

BS"D



To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON ROSH HASHANA - 5764

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: September 25, 2003 PM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Rosh Hashanah

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Rosh Hashanah -

This Dvar Torah was adapted from remarks made by Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Erev Rosh Hashanna several years ago. K'siva V'chasima Tova!

Thoughts for Erev Rosh Hashanah

In Tractate Berochos (29a), the Talmud says that on Rosh Hashanna we daven a Shmoneh Esrei [referring to the "standing prayer"] of nine blessings (the standard opening three blessings, the standard closing three blessings, and the middle three are special blessings of Malchiyos, Zichronos, & Shofros -- the middle portions of the Rosh Hashanna Mussaf service dealing respectively with Kingship, Remembrances, and Shofar Blasts). The Gemara says that the source for the number of these blessings, nine, comes from the nine Azkoros -- the nine times that G-d's Name is mentioned in the prayer of Channa [Samuel 2: 1-10].

We read the story of Channa [Samuel 1:1-2:10] as the Haftorah for the first day of Rosh Hashanna. Channa was barren. She came to the Mishkan every year to cry her heart out. [The Mishkan, or Tabernacle, was originally built during the years in the Wilderness, and was set up in Shilo during the time of the story of Channa. It eventually gave way to the Beis HaMikdash.] Channa had to suffer the humiliation of her husband having a second wife who was blessed with children, and who taunted Channa over her inability to have children, though for a noble reason (because she wanted to inspire Channa to pray more). Channa's prayers were finally answered on Rosh Hashanna. She eventually gave birth to a son who grew up to become the great prophet Samuel.

The story of Channa contains a lesson that is so vital and central to the message of Rosh Hashanna that not only do we read this Haftorah on the first day of Rosh Hashanna, but the whole Tefillas Mussaf (Additional Prayer) was structured around the nine mentions of G-d's name in Channa's prayer. What is so important about this episode that causes us to base the central prayer of Rosh Hashanna on the prayer of Channa? An analysis of Channa's prayer reveals that it emphasizes that life is full of changing fortunes. Channa tells us "...while the barren woman has born seven, she that had many children has been bereaved (2:5)". She describes the fact that in the past she was barren and her co-wife, Penina had many children. But now Channa has 7 children and when each baby was born to Channa, Penina lost a child.

G-d makes some people poor and he makes some people rich. He makes the haughty low and the humble high. Fortunes keep changing.

[Over the last few weeks, I have found a new "mussar sefer" (book on ethics) which has done a wealth of good for me. The "mussar sefer" is called the Business Section of the newspaper. One reads of people and institutions that were riding high and suddenly find that their fortunes have turned. Other people who had nothing, are suddenly overnight millionaires.] Channa cautions and says (2:3) "Al Tarbu t'dabru gevoha gevoha..." [You mighty ones -- don't speak with haughtiness] "...Keshes Giborim chatim, v'nichsalim ozru chayil" [because you may fall and the weak will be girded with strength] (2:4).

This is Channa's message to the Jewish People on Rosh Hashanna: Life is so fickle. Fortunes are so fragile. Rosh Hashanna is an unbelievably scary day!

Emotionally, Rosh Hashanna is one of the most difficult days of the year. We can deal with Yom Kippur. We do not eat. It is a day of Mercy. We separate ourselves from the rest of the world and we pour our hearts out. But what are we supposed to do on Rosh Hashanna? Rosh Hashanna is the Yom HaDin [the Day of Judgment]. Everything is riding on this day. And yet there is an obligation to observe this day as a Festival -- looking and acting and eating like a Yom Tov. How does one cope with this dichotomy? Rav Tzadok HaCohen (1823-1900; Chassidic Sage and thinker; one of leading Torah scholars in the 19th century; author of Pri Tzadik) points out that the Shevarim and Teruahs, which are the broken sounds of the shofar (representing the crying out of a broken spirit), must always be sandwiched between two Tekiahs. The firm, unbroken, Tekiah sound represents Simcha [joy]. This, Rav Tzadok says, captures the theme of the day. On the exterior, we must act and feel like it is a Yom Tov. But on the interior -- between the Tekios -- we must have a terrible, terrible, fear: a fear that anything can happen.

If anyone doubts this for a minute, they just need to think back about these past few years. Think back on what happened in the world, what happened to individuals, what happened to communities. It is nothing less than frightening!

This is what Channa is trying to tell us. For some people, this year will bring the greatest sorrow... and for some people this year will be one of "the barren woman turning into a mother of seven".

Chaza"l say that the 100 Shofar blasts which we blow on Rosh Hashanna correspond to the 100 cries that Siro's mother cried on the day of battle [Shoftim 5:28-30, based on Medrash]. Rav Schwab asked, what is the significance of associating our Shofar blasts to the wailings of Rav Siro's mother? Rav Schwab explained that the wailings of Siro's mother represented the uncertainty of the future. If Siro would come back victorious, this would represent the greatest triumph of his military career. On the other hand, he might come back in a coffin. Siro's mother did not know which scenario would occur, so she wailed out of uncertainty and fear.

Life and Death. Success and Failure. On Rosh Hashanna, everything lies in the balance of Judgment -- nothing less than totally changing or fates. And yet, we as Jews, have to surround these emotions with the Tekiah -- the firm blast of confidence.

We can not wear our emotions on our sleeve. But we must realize that what will be determined on this day is nothing less than the fate of our lives, of our family's lives, of our community's lives, and indeed the life of the entire world. Anything can happen. This is what Channa is telling us. There are no givens, there are no "Chazakahs" [presumed right based on historical precedent], nothing can be taken for granted.

May it be G-d's will that we as a community, together with the entire House of Israel, be written for a good, lengthy, and peaceful life.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington
DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman;
Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

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From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] Sent: September 24, 2003 3:49 PM To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org Subject: daf-hashavua Rosh Hashanah 5764/2003

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Rosh Hashanah Vol 16 No 1 27 September 2003 1 Tishri 5764

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Rosh Hashanah 5764

by CHIEF RABBI DR JONATHAN SACKS

There are many lovely explanations for why we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, but one of the most powerful is given by Moses Maimonides, whose 800th yearzeit we will commemorate in the coming year. For Maimonides the shofar is G-d's alarm clock, waking us up from the "slumber" in which we spend many of our days. What did he mean? G-d's greatest gift to us is time, and He gives it to us on equal terms. Whether we are rich or poor, there are still only 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week and a span of years that is all too short. Often we spend our time on things that in Maimonides' words "neither help nor save." How many people looking back on a lifetime, say, "I wish I had spent more time at committee meetings"? By contrast, how many say, "I wish I had spent

more time with my children, or helping others, or simply enjoying being alive"? Sometimes we can be so busy making a living that we hardly have time to live.

Experts on time management speak about two types of activity, the urgent and the important. Often our days are spent on the urgent, and we lose out on the important. I remember a conversation with someone who had been a workaholic, busy seven days a week. As a result of a personal crisis he decided to keep Shabbat. He later told me it was the best decision he ever made. "Now," he said, "I have time for my wife and child and for my friends. Going to Shul has made me part of community. The strange thing is that the work still gets done, in six days not seven." Shabbat teaches us to take time for what is important even though it isn't urgent.

Thirty years ago, when technology was less advanced, most people who wrote about the future saw it as an age of leisure when we would have far more free time. It has not happened that way. We seem more pressurised than ever and less relaxed. Mobile phones, e-mails and pocket computers mean that we are constantly on call. As Wordsworth said, "The world is too much with us; late and soon/Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." The Psalmist put it best: "Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are when we number our days. Asking to be written in the book of life, we think about life and how we use it.

In this context the three key words of the Unetaneh Tokef prayer are fundamental: teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah. Teshuvah is about our relationship with ourself. Tefillah is about our relationship with G-d. Tzedakah is about our relationship with other people.

Teshuvah means not only "repentance" but also "returning" - to our roots, our faith, our people's history and our vocation as heirs to those who stood at Sinai more than three thousand years ago. Teshuvah asks us: did we grow in the past year or did we stand still? Did we study the texts of our heritage? Did we keep one more mitzvah? Did we live fully and confidently as Jews? Teshuvah is our satellite navigation system giving us a direction in life.

Tefillah means prayer. It is our conversation with G-d. We speak, but if we are wise we also listen, to the voice of G-d as refracted through the prayers of a hundred generations of our ancestors. Tefillah is less about asking G-d for what we want, more about asking G-d to teach us what to want. A new car? A better job? An exotic holiday? Our prayers do not speak about these things because life is about more than these things. It is less about what we own than about what we do and who we aspire to be. We speak about forgiveness, and about G-d's presence in our lives. We remind ourselves that, short though our time on earth is, by connecting with G-d we touch eternity. Tefillah is our mobile phone to heaven.

Tzedakah is about the good we do for others. Sir Moses Montefiore was one of the great figures of Victorian Jewry. He was a wealthy man and devoted much of his long life to serving the Jewish people in Britain and worldwide (he built the windmill in Jerusalem, and the area of which it is a part - Yemin Moshe - is named after him). He was also highly respected in British society and The Times devoted leaders to him on his ninety-ninth and hundredth birthday. Someone once asked him how much he was worth, and he gave him a figure. "But," said the questioner, "I know you own more than that." "You didn't ask me what I own but what I am worth. The figure I gave you was how much money I have given this year to charity, because we are worth what we are willing to share with others." That is tzedakah.

Certain mitzvot in Judaism are rehearsals for a time to come. Shabbat is a rehearsal for the messianic age when strife will end and peace reign. Yom Kippur - when we do not eat or drink or engage in physical pleasure, and when there is a custom to wear kittel like a shroud - is a dress rehearsal for death. It forces us to ask the ultimate question: what did I do in my life that was worthwhile? Did waste time or did I share it, with my faith, with G-d, and with those in need? Knowing that none of us will live forever, we ask G-d for another year: to grow, to pray and to give. That is what Maimonides meant when he called the shofar G-d's alarm call, asking us not to slumber through life but to use it to bring blessings. May the Almighty bless us, our families and the Jewish people, and may He write us all in the Book of Life.

Produced by the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue.

Editor: Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis <mailto:editordaf@brijnet.org> Address: Finchley Synagogue, Kinloss Gardens, London N3 3DU

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Calendars for the Jewish Year 5764 September '03 - September '04
EREV ROSH HASHANAH 29 ELUL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 26

REPENTANCE, PRAYER AND CHARITY AVERT THE EVIL DECREE!
MAY THE NEW YEAR OF 5764 AND ITS BLESSINGS COMMENCE!

(Some are accustomed to fast until noon.) We begin saying the many Selichos of Erev Rosh HaShanah that include iZchor Brišî, before the pre-dawn sky begins to brighten; Tachanun during Selichos but not during morning or afternoon prayers. One who arose before dawn and at that time washed his hands in the prescribed manner, three times alternately on each hand, must wash them again three times after dawn (see Mishne Brurah on Orach Chaim 4:14). We say Lamenatzayach. We do not sound the Shofar at all during the day to make a distinction between the Shofar of Elul and the obligatory Shofar of Rosh HaShanah; Hatoras Nedorim. [Harav Yosef Eliahu Henkin zt"l noted: The Chazzan and the Baal T'kiah (the one who sounds the shofar) must be Torah observant, pious individuals who understand the meaning of what they are saying and doing. The melodies used should not distort or interfere with the words of the prayers. Willful and blatant transgressors may not be permitted to represent the congregation. During the rest of the year, too, and especially, during the Ten Days of Repentance, such people should not lead public prayer even if they are mourners or have a Yahrzeit ó for their prayers are of no benefit to the deceased.]

[Rav Henkin noted that in preparing for Shabbos, one should be certain that all food that is to be kept warm, must be completely cooked before candle-lighting time. The possibility of permitting food that is totally raw to be placed on a covered flame immediately before candle-lighting should not be used nowadays. If food is not completely cooked before Shabbos, there is a strong possibility that one might, Heaven forbid, come to violate the Torah prohibition against cooking on Shabbos.

Hot cooked foods that are to be kept warm must be put in their proper place before candle-lighting.

We take haircuts and bathe in honor of the approaching holiday.

Immersion in a Mikveh, preferably after midday, is appropriate so that we may enter the Day of Judgement in a state of holiness and purity.

CANDLE-LIGHTING

We light candles at the proper time before Shabbos, 20 minutes before sunset. The Brachos over candle-lighting are iLhadlik Ner Shel Shabbos veYom Tovî and iShehecheyanuî. It is a good habit to give Tzedakah before candle-lighting for Shabbos and Yom Tov (an Ezras Torah pushka may be obtained for this purpose). It is proper that at this time a woman pray for sons who will be Torah luminaries (Mishne Brurah 263:2).

FIRST DAY ROSH HASHANAH THE HOLY SHABBOS

1 TISHREI, FRIDAY EVENING, SEPT. 26

One comes to Shul on Friday afternoon, the eve of Rosh HaShanah with reverence and trepidation for the approaching Divine Judgment. One should be particularly careful throughout the entire year to respond with Amen in the correct manner. For example, one should not answer Amen in a hasty fashion before the Chazzan completes the entirety of the Bracha. (See Orach Chaim 124 for additional laws regarding the response of Amen. A warning to the Chazzan (during the repetition of the Shemonah Esrei) not to start the next bracha until most of the congregation answered amen. Note that the prohibition against speaking during the Chazzan's repetition of the Shemonah Esrei is a very serious one.

iRabbeinu Asher (the Rosh) wrote that during the Ten Days of Repentance, one should read the Letter of Repentance by Rabbeinu Yonah. The Ari z"l wrote that one is obligated to study Mussar (the study of personal behavior) works throughout the entire year. The Vilna Gaon expressed the same idea throughout his commentary to Mishlei and it is related in the work Maaseh Rav (which details the personal habits of the Vilna Gaon) that this was the custom of the Gaon. At the very least, during these days, everyone should attempt to follow the custom of the Zohar which states that each night before one goes to sleep, one should repent, lament his sins, and examine his conduct with scrutiny. See the work

Yaaros Dvash (by R. Yonoson Eibshitz) volume 1, Drush I, wherein it states that the seven days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are representative of each of the days of the week throughout the entire year. Thus, on that Sunday one does Teshuvah for every Sunday of the year, on Monday, for every Monday, etc." (Mishne Brurah 603:2).

WELCOMING THE SHABBOS

Nusach Ashkenaz begins with Mizmor Shir Leyom HaShabbos and Hashem Malach, followed by Mourner's Kaddish (neither Lechu Neranana nor Bameh Madlikin is said). (Since there are many variant customs among those who follow Nusach Sefard, each congregation must follow its own Minhag in these matters.)

MAARIV

Following the Machzor we say Borchu...; Ufros...; V'Shamru...; Tiku; followed by Half-Kaddish. We say Leíayla Leíayla Mikol Birchasa (Leíayla or UíLayla) in every Kaddish until after Yom Kippur. In the Shemonah Esrei for Rosh HaShanah we add Zochrainu, Mi Chomocha, Uksov and Basefer (if any of these were omitted, one does not have to repeat the Shemonah Esrei). The third Bracha is Hamelech Hakodosh (if one says the usual Hakel Hakodosh and did not immediately correct it, the Shemonah Esrei must be repeated over again. This holds true throughout the Ten Days until after Yom Kippur). Atah vechartanu. We add all the pertinent additions for Shabbos that are found in the Machzor; we say: Es Yom HaShabbos Haze ViEs Yom Hazikuron Haze Yom Zichron Teruah Beha'avahî. The conclusion of the blessing of Rosh HaShanah and Shabbos is: iMekadesh HaShabos ViYisroel Veyom Hazikoronî. The conclusion of the final Bracha afteriBesefer Chaim...î is the usual: iHamevorech es Amo Yisroel Bashalomî (many conclude with iOseh Hashalomî). We say: iVayechuluî and iMagen Avotî which containsiHamelech Hakodoshî and which concludes only with iMekadesh Hashabbosî. (According to Nusach Sefard, the congregation says Ledovid Mizmor); Kaddish Tiskabel (the conclusion of every Kaddish during these ten days is iOseh Hashalomî etc); Kiddush of Rosh HaShanah: Asher Bochar; mentioning Shabbos, concluding with iMekadesh HaShabbos ViYisroel Veyom Hazikoronî; Shehecheyonu; Aleinu; Ledovid Ori; Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim: 132) states: iWe recite at the end of each service Aleinu in a standing position. One should be careful to say this prayer with proper intent.î The Mishneh Brurah (subparagraph 8) makes the following comment: iOne should say Aleinu with great awe and trepidation for the entire Heavenly Host is listening. The Holy One, Blessed be He, stands with his Heavenly contingent and they respond, eHappy is the people who are in such a case, happy is the people whose G-d is the L-rd.î

On the first night, after services we bless each other with:

iMay you be inscribed and sealed for a good yearî (according to the Vilna Gaon we do not say iand sealedî on Rosh HaShanah).

At home, Kiddush, as above; ritual washing of hands, followed by the Brachos Al Natilas Yadayim and Hamotzi. To symbolize a sweet year we dip the challah in honey before eating it. We also dip a piece of apple into honey and eat it after making the Bracha Borai Pri Haetz. We then say, iMay it be Your will our G-D and G-D of our fathers that You renew for us a good, sweet year.î Other symbolic foods are eaten such as a bit of meat of a ram's head, or of the head of a fish or fowl, followed by statements such as, iMay it be Your will that we be raised high and proud like the head and not lowly like the tail.î We eat grated carrots (the Yiddish word for carrots eMehrenî can be translated as emultiplyingî) and say, iMay it be Your will that we be fruitful and multiplyî and iMay it be Your will that our merits increase.î (The Talmud states that it is proper to eat a variety of symbolic foods on the night of Rosh HaShanah. The Sefardim still eat many of the symbolic foods that are mentioned in the Talmud). iAll of these symbolic acts are performed with the intent of exhibiting propitious signs of a good new year. It is, therefore, obvious that one should strive to refrain from anger during this time period. This is not merely in order to avoid the very serious prohibition against anger, but also in order to usher in the new year in a proper state of mind. One should maintain a cheerful disposition and have a secure trust in HaShem, while aspiring to sincere repentance and good deeds." [From the Chayei Adam quoted by the Mishne Brurah: 583: subparagraph 5]. In Birchasa Hamazon we say iRetzeî and iYaaleh Veyavoî.

1 TISHREI, SHABBOS MORNING, SEPT. 27

SHACHRIS

(One should not alter the special traditional melodies associated with Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur). The Chazzan wears a Kittel under his Tallis

(some have the custom that all the congregants wear the Kittel on Rosh HaShanah). The custom is to say the Shir Hayichud (for Shabbos); Anim Zmiros; the Psalm of the Day and Ledovid Ori followed by Mourner's Kaddish and Adon Olam; the regular morning Brachos, followed by the customary morning order: Psukei D'zimra; Nishmas; Hamelech; Yishtabach; Half-Kaddish (according to Nusach Sefard, Shir Hamaalos Mimaamakim is said between Yishtabach and the Half-Kaddish); Borchu; Birchas Yotzer; (with the customary additions ó Piyutim for Rosh HaShanah); Hakol Yoducha; Kel Adon; Ahava Rabba; Krias Shma; [Rav Henkin noted that according to the Talmud, the Chazzan should say the entire text of the Brachos of the Shema, both morning and evening, in an audible voice (as is the custom of the Sefardim). The Ashkenazim are lenient in this matter and have the Chazzan say only part of the Brachos audibly; the essence being the beginning and the end of each Bracha. A Chazzan who says the ending of Gual Yisroel in an inaudible voice, is violating the Talmud's ruling. Therefore it is a Mitzvah to correct this matter, and to insist that the Chazzan begin Yotzer Or and conclude Gual Yisroel in an audible voice the entire year]; Shemonah Esrei of Rosh HaShanah with insertions for Shabbos.

CHAZZAN'S REPETITION

The customary Piyutim are said (Avinu Malkaynu is omitted after the Shemonah Esrei); Kaddish Tiskabel; iAin Kamochoi (Nusach Sefard: iAta Horaisai); open Aron; (13 Middos and the special Ribono Shel Olam for Rosh HaShanah are not said on Shabbos); we take out two Sifrei Torah; Brich Shmey; Shema Yisroel; Echod; kadosh VaNora; Gadlu; Al Hakol.

TORAH READING

Veyazor veYagen; there are seven Aliyahs in Parshas Vayeira (Genesis: 21:1-34). The second Sefer Torah is placed next to the first and Half-Kaddish is said. The Maftir reads from the second Sefer Torah in Parshas Pinchas (Numbers 29:1-6). The Haftarah is read from Samuel I: 1:1-2:10. In the Brachos after the Haftarah, we say iYom HaShabbos HazeH ViYom Hazikoron Hazehi and we conclude: iMekadesh HaShabbos ViYisroel V'yom Hazikoron. We do not blow Shofar; Yekum Peurkan; Ashrei; Mizmor Ledovid; we return the Sifrei Torah to the Aron.

MUSSAF

The Chazzan says Hinenni; Half-Kaddish; in the Shemonah Esrei of Mussaf we say Ve'es Musfei Yom HaShabbos Haze ViYom Hazikuron Haze and Uvayom HaShabbos and Uvachodesh Hashvii.

CHAZZAN'S REPETITION

As is customary: We say Hayom Haras Olam (We do not blow Shofar and we do not say Areshes Sefasainu.)

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

The Kohanim wash their hands until the wrist before the Chazzan reaches Retzei. The custom is for a Levi (if there is no Levi, then a first-born) to pour the water on the Kohen's hands.

At Retzei the Kohanim begin to mount the platform and the congregation says iVasearevi. After the Chazzan says iNaeh Lahodosi he says iElokeinu Valokei Avoeinu Borchenui... in a whisper. When he reaches the word iKohanimi he says it in a loud voice to which the congregation responds: iAm Kedoshecha Kamuri after which the Kohanim pronounce the Bracha: iAsher Kidshanu Bikkushaso Shel Aharon...i The Chazzan prompts the Kohanim with the Priestly Blessing, word by word, and they repeat each word after him, concluding immediately with Veyishmirecha, Vechuneka and Shalom. Because it is Shabbos the prayers Ribono Shel Olam and Yehi Razon are omitted. Kaddish Tiskabel; Ein Kaleikanu; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish. If the Daily Psalm or Ledovid Ori were omitted before services, they should be recited now; Adon Olam.

At home, Kiddush over wine: Zachor es Yom HaShabbos... etc., followed by iTiku Bachodeshi followed by Borei Pri Hagafen. We eat a typical Yom Tov meal, followed by Birkas HaMazon, which includes iRetzei and iYaaleh Veyavo.

We should attempt to remain awake the entire day of Rosh HaShanah, spending the day in the study of Torah and in the recitation of Tehillim.

MINCHA

Ashrei; Uva Letzion; Half-Kaddish; Torah Reading; three Aliyahs in Parshas Haazinu; Shemonah Esrei of Rosh HaShanah with insertions for Shabbos; according to Nusach Ashkenaz, Shalom Rav; the Chazzan's Repetition (no Avinu Malkeinu or Tzidkascha Tzedek); Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

One should advise women who have not yet said Havdalah in Maariv to say iBaruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lekodeshi before lighting candles or

doing some other type of activity that is permitted on Yom Tov but is forbidden on Shabbos.

SECOND DAY ROSH HASHANAH

2 TISHREI, MOTZIE SHABBOS, SEPT. 27

DEPARTURE OF SHABBOS

(We wait seventy-two minutes after sunset before lighting candles. The same length of time applies for all preparations for the second day. In extenuating circumstances, an hour's wait is sufficient.) The Brachos over the candle-lighting are Lehadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov and Shehecheyanu (it is proper for women to wear a new garment or display a new fruit at candle-lighting so that the Shehecheyanu applies to these as well. The fruit may not be eaten before Kiddush).

MAARIV

Borchu...; Ufros...; Tiku... followed by Half-Kaddish; the Shemonah Esrei of Rosh HaShanah (with all of the appropriate additions: Zachreinu etc.); we add iVatodiaynu to mark the end of Shabbos. (According to Nusach Sefard, the congregation says Ledavid Mizmor after the Shemonah Esrei); Kaddish Tiskabel; Kiddush; Borei Pri Hagafen; Asher Bochar; Borei Meioiri Ha'aysh; Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lekodesh; and Shehecheyanu; Aleinu; Ledovid Ori; Kaddish; Adon Olam (all as on the previous day). Kiddush at home.

KIDDUSH

On the second night we bring to the table a new fruit or we wear a new garment so that the Bracha Shehecheyanu that we recite at the end of Kiddush applies to these as well. (If one utilized a new fruit for this purpose, it should be eaten immediately after Kiddush. It is advisable that even in Shul the person making Kiddush on the second night should wear a new garment. If one forgot to prepare a new fruit or garment he may still make the Shehecheyanu).

2 TISHREI, SUN. MORNING, SEPT. 28

SHACHRIS

As on the previous day, we commence with the Shir Hayichud (for the first day of the week); Anim Zmiros; the Psalm of the Day and Ledovid Ori followed by Mourner's Kaddish and Adon Olam; the regular morning Brachos, followed by the customary morning order; Psukei Dezimra; Nishmas; Hamelech; Yishtabach; Half-Kaddish (according to Nusach Sefard, Shir Hamaalos Mimaamakim is said between Yishtabach and the Half-Kaddish); Borchu; Birchas Yotzer... (with the customary additions ó Piyutim for the Second Day of Rosh HaShanah); Hameir Laifaret; Ahava Rabba; Shema; Shemonah Esrei; repetition by the Chazzan; Avinu Malkeinu; Kaddish Tiskabel; iAin Kamochoi; open Aron; 13 Middos; followed by the special Ribono Shel Olam for Rosh HaShanah; We take out two Sifrei Torah; Brich Shmei; Shema Yisroel; Echod; Kadosh Venora; Gadlu; Al Hakol; Veyazor Veyagen. There are five Aliyahs in the first Sefer Torah. We read again from Parshas Vayeira continuing from Genesis 22:1 - 24 (from iVayahi Achar Hadvorimi until the end of the Parsha); Half-Kaddish; in the second Sefer Torah we read the same Maftir as yesterday: Numbers 29:1-6 (Parshas Pinchas Uvachodesh Hashviyi); Haftarah from Jeremiah 31:1-19; Brachos after the Haftarah.

SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

After the reading from the Torah we blow the Shofar. The custom is to appoint a prompter, who stands by the side of the Baal T'kiah and calls out the proper order of Takios. The prompter must be a Torah scholar who is totally familiar with the laws of the Shofar. Before sounding the Shofar, we recite iLamenatzayachi (Psalm 47) seven times, followed by the verses whose first letters spell out iKra Satan "destroy Satan." The Baal T'kiah makes the Brachos:

iLishmoa Kol Shofari and iShehecheyanu. He must bear in mind that he is making the Brachos and sounding the Shofar on behalf of all those who are listening.

The Baal T'kiah blows three sets each of Tashrat, Tashat, and Tarat. The prompter must listen carefully for any possible deviation from the Halacha, which would require a repetition of any of the sounds.

One may not talk during the first thirty sounds, and even afterwards one should not talk until the conclusion of all one hundred sounds at the end of services. After these first thirty blasts the Baal T'kiah leads the congregation in: Ashrei Haam Yodei Sruah; Ashrei Yoshvei Veisecha; and Ledavid; we return the Sifrei Torah to the ark.) [Rav Henkin noted that one may not eat before hearing the Shofar sounded. However if one feels weak, he may make Kiddush and taste some food immediately after the first thirty blasts].

MUSSAF

The Chazzan says Hinini; Half-Kaddish; in the Shemonah Esrei of Mussaf we say iVe'es Musfei Yom Hazikuron Hazei and iUvachodesh Hashvivi.

CHAZZAN'S REPETITION

Following our custom, we blow Tashrat, Tashat, and Tarat after Malchiyos, Zichronos and Shofros, and we say after each group of Shofar blasts, iHayom Haras Olami and iAreshes Sefasainu. (Nusach Sefard blows Shofar during the silent Shemonah Esrei.)

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

[Rav Henkin noted that in some congregations the Kohanim repeat the final word of each of the verses that compose the Bracha (Veyishmirecha, Vechuneka, Shalom), immediately after the Chazzan. This is done so as to avoid the possible problem of an undue interruption within the Blessing. The prayers that are found in the Machzor are then recited by the congregation after the conclusion of the entire Priestly Blessing.] Kaddish Tiskabel; (before the Chazzan says the word iTiskabeli the Baal T'kiah sounds Tashrat, Tashat, and Tarat which consist of ten sounds); Ein Kaleikanu; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish; then we blow an additional thirty sounds to make a total of one hundred sounds. (Those who followed Nusach Sefard and blew thirty sounds during the silent Mussaf blow only ten additional sounds at the end of the service). If the Daily Psalm or Ledovid Ori were omitted before services, they should be recited now; Adon Olam.

MINCHA

Ashrei; Uva Letzion; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Rosh HaShanah; according to Nusach Ashkenaz n Shalom Rav; the Chazzan's Repetition; Avinu Malkeinu; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

The prevailing custom is to go to a river (or other body of water) to say Tashlich; some add the additional prayers and requests that are found in the Machzor. If one did not say Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, he may do so throughout the Ten Days of Repentance.

THE NIGHT FOLLOWING ROSH HASHANAH

3 TISHREI, SUNDAY NIGHT, SEPT. 28

(It is proper to wait 72 minutes after sunset [under extenuating circumstances, 60 minutes] before beginning Maariv, making Havdalah, or doing work. This applies to every night that follows Shabbos or Yom Tov).

MAARIV

We begin Vehu Rachum; Barchu; weekday Shemonah Esrei: iZachreinu; iMi Chamocha and iHamelech Hakadosh the additions in Shemonah Esrei apply throughout the Ten Days of Repentance. (See our instructions for the first night of Rosh HaShanah concerning the omission of these additions); iAtah Chonantanu; iHamelech Hamishpati (we add Hamelech Hamishpat during every weekday Shemonah Esrei of the Ten Days of Repentance. If one omitted it he does not have to repeat the Shemonah Esrei. (If one remembered that he omitted the words iHamelech Hamishpati immediately at the conclusion of the Blessing, he should say the words iHamelech Hamishpati then.); iUchsovi; iB'sefer Chaimi; Kaddish Tiskabel; Havdalah n No candle or spices n only the Brachos iBorei Pri Hagafen and iHamavdil; Aleinu; Ledovid Ori; Mourner's Kaddish.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah at home as in Shul.

(Rav Henkin noted that the most appropriate time to begin the morning prayers is in the following fashion: The introductory Bracha to Psukei Dazimra, iBaruch Sheamar should be begun twenty minutes before sunrise, so that the Shema and its final Bracha iGa-al Yisroel are completed by sunrise, and the Shemonah Esrei begins exactly at sunrise, in the fashion of the iVasikini n the ancient pietists whose lives revolved around the performance of Mitzvos in the most exemplary fashion possible).

The earliest time that one may put on Tefillin and recite the Shemonah Esrei is one hour before sunrise (this is the time when there is enough natural illumination to recognize a casual acquaintance from a distance of six to eight feet). In extenuating circumstances, one may put on Tefillin and recite the Shemonah Esrei 72 minutes before sunrise. However, earlier than 72 minutes before sunrise, one cannot fulfill the Mitzvos of Tefillin, the morning Shema or the morning Shemonah Esrei.]

FAST OF GEDALIAH

3 TISHREI, MONDAY, SEPT. 29,

This is a Public Fast Day. Selichos are said before the regular morning service throughout the days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, except for Shabbos (one should attempt to begin the Selichos before the pre-dawn sky begins to brighten); the regular morning service; (according

to Nusach Sefard, Shir Hamaalos Mimaamakim is said between Yishtabach and the Half-Kaddish throughout the Ten Days of Repentance); in the Shemonah Esrei: Zachreinu, Mi Chamocha, Hamelech Hakadosh, Hamelech Hamishpat, Uksov and Basefer (all these are repeated during the Chazzan's Repetition of the Shemonah Esrei); the Chazzan says Aneinu between Goel and Refaenu; (If the Chazzan forgot to say Aneinu here; he should add it during Shomeah Tfilah as an individual does at Mincha.); Avinu Malkeinu (this is said after the Chazzan's Repetition of the Shemonah Esrei at Shacharis and Mincha throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, except for Mincha of Erev Shabbos, Shabbos and the entire day of Erev Yom Kippur); Tachanun (Vehu Rachum); Half-Kaddish; iKai Erech Apayim; (some have the custom of saying the 13 Middos whenever we take out the Sifrei Torah throughout the Ten Days of Repentance); three Aliyahs in the usual reading for Public Fasts, iVayichali in Parshas Ki Sisa (32:11-14, 34:1-10); Half-Kaddish; series of iYehi Ratzon...; it is proper to concentrate on listening to the reading of the iYehi Ratzon... and to answer iAmen after the Chazzan, for they are extra-ordinary pleas for the welfare of iKlal Yisroel and the sustenance of its sages (Shar Efraim); Yehalilu; Ashrei; Lamenatzayach; Uva Letzion; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Psalm of the Day; Ledovid Ori; Mourner's Kaddish.

MINCHA

Ashrei; Half-Kaddish; we take out a Sefer Torah (some say 13 Middos); if there are at least six people present who are fasting, we have three Aliyahs in iVayichali as in the morning; [Rav Henkin noted that there are those who read from iVayichali even if there are only three men present who are fasting. Those three men who are fasting are called to the Torah. This leniency applies only to the four Fast Days mentioned by the Prophets (Tzom Gedaliah, the Tenth of Teves the Seventeenth of Tamuz, and Tisha B'Av). It does not extend to Taanis Esther or to Public Fasts that are decreed by a Kehillah because of a state of emergency.] the third Aliyah is the Maftir; no Half-Kaddish after the Torah is read. The Haftarah iDirshui: Isaiah: 55:6-56:8, is the usual one for the afternoons of Public Fasts (except for Yom Kippur); Brachos after the Haftarah until iMogen David; Yehalilu; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei including Zachreinu, Mi Chamocha; Hamelech Hakadosh; Hamelech Hamishpat; Aneinu in iShema Koleinu; Uksov; Sim Shalom and B'sefer.

CHAZZAN'S REPETITION

As in the morning, the Chazzan adds all the special insertions of the Repentance, also saying Aneinu between Goel and Refaenu, and adding Birkas Kohanim before Sim Shalom; Avinu Malkeinu; Tachanun; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

6 TISHREI, THURSDAY, OCT. 2

(Torah Reading.) We say the Selichos for the Fifth Day of Atonement which includes the special Selicha of 13 Middos n the Thirteen Divine Attributes. On Friday, 7 Tishrei the Selichos for the Fourth Day of Atonement are said. (There are those who do not make this change and read the Selichos in order.)

http://www.aish.com/hhRosh/hhRoshDefault/abcs_of_rosh_hashana.asp
ABC'S OF ROSH HASHANA

by Research from RABBI MOSHE LAZERUS

The opportunity of Rosh Hashana is too important to leave things to chance. Here's a handy checklist of what you'll need to know.

PRE-ROSH HASHANA

A key component of Rosh Hashana preparation is to ask for forgiveness from anyone one may have wronged during the previous year. To whatever extent possible, we want to begin the year with a clean slate -- and without anyone harboring a grudge against us. One should also be quick to forgive those who have wronged him.

Many people have the custom to go to the mikveh before Rosh Hashana after midday. A mikveh, which has the power to purify from certain types of spiritual impurities, can be an important part of the teshuva process. Some have the custom of visiting a cemetery on the morning of Rosh Hashana and praying at the graves of the righteous. Of course, we do not pray "to" the righteous, but only to G-d who hears our prayers in the merit of the righteous.

The morning before Rosh Hashana, we perform "Hatarat Nedarim" -- annulling all vows. In Torah terms, saying something as simple as "I refuse to eat any more candy" can be considered a legal vow. Therefore, before Rosh Hashana, we annul any vows, whether they were made intentionally or not. This is done by standing in front of three adult males (or 10 if

available), and asking to be released from the vows that were made. The full text can be found in a Siddur or Rosh Hashana Machzor.

THE FESTIVE MEAL

During the High Holidays, a round challah is used -- symbolizing fullness and completion. After making the "Hamotzi" blessing, it is customary to dip the bread into honey -- symbolizing our prayer for a sweet new year. Then, after most of your slice of bread has been eaten, take an apple and dip it in honey. Make a blessing on the apple (since "Hamotzi" did not cover the apple) and eat a little bit of the apple. Then say, "May it be Your will, G-d, to renew us for a good and sweet new year." (OC 583)

Why do we ask for both a "good" AND "sweet" year? Doesn't the word "good" automatically include "sweet?"

Judaism teaches that everything happens for the good. It is all part of the divine will. Even things that may look "bad" in our eyes, are actually "good." So when we ask G-d that the year should be "sweet" (in addition to good), it is because we know that everything will be for the good. But we also ask that it be a "revealed" good -- i.e. one that tastes "sweet" to us.

On Rosh Hashana, we add the paragraph Ya'aleh V'yavo in Grace After Meals.

SYMBOLIC FOODS

On Rosh Hashana, we eat foods that symbolize good things we hope for in the coming year. We contemplate what these foods symbolize, and connect with the Source of all good things.

The symbolic foods are based on a word game which connects the name of a certain food, to a particular hope we have for the new year. Here is a list from the Talmud of symbolic foods customarily eaten on Rosh Hashana. (The food and its related meaning are written in capital letters.) After eating LEEK or CABBAGE, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our enemies be CUT OFF."

After eating BEETS, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our adversaries be REMOVED."

After eating DATES, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our enemies be FINISHED."

After eating GOURD, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that the decree of our sentence should be TORN apart, and may our merits be PROCLAIMED before You."

After eating POMEGRANATE, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our merits increase as the seeds of a POMEGRANATE."

After eating the HEAD of a sheep or fish, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that we be as the HEAD and not as the tail.

You can also use other foods and make up your own "May it be Your will..." For example, you could eat a raisin and celery, and ask G-d in the coming year for a "raise in salary" (raisin celery)!

ROSH HASHANA PRAYERS

Since there are so many unique prayers on Rosh Hashana, we use a special prayer book called a "Machzor."

In the "Amidah" and "Kiddush" for Rosh Hashana, we say the phrase Yom Teruah. However, if Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat, we say Zichron Teruah instead. (If one inadvertently said the wrong phrase, he needn't repeat the prayer.)

The supplication "Avinu Malkeinu" should be said on Rosh Hashana, except when Rosh Hashana and Shabbat coincide, since supplications are not said on Shabbat. If Rosh Hashana falls on a Friday, "Avinu Malkeinu" is not said at Mincha.

During the High Holidays, the curtain on the ark is changed into a white one, to symbolize that our "mistakes will be whitened like snow."

The chazan (cantor) for the High Holidays should not be chosen for his vocal talents alone. Ideally, the chazan should be over 30 years old, G-d fearing, learned in Torah, humble, and married. A learned man under 30 with the other qualifications is acceptable. Though it is preferable to allow an unfit chazan to lead services, rather than cause strife over the issue in the community.

Since it is a question as to whether the She'hechianu blessing should be said on the second day of Rosh Hashana, we are accustomed to eat a new fruit or wear a new garment and say She'hechianu upon it. When saying the She'hechianu, one should also have in mind the mitzvot of lighting candles, "Kiddush" and hearing the shofar.

THE SHOFAR

The essential mitzvah of Rosh Hashana is to hear the sounding of the shofar. The shofar blasts after the Torah Reading are called "Tekiot M'yushav."

The minimum Torah obligation is to hear nine blasts. However, there is a doubt whether the sound of the shofar should be a groaning type of cry (Shevarim), or a sobbing weep (Teruah), or a combination (Shevarim-Teruah). Therefore, we perform all three sounds, each preceded and followed by an unbroken blast, Tekiah. Three of each set results in 30 blasts total, which are necessary to remove all doubt that the Torah precept has been fulfilled.

It is customary to blow shofar in the same place that the Torah is read, so that the merit of the Torah will support us. The shofar should be blown during the daytime. In ancient times, when the Romans persecuted the Jews, the rabbis instituted blowing the shofar before Musaf, since the Romans had guards in the synagogues during the early morning.

The person who blows the shofar must stand. He should be instructed immediately before blowing to have intention to fulfill the obligation for all those listening. Similarly, all those listening should be reminded to have intention that their obligation is being fulfilled.

Before blowing, two blessings are recited: "to hear the sound of the shofar," and She'hechianu. Once the blessings have been made, one may not speak until the end of the shofar blowing.

Women may sound the shofar and say the blessing to accomplish the mitzvah. A child who is old enough to be educated regarding mitzvot is required to hear the shofar.

The shofar is not blown when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat.

The shofar used on Rosh Hashana should be a curved ram's horn, and longer than four inches. It is permitted to use the shofar of an animal not ritually slaughtered. After the fact, any shofar is acceptable except the horn of a cow, ox or an unkosher species of animal.

In the "Amidah" prayer of Musaf, there are three special blessings: Malchiot (praises to G-d the King), Zichronot (asking G-d to remember the merits of our Ancestors), and Shofrot (the significance of the shofar). During the chazan's repetition, we blow an additional 30 blasts in the various combinations.

It is the custom to blow 40 extra blasts at the end of services, bringing the total to 100. It is customary to prolong the final blast, which is called a Tekiah Gedolah.

OTHER CUSTOMS

It is customary to greet others as follows: "L'shana Tova -- Ketivah vi-chatima Tova." This means: "For a good year -- You should be written and sealed in the good (Book of Life)."

One should try not to sleep or go for idle walks on the day of Rosh Hashana. (The Arizal permits a nap in the afternoon.)

It is advisable to avoid marital relations, except if Rosh Hashana falls on the night of the wife's immersion.

If a Bris Milah falls on Rosh Hashana, it should be performed between the Torah reading and the shofar blowing.

TASHLICH

The "Tashlich" prayer is said on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashana by a pool of water that preferably has fish in it. These prayers are symbolic of the casting away of our mistakes. Of course, it is foolish to think you can rid sins by shaking out your pockets. Rather, the Jewish approach is deep introspection and commitment to change. Indeed, the whole idea of "Tashlich" is partly to commemorate the Midrash that says when Abraham went to the Akeida (binding of Isaac), he had to cross through water up to his neck

If Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbat, "Tashlich" is pushed off until the second day. If "Tashlich" was not said on Rosh Hashana itself, it may be said anytime during the Ten Days of Repentance.

Both the body of water and the fish are symbolic. In Talmudic literature Torah is represented as water. Just as fish can't live without water, so too a Jew can't live without Torah!

Also, the fact that fish's eyes never close serve to remind us that, so too, G-d's eyes (so to speak) never close; He knows of our every move.

This is the text of "Tashlich:"

Who is like You, G-d, who removes iniquity and overlooks transgression of the remainder of His inheritance. He doesn't remain angry forever because He desires kindness. He will return and He will be merciful to us, and He will conquer our iniquities, and He will cast them into the depths of the seas.

Give truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham like that you swore to our ancestors from long ago.

From the straits I called upon G-d, G-d answered me with expansiveness. G-d is with me, I will not be afraid, what can man do to me? G-d is with me

to help me, and I will see my foes (annihilated). It is better to take refuge in G-d than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in G-d, that to rely on nobles.

Many people also read Psalms 33 and 130.

http://www.aish.com/hhRosh/hhRoshDefault/Symbolism_of_the_Shofar.asp

SYMBOLISM OF THE SHOFAR

BY RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS

The shofar is the quintessential symbol of Rosh Hashana. Is it just a primitive trumpet? Or is there a much greater story to be told?

During the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana, notice there are three distinct sounds:

Tekiah -- one long, straight blast Shevarim -- three medium, wailing sounds Teruah -- 9 quick blasts in short succession Hear the Shofar Sounds

Let's examine each of these shofar sounds, and see how they relate to the different themes of Rosh Hashana.

THE TEKIAH SOUND

Rosh Hashana is the day of appreciating who G-d is. We then internalize that understanding so that it becomes a living, practical part of our everyday reality. G-d is all-powerful. G-d is the Creator. G-d is the Sustainer. G-d is the Supervisor. In short, G-d is King of the Universe. But for many of us, the idea of a "king" conjures up images of a greedy and power-hungry despot who wants to subjugate the masses for his selfish aims.

In Jewish tradition, a king is first and foremost a servant of the people. His only concern is that the people live in happiness and harmony. His decrees and laws are only for the good of the people, not for himself. (see Maimonides, Laws of Kings 2:6)

The object of Rosh Hashana is to crown G-d as our King. Tekiah -- the long, straight shofar blast -- is the sound of the King's coronation. In the Garden of Eden, Adam's first act was to proclaim G-d as King. And now, the shofar proclaims to ourselves and to the world: G-d is our King. We set our values straight and return to the reality of G-d as the One Who runs the world... guiding history, moving mountains, and caring for each and every human being individually and personally.

Maimonides adds one important qualification: It isn't enough that G-d is MY King alone. If ALL humanity doesn't recognize G-d as King, then there is something lacking in my own relationship with G-d. Part of my love for the Almighty is to help guide all people to an appreciation of Him. Of course this is largely an expression of my deep caring for others. But it also affects my own sense of G-d's all-encompassing Kingship.

THE SHEVARIM SOUND

When we think about the year gone by, we know deep down that we've failed to live up to our full potential. In the coming year, we yearn not to waste that opportunity ever again. The Kabbalists say that Shevarim -- three medium, wailing blasts -- is the sobbing cry of a Jewish heart -- yearning to connect, to grow, to achieve.

Every person has the ability to change and be great. This can be accomplished much faster than you ever dreamed of. The key is to pray from the bottom of your heart and ask G-d for the ability to become great. Don't let yourself be constrained by the past. You know you have enormous potential.

At the moment the shofar is blown, we cry out to G-d from the depths of our soul. This is the moment -- when our souls stand before the Almighty without any barriers -- that we can truly let go.

THE TERUAH SOUND

On Rosh Hashana, we need to wake up and be honest and objective about our lives: Who we are, where we've been, and which direction we're headed. The Teruah sound -- 9 quick blasts in short succession -- resembles an alarm clock, arousing us from our spiritual slumber. The shofar brings clarity, alertness, and focus.

The Talmud says: "When there's judgement from below, there's no need for judgement from above." What this means is that if we take the time to construct a sincere, realistic model of how we've fallen short in the past, and what we expect to change in the future, then G-d doesn't need to "wake us up" to what we already know.

G-d wants us to make an honest effort to maximize the gifts He gave us. You aren't expected to be anything you're not. But you can't hoodwink G-d, either.

The reason we lose touch and make mistakes is because we don't take the time everyday to reconnect with our deepest desires and essence. The solution is to spend time alone everyday, asking: Am I on track? Am I focused? Am I pursuing goals which will make the greatest overall difference in my life and in the world?

Make it a habit to keep in touch with yourself, and when Rosh Hashana comes around, the alarm clock of the shofar won't be nearly as jarring! #1 of 23 in the Aish.com High Holidays Rosh Hashana Series

From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Sent: September 19, 2003
Subject: Kol Torah The Rambam's Aseret Yemei Teshuva Roadmap
KOL TORAH A Student Publication of the Torah Academy of Bergen County Parshat Netzavim/Vayelech 23 Elul 5763 September 20, 2003
Vol.13 No.3

This week's issue of Kol Torah has been sponsored by the faculty of Torah Academy in honor of the engagement of our colleague, Rabbi Daniel Feldman, to Ms. Leah Feuerstein.

THE RAMBAM'S ASERET YEMEI TESHUVA ROADMAP BY RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

Introduction This week we shall analyze one of the richest passages in the Rambam's Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuva 3:4. A careful analysis of this remarkable passage reveals that the Rambam presents a roadmap for our actions and thoughts during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva.

The Wakeup Call Rambam writes, "Although Shofar blowing on Rosh Hashana is a divine decree, there is a hidden message of the Shofar. The message is for those who are spiritually asleep to awaken, carefully examine their behavior, perform Teshuva, and remember our Creator.

Those who forget the truth in the course of daily routines and devote all of their time to temporal matters that have no lasting impact, should ponder their souls, improve their actions and thoughts. Everyone should abandon his evil actions and thoughts." We may suggest four ways of understanding this passage in the Rambam. One possibility is that in order to fulfill the Mitzva of Tekiat Shofar properly one must be awakened to Teshuva by the Shofar blasts. Although one has fulfilled the base level Mitzva of Tekiat Shofar simply by hearing the Shofar, one must feel summoned to Teshuva in order to fulfill the Mitzva in the fullest sense. An analogy is the Mitzva to wave the Lulav on Sukkot. Although one fulfills the basic Mitzva of taking the Lulav even if one does not shake the Lulav, he does not fully fulfill the Mitzva if he only takes the Lulav but does not perform the Na'anuim (see Rambam Hilchot 7:9). Another possibility is that the Rambam is describing a Hiddur Mitzvat Tekiat Shofar. Hiddur Mitzvah is an enhanced level of fulfillment of the Mitzva similar to the Gemara's exhortation (Shabbat 133b) to make a beautiful Sukkah, Sefer Torah, and Tzitzit. Hiddur Mitzva might not only to the enhancement of the physical beauty of the Mitzva but also to a richer psycho-spiritual experience of the Mitzva. Another possibility is that the Rambam is engaging in Taamei. Hamizvot (explaining the reason for Mitzvot) as is common in his Mishneh Torah. Indeed, the Mishneh Torah is not restricted to discussion of pure Halachic details. For an extensive discussion of this point see Rav Dr. Yitzchak Twersky's discussion of this point in his Introduction to the Code of Maimonides pp.356-514. I should note that when I served as an assistant to Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik in 1985 he noticed that I was reading this book and remarked that "it is a very good book; Yitzchak knows the Rambam virtually by heart" (Rav Twersky zt"l was the son-in-law of Rav Soloveitchik zt"l). My student Dov Rosenblatt commented it is evident that the Rambam is not engaging merely in Taamei HaMitzvot due to the fact that immediately after the Rambam describes the role of the Shofar as a wakeup call, he writes "therefore, one should view himself throughout the year as half righteous and half sinful". Dov argues that the fact that the Rambam outlines a normative ramification of the wake up call, demonstrates that the Rambam's discussion is not simply an exercise in Taamei HaMitzvot. Dov, in turn, suggests that the Rambam teaches that an aspect of the Mitzva of Teshuva is to be inspired by Tekiat Shofar to do Teshuva. Indeed, Rav Soloveitchik (see footnote 3 to his essay "Kol Dodi Dofek") teaches that one is obligated to engage in Teshuva in two circumstances. First is that when one becomes aware that

he has committed a sin (see Rambam Hilchot Teshuva 11:1) and the second is in a time of difficulty (see Brachot 5a). The Aseret Yemei Teshuva is certainly a time of difficulty as Hashem is judging us whether we will live or die. Indeed, the Rambam describes in the Halacha presented before the passage we are studying (Hilchot Teshuva 3:3), how Hashem judges the world on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. According to Dov's approach, the juxtaposition of the Halachot in the Rambam makes perfect sense. This approach also might explain a passage in the Piyut that Ashkenazim recite on their first night of Slichot. They begin "B'Motzei Menuchah Kidamnucha Tefilla", after the rest [of Shabbat] we approach You with Tefillah. One could explain that the Motzei Menucha is not referring only to the Menuchah (rest) of the preceding Shabbat, but also to the complacency of our lives until this point. In other words, we are saying that we have abandoned our complacency and are ready to commit to serious contemplation and improvement. Perhaps this is a reason for the Ashkenazic custom to begin the recitation of the Slichot on Motzei Shabbat. This might also be the reason we break our routine and recite Slichot at odd hours. We thereby demonstrate our resolve to act differently and improve on our past behavior. Our analysis provides some insight into a celebrated incident that occurred in the shul in Washington Heights where Rav Moshe Soloveitchik served as the Mara D'atra. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik presents this story about his father in his essay entitled the *Ish Halacha*. The Baal Tokea in Rav Moshe's shul was a Lubavitcher Chassid and he was crying intensely immediately before Tekiat Shofar. Rav Moshe (a quintessential Litvak-Mitnaged) reacted to this display of emotion by asking the Chassid whether he cries before he takes a Lulav. His son Rav Yosef Dov, though, boldly stated (in a public Shiur delivered in Boston in August 1985) that he does not agree with his father. He felt that it is apparent from the Rambam that simple obedience to the Divine Will is an inadequate experience for Tekiat Shofar (although it might suffice for most Mitzvot according to Mitnagdic thought, see for example Teshuvot Nodah B'Yehudah 2:93 where Rav Yechezkel Landau opposes the recitation of L'Shem Yichud before performing Mitzvot, unlike Sephardim and Chassidim). The Rav strongly felt that the Rambam teaches that a richer religious experience is expected from us during the Tekiat Shofar. It seems that Rav Moshe Soloveitchik understands our passage as mere Taamei HaMitzvot. On the other hand, his son Rav Yosef Dov seems to interpret the Rambam in one of the other three possible alternatives that we suggested.

The Absence of Vidui on Rosh Hashanah Rav Soloveitchik (cited in Mesorah 13:9-10) poses the following basic question. If the Shofar is supposed to spur us to Teshuva, why do we not recite a Vidui on Rosh Hashanah? The Rambam (Hilchot Teshuva 1:1) stresses that Vidui is indispensable for proper Teshuva. The Rav answers that Rosh Hashanah is not the time for Teshuva. Rather, it is the time for Hirhur Teshuva, beginning to contemplate Teshuva. Accordingly, Tekiat Shofar is intended to spur Hirhur Teshuva, which is at the core of the Rosh Hashanah experience.

The Content of Hirhur Teshuva The Rambam continues, "Therefore one should view himself throughout the year as half righteous and half wicked. Similarly, one should view the entire world as half righteous and half wicked. Thus, if one commits even just one sin he has made himself and the entire world deserving of punishment and destruction. However, if he performs even just one Mitzvah he has saved himself and the world." One might say that the Rambam is describing the content of the Hirhur Teshuva of Rosh Hashanah. The intellectual infrastructure of Teshuva is the conviction that one's every action is vitally important to G-d. A sinner suffers from poor self-esteem as he thinks that his actions do not truly matter to G-d. However, a healthy self-esteem makes one realize that he is too important to sin.

The Aseret Yemei Teshuva The Rambam continues "...And because of this matter, all Jews increase their charitable donations, good deeds, and involvement in Mitzvot from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur, relative to the rest of the year." One might say that these actions concretize the Hirhur Teshuva of Rosh Hashanah. One increases his involvement in Mitzvot to reinforce the notion that one's good deeds truly matter to Hashem. We engage in the Mitzvot to tip the divine scales of justice in our favor and convince ourselves that we are worthy and worthwhile in the eyes of our Creator. Yom Kippur, accordingly, is the culmination of nine days of Hirhur Teshuva. Yom Kippur is the day when we actually perform Teshuva.

Slichot The Rambam concludes "...And all Jews arise at night during these ten days to pray in synagogues with words of supplication and conquering, until the light of day." One might say that Slichot also serves to reinforce the Hirhur Teshuva. The fact that we are empowered to add special prayers during this critical portion of the year to influence the divine judgment serves to enhance our spiritual self-esteem. Thus, the very fact that we recite Slichot is a motivation to Teshuva. Indeed, many Sephardic communities have the practice to blow Shofar during the recitation of Slichot. This custom is in accordance with the Rambam who records the practice to recite Slichot in the same Halacha where he discusses how Tekiat Shofar serves as a spiritual wake up call. We suggest that the recitation of Slichot also serves as a wake up call to Teshuva. Indeed, the Sephardim begin Slichot every day with the following thought "son of man, why are you sleeping, wake up and call [to G-d] in supplications."

Conclusion Tekiat Shofar, the recitation of Slichot, and performing more Mitzvot all serve to spur Hirhur Teshuva during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva. Yom Kippur crowns these actions and thoughts when we engage in Teshuva on this awesome day. The intensity of these days should transform our personalities and affect us the entire year. One should emerge from the Yamim Noraim a much different and much better person than he was beforehand.

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: September 25, 2003 3:01 AM To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT63 -45: The Sound of a Silent Shofar
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva ROSH HA-SHANA
THE SOUND OF A SILENT SHOFAR: THE PROBLEM OF ROSH HA-SHANA WHICH FALLS ON SHABBAT
By HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL
Adapted by Rav Reuven Ziegler
Translated by David Silverberg

Each year on Rosh Ha-shana, we fervently recite the verse from Tehillim (89:16), "Ashrei ha-am yodei terua," "Fortunate is the nation that knows the blast [of the shofar]." Rashi explains the verse as follows: "[The Israelite nation is fortunate] in that they know how to APPEASE (leratzot) their Creator on Rosh Ha-shana by blowing [the shofar] and reciting in conjunction with it [the three special blessings of the Mussaf Amida:] Malkhuyot, Zikhronot and Shofarot." Rashi draws his explanation of the verse from Yalkut Shimoni (Parashat Emor 645, as well as Parashat Pinchas 782 and Tehillim 840; see also Vayikra Rabba 29, Pesikta De-Rav Kahana 23, and Midrash Tehillim, mizmor 41). The Midrash reads: "Rabbi Yoshiya said: It is written, 'Fortunate is the nation that knows the blast' - do the gentile nations not know how to sound the blast? How many horns and trumpets they have! Rather, fortunate is the nation that knows how to PERSUADE (lefatot) its Creator by means of a shofar blast. And when? In the seventh month [i.e. Tishrei]." According to Rashi, when the midrash says the Jewish People "persuade" the Almighty on Rosh Ha-shana, it means that they appease Him by means of the shofar blowing and the accompanying recitation of Malkhuyot, Zikhronot and Shofarot. If so, then what happens on Rosh Ha-shana which falls on Shabbat, when we do not blow the shofar? How do we appease the Almighty then? The Gemara (Rosh Ha-shana 29b) cites Rabba's assertion that as far as Torah law is concerned, we should blow the shofar on Rosh Ha-shana even if it occurs on Shabbat. The Sages, however, decreed that the shofar not be blown on Shabbat, as one may neglectfully carry his shofar through the public domain (which is forbidden on Shabbat) in order to practice blowing under the tutelage of an expert. The Gemara adds that this same concern prompted Chazal to cancel the mitzva of lulav when

Sukkot falls on Shabbat and to delay Megilla reading when Purim occurs on Shabbat.

However, as Tosafot (Sukka 43a) note, there exists a difference in this regard between the mitzva of shofar and that of lulav. After the destruction of the First Temple, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai instituted that the shofar be blown on Shabbat Rosh Ha-shana in every locale where an authoritative Bet Din (rabbinic court) sat. Yet no such provision exists with regard to the mitzva of lulav; Rabban Yochanan never decreed that the mitzva of lulav be performed on Shabbat in a region with a Bet Din. (What's more, during the time of the Temple, the shofar was blown only in the Temple itself when Rosh Ha-shana fell on Shabbat, whereas the lulav was taken on Shabbat everywhere. After the destruction, however, the mitzva of lulav suddenly became more limited than that of shofar!)

Why did Rabban Yochanan draw this distinction between these two mitzvot, if the same concern motivated both decrees? Tosafot answer, "The shofar, which serves to bring the [favorable] memory of Israel before their Father in Heaven, they [Chazal] did not want to cancel entirely."

Our original question, then, becomes even more pointed: What about us today? Why did Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai not worry about those of us who do not have an authoritative Bet Din nearby? How do we deal with the urgent need for divine compassion? Why, on Shabbat Rosh Ha-shana, are we denied the ability to "bring our memory before our Father in Heaven" by means of the shofar?

One could perhaps answer, very simply, that we observe two days of Rosh Ha-shana, and on the second day - Sunday - we have the opportunity to blow the shofar. However, when all is said and done, we observe the second day of Rosh Ha-shana only as a result of a "sefeka de-yoma" - the uncertainty surrounding the correct day of Rosh Ha-shana. How do we earn G-d's mercy on the first day of Rosh Ha-shana in the absence of the shofar?

It would seem that the redactor of the Mishna, Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi (known as "Rabbeinu Ha-gadol" or simply "Rebbi"), provides the essential answer through his arrangement of the mishnayot in the third chapter of Tractate Rosh Ha-shana, thus setting our uneasy minds at rest. This chapter includes several laws relevant to shofar blowing. Sandwiched in between the law requiring intention for the fulfillment of the mitzva and the disqualification of certain individuals from blowing, a seemingly unrelated mishna suddenly catches our attention:

"Whenever Moshe held up his hand, Israel prevailed [against Amalek]...' (Shemot 17). Do Moshe's hands make or break the battle? Rather, this teaches you that so long as Israel were looking upwards and subjugating their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were victorious; if not, they would fall. Similarly, we find, 'Make a seraph figure and mount it on a standard; anyone who is bitten should look at it and shall recover' (Bemidbar 21). Does the brass snake kill or cure? Rather, when Israel looked upwards and subjugated their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were cured. If not, they would wither."

Why did Rabbi Yehuda insert this mishna right in the middle of the chapter, amidst the complex, detailed laws concerning the blowing of the shofar? Perhaps he should have placed this mishna towards the beginning of the second chapter of Berachot, where the mishna discusses the requirement of "kavana" (intention to fulfill the mitzva) while reciting Shema. Would that not be a more fitting location for a discussion of the great power of one's thoughts and subjugation of the heart? Why did Rebbi wait until Tractate Rosh Ha-shana?

Sensing this difficulty, the Rambam writes in his commentary to our mishna,

"All this is clear in light of what requires mention in our context, and in accordance with the book's purpose."

What does the Rambam mean? How is Moshe's lifting his hands relevant to the laws of blowing shofar? Furthermore, what does the Rambam view as "the book's purpose?"

The answer is that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi saw Jews who viewed the blast of the shofar as laden with some mystical power, a spiritual force beyond our comprehension that arouses Divine compassion. There were those who thought that the shofar blast itself, through some magical power, triggered the Almighty's mercy and led to His favorable judgment of us. Rebbi opposed this view and equated the shofar with Moshe's hands and the brass serpent. The shofar possesses no power

beyond that lying within Moshe's hands. Only when Benei Yisrael look upwards and subjugate their hearts to their Father in Heaven do the gates of Heaven open and welcome their prayers. It is THE SUBJUGATION OF OUR HEARTS, which accompanies the fulfillment of the mitzva of shofar, that arouses Divine mercy in our favor.

Appropriately, then, the very next mishna teaches us a fundamental precept regarding shofar: "Whoever is not obligated in this matter may not fulfill the obligation on behalf of the public (i.e. he may not blow for others)." The mitzva of shofar is one of subjugation of the heart, and total subjugation requires a sense of absolute obligation and the unwavering acceptance of the yoke of mitzvot upon oneself. Only an individual bound by the mitzva can fulfill the obligation on behalf of others. A subjugation of the heart which does not derive from acceptance of the burden of mitzvot can never be considered complete subjugation of the heart. As such, it cannot represent others who do possess this full measure of subjugation. The mishna thus teaches us a critical lesson: with regard to shofar, intention to fulfill the mitzva (kavana latzet yedei chova) must entail more than a formal, technical awareness; it demands nothing less than absolute acceptance of the yoke of Heaven.

When the Romans destroyed the holy Temple, a feeling of depression and despair overtook the People. After the destruction, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai saw before him a broken, shattered nation whose spirits have been crushed. He realized that the people under his leadership were unprepared for this revolutionary message transmitted to us by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi. They desperately needed the concrete expression of the shofar blast to restore their hope. Therefore, even when there were those who discouraged shofar blowing in Yavneh on Shabbat, Rabban Yochanan overruled them and insisted on sounding the shofar (Rosh Ha-shana 29b).

The Gemara (Rosh Ha-shana 16a) tells us that the sounding of the shofar flusters the satan and frustrates his efforts against us. In truth, it is not the shofar blast itself that rattles the pernicious satan, but rather the accompanying subjugation of the heart. [See Ran, *ibid.*, 3a in the Alfas.] Indeed, this is the message of the midrash: "Fortunate is the nation that knows the blast" - that knows how to appease its Creator on Rosh Ha-shana." If we refrain from blowing the shofar in deference to the ordinance of our Sages, then we can surely achieve thereby the same feeling of subjugation attainable through the fulfillment of the mitzva of shofar. This type of subjugation of our hearts, even though it is unaccompanied by the shofar, opens the gates of mercy and brings our favorable memory before the Almighty. [See also Meshekh Chokhma, Vayikra 23:24.]

Subjugation of the heart means absolute subjugation. Even the Vilna Gaon's approach to service of G-d, in which each individual expresses his personal uniqueness (see the Vilna Gaon's commentary to Mishlei 16:4), requires total subjugation, a sense of absolute obligation. This is what the Almighty wants of us, particularly on this day.

As expressed in our prayers and taught by Chazal (Yerushalmi Rosh Ha-shana 4:1), Shabbat Rosh Ha-shana is the "yom zikhron terua" - the day of recalling the blast. This means that on Shabbat Rosh Ha-shana we arouse Divine compassion not by blowing the shofar, but by recalling the shofar blast, by subjugating our hearts to the kingship of G-d. We conclude the "Shofarot" section of Mussaf with the clause, "For You listen to the sound of the shofar and heed the blast; there is none like You." This means that G-d listens not only to the shofar, but also to the subjugation of our hearts. Only He, who understands the heart of man and knows his feelings and inner conscience, can truly listen to our sincere submission to His will; thus, "there is none like You."

(This sicha originally was delivered on Shabbat, the first day of Rosh Ha-shana 5760 [1999].)

yeshivat har etzion israel koschitzky virtual beit midrash alon shevut, gush etzion 90433 e-mail: yhe@etzion.org.il or office@etzion.org.il

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HOPE AND DESPAIR IN THE AKEIDA
BASED ON A SICHA BY HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL
Adapted by Aviad Hacoheh
Translated by Kaeren Fish

"Rabbi Abahu taught: Why do we sound a shofar that is a ram's horn? The Holy One said: Sound a ram's horn before Me in order that I may remember in your favor the binding of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham, and I shall consider it for you as though you have bound yourselves before Me." (Rosh Ha-shana 16a)

Since the Akeida (binding of Yitzchak) is so central to Rosh Ha-shana, let us examine this episode. In consequence of the Akeida, G-d promises Avraham great blessings:

"Avraham lifted his eyes and he saw, behold, a ram was behind, caught by his horns in the thicket. Avraham went and he took the ram, and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Avraham called the name of that place 'G-d will see,' as it is said to this day – 'On the mountain G-d will be seen.' An angel of G-d called to Avraham a second time from the heaven. He said, 'I have sworn by Myself, says G-d, that because you have done this thing, and you have not withheld your son, your only one – therefore I will bless you greatly, and increase your seed greatly like the stars of the heavens and like the sand that is upon the sea shore, and your seed will possess the gate of their enemies. And through your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you obeyed My voice.'" (Bereishit 22:13-18)

Why does G-d repeat His blessing to Avraham? He had declared all of this already in His first revelation:

"I shall make you a great nation, and I shall bless you, and I shall make your name great, and you shall be a blessing; I shall bless those who bless you, while those who curse you I shall curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you." (12:2-3)
It would seem that the appropriate blessing after the Akeida would have been, "Your reward is very great" (Bereishit 15:1), as an addition to the original blessing!

Concerning the words, "Behold, a ram was behind, caught by his thorns in the thicket," the Sages explain:

"What is the meaning of 'achar' (behind, after)? Rabbi Yitzchak taught: AFTER all of these things, Israel becomes caught up in sins, and suffer troubles, and they are destined to be redeemed by the horn of a ram, as it is written (Zekharia 9:14): 'And the Lord G-d will sound the shofar....'" (Bereishit Rabba 56)

In order to understand the full significance of the Akeida, we must note an additional point. "There were ten generations from Noah until Avraham." Only ten generations had passed since G-d had declared, "The end of all flesh has come before Me." The Flood had come and gone, and new hope had flickered on the horizon. Suddenly, however, the world looked as though it were back at the time of the Flood, in a situation where everything lacked purpose and direction. "Avraham ha- Ivri" (the Hebrew) was so called because "all the world was on one side (me-ever echad), and he was on the other side." Just as Noah was the lonely man of faith in his generation – "For I have seen you to be righteous before Me in this generation," so was Avraham in his: "All the world was on one side, and he" – the lone, strong, true individual – was on the other."

Avraham's dream was to "perfect the world under the kingdom of G-d." He was fully aware that this would involve a historical process lasting thousands of years, but he believed, with all his heart, that he and his descendants could realize this dream.

At the same time, Avraham feared that it was too late. Perhaps the world was already destined for destruction, before the dream could be realized. It was true that the Holy One had promised Noah, "I shall not curse the land again because of man... nor shall I strike all living things again, as I have done" (Bereishit 8:21). G-d had also promised, "Nor shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a Flood, nor shall there be another Flood to destroy the land" (ibid. 9:11). But there was no guarantee that the world would not act in such a way as to activate its own self-destruction. There was no way of knowing with certainty that there would not arise an egoistic generation that would seek to exploit all of the world's natural treasures for its own benefit, leaving nothing for the generations to come. There was no assurance that the balance of nature would not be upset, with irreversible damage to the earth's protective

ozone layer, or with poisons flowing into the oceans, endangering all of mankind.

"And Avraham and Sarah were old, full of days, and the manner of women had ceased from Sarah" (Bereishit 18:11). Avraham feared that Sarah's barrenness was a sign that there was no hope for the world, that his dream was an empty one.

But a time came when hope appeared: "And G-d remembered Sarah as He had said, and G-d did for Sarah as He had said." The Divine promise, "Your seed will be called after Yitzchak," was coming true; it was being revived in all its glory. Avraham was looking towards the future. The conversation in his household was turning to the future of the family. Even for Hagar, the distant future was starting to become something important and tangible in the present: at the time of her distress, she received a promise: "Arise; take up the boy and hold your hand to him, for I shall make him a great nation" (Bereishit 21:18).

Then comes the test of the Akeida. "Take your son, your only one, whom you love – Yitzchak, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him up there as an offering." The test is enormous, but its significance is even greater: the shattering of the dream that has been built up over many years - to establish a nation that will offer new hope to mankind and to the world.

The Akeida presents Avraham with the possibility that the great dream will dissolve in a second. Its memory will descend into the depths of oblivion, dragging with it Avraham, who will have passed like a burst of light in human history for just a moment, leaving behind him no real impression.

Avraham accepts the Divine decree. He presents no complaint, never asking, "Where is Your promise, 'I shall make you into a great nation'? Where is the blessing, 'I shall make your name great, and you shall be a blessing'?"

Indeed, "Your thoughts are not My thoughts, and your ways are not My ways." Before Avraham has managed to digest the significance of the shattering of the dream, "an angel of G-d called to him from the heaven, and said, 'Avraham! Avraham!'" Avraham is beside himself. His response is a single word: "Hineni!" (Here I am!). The Holy One commands: "Do not lay your hand upon the boy, and do not harm him, for now I know that you fear G-d, for you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me."

Avraham looks at the ram that has been bound in place of his son, and understands that it is not the future that is being offered up on the altar, but rather the present.

From this point onwards, the picture changes. The Holy One repeats His promise:

"For I shall bless you greatly, and I shall increase your seed greatly like the stars of the heavens and like the sand that is upon the sea shore, and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemy. And all the nations of the world will be blessed through your seed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Avraham returns to his original dream. The terror has passed, and his anxieties have dissolved. From now, he is certain, the promise will be fulfilled:

"And it shall be on that day that a great shofar will be sounded, and the lost ones will come from the land of Ashur and the forgotten ones from the land of Egypt. And they bow down to G-d at the holy mountain in Jerusalem." (Yeshayahu 27:13)

The Akeida thus bears an important message for all generations. Even when it appears that dreams, visions and aspirations have shattered on the rocks of reality, there is no place for despair. Individuals have the power to build worlds – if only they will believe in their power.

I do not know if there were many generations that suffered such a sense of helplessness as has our generation. Ours is a generation that survived the Holocaust – "a nation that is remnants of the sword," a generation that shortly thereafter had to stand – vastly outnumbered – and fight a war for its independence. It is a generation that, while meriting to witness the establishment of the State, could not then retire in peace and quiet. War followed war: the Sinai campaign, the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanon War, the war of rocks and Molotov cocktails, day by day, hour by hour.

Together with the security danger – the external war – we also face a spiritual danger: the internal war. The rate of Jewish intermarriage around the world continues to rise; the birth rate amongst the Jewish population continues to fall. Many sectors of Jewish society tend to follow the empty

"in" culture, a nihilistic lifestyle. They espouse a culture that lives by the motto, "Eat and drink for tomorrow we die," a culture devoid of commitment, a culture that recognizes no responsibility.

There can be no doubt: it is far easier to live in a world in which the future is known, and it is rosy and secure. But we are little people; it is not enough for us to know that the dream will be realized in the distant future. We want, right here and now, that "The name of the Lord be exalted and sanctified in the world that He created as He willed. May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days, and in the lifetimes of all the house of Israel."

At this time, we have an obligation to aspire to the characteristic of Avraham Avinu: to believe in the power of individuals to change the world, to dream and to fight for a world that is more moral, more spiritual, more just. Every person has in his ability to bring closer a world in which "every creation will understand that You have created it, and everything that is alive will declare: The Lord, G-d of Israel, is King, and His Kingship rules over all!" (Adapted from a sicha delivered on Rosh Ha-shana 5750 [1989].)

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From: RABBI RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM LIST

[parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: September 24, 2003 To: Shabbat_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Rosh Hashanah by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin Shabbat Shalom: Rosh Hashanah By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - Once again this year, the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbat and the shofar will remain silent. There is one positive result of this relatively rare Rosh Hashanah experience: it gives everyone an opportunity to concentrate much more carefully upon the actual words of the Mussaf Amidah. After all, when the shofar sounds punctuate the unique blessings of Malkhuyot (kingship), Zikhronot (remembrances) and Shofarot, most of the drama of the day revolves around the piercing cries of the ram's horn. In the absence of the shofar, the words and concepts of these blessings will naturally assume center stage. And it is the content of these three special blessings which are the essence of Judaism – according to both the early medieval theologian Rav Yosef Albo (in *The Ikkarim*, *Essential Judaism*) as well as the more contemporary Franz Rosenzweig (in his *Star of Redemption*) – and which likewise contain a critical message for humanity especially today. The first of these blessings, Malkhuyot, tells us of the basic theological message of our faith: our optimistic belief that eventually the wicked of the earth will return to the G-d of creation, that world society will eventually be perfected so that peace will reign throughout the world (Alenu, Al Ken NeKava). This axiom of our religion, this prophecy of the ultimate end game, is especially comforting in the face of the dangerous global village in which we presently live, a global village in which the specter of nuclear proliferation threatens every freedom loving citizen; if the sacred G-d is not "sanctified by righteousness", then we are tragically left with a Satanic G-d who is sated only by the sword, a tainted totalitarian trinity of Nazi fascism, Stalinist Communism and Islamic Fundamentalism. The second sacred blessing, Zikhronot, opens, "You remember the activities from the beginning of the world, and you provide a function (the Hebrew poked is the root form of the tafkid, function) for every creature from earliest times." There is here a ringing declaration of faith in the process of history, the clear sense that historical time is on the side of humanity, and that individuals and nations have a unique role to play in the cumulative march of history towards redemption. Israel alone of the nations of the world enjoys a special relationship with G-d, a covenant which ensures it eternity and defines its mission as the messenger of ethical monotheism to all of humanity. And if Israel has been divinely chosen to be the medium of universal blessing ("through you shall all the families of the world be blessed," charges the Almighty to Abraham at the dawn of his election), it is difficult to imagine that America, the arch super power who has experience, does not carry the torch of responsibility to ensure freedom and democracy throughout the world.

The third brachah Shofarot, reminds us of the revelation at Sinai, the 613 commandments which G-d presented to Israel and the seven commandments of morality-centering around "thou shalt not murder" – which G-d presented to the world. Maimonides, the great codifier of Jewish

law insists that just as G-d commanded Moses to bequeath 613 commandments to Israel, "similarly did He command Moses to coerce the nations of the world to accept the seven laws of morality" (Laws of Kings 8,10). This is an immensely significant message especially in our post-modern, relativistic, "everything goes" society, which denies any absolute law of concept of morality; "situation ethics" dominates our conventional wisdom, and the most heinous crime can become transformed into a sacred act "when seen from the perpetrators point of view". (Hence a homicidal suicide bomber who murders innocent children is called a 'freedom fighter'). Shofarot tells us that the seven laws of morality which must be accepted by the nations are not possibilities or options; they are absolutes, since –especially in our global village- the lives of all free humanity hang in the balance of their acceptance. Hence the Rosh Hashanah Mussaf Amidah teaches that the nation of Israel must and will teach fundamental morality, or ethical monotheism, to all the nations of the world. Only when this message is accepted, when "this Torah comes forth from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem", only then will nation not lift up sword against nation and humanity not learn war anymore", and "everyone will sit under his/her vineyard and fig tree and no one will have reason to fear" (Micah 4). On Sunday, the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the piercing sounds of the shofar will be added to these vital concepts of the Amidah. We will hear the truah-shevarim sounds, the three sighs and nine sobs, which symbolize the world as it is, a world not yet perfected, a world which is often a tragic vale of tears. This broken truah sound was also trumpeted in times of war (Numbers 10:9), so that the staccato sound of the shofar symbolizes military battle. The additional firm and exultant tekiyah sounds of the shofar are taken from the fiftieth year of the Jubilee, precursor of the ultimate period of redemption and harbinger of festive joy and universal peace (Leviticus 25:9), Numbers 10:10). Perhaps the message here is that when the world is divided between those who believe in a compassionate G-d of peace and those who believe in a terrorizing Satan of the sword – and there is an imminent danger of the sword gaining ascendancy – then there is no recourse than to wage war in order to secure a free world for humanity. The ultimate promise of Rosh Hashanah is that the tekiyah of redemption will overcome!

A Rosh Hashanah Blessing

The Torah describes the special quality of Israel as "the land which the Lord seeks out always; the eyes of the Lord your G-d is on it from the beginning of the year until the end year"(Deuteronomy 11:12) Why does the verse open with "the beginning of the year (Hashanah) and conclude with "end year" (shannah)? At each New Year it is our prayer that this year will be the year, the year of peace, the year of prosperity, the year of redemption. Generally when we come to the year's end, we find it to be merely another year, a year like all other years, a year and not the year. It is for this reason that we recite in the Kedushah of the Shabbat Mussaf Amidah, "I shall redeem them at the end like the beginning (aharit k'reishit) to be for them as a G-d;" this may be interpreted to mean that in the year of the redemption, the end of the year will be like its beginning, we shall be able to say the year at year's end just as we say the year in the expectations of its beginning. May 5764 be the year of peace, prosperity and redemption for Israel, for Jews throughout the world and for all of humanity.

Shabbat Shalom and Shanah Tova!

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:

<http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm>

Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean