia. All these customs combine within them the two opposite emotions that characterize this new year holiday. We eat sweet food and honey and hope for a year of physical and spiritual renewal. Yet, we gather to cast away our sins in pools of water to symbolize the necessity for our self-improvement in the coming year. It is therefore a day of regret, though we do not allow such expressions to appear in our prayer service, for our focus is upon the future and not on the past. But we are all aware that our past always accompanies us and reminds us of our strengths and weaknesses, of our potential and of our goals.

So, once again, the words of the Psalmist to rejoice in the trembling, accurately describes our feelings and emotions on this day of celebration and judgment. The majesty of the prayer service of this day is unmatched, so to speak, in all human expression. Contemplation and understanding of the service itself creates within us the mood and sets tone of the day, to encourage us to move forward in confidence into the new and blessed year that is now beginning.

Ktiva v'chatima tova

Chag Sameach

Berel Wein

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Ha-Rav Aviner

On the Rosh Hashanah...

Collection of Laws of Rosh Hashanah

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:235]

1. Lighting Candles

We recite the blessing of Shehechyanu on both nights of Rosh Hashanah, even if one does not have a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (which he

did not yet eat this season) before him. It is preferable, however, that there be a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 600:2).

Question: Is it permissible to attach the candles in the candlesticks on Rosh Hashanah?

Answer: Attaching the candles to candlesticks for the second night is forbidden on account of [the prohibition of] "leveling" (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p. 76 #18), and this prohibition is no less important than the actual commandment of lighting the candles. One should therefore prepare two additional candlesticks before Rosh Hashanah or to stick them into the candlesticks without attaching them on the holiday.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, one may not prepare the candlesticks before the stars come out (definite nightfall), since we may not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day. But it is permissible to light the candles before sunset, since one benefits from their light on the first day itself.

Addition to the revised edition

Question: I saw in the book "Am Ke-Lavi" (the original name of this volume of She'eilat Shlomo) that it is permissible to light on the first day of Rosh Hashanah before sunset (for the second day) because this is not considered preparation for the next day, since we benefit from the lights on the first day as well. What is the source for this law, since it does not follow the opinion of the Mateh Ephraim (599:9-11)?

Answer: The Be'er Heitev writes: "The Levush (503:4) wrote: We customarily light the candles when it gets dark even before [reciting the prayer] "Barechu." And the Or Zarua wrote that there are women who recite the blessing before they go to shul (for Maariv of the second day). And it is also written in the Shelah that it is a greater mitzvah to do this than to light upon returning to their house since they would return to a dark house. And in shul it is customary to light even when it is still day time since in a shul it is always a mitzvah to light candles, even in the day." And this is the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 514:5): "It is forbidden to light an idle light which one does not need, but [a light] of a shul is not considered idle. It is permissible to light one even on the second day after Minchah and this is not preparing for a weekday, since in lighting it there is a mitzvah for that time." And the Mishnah Berurah (#33) wrote: "There is a mitzvah...that is to say, even if one does not need the light while it is still day, even so there is a mitzvah to light it because of the honor of the shul, and if it is already close to dark it is even permissible in one's house since he needs it at that time."

2. Annulment of Vows

It is customary to release ones vows on Erev Rosh Hashanah or Erev Yom Kippur, but it is also possible to do this during the entire Ten Days of Repentance. One who is unable to do this should be released before three individuals when the opportunity arises (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:10).

3. Eating before the Shofar Blasts

Question: Is our custom of eating before the Shofar blasts in consonance with Jewish Law?

Answer:

1) In general, when it is incumbent upon a Jew to fulfill a mitzvah he should first fulfill the mitzvah and then eat afterwards. Nevertheless the basic law is that only an actual meal is forbidden before the fulfillment of a mitzvah, and a small snack is permissible. But in the generations of the Achronim, they were very strict regarding eating a snack, and they only permitted it for someone who was extremely feeble (See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:9. Sha'arei Teshuvah 584 #3).

2) It is now customary in all places, even amongst the pious, to permit eating a small amount. They support this on the basis of the law that a small snack is permissible. There is therefore no basis to prohibit it. See the comprehensive article of Rabbi Y. Segal in Noam vol. 14, which states that someone who has difficulty with not eating, and whose davening continues

until after midday – is permitted to eat something small.

Summary: It is certainly preferable not to eat, in particular on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, since these Shofar blasts are a Torah Mitzvah, but for one who has difficulty waiting until the end, and whose ability to pray with proper concentration will be disturbed, it is permissible to eat something light. And one should obviously do so with awe and fear, and not for an inappropriate reason (In Shut Bnei Banim #14, Rav Yehudah Herzl Henkin disagrees with the above, but one can counter his argument).

4. Question: Is one required to recite another blessing over a Talit after the break between Shacharit and Musaf?

Answer: Yes, since this is a significant interruption and the person's mind will be distracted from the Mitzvah of Talit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 8, Mishnah Berurah #37).

5. Shofar

One should not say "Baruch Hu U-Baruch Shemo" (Blessed is He and Blessed is His Name) during the blessing over the Shofar, because this blessing is also recited in order to fulfill his (the listener's) obligation, and "Baruch Hu U-Baruch Shemo" is considered an interruption (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 585). This is the general principle: any time during which it is forbidden to interrupt, one should not say "Baruch Hu U-Baruch Shemo." As, for example, during the blessing before the Shema in the morning and evening, during Baruch She-Amar and during Yishtabach. This also applies any time that a blessing is recited in order to fulfill one's obligation, as in Kiddush and Havdalah. But one may say "Baruch Hu U-Baruch Shemo" during the morning blessings, during the repetition of the prayer on Shabbat Evening in Me'ein Sheva, during Magen Avot and during the blessings for an Aliyah to the Torah.

6. Bowing in Shul

When one bows on the ground, he should spread out a towel, handkerchief or piece of paper (but not a Talit bag, since it is disrespectful to put it on the floor). We do this because it is written in the Torah (Vayikra 26:1): "Nor shall you place a figured stone in your Land to bow down on it." This means that it is forbidden to bow down, even to Hashem, on a stone floor (except for one in the Temple. Rama in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 131:8). And because all of this refers to when one's face touches the ground, one should spread out the handkerchief in the place where one's face will be and not under the knees (Mishnah Berurah #40-41. Luach Heichal Shlomo).

Question: Can women fall on their knees during Musaf on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since women were not in the Temple courtyard and therefore would not bow? [In the book "Nefesh Ha-Rav" (pp. 214-215), Rav Soloveitchik rules that women should not prostrate on account of this reason].

Answer: Yes, they may. This is a minhag. As long as there is a modest place and she does not have a bad back, a woman may prostrate.

7. Preparing on the First Day for the Second Day

Question: Is it permissible to prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day?

Answer: Regarding this issue, each day is considered as a holy day on its own, and just as we do not prepare on Shabbat for a weekday, so too we do not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day, since there is room to say that perhaps the holiness of the second day is in fact a weekday in relation to the holiness of the first day (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p. 20 #58 and p. 59 #1). It is therefore forbidden to cook, wash dishes, prepare candles in the candlesticks, make beds, set tables, etc... (ibid. 1, 58) on the first day in preparation for the second day. One must wait until after the stars have come out.

One may, however, prepare on Rosh Hashanah for Shabbat when they are consecutive days, by making an Eruv Tavshilin (by setting aside, before the

holiday begins, an eruv consisting of a cooked portion of food and a piece of bread or matzah. This is considered the start of the food for Shabbat and any further preparation of food is seen as a continuation of it, and is thus permitted).

Addition to the revised edition

If Rosh Hashanah falls on a Thursday and Friday, it is forbidden to prepare on Thursday for Shabbat even with an Eruv Tavshilin. The preparation may only be performed on Friday (Shut Yehaveh Daat 6:32).

8. Repentance

Do not forget the essence of Rosh Hashanah: to perform Teshuvah, both in commandments between a person and Hashem and in commandments between a person and his fellow man.

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from: Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald <ezbuchwald@njop.org>

subject: Weekly Torah Message From Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

njop.org - Rosh Hashana 5780-2019

Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message

"The Judgment of Ishmael, and its Contemporary Implications for all of G-d's Creatures"

(Updated and revised from Rosh Hashana 5761-2000)

Because of Rosh Hashana, instead of commenting on the scheduled Shabbat parasha, Nitzavim, we will comment on the Torah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashana, found in Genesis 21, which focuses on the birth of Isaac.

The Torah commentators offer a host of interesting reasons explaining the relevance of this particular portion to Rosh Hashana. The Talmud, in Rosh Hashana 10b, states: "On the new year, Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah were remembered," meaning that G-d remembered them, and these barren women became pregnant. Genesis 21:1, reads, וְהָשֵׁם פָּקַד אֶת שָׂרָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר, And G-d remembered Sarah as He had said. Sarah conceives and bears a son for Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time about which G-d had spoken. The Hebrew word פָּקַד —pa'kad comes from the root of the Hebrew word to count or to remember. In effect, Sarah was taken into account and remembered. Similarly, on Rosh Hashana all of G-d's creatures pass before G-d to be examined, setting their fate in accordance with the Divine plan. The child who was born, Isaac, who was named in Hebrew Yitzchak, becomes a paradigm for the Jewish people. Remember, that Sarah had been menopausal and Abraham too was well on in years. Biologically, there really was no hope that they would be capable of bearing a child! But, just as Isaac's birth was an act of Divine providence, so too is the continued existence of the Jewish people an act of Divine providence. As we say in the Passover Haggadah, שָׂבָבֵל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹקְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ,—"In every generation they [our enemies] rise up to destroy us, but the Al-mighty rescues us from their hands." The great nations of history—the Greeks, the Romans, are gone, the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Chinese have vanished, but the Jews survive. Realistically, the Jewish people should have ceased to exist long ago. After all, in every generation, the Jews have been at the virtual precipice of destruction, yet we survive—only because of the Al-mighty's intervention; just as G-d had intervened to ensure the existence of our forefather Yitzchak.

Abraham and Sarah's child is called Yitzchak, which literally means to laugh. It is an odd and challenging name to give a child. It is as if a father would name his child "Big Joke." But Abraham understood that while the world would regard Isaac's birth and continued existence with great skepticism, Abraham and Isaac will prove them all wrong—and the "big joke" will be on them!

In Genesis 21:9, Sarah sees the son of Hagar, Ishmael, מִצְחֵק —mitzachek—mocking or "making sport" of her son Yitzchak. She demands that Abraham expel the handmaiden Hagar and her son, so that Ishmael will not inherit with her son Isaac.

According to the famed commentator, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Sarah had hoped that because he was fathered by Abraham, Ishmael would be able to overcome the Hamitic nature that he had inherited from his mother Hagar, but she was mistaken. In fact, our commentators say that the word mitzachek, mocking or making sport, actually implies that Ishmael indeed acted out on that base nature, and attempted to sexually molest Isaac. Therefore, it was not just a benign case of two little boys who could not play nicely together that drove Sarah to insist that Ishmael be expelled. Nevertheless, Abraham, the great, open-hearted, and generous “welcomer” of guests, was heartbroken at the thought of sending away his wife and child. Only the direct dictate of G-d, compelled him to heed the instructions of his wife, Sarah.

Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael to the barren desert of Beersheba, giving Hagar only a few pieces of bread and a small vessel of water—the equivalent of a death sentence by thirst and starvation. When there is no more water, Hagar casts the lad (who, according to tradition was either 17 or 27 years old), under one of the shrubs. Based on scriptures’ description, Hagar set herself apart from Ishmael so she would not see the death of her child. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary takes Hagar to task for distancing herself from her stricken son. The Torah tells us that as Hagar sat opposite, but quite a distance away from Ishmael, she lifted up her voice and wept. Asks Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: How could a mother cast away a child who is dying of thirst? Should she not have held him in her arms, and kept him cool, even if it was painful for her to witness his pain? With great insight, Rabbi Hirsch notes that, “In truly humane people the feelings of duty master the strongest emotions, make one forget one’s own painful feelings and give helpful assistance even if one can do no more than give comfort of one’s participating presence.”

Miraculously, Hagar and Ishmael are saved by an angel, who shows Hagar that there is an oasis of water nearby. Apparently, Hagar was so overwhelmed by grief that she didn’t even make the slightest effort to try to find nourishment for herself or the child, even though it was clearly within reach.

In Genesis 21:17, G-d hears the cry of the child. The Angel of G-d calls out to Hagar and says to her: “What is the matter Hagar, do not be afraid, for G-d has heard the voice of the lad there where he is.”

Let us pay particular attention to the phrase, בְּאֶשֶׁר הוּא שָׁם, “there where he is.” Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf, in his wonderfully enlightening and engaging manual, *The Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur Survival Kit*, states that it was clear and apparent as Ishmael grew older he would be fated for doing evil. Even as a young boy, Ishmael was already an assaulter—a potential cold-blooded murderer. Of course, G-d knew that Ishmael and his descendants would be bitter oppressors of the Jewish people in the future. So, if G-d knew Ishmael’s evil past and his potential evil future, why did G-d save Ishmael? The reason, says Rabbi Apisdorf, lies in the phrase: “Ba’asher hu sham,”—there where he is. At that very moment that Ishmael was being judged, he was not yet guilty. He might become guilty in the future, but at that very moment he could not be considered culpable.

Rabbi Apisdorf points out that the favorable judgment of Ishmael, which is read on Rosh Hashana, should be a source of great encouragement and promise for every Jew. Yes, G-d surely knows our future, but He chooses not to take it into account. In fact, G-d doesn’t even take our past into account when one seeks forgiveness. Therefore, writes Rabbi Apisdorf, to merit a favorable decree, all we need to do, is to simply get our act together for one single day.... What a bargain: the future doesn’t count, the past is irrelevant, we will only be judged according to who we are, and how we act on the day of Rosh Hashana itself!

Surely, this is a most hopeful and optimistic message. On Rosh Hashana, G-d judges us—sounds ominous doesn’t it? But, at the same time, G-d does “somersaults” to find every possible reason to judge us favorably.

Consequently, it is absolutely vital, that when G-d looks at us on Rosh Hashana, “Ba’asher hu sham”—to see where we are at that very moment,

we must be certain that we merit His favorable judgment and that we deserve to be blessed and inscribed in the Book of Life.

SHANAH TOVAH. May you and all of your loved ones be inscribed for a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year.

Rosh Hashana 5780 is observed this year on Sunday evening and all day Monday and Tuesday, September 29th, 30th and October 1st, 2019. The Fast of Gedaliah will be observed next Wednesday, October 2nd from dawn until nightfall.

May you be blessed.

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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Nitzavim

Va'ani Tefillah

הַשֵּׁם קוֹלֵנוּ ד' שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ – Shema koleinu, Hashem Elokeinu. Hear our voices, Hashem our G-d.

Hashem never turns a deaf ear on one’s sincere prayer. He might respond, “No,” but the prayer will not be wasted. It will be used at some other time—either for the supplicant himself or for someone else. David *Hamelech* bequeathed an appreciation of the potency of *tefillah* to his descendants. Indeed, when *Melech*/King Chizkiyah was laying at “death’s door,” and the *Navi* Yeshayah told him that was “it”, he had little time left to live, the king told him to cease his negative talk. “I have a tradition transmitted to me from my ancestor, David *Hamelech*: ‘Even if a sharp sword is poised over a person’s neck, never despair! Continue praying and pleading for mercy!’” Chizkiyah pleaded with Hashem, and the Almighty added fifteen years to his life. Sincere prayer overrides even Divine prophecy.

The *Shibolei HaLeket* quotes the *Midrash* that teaches, that although it was decreed that *Klal Yisrael* would be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years, when they groaned and prayed to Hashem, He listened and decreased their sentence. This is when the ministering angels recited the conclusion (and motif) of the blessing, *Shomea Tefillah* – Who (always) listens to prayer.

In memory of a dear friend on the occasion of his yahrzeit

הַחֵבֶר הָרֵב צְבִי בֶן הַחֵבֶר ר' מִשְׁהֵל

נפ' ד' תשרי תשע"ג Mr. Bjorn Bamberger

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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

<http://www.5tjt.com/35-halachos-to-remember-on-rosh-hashanah/>

35 Halachos to Remember on Rosh Hashanah

September 28, 2019

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

1. There are three main aspects to Rosh Hashanah. It is the time when we declare Hashem King. It is the time when we are all judged. It is the time when we have the special mitzvah of blowing shofar.
2. The Gaonim who lived after the time of the Gemara initiated certain additions to insert in Shemoneh Esrei during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, beyond the changes mentioned in the Gemara. They added the recitation of certain phrases. “Zachreinu L’Chaim” is inserted in the first berachah of Shemoneh Esrei. “Mi Chamocha” is inserted in the second berachah. “U’chsov l’chaim tovim kol bnei b’risecha” is said in the berachah of Modim, and “B’sofer chaim” is inserted at the end of the Shemoneh Esrei.
3. In the Kaddish that is recited during Rosh Hashanah and the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah the words “I’ayla ul’ayla mi’kol birchasa” are said instead of “L’ayla min kol birchasa.” The number of words in the Kaddish must equal 28 words, according to the Zohar. Hashem’s Holy name also has 28 words. This is why we combine the two words min kol to mikol when we add the word “I’ayla.”
4. The poskim have ruled that on the Yomim Nora’im we daven slightly louder than we do during the rest of the year. One must, nonetheless, be

careful that this ruling not be a source of machlokes, argument. It is better to daven in a more quiet tone if it will cause someone to be disturbed or distressed, Heaven forbid.

5. We recite the Avinu Malkeinu on Rosh Hashanah and throughout the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, a tefillah that was composed by Rabbi Akiva. It is recited during Shacharis and Minchah, but it is not recited on Shabbos.

6. After Ma'ariv during Rosh Hashanah the chazzan recites each pasuk of "L'Dovid Mizmor." The congregation repeats each verse after the chazzan.

7. After Ma'ariv, each person extends a greeting to friends and family. The general greeting as cited by the Chofetz Chaim is "L'shanah tovah tekaseiv v'seichaseim l'alter u'l'chaim tovim u'l'shalom." This is not said during the daytime, however, because the tzaddikim are inscribed in the morning. We want to treat everyone as if they were already inscribed, a worthy action that helps both ourselves as well as others. This, too, when said with the proper intent, can be a fulfillment of "V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho," a biblical mitzvah.

8. Rosh Hashanah is the day in which the creation of the world is celebrated. In actuality, however, it is the day that mankind was created (See Talmud Rosh Hashanah 10b). The world was created six days earlier, on the 25th of Elul.

9. It was on this day that Adam HaRishon, the first man, was created. On this day he also sinned. And on this day he was granted amnesty, or forgiveness. Because of this, the day of Rosh Hashanah became the day on which all mankind is judged.

10. Rosh Hashanah is referred to in the Torah only as Yom HaZikaron, Day of Remembrance, or as Yom Teruah, Day of Sounding the Shofar; the name Rosh Hashanah is not found in the Torah.

11. Rosh Hashanah plays a central role in our lives as well as for the entire world. It is a day that we mark with intense prayer. What do we pray for? We long for the time when the entire world will recognize Hashem and His Divine Plan for the world. This longing helps change our perspectives.

12. In the evening, right after the Ma'ariv prayers and after we extend greetings to friends and family, we come home and eat the seudah. It is the custom to recite the special Yehi Ratzons found in the Machzor as a good omen for the upcoming year. This is based upon the Talmud that states, "Simana milsa—omens are significant" (Horayos 12a). Another Gemara (Kerisus) tells us to eat certain foods on Rosh Hashanah in order to have these good signs.

13. Some also have the minhag not to eat walnuts (egoz) on Rosh Hashanah. There are three reasons cited: (1) it increases phlegm; (2) it has the same gematria as the word cheit, sin. Egoz is 17 and ches tes is 17; (3) The Chasam Sofer writes that the word "egoz" alludes to the exiles of Israel.

14. The two days of Rosh Hashanah are also called Yoma Arichta, one long day, a single period of time and holiness. This was an enactment of the sages out of a concern as to when the witnesses testifying to the new moon would arrive. Because of this status, there is a debate as to whether we recite Shehecheyanu on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. To avoid doubt, we try to purchase a new fruit or garment that would require a Shehecheyanu to be recited regardless. In the past decade, the availability of new fruit in this country has expanded greatly. It is thus rare to be able to recite a Shehecheyanu on a new fruit. One should therefore rely on the clothing option. If neither is available, a Shehecheyanu is still recited.

15. One should arise on time to davening on Rosh Hashanah. There is a Talmud Yerushalmi that states, "One who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah, his mazal will also sleep."

16. The main special mitzvah of this day is the sounding of the shofar. The Rambam writes that the shofar tells us: "Awaken from your sleep, you sleeper! Think about your deeds. Remember Hashem and go back to Him in teshuvah. Don't be like those who miss everything that is real and important and instead chase after things that are just a shadow. Don't waste your years chasing after vain things that won't help you. Look to your souls and consider your actions."

It is a positive mitzvah in the Torah to hear the blast of the shofar on account of the verse, "Yom Teruah yihyeh lachem." We also learn from this verse that the mitzvah is during the day. The earliest time one may fulfill this mitzvah is after alos ha'shachar, dawn. Ideally, however, it should be done after sunrise.

Nowadays, we blow shofar after Shacharis. Originally, we blew it during Shacharis because of the principle of "zerizim makdimim l'mitzvos." Why did we change? According to the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 32b), we changed during Roman times because of a decree. According to the Yerushalmi, the enemies thought that the call of the shofar was a battle cry, a call for a rebellion, and they killed Jews. Even though this is no longer applicable, the Gemara states that we do not change back.

17. The sages enacted that when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos the shofar is not to be blown. They ruled in this manner so that someone will not come to carry a shofar by accident. This is a lesson in how seriously we should be concerned about the issues of carrying on Shabbos; the sages were so concerned that they repealed a Torah mitzvah! The Gemara tells us that any year in which the shofar is not blown ends up as a calamitous year. What about on Shabbos then? Rabbi Aharon Kotler explains that the merit of Shabbos observance—having given up the item that will silence the Satan—will serve to silence him.

18. The Gemara tells us that one set of shofar blasts is to fulfill the mitzvah, while the other set of shofar blasts is to confound the Satan. Rashi explains that the Satan will be unable to prosecute us when he sees us lovingly perform Hashem's mitzvah again. Tosfos explains that the Satan is afraid that he will lose his job, thinking that this shofar blast is the one that hails the arrival of the Messianic era. One may ask how it is that the Satan can be confounded and confused so easily. The Ta'amei HaMinhagim explains that the Satan is concerned that the Jewish people are not just doing teshuvah but that they are doing teshuvah m'ahavah—repentance out of love of Hashem. When that happens all the aveiros that the Jewish people performed are turned into mitzvos. This is what worries and confuses him!

19. Some shuls have the custom to break for Kiddush and a snack before the blowing of the shofar. This is controversial because many authorities forbid eating before any mitzvah of the day. Because Mussaf ends late, however, many shuls are lenient. Nonetheless, a full meal should not be eaten; one should only eat enough to help him focus on the mitzvah further.

20. Women are technically exempt from the mitzvah of shofar because it is a time-bound mitzvah. Nonetheless, if they hear the shofar it is counted as the fulfillment of a mitzvah. For this reason Ashkenazic women may recite the blessing. A child is obligated in hearing the shofar by rabbinic decree.

21. Two blessings are recited on the shofar, "Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu l'shmoah kol shofar" and the Shehecheyanu. The berachos should be said while standing.

22. A shofar may only be made from a tahor animal. Ideally, a ram's horn should be used, alluding both to the merit of Akeidas Yitzchak and to the ram's horn heralding Mashiach. The word shofar means "hollowed tube." Therefore, a horn that is not naturally hollow but was hollowed out by man is not called a shofar. A deer-horn or ox-horn is called a keren by the Torah and therefore is also invalid, even though they are hollow. If a shofar has a hole or a crack it may have become invalid. The shofar should be presented to a rav who is proficient in these laws to rule upon it.

23. The shofar blasts are divided into two types: (a) the sitting blasts, tekios d'meyushav (although our custom now is to stand for them, too), which are blown before Mussaf; and (b) the standing blasts, tekiyos d'me'umad, which are blown during and after Mussaf.

There should not be any talking from the time the blessing is recited until the last blast of the shofar. If one did speak and at least one set of blasts was heard the blessing does not have to be recited again.

24. The shofar is blown from the shulchan and not the amud. The reason is to remind the heavenly court of the merit of our Torah study. The shofar is

blown from the right side of the mouth. If this is difficult for the ba'al tokeiah, then one may switch sides.

25. The Torah mentions the word teruah three times. The chachamim derive from here that three teruahs must be sounded on Rosh Hashanah. We also have a tradition that each teruah must be preceded and followed by a tekiyah. We must therefore hear at least 9 different blasts. However, our sages were unsure as to whether teruah means wailing, sobbing, or both. Therefore we make all types of sounds to ensure that we have fulfilled the mitzvah.

26. Rav Saadya Gaon lists ten reasons why the shofar is blown, other than the fact that it is a mitzvah in the Torah.

a. Kings are enthroned with trumpet blasts. We are enthroning Hashem as King of the Universe.

b. The shofar sound is a call for us to do teshuvah.

c. It reminds us of Har Sinai, where a shofar blast was heard throughout the camp. We committed ourselves then to "Na'aseh V'nishmah," which we should do now, too.

d. It reminds us of the mussar, the chastisement, of the prophets which is described as "Like a shofar" in Sefer Yeshayahu (chapter 58) and Sefer Yechezkel (chapter 33).

e. It reminds us of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and arouses us to pray for its rebuilding.

f. It reminds us of Akeidas Yitzchak and arouses within us thoughts of commitment and self-sacrifice to Hashem, something that will help us in judgment.

g. The sobbing instills Yiras Shamayim in us.

h. It reminds us of the final Day of Judgement.

i. It reminds us of kibbutz galiyos, when all exiled Jews will return.

j. It reminds us of techiyas ha'meisim.

27. The daytime Kiddush of Rosh Hashanah is the recitation of the verse "Tik'u ba'chodesh shofar ba'kesef l'yom chageinu." Then a borei pri ha'gafen is recited on wine. As in all Kiddush, a mezonos must be eaten or one is not permitted to taste anything.

28. When the shliach tzibbur begins Shacharis after Pesukei D'Zimrah, he sings a long traditional tune while he is still standing at his regular seat. Then he recites the word "HaMelech" aloud and walks up to the amud, where he will continue leading the prayers. The Sefer HaChaim explains that just as a robbery victim overcome by robbers will shout out to police when he sees them, so do we shout out to the king when we are overcome by accusers.

29. After Shacharis, as mentioned earlier, we recite the Avinu Malkeinu that was composed by Rabbi Akiva. The Gemara tells us that Rabbi Akiva's prayer was effective when other prayers were not, only because of a remarkable quality that Rabbi Akiva possessed—he was ma'avir al midosav, forgiving toward others. One of the reasons why this prayer should be said is to remind us to emulate the qualities of its author.

30. The Zohar tells us that when we open the Aron in preparation for the reading of the Torah, it is a special eis ratzon, a time of remarkable receptivity for prayers. Normally we say the prayer "B'rich Shmei" during this time. On Rosh Hashanah we add the 13 Middos HaRachamim as well. We also add the word "V'Nora" in the middle of "Echad Elokeinu, Gadol Adoneinu, Kadosh _____ Shemo."

31. The reading on the first day of Rosh Hashanah is the story of the birth of Yitzchak. One of the reasons that we read this section is to highlight the idea that Hashem pays particular attention to answer prayers said in deep anguish and in earnest. Sarah Imeinu's tefillos were recited in this manner. Yitzchak was also conceived on Rosh Hashanah. On the second day we read of the Akeidah.

32. The Mussaf tefillah contains three main sections called Malchiyos, Zichronos, and Shofros. Each section contains ten pesukim: three from the Torah, three from the Nevi'im, three from Kesuvim, and one more from the Torah. The Malchiyos section contains verses that declare Hashem's Kingship. The Zichronos section contains pesukim that describe how Hashem remembers all of our deeds. The Shofros section contains pesukim

that proclaim Hashem's glory, the removal of wickedness, and the merits of Klal Yisrael.

33. We have the custom to blast the shofar 100 times over Rosh Hashanah. We do three series of 30 and one last one of 10.

34. Ideally one should not sleep on Rosh Hashanah afternoon on account of the aforementioned Yerushalmi. If need be, however, one can rely on those authorities who understand the Yerushalmi as referring to times of prayer and the time to hear the shofar.

35. On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah many people have the custom to recite the Tashlich service at a body of water. Ideally, the body of water should contain fish. If the first day of Rosh Hashanah comes out on a Shabbos, Tashlich is delayed until the afternoon of the second day of Rosh Hashanah. If one is unable to do it, Tashlich may be said until Hoshana Rabbah.

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Are You More Than a Member of the Herd?

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ARE YOU MORE THAN A MEMBER OF THE HERD?

By Yonoson Rosenblum | SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

We need a better answer on Rosh Hashanah to Hashem's question of, "Who are you?" than "I want a Lexus, but my friend wants a Prius."

One of the recurrent Rosh Hashanah themes of Rav Moshe Shapiro, ztz"l, was the nature of the judgment on each of us as individuals. His starting point was invariably the second mishnah in tractate Rosh Hashanah, which describes all those who come into the world as passing before HaKadosh Baruch Hu as "bnei maron." Though the Gemara offers three different interpretations of the term "bnei maron," they each have the aspect of passing single file — as a distinct individual — in front of Hashem.

The mishnah in question states that the world is judged four times in the year. Three of those judgments parallel one another: On Pesach the world is judged on the grain for the coming year, on Shavuos on the fruits, and on Succos on the water. The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16a) specifies the different offerings brought on each of the days of judgment: the Omer offering on Pesach, the two loaves on Shavuos, and the water libation on Succos — each connected to what is being judged.

Rosh Hashanah stands out from the other three days of judgment cited in the mishnah. First, the mishnah does not specify what the judgment is on Rosh Hashanah, only that we pass in front of HaKadosh Baruch Hu as individuals. Nor is there any parallel to the other three specified offerings, which are clearly related to the judgment at hand. With respect to the judgment of Rosh Hashanah, however, the Gemara specifies no offering to be brought, only that we recite Malchuyos, Zichronos, and Shofros.

The difference between the judgment on Man and the judgments on the grain, fruits, and water lies in the difference in their manner of creation. All the other species were created "limineihu — according to their kind." Only Adam Harishon was created "yechidi — as an individual." Because Man was created "yechidi," not as a member of a species, a single offering cannot suffice. Each person must recite Malchuyos, Zichronos, and Shofros. As a unique creation, the mishnah in Sanhedrin (4:5) describes Adam Harishon as an "olam malei — an entire world": "Therefore was Adam created yechidi, to teach you that one who destroys a single soul in Yisrael is deemed by the verse to have destroyed an entire world, and one who saves a single soul in Yisrael is considered as if he saved an entire world."

Each Jew is in potential an entire world for whom the creation of the world would have been justified. As such, he is subject to Hashgachah Pratis (individual Providence), as opposed to every other aspect of creation, which is governed by general Providence, according to its species.

The instrument through which each Jew realizes his potential is his daas, the faculty with which he forms a unique perspective on the world that unites its disparate parts. Just as the face of each individual differs from that of his fellows, so too does the daas of each individual differ from that of his fellows.

That is only true, however, for one who has developed his daas, who has given definition to what is unique about him and does not define himself in terms of anyone else.

In that moment that each of us stands alone before HaKadosh Baruch Hu on Rosh Hashanah, the question we are asked is: Who are you? What distinguishes you from every other person? What is your unique mission in life — the mission that gives you the status of an olam malei?

If we have never contemplated those questions, we have failed to actualize our potential as an olam malei, and we have no basis for beseeching Divine mercy. True, Hashem saw that the world could not exist according to the middah of strict judgment. Therefore, He descended from the Throne of Din and ascended, kivayachol, to the Throne of Rachamim. But din did not disappear from the judgment entirely. There must be a basis in din for the extension of rachamim.

When we beseech Hashem for rachamim, we are seeking an extension of time to fulfill our unique mission in the world. But if we have given no consideration to that mission or what is unique about ourselves, we have no basis for seeking an extension. As Chazal teach us, "It is forbidden to show rachamim to one who has no daas" (Berachos 33a).

If we define ourselves in terms of others or in comparison to them, we have turned ourselves into members of a herd and ceased to be individuals. We are compared to the animals (see Tehillim 49:13). In short, we need a better answer on Rosh Hashanah to Hashem's question of, "Who are you," than "I want a Lexus, but my friend wants a Prius."

Sadly, that perception of ourselves as members of the human herd is prevalent today. We are too distracted to exercise our daas to contemplate our uniqueness, or to fashion ourselves as unique beings. Science Magazine (July 2014) reported upon one experiment in which heavy users of handheld devices were instructed to shut off their devices and instead contemplate themselves. Those efforts at self-contemplation proved so beyond their capacity that when offered an electrical shock to relieve the boredom of being left to their own thoughts, 67% of the men and 25% of the women opted for the shocks.

One who commits suicide is described as m'abeid atzmo l'daas. Why is the word "l'daas" necessary? Why is it not sufficient to simply say that he has destroyed himself? Rav Moshe answered that such a person has failed to recognize the power of his daas to actualize his potential as an olam malei. Otherwise he would not have been able to end his own life. Spiritual suicide — the failure to utilize one's daas to give coherence and shape to one's existence — is increasingly more the rule than the exception.

What is more, one who lacks any conception of himself as a unique individual with a specific mission in the world cannot crown Hashem as Melech. The kavod (honor) that is given to a king can only come from one who himself possesses kavod. There is no greater insult — i.e., lack of kavod, for an individual than to be identified not as an individual, but as one of a herd. (That, incidentally, is the greatest sin of contemporary identity politics: It dehumanizes all who succumb to its lure.)

We can now identify the difference between the crowning of Hashem as King on Rosh Hashanah and the kabalos ol malchus Shamayim that is incumbent upon us each day. The judgment of Rosh Hashanah, during which we pass in front of HaKadosh Baruch Hu as individuals, as if we were the only adam in the world, forces us to contemplate our individuality, what makes us unique. Only when we do so can we truly proclaim Hashem as King, for only then do we possess the kavod inherent in our status of having been created yechidi. And only then can we offer to Hashem the kavod due to the King of kings.

Kesivah v'chasimah tovah