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From: **Eiruv Tavshilin Reminders** <eiruvtavshilin@gmail.com>

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Some of the Halachos regarding Eiruv Tavshilin

Written by Rabbi Ephraim Friedman, Dayan for the CRC Beis Din

1 - As a rule, on Shabbos and Yom Tov one is not allowed to do any preparing for a different day. Consequently, even melachos which are permitted on Yom Tov such as cooking, baking, and carrying, may be performed for the needs of that day only. When Yom Tov falls out on Friday, however, the Chachamim permitted preparing food for Shabbos on Friday, provided an Eiruv Tavshilin is made in advance. Through the process of Eiruv Tavshilin, one actually begins Shabbos preparations on erev Yom Tov, and the melachos which are performed on Yom Tov proper for Shabbos are considered a continuation of these preparations. (Rema O.C. 527:1 See Beur Halacha there for a fuller discussion of the background and mechanics of Eiruv Tavshilin.)

2 - The materials necessary to create an Eiruv Tavshilin are a portion of bread or matza and a portion of cooked meat or fish or some other cooked food which is customarily eaten together with bread (e.g. a hard boiled egg). The amount of bread should preferably be at least the size of a c'beitza, which is twice the size of a c'zayis. The average challah roll or sheet of matza will serve the purpose. (If the eiruv was made with one c'zayis of bread, it need not be repeated.) Even a broken or started roll or matza, or a large slice of bread, can be used for the eiruv provided it meets the minimum shiur. Nonetheless, it is a hidur (an enhancement of the mitzva) to use a shalem – a complete loaf. The minimum shiur of the portion of cooked food required for an Eiruv Tavshilin is one c'zayis. Any method of preparing the food for consumption (e.g. cooking, roasting, frying, etc.) is acceptable. Here, too, hidur mitzva dictates that an attractive, tasty portion of food be used. As explained above, the concept of the Eiruv is that Shabbos preparations have already begun before Yom Tov begins. In this vein, it is a preference that the food which is used be cooked specifically for the purpose of Eiruv Tavshilin, or at least that it be cooked expressly for Shabbos use. It is also preferred that it be cooked specifically on erev Yom Tov as opposed to earlier. (Beur Halacha 527:6 and 14) In practice, however, as long as the food is designated for the Eiruv Tavshilin (in the manner which will be explained below) the eiruv is valid, regardless of when and for what purpose the food was originally cooked.

3 - The actual procedure of establishing an Eiruv Tavshilin is as follows. After selecting appropriate food items, the head of household – or whoever else is making the Eiruv – takes the food in his hands and recites a brocha (...asher kidishunu b'mitzvosav v'tzivunu al mitzvas eiruv). He then makes a statement, declaring that through this eiruv it should be permissible to cook, bake, insulate food, light candles and do whatever else necessary on Yom Tov for the sake of Shabbos. This declaration, which can be found in most siddurim and machzorim in the original Aramaic text, should be recited in a language which is understood by the one saying it. In the event that the one establishing the eiruv neglected to recite the brocha, the eiruv is nonetheless valid and should not be repeated. If, however the above declaration was omitted, the validity of the eiruv is questionable. Therefore, if you realize your mistake before Yom Tov begins, the food items should be lifted again and the declaration recited. If a brocha was recited the first time it should not be repeated. If you don't realize your mistake until Yom Tov has begun a Rav should be consulted. (See Mishna Brurah 527:63)

4 - After establishing the Eiruv Tavshilin the two food items should be carefully stored away for Shabbos. In the event that the bread of the eiruv is eaten or lost before Shabbos arrives the eiruv is still valid. Nonetheless, if this happens before Yom Tov begins, take new bread and redo the eiruv including reciting the eiruv declaration, but do not repeat the brocha. On the other hand, if the cooked food of the eiruv is eaten, lost, or spoils, from that point on and the eiruv is no longer valid. If this occurs before the onset of Yom Tov, the eiruv must be redone. If this occurs after Yom Tov has begun, a Rav should be consulted. Once Shabbos arrives the eiruv can be eaten. It is a proper minhag to use the bread of the eiruv as part of your lechem mishneh on Friday night, Shabbos morning, and again at shalshudos, at which point it is eaten. Even if the eiruv food is not eaten on Shabbos, the validity of the eiruv is unaffected.

5 - When Yom Tov falls on Thursday and Friday, the Eiruv Tavshilin which is established Wednesday, erev Yom Tov, allows one to prepare for Shabbos on erev Shabbos only. No preparations for Shabbos may be done on Wednesday night or Thursday (until after nightfall). When Friday is the first day of Yom Tov, the Eiruv Tavshilin should be established on Thursday, erev Yom Tov, to permit preparing for Shabbos on Thursday night and Friday.

6 - According to one view in the g'marah, the principle behind Eiruv Tavshilin is that any food prepared on Friday Yom Tov, although intended for Shabbos, may potentially be used for on Yom Tov itself. If not for this potential the Eiruv Tavshilin would be ineffective. It follows from this that any Shabbos preparations being performed on Yom Tov should be done at an early enough point in the day that using the food on Yom Tov would at least be possible. The Mishna Brurah paskens

that one must conduct himself in accordance with this view. Therefore one should not wait until late in the day to put up a cholent or to begin cooking other Shabbos foods. Rather, all melacha for Shabbos should be done early enough that the food which is cooking will be at least partially cooked and somewhat edible before Shabbos arrives. In the event that one was delinquent and did not make sufficient preparations early on, one may rely on the opinions which permit cooking for Shabbos as long as it is before sunset. (see M.B. 527:3 and Beur Halacha.)

7 - Only those melachos which are normally permissible on Yom Tov for Yom Tov, are permissible on Friday Yom Tov for Shabbos through the process of Eiruv Tavshilin. Anything which is forbidden to do on Yom Tov for the same day, may not be done on Yom Tov for Shabbos even though an Eiruv Tavshilin has been established. For example, one may not plug in or turn on an electric crock pot or any other electric appliance or lights on Yom Tov despite the Eiruv Tavshilin. Similarly, one may not strike a match to light Shabbos candles nor pick fruits or vegetables from the garden, even to serve at the Shabbos meals. 8 - One Eiruv Tavshilin is effective for all the members of the household. According to accepted practice, this includes individuals (e.g. married children or friends) who are members of the household over the days of Yom Tov and Shabbos although they have their own permanent residence. A family which is sleeping in their own home during Yom Tov but eating all the meals at the home of others should establish an Eiruv Tavshilin in their own home without reciting the brocha. The eiruv declaration (see #3 above) should be recited. A family which is spending the two days of Yom Tov at the home of others, but returning to their own home on Friday to prepare to spend Shabbos at home, should establish an Eiruv Tavshilin (on Wednesday erev Yom Tov) and recite the brocha as well.

9 - If one forgot to make an Eiruv Tavshilin, or if the cooked food of the eiruv is lost or eaten on Yom Tov, a Rav should be consulted.

Date Fri, Sep 15, 2017

From Daniel Kaminetsky <danielkam@gmail.com>

Notes are sponsored by an anonymous group in honor of Rav Moshe Tzvi and Alisa Weinberg and family in honor of everything they do for our community.

Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg Taisi K'seh Ovoid: A lost Sheep Returns Home

Transcribed by Daniel Kaminetsky from recording of shiur in 5775

Pre-Selichos drasha The Zohar Chadash has a comment in Parshas Noach that is brought by the Ohr Hachaim in Parshas Reah. He says if there would be a singular gathering of Jews that came together to awaken themselves Bemotes to HKBH, there is a havtacha that Moshiach would come.

If a Kehila of Jews gets together without any specific thing that binds themselves together other than the fact that they are Jews that want get close to HKBH, it's an amazing thing. Gerrer Rebbe was once walking in the streets of Jerusalem. Bumped into a young man who was learning in Ohr Sameach. The Gerrer Rebbe asked him, where are you learning? The young man answered, I'm learning in Ohr Sameach but I'm not a Baal Teshuva. The Gerrer Rebbe said, why not? Why aren't you a Baal Teshuva? Is that something to be embarrassed about? To be ashamed of? It's the greatest zechus in the world. Greatest excitement in the world. Ability to become balei teshuva. So here we are gathered together and halevai HKBH should look down on all of us assembled here and help us to have the true Hisorerus to bring Moshiach very quickly. There is a machlokes between Shamayim and Aretz that has been taking place since the beginning of time. Between HKBH and Klal Yisrael. Kivyachol, a machlokes between kudsha brich hu ushechinteh. An inner struggle that is taking place. A machlokes, how the process of Teshuva should begin. Who should make the first move when it comes to Teshuva. Should HKBH return to Klal Yisrael? Or should Klal Yisrael return to HKBH? Each side has a lot of truth to it. HKBH stands, kivyachol, on the side, and says time and time again, you rebelled against Me. Every time you did an aveira, you strayed a little farther and farther from the path. Moved away from everything I tried to offer you. Ki lekach tov nasati lachem. I give you good things and you ran away from it. And HKBH says if you want to come back, come back, but the ball is in your court. Weight of the teshuva process in on your back. And Klal Yisrael stand in their corner of the exile, and we say to HKBH, You are the one who threw us out and sent us into exile. Isn't it Your achrayus to make a move to bring us back? More so than its our achrayus to come back? It's a machlokes that shakes the word. Shayamym and artez. Klal Yisrael and HKBH. kudsha brich hu ushechinteh. This ongoing debate who should make the first move and how should the process of Teshuva begin.

History has proven that when you have two parties to a disagreement who are both "stubborn", kivyachol, each believes they are correct and are not willing to move towards one another, history has proven that such a machlokes has tragic results. We see this from the story of Yiftach. Yiftach was a shofet. A holy man who comes back to his home after battling Amon and says the first thing that comes out of my home I will offer as a korbon to the RSO. His daughter walks out; she is so excited to greet him. And he has a quandary. He was hoping a kosher animal would walk out the front door. But his daughter came out. Machlokes what happens in the end. Whether she sits in solitude for the rest of her life or is actually killed. But Chazal tell us there was a way out. A way to undo this terrible avla. Pinchas was still alive at this time. He was the gadol hador. Had Yiftach gone to Pinchas, he could have been matir the neder. Could've undone this horrible confusion that took place in his own home. Yet Chazal tell us that there was this terrible stand-off. Yiftach was saying, I am the shofet. Pinchas should come to me. And Pinchas was saying I am the elder of the generation. Yiftach should come to me. And each one was so entrenched in their position to the point that this poor girl got crushed in between. So here we now stand, negotiating with HKBH. HKBH says you come to Me, and we say, HKBH, You bring us back. Who is right? This machlokes is presented in he Medrash on Eicha on the pasuk Hashivainu Hashem aleycha, venashuva. Says the Medrash, Klal Yisrael say to the RSO, the responsibility is on You. After all that's what the pasuk says. Hashivainu Hashem aleycha, venashuva. You bring us back and then we'll come back. But You make the first move. HKBH answers you need to lead the way. As it says is Malachi (and there is a similar lashon in Ezra) Shuva ailai, veashuva aleichem. You return to Me and then I'll return to you. And again, it's unclear what to do. We have this stalemate. This is not the only place we find this struggle taking place. Shir Hashirim is the greatest love song between Klal Yisrael and HKBH. Even in the pesukim that reflect that love that Klal Yisrael has for HKBH, there is still this tension that is lingering beneath the surface. On the one hand, find in the second perek, dodi li vaani lo. And then later, in the 6th perek, Ani ledodi vedodi li. Even though these pesukim are really saying the same thing, namely that we love Hashem and He loves us, we are 100% committed to one another, there is this struggle. Who is the one to lead the way? Who is responsible to take that first step? And there is truth to both positions. Ailu veailu divrai elokim chaim. But at the end of the day, who is going to take that first move? Who is going to allow the separation that's taking place between shamayim and aretz to come undone? There are two places in the Torah where we read about the mitzva of Hashavas aveida. Mishpatim and Ki Saitzai. In Mishpatim, the Torah tells us, ki sifga shor oyvecha oh chamoro toeh, hashev tashivenu lo. In Ki saitzai, Devrim 22, its clearer. Spells out the mitzva more clearly. But even in Mishpatim, we are told if you encounter the animal of your enemy that is "toeh", straying from the path, there is an obligation to return that animal to the path. Rebbe Nachman writes in Torah resh kuf vav, on the pasuk in Tehilim 119, "Taisi k'seh ovoid, bakesh avdecha", I have strayed like a lost sheep, HKBH, please come and seek out your servant, "ki mitzvosecha lo shachacti", for I have not forgotten your commandments. Rebbe Nachman explains that when a Jew begins to stray from the path, there is an opportunity to return to Hashem right away. The farther a person strays and the longer a person travels down the path that is not yashar, the more a person walks on a crooked path, so one crooked path leads to another and another and another and eventually, a person becomes so lost, there is no way of finding himself. When a person first strays off the derech hayashar, in that first moment, when a person sins and there is still this trembling of the heart that says this isn't for me, and he is trying to feel a little bit what it would be like to step off the path, he has hihurai teshuva, which is a bas kol from HKBH, as the seforim say, to try and return him to the path. Each person gets a bas kol, a call from Hashem, according to his madrega. Sometimes HKBH calls to a person bderech remez. Sometimes Hashem mamesh speaks to a person. Sometimes Hashem sends yisurin to try and get him to return to the path. At

that point, when a person first steps off the path, it is very easy for him to return. Taisi k'seh ovaïd. When the sheep steps off the path and the shepherd calls to the sheep, the sheep recognizes the shepherd's voice and can easily come back to the path. Immediately. It's easy. But if the sheep has travelled far, if a person has travelled one too many wrong roads, one too many wrong turns, it's possible for a person to stray from the path to such a degree that he can't hear the voice of the shepherd. Or if he hears it, he doesn't recognize it any more. Doesn't know it's the voice of someone who cares about him and loves him. Sometimes even the shepherd, who is not an animal but a baal saichel, gives up on the sheep. Can't get the sheep back. This is what Dovid Hamelech is saying. Taisi k'seh ovaïd. RSO, please don't let us stray too far. We have been toeh from the derech. Like a sheep that's lost its way. But HKBH, seek me out right away. Bakesh avdecha. Ki mitzvosecha lo shachachti. I haven't forgotten the Mitzvos. I still want to come back to You. I'm still seeking a way to get back to You. I'm still waiting for the shepherd to call me back. I'm looking for that opportunity to be pulled back in. Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the Rosh HaYeshiva in Slobodka, is quoted in the footnotes of Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah and has a beautiful hosafa on this. [We don't know whether he learned Rebbe Nachman or not, pashtus is he didn't.] Gemara in Shabbos 24a describes how when Rav would get to the pasuk in the Tochacha in Bechkosai, "Va'avaditem bagoyim", that Klal Yisrael would be lost among the gentiles, he would get very frightened. Rav Papa says to Rav, maybe we'll be lost like an item that seeks to be found, as it says "Taisi K'seh ovaïd, bakesh avdecha". Explains Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, there are two types of lost objects. You could have a sheep that's lost, but it desires to come back. The sheep is frightened. Wants to come back to the flock. But can also have an inanimate object, a wallet that falls out of someone's pocket. Set of car keys that lands on the floor. In such a case, the object itself doesn't know how to come back. Doesn't desire to come back. Can't do anything to help itself come back. Klal Yisrael say to HKBH, Taisi K'seh ovaïd. We want to come back. We want to be like that sheep. We don't want to be like that lifeless wallet on the ground. We're like the sheep. Rav Papa says to Rav, don't be so afraid. Even if Klal Yisrael lose themselves, they will be like an avaida hamisbakeshes. That desires to be found. That's able to facilitate its being found. Rav Shalom Schwadron used to tell a story that's printed in the second volume of the She'al Avicha Veyagedcha. He says in Yerushalayim there is a school for children who are less fortunate. Don't come from the finest or most comfortable of homes. Children are taught Torah. Many for the first time in their lives. Get professional training as well. There was one boy who was on fire for Torah. Falling madly in love with Torah. Becoming more religious. Parents were encouraging. But were not interested in becoming religious themselves. Boy's father had not been to Shul in 30 years. One year, it was Erev Shavuot, and the young man was getting ready with his friends for the Yom Tov, and all of a sudden, he sees that his father is walking towards the Yeshiva. Seems to be arriving for Yom Tov. Surprised because while his parents were very supportive, they didn't keep the Mitzvos themselves. He asks his father what are you doing here? His father answered, I haven't seen this chag celebrated in so long. Been 30 years since I stepped into a Bais Medrash or Bais Knesses. I want to see how they celebrate the chag here. Can I join you and spend time with you? The son says of course! So the Father spends the first night of Shavuot with them. He davens and eats and learns the whole night. At the end of the night, as is common practice, they started to recite Tehilim. Father and son are reciting Tehilim together, the father with this newfound excitement and energy, commitment and passion for Judaism, as he was tasting the sweetness for the first time in thirty years. Father arrives at this pasuk, Taisi K'seh ovaïd, bakesh avdecha, last pasuk in Tehilim 119, and as the father recites the words, he faints. They splash some cold water on his face and revive him. He sits up and he is sitting on the floor. Starts bawling like a baby. He is crying and saying over and over Taisi K'seh ovaïd, Taisi K'seh ovaïd. This pasuk is about me. I'm the lost sheep. But at least he knew he

wanted to come back. It had been a long time but he came back. He was off the path but he was able to get back onto the path. He was like the avaida hamisbakeshes, that object that wants to return, that facilitates the return. It was a long break in time from his connection to Torah and Mitzvos but he came back. In a very strong way. Rav Avrohom Lider who runs Ahavas Chesed, a Chesed organization, got a frantic phone call from one of the hospitals in New York. He was told there is a woman here who needs to see you immediately. He comes to the hospital and meets the woman who is with a man on life support. She says, I am a Muslim woman and this is my Jewish husband. We've been married for a long time. I'm scared he is not going to make it. Even though he never practiced Judaism in his lifetime, I know he would want to be buried as a Jew. I have to leave the country to take care of another family situation. Scared he is going to die. Want to authorize you to bury him like a Jew. And she leaves. Every day, Rav Lider went to visit this Jew. Standing over him and saying mi sheberaich for him. Davening for him. On the 4th day, the man opened his eyes. (This is how we know it has to be true. Because chasidische maisos always talk about the third day or third time - not that Chasidische maisos are not true . . .). They start talking. He says my name is Yitzchok. Rav Lider says do you like chicken soup? He answers chicken soup? I love chicken soup! Rav Lider says I will bring you chicken soup tomorrow. Can I also bring a pair of Tefilin for you to wear? Would you be interested in wearing Tefilin? He says Rabbi, I am 84 years old and I haven't worn Tefilin since my Bar Mitzva, but yes, I'd love to wear a pair of Tefilin. So the next day Rav Lider brought chicken soup and a pair of Tefilin and the man put them on and they said Shema together with tears streaming down the man's face. Taisi K'seh ovaïd, bakesh avdecha. The lost sheep who wants to return. To come close. The animal that is toeh. But there is another pasuk in Parshas Ki Saitzai that describes a different type of lost object. In Ki Saitzai the pesukim describe: "Lo Sireh es shor achicha oh es sayo nidachim". The Ramban explains that there is a difference between the animal that is toeh and the animal that is nidach. Toeh is that first moment, as Rebbe Nachman described, where the sheep strays from the flock and takes a step off the road. The nidach has gone very far from the path. And it's not only a kosher animal that's being described here. As the pesukim say in Ki Saitzai, vechen taseh lachamoro. Sometimes you have an animal that you don't have such a strong keshet because its a behaima temaiah. Vechen taaseh lesimlaso. The garment, the inanimate object is not as precious as the balei chaim. The loss of that item is perhaps less valuable. So what do you do in such a case? What happens when it's no longer a sheep that is toeh but it's a nidach? It's a behaima temaiah? It's an inanimate object? Torah says you have to return such an object as well. Hashev teshivem le'achicha. Have to return it to your brother. Return the object to its place. Lo tuchal lehisalem. Can't hide from it. However, the Gemara tells us in Bava Metziah daf 31a, that even though there is an expectation that most of the time when a person finds an object, regardless of whether the animal has strayed very far, it's a behaima temaiah, it's a lifeless object, there is an obligation to return it, but the Gemara says on the word vehisalamta (Rashi in Ki Saitzai quotes the Gemara), that there are times we are allowed to ignore the object. Allowed to look away. Person doesn't have an obligation to return that object. Gemara gives examples: if you have a zaken for whom it is beneath his personal kavod to bend down and pick up that lost item. Zeken veaino lefi kevodo. Now we have a real problem. Chazal tell us in the Yerushalmi in maseches Rosh Hashanah that HKBH filled all the mitzvos of the Torah. But here by hashavas avaida the Torah tells us that a zaken doesn't have to bend down and pick up this object. HKBH is the ultimate zaken. The Yalkut Shimoni refers to HKBH as a zaken. HKBH is the oldest of anything we have ever encountered. Hayah, hoveh, veyihyeh. HKBH is the wisest zaken. Maybe its aino lefi kevodo. Beneath HKBH's dignity to bend down and pick up Klal Yisrael when we fall into such a low place. And even mitzad the object, we have a shailah in halacha. Rav Yosef Lieberman, a rosh kollel in EY has a volume of shailos and teshuvos called Mishnas

Yosef. Discusses in the 10th volume whether there is a mitzva to return an inherently destructive object. Its inappropriate for the person to have. Do you have to return it to its proper place? Maybe its better to allow it be destroyed. Trampled in the street. This shailah is nogeah to us. When Klal Yisrael fall to a low place, when we become dirty by our aveiros, as the Rambam describes, a person who does aveiros becomes meshukatz, he is a toevah in the eyes of HKBH before he returns, so maybe HKBH is a zakein veaino lefi kevodo, or maybe we have proved ourselves time and time again to be destructive, spiritually dangerous and destructive? Maybe HKBH does not have an obligation to return us to our place? Perhaps we can answer second question as follows. Mishnas Yosef goes on to describe that there is a difference between an object which is inherently assur, inherently dangerous, and an object which is a good object but the person is using it in the wrong way. If we are concerned only that the person is using the object the wrong way but inherently the object is not dangerous, then we have an obligation to return the object. So perhaps we can say about Klal Yisrael, yes, we have made mistakes. Sometimes our behavior is dangerous and destructive. Spiritually poisonous. But we are not inherently a bad object. Opposite. Af al pi shechata Yisrael hu. A Jew who sins is still a Yisrael. Klal Yisrael is be'tzem very very good. So we say to HKBH, mitzad the object, even though we have sometimes let You down, object has been misused, we have misused our own souls, HKBH, the chiyuv of hashavas aveida is still applicable for such an object. What about the first question? That HKBH is a zakein and its aino lefi kevodo? What can we do to defend Klal Yisrael? We can say to HKBH that really the halacha is that You don't have the obligation to return us. Its beneath Your dignity. But RSO, we ask You to go lifnim meshuras hadin. Rav Yeschekel of Kushmir, the founder of the Moznitz Chassidic dynasty, we have a few of his Toras printed in the Divrai Yisrael of Muznitz, on the last page, he says this is what we say in yedid Nefesh, vechusa na ve'al tisalam. You are right. The pasuk says vehisalamta. There are times when one is allowed to look away. But RSO, chusa na. Have rachmanus on us. Ve'al Tisalam. Go lifnim meshuras hadin. In the Vayaged Yaackov, he quotes from Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz who takes it one step further. Belzer rebbe says the Rambam writes in hilchos aveida perek 11, halacha 17, even though the halacha is zakein veaino lefi kevodo, but if a zaken wants to go lifnim meshuras hadin, he has the right to do so. Therefore, RSO, have rachmanus on us. And this is what we are going to say throughout the selichos. Hashem, You are misnaheg b'chasidus. You go lifnim meshuras hadin. Beyond letter of the law. Do the same thing in this case. Even though its aino lefi kevodo. Rambam gives the heter. Zaken can be mochel on his kavod. Chusa na ve'al tisalam. Have rachmanus on Klal Yisrael. For the sake of your beloved Klal Yisrael. But bemechilas kevod the Belzer Rebbe and Rav Yechezkel MiKushzmir, perhaps we can challenge them on behalf of Klal Yisrael and say that really HKBH is chayav. And it's not lifnim meshuras hadin for HKBH to restore Klal Yisrael to their proper place. It's not HKBH going beyond the letter of the law. It's very much within the letter of the law. Rebbe Akiva Eiger was once traveling in Warsaw. And he had a relative there. A simple man who was a shoemaker. Pashute yid. And he told his Gabboim, I want to visit with this shoemaker. And they were shocked. The Gadol Hador should go visit the shoemaker? The shoemaker should come to the Gadol Hador! And the whole trip in Warsaw they were trying to avoid this encounter. And Rebbe Akiva Eiger caught on that the Gabboim were trying to keep him a little too busy and keep him from making this visit. That he so badly desired. So he turns to them and says I know you are thinking the halacha says a zakein veaino lefi kevodo. And that vehisalamta. Peamim sheata misalem. It's beneath my dignity to go to this relative. Who am I to return to him? He should return to me? Halacha is in my favor. But you are wrong. Because the Navi in Yeshaya, perek 48, tells us, as we read in the HafTorah on Yom Kippur, "mibesarcha lo tisalam". From your own relative, your own flesh, you are not permitted to conceal yourself. So even through the halacha says vehisalamta, Peamim sheata misalem, there are times a zakein

sheaino lefi kevodo is allowed to ignore, that's true about everyone except for a relative. When it comes to a relative, there is no heter. And as a relative of this individual, I want to go and help him return to his place. I want to be mechazek this shoemaker cousin of mine in Warsaw. Let's go back to Yedid Nefesh. Rav Naftali Rupshitzer says, we says Yedid Nefesh Av Harachaman. HKBH, you're a father. And a father has an obligation, more so than any other relative to return to the child. To restore that child to its place. Vechusa na al ben ahuvecha. HKBH, have rachmanus on Your own child. That rachmanus is not lifnim meshuras hadin. It's within the letter of the law. You can't look away. You don't have a right to look away. The halacha demands, RSO, that You pay attention to us. That You look at us and restore us to our place. You may be the greatest zaken of all time. We might be the greatest nidach of all time. We might be a behaima temaia. We might be a lifeless object. We've lost all of our chiyus and connection to You. But a parent never stops looking for a child. A relative doesn't look away from another relative. A parent will do anything to restore that child to its place. Every parent can relate to that moment when you are standing in the supermarket and your little child runs around the corner to the next aisle. You look up, and for a second, your child is not there. You get a sinking feeling in your stomach. You know your child just turned the corner and is probably looking at the candy in the next aisle. Picking out an extra snack for Shabbos. You know you are going to walk around the corner and the child is going to be there. But for a split second, when the parent looks and doesn't see that child, and fears, in a totally irrational way, for a moment, what if I never see my child again? What if something happened? The parent becomes frantic. And becomes so relieved, there is such a simcha for the Av when the ben returns to his place. This time of year we say Avinu Malkeinu. Yes, Hashem is our master. But He is also our father. And we say HKBH, mibesarcha al tisalam. You don't have the heter of zaken veaino lefi kevodo. Have the obligation to restore Klal Yisrael to our rightful place regardless of our behavior. There was a couple who waited a long time to have children. Finally blessed with twin girls. One weekend went upstate with their daughters. Staying at a hotel. Having nice time. One day they were in the dining room and all of a sudden, the mother looks up and one of the girls ran off. She is missing. The mother becomes frantic. It's a big hotel. There are a lot of people there. She is very frightened. Starts to look around, tension in her voice rising as she is looking here and there. Can't find the child. And she is very very nervous. Where did the child go. There was a group of Bais Yaakov girls who happened to be at the hotel on a retreat. She goes to these girls and says, I am so sorry but I am desperate. Can you help me find my little girl. She looks like my other daughter, who she points to. One of the girls in the Bais Yaakov group takes charge and starts assigning the other girls places to look. The girls are running around. One by one they come back and still no sign of the missing child. The one girl who took charge was the last to come back. After a long period of waiting, she finally comes back after finding the missing girl who is safe and sound. And the mother is crying. She is so happy, relieved and thankful. The mother turns to this young girl and asks her, how is it that you refused to give up? All of the other girls searched and looked but there was something about you that the second I told you there was a child missing, you took charge and went about this differently than everyone else. You cared more than everyone else. You were ready to turn the entire hotel upside down. You don't know me. Don't have anything to do with my child. How did you have the strength? You organized and kept searching until you found my child and brought her back. She explained, I am the sister of Leiby Kletzky. [The young boy, who a few summers ago, when he was a little bit lost in the street, was picked up by a monster and lost his life]. She said I know the pain that I went through. That my parents went through when our Leiby went missing. I was not going to let your daughter go missing. Was going to do whatever it took to restore this child to her mother and father. This is a tefilah to the RSO. We ask Him, rachmana litzlan, there are children who don't find their way back. And therefore, RSO we

beg you. Mibesarcha al tisalam. Even if we're hiding, even if we run far away like the Ramban said that the nidachim are barchu mimenu, verechiku, we ran so far away from You RSO, You have an achrayus, by the letter of the law according to Rav Akiva Eiger, a chiyuv to bring Klal Yisrael back and restore us to our place. So we return to the medrash we started with. The machlokes between Klal Yisrael and the RSO. Dodi li vaani lo. Ani ledodi vedodi li. Or in the language of the Medrash, Hashiveinu Hashem ayleycha, venashuva vs. shuva ailai veashuva aleichem. We had a stalemate. We were stuck. Who makes the first move. The Medrash concludes, we respond to Hashem, we said our piece and You said your piece but shelcha hu, its Your achrayus to restore us. Because the pasuk says in Tehilim pey heh, shuvainu elokai yishainu. Concludes the medrash, lekach Hashiveinu Hashem eyleycha, venashuva. One last pasuk in our defense and HKBH is silent. So shetikah kehodaah. Hashem seems to agree. Rav Yisrael Zev Gustman was deciding where to build his Yeshiva. There was a beautiful big building in Rechaviah. More expensive than a smaller building in Geulah. Wasn't sure which direction to go in. He went to the Churbiner Rov and asked him what to do. The Chubiner said buy the building in Rechviah. It will be better for the Yeshiva. So Rav Gustman was standing at the Kosel and having a conversation with the RSO. He says, RSO, the Ramban writes often in his perush hamishna, omer Hashem yisbarach, Hashem says, and we know that Hashem speaks to the tzadikim of the generation, so if the Chubiner Rov tells me I should buy the building in Rechaviah, then its as if You told me that and I came to ask and see if my logic is correct. Does this make sense. He stands there and waits for his answer. Its silent. He smiles and says shetikah kehodaah. RSO, apparently, You side with me. And if I am supposed to buy the more expensive building in Rechaviah, then I am sure You are going to send me the money for the building. And within two days he had the funds raised for the building. So since HKBH does not respond to our second pasuk, shuvainu elokai yishainu, the halacha is like us. But perhaps we can find an even clearer psak halacha. A psak halacha that we can take with us into selichos and say, HKBH, You have a chiyuv to return us midin hashavas aveida, and as far as this machlokes that has spanned history, the psak is like us. Halacha is like us. Who can we bring to defend Klal Yisrael? Someone who always has defended Klal Yisroel. Rav Yisroel of Rizhin. The Rizhner. In the sefer Yeshuos Yisroel, second volume, os yud alef the following is brought down. One year on Shushan Purim Rizhner was sitting by the tish with his Chassidim. They were about to bench. He was sitting there and thinking about this medrash. All the actions of chassidic rebbes have been analyzed. They are kodesh kadashim. The Rizner put his right hand on the table facing downwards, pointing downwards and he said Hashem says you lead the way. Shuvu alei veashuva aleichem. Then he turned his hand up and said but we say, pointing up to Hashem, as if to say, You, Hashem, must lead, hashivainu hashem ayleycha, venashuva. Then he pointed his hand down and said, but You say, Shuvu alei veashuva aleichem, we need to start. Turned his hand up and said, but we say, hashivainu hashem ayleycha, venashuva, You need to start. Repeated this for a total of four times. Then he paused, as he analyzed the many pesukim and statements of Chazal in his head, and finally said I'm ready to pasken. Din is with Klal Yisrael. Jewish ppl are correct. Because we have suffered so much for you, Hashem, in galus. We're hurting so bad. Therefore, after all we've been through, the very least is that You take the first step. hashivainu hashem ayleycha, venashuva, chadesh yamainu kekedem. Hashem, you need to lead the way. You need to invite us in. Perhaps it's a bit chutzpadik to say, but we have already gone lifnim meshuras hadin by getting together tonight to say selichos. Halacha is by Klal Yisrael. HKBH, You have a chiyuv to bring us back. But we come together selichos night to show You that we are willing to doo a little bit on our part. IYH, HKBH, please be mekayem the halacha, both mitzad Hashavas aveida, mitzad this machlokes from the Medrash in Eicha, be makyem the psak of the Rizhner, of Rebbi Akiva Eiger, and then IYH, HKBH, if You can help us get a little bit back on that path, if You can take

that sheep that is not only toeh but nidach, and bring us a little bit back to the path, then IYH HKBH, Venashuva, we will do our part and all be zocheh to a ksiva vechasima tovah.

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The How, Why, and Why-not of Simanei Rosh ha-Shana

Rabbi Tanchum Cohen

Rebbe, YU High School for Boys Assistant Rabbi, Congregation Beth Abraham, Bergenfield, NJ

Some of the great joys of learning and studying halacha and minhag are the grand vistas and big ideas that we often discover in the exploration of problematic details. As part of our Rosh ha-Shana preparation, an examination of one such detail of practice — the colorful array of foods that annually adorn our Rosh ha-Shana tables — can also inspire and equip us for a more profound yom tov experience. Moreover, this intellectual journey can provide us with globally important skills and insights particularly relevant for 21st-century Jews, enabling us to appreciate and discern authentic, sophisticated religious experience throughout the year.

While it is somewhat curious that eating honeyed apples on Rosh ha-Shana night — a minhag mentioned some seven centuries ago by the Tur — is far more prominent among Ashkenazim than consuming leek, black-eyed peas, and the other items cited more than 1½ millennia ago by the Gemara in Massechtos Horayos 12a and Kereisos 5b,2 the most surprising and most troubling aspect — as we are about to discover — is that we allow any of these foods at our yom tov table.

I. Superstitious Se'uda? In Parashas Shofetim, the Torah forbids many occult practices, particularly nichush: Let no one be found among you who ... practices nichush ... Devarim 18:10 In the Sifrei (the midrash halacha on Bamidbar and Devarim), the tannaim defined “nichush” as engaging in superstitious behavior: Who qualifies as a “menachesh”? [One who interprets natural happenings as signs or portents] e.g., “His bread fell from his mouth; therefore ...” “his stick fell from his hand; therefore ...,” “a snake on his right, a fox on his left, a deer crossed his path; therefore ...,” and one who says “Do not begin” (a new enterprise) — it is morning; it is the New Moon; it is the end of Shabbath.” Sifrei 171 trans. adapted from Sefaria

This Sifrei is quoted in Masseches Sanhedrin 65b, and it is codified as a matter of halacha by Rambam (Avoda Zara 11:4) and Shulchan Aruch (Yore De'ah 179:3). Yet this seems to stand in direct contradiction to the Gemara mentioned above, which appears to recommend consuming particular foods as a way to magically ensure a year of beracha!

Both Meiri and Rav Yaacov of Lisa address this quandary, and both of their answers actually flow from a third, striking Gemara

II. Superstitious or Simply Super?

In discussing the bounds of forbidden nichush, we learn in Masseches Chullin 95b, that: Rav said: Any nichush unlike that of Eliezer (Avraham's servant) and of Yonasan (son of Shaul) does not qualify as nichush.

Rav points to two episodes in Tanach that serve as paradigms of nichush: Eliezer selecting a wife for Yitzchak by waiting to hear the significant phrase, “I'll water your camels as well” (Bereishis 24), and Yonasan deciding whether or not to charge up the hill at the enemy Pelishti camp by testing whether the Pelishtim stream down the hill at Yonasan or invite him uphill (Shemuel I 14). Acting based on a sign — as did Yonasan and Eliezer — is the paradigm for forbidden nichush according to Rav.

Ba'alei ha-Tosefos are shocked: are these tzaddikim, Yonasan and Eliezer, actually models of sin? Ri ba'al haTosefos3 answers that Yonasan and Eliezer planned to act regardless, Yonasan relying on his judgment and Eliezer upon zechuso shel Avraham, the merit of Avraham; the signs were merely an additional siman but were not dispositive whatsoever. Truly

acting based upon signs, though, would indeed violate the prohibition against nichush.

In his chiddushim, Rabbeinu Nissim⁴ offers an alternative teirutz: "I believe the solution is as follows: The Torah forbade nichush when one relies upon a siman for which there is no logical basis to presume it causes benefit nor harm, such as divining based upon bread falling from one's hand or a deer crossing one's path. These examples are indeed superstitious. If, however, one employs simanim with a logical basis — why, that is typical everyday living! For instance, "I shall not travel if it will rain, but I shall travel if it won't rain" is typical practice, not nichush. Eliezer and Yonasan employed the second [and permissible] type of siman. Eliezer sought a woman who would be appropriate for [the great tzaddik] Yitzchak, and so he took the following as his siman: if she is so refined and of developed character as to generously respond to my request for water with an offer to water my camels as well, she is a good fit for Yitzchak. Similarly, Yonasan — who sought to attack an entire Pelishti camp with only one companion — took the following as his siman: if they say to us, "Come up the mountain [to fight]," they must be frightened of ambush, and then we can reasonably rely on our capabilities, as a couple of courageous soldiers can effectively disperse a large group of frightened ones. However, if they say to us, "Wait and stand your ground, we are headed towards you [to fight]," then they seem unafraid, and logically we ought to flee rather than fight. The Gemara referenced these episodes in order to teach us even if a siman is illogical, it is only forbidden if one acts upon it as did these two [Eliezer and Yonasan]."

Acting based upon signs is prohibited provided that the signs are nonsensical, as are the examples mentioned by the Sifrei above. There is no rational reason to avoid business subsequent to bread dropping from one's mouth or a deer (or black cat) crossing one's path, so such avoidance violates the biblical prohibition against nichush, superstition. By contrast, choosing to take an umbrella based upon sky color (grey rather than blue) is a sensible, scientifically-based heuristic and is therefore permitted. Similarly, volunteering unasked to provide several hundred gallons of water⁵ certainly indicates exceptionally proactive and insightful chesed, and a mountaintop garrison's surprising hesitancy to charge down at a pair of enemy soldiers reveals the garrison's remarkable weakness or low morale, so Eliezer and Yonasan violated no prohibition. Combining his explanation with that of Tosefos, Ran writes there are two criteria that must be met for violation of nichush: truly acting upon a meaningless sign.

This pair of concepts is quoted by rishonim in discussing an adjacent Gemara as well. As the sugya progresses, a baraisa⁶ teaches us that sometimes what seems like prohibited nichush is in fact permitted, a mere siman: "Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: "home," "wife" and "child" are not nichush, but rather a siman.

What distinguishes a permitted siman from forbidden nichush? Rambam writes:

It is forbidden to practice nichush ... And whosoever commits an act as a result of any one of such divinations, is lashed. One who said: "This dwelling which I built was of good prefigurement," "this wife whom I married has brought a blessing to me" ... Likewise, one who asks a child, "What verse are you studying?" if he mentioned to him a verse of the blessings, he may rejoice and say: "This is of good omen." All such and the like is permitted;⁷ seeing that he neither regulated his actions nor withheld himself from performing them by these signs, save that he made for himself a mark of a thing which already had come to pass, this is permitted. Rambam (Avoda Zara 11:4-5); trans. adapted from Sefaria

In other words, "a mere siman" means that one does not actually decide and act based upon this sign. It is esthetic, not heuristic. Hagahos Maimoniyos⁸ notes that this understanding of siman aligns with the Ri ba'al ha-Tosefos and the first criterion above. He goes on to cite Rabbeinu Eliezer of Metz who developed the second criterion above, that of davar be-lo ta'am versus ta'am ba-davar.

III. Take One: Meiri Returning to simanei Rosh ha-Shana and the question of nichush raised above, one solution is offered by Meiri:

Many behaviors are permitted despite seeming to be nichush, for these are not surely not actual nichush but are instead a siman to inspire an individual to proper conduct. This explains why the Gemara instructed that one serve various plant foods at his table on the eve of Rosh ha-Shana, as some of these plants grow rapidly and some grow to significant height. And, in order to avoid this being done in a superstitious fashion, the rabbis instituted that we recite repentance-oriented formulae in conjunction with these foods ... It is well-known that these are but inspiration, as the real crux is not these formulae, but rather repentance and good works. Meiri Horayos 12a

According to Meiri, simanei Rosh ha-Shana are not meant to directly, intrinsically determine our gezar din (verdict) for the coming year, but are instead a tool, an instrument for inspiring us to do teshuva. It is teshuva that does impact our gezar din, and the brief tefillos that accompany the foods serve to ensure that we do not mistake the foods for anything but teshuva-catalysts. (Note as well that Meiri interprets the language of each of those tefillos as references to teshuva.) This explanation is cognate to the first criterion above, siman be-'alma; according to Meiri, simanei Rosh ha-Shana are meant to be psychologically inspirational, not materially influential.

IV. Take Two: Rav Yaacov of Lisa

Rav Yaacov of Lisa⁹ suggests in his Emes le-Ya'acov that the basis for simanei Rosh ha-Shana lies in the Tanach-wide concept of po'al dimyon developed by Ramban in his Peirush al ha-Torah (Bereishis 12:6).¹⁰ Ramban writes that a nevua (prophecy) that is both spoken and acted out by the navi (prophet) is more potent than one that is only delivered verbally. It is for this reason that throughout Tanach, a navi may be instructed to both pronounce a given nevua and concomitantly perform a po'al dimyon, an action that portrays and mimes the content of that particular nevua.

By analogy, a tefilla that is both spoken and mimed is even more powerful than one that is only spoken. The objective of simanei Rosh ha-Shana is to serve as po'alei dimyon, enhancing and multiplying the power of the tefillos "Yehi ratzon ..." which they accompany. Instead of a solely verbal request for a shana tova u-mesuka (a good and sweet year), for ribbui zechuyos (increase in merits), and for kerisas sone'einu (destruction of our enemies), we both say those tefillos and mime them by eating corresponding foods, thus equipping our Rosh ha-Shana with enhanced tefillos.

This second explanation is cognate with the second criterion above in the definition of nichush, namely ta'am ba-davar. According to Rav Yaacov of Lisa, simanei Rosh ha-Shana are permissible because while they are meant to effectively impact our year, they do so in an explainable, rational fashion — by leveraging and multiplying our verbal tefillos.

V. Reflections Two reflections flow from this approach of Rav Yaacov of Lisa. First, it highlights the critical importance of uttering the tefillos "Yehi ratzon ..." (To instead focus solely on consuming the array of siman foods while neglecting the tefillos is to embrace the tafel, secondary, while ignoring the ikkar, primary.)

Moreover, the Rav¹¹ famously developed the notion of teki'as shofar as a primal, wordless form of tefilla.

Taken together with Rav Yaacov of Lisa's insight, Rosh ha-Shana emerges as the tremendously consequential yom ha-din (day of judgment), which understandably requires us to employ not only routine methods of tefilla, but rather the full suite of tools in our tefilla arsenal, including both wordless and mimed forms of expression. Certainly, its more standard tefillos similarly demand singular effort and unique focus.

As we prepare to organize and energize our toolkit of tefillos — our Rosh ha-Shana panoply — to the best of our ability, may we merit kabbalas ha-tefillos.

Endnotes ¹ Tur (Orach Chayim 583). Interestingly, the Gra (loc. cit.) suggests that the apple recreates the episode of birkas Yitzchak, and that it

occurred on Rosh ha-Shana. 2 According to Tosfos (Avoda Zara 5b), it is already indicated in a mishna (Chullin 83a). 3 Quoted by Tosfos and Ritva ad loc. 4 Ad loc. See also the commentaries on the above-referenced Rambam, particularly Kesef Mishne who expands upon this thesis of Rabbeinu Nissim, as well as Hagahos Maimoniyos who references an earlier partial source for this position in Sefer Yere'im. 5 nationalgeographic.com/weepingcamel/the camels.html. 6 This baraisa appears as well in Bereishis Rabba 85:5 in the context of Yehuda's refusal to marry his third son Sheilah to Tamar (Bereishis 38:11). 7 In his comments, Ra'avad (ad loc.) disagrees with this reading of the passage in Masseches Chullin. He believes that the Gemara is concerned with the efficacy of the siman, not with its halachic permissibility. Ran explores Rashi's position on this question. Hagahos Maimoniyos supports the position of Rambam and Tosfos; see especially the strong language in his closing sentence: "?? ????? ?? ??????? ??????? ?? ????? ?? ?? – I have written on this at greater length in order to counter those who destructively belittle these halachic rulings [namely, the halachic distinctions accepted by Rambam and Tosfos]." 8 Ad loc. 11:5:4*. 9 He is better-known for his Nesivos (haMishpat) and Chavvos Da'as. Emes le-Ya'acov a 94-page sefer on aggados ha-Shas. 10 Ramban sees this notion of po'al dimyon lying at the core of ma'ase avos siman la-banim — the episodes of the forefathers are a siman for the history of the Jewish people to come — a concept that he takes as fundamental in globally understanding sefer Bereishis. 11 See Mi-Peninei Ha-Rav (Shofar 8, p. 126), et al. For the Rav, this perspective on shofar also explains why mitzvas shofar is fulfilled during tefilla — unlike other mitzvos such as lulav, hallel and kerias ha-Torah which are fulfilled in the synagogue but not during Shemone Esrei.

from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Thu, Sep 14, 2017 at 10:59 PM subject: Rabbi Mordechai Willig - The Months, Divine Attributes, and Purpose of Creation

Rabbi Mordechai Willig
The Months, Divine Attributes, and Purpose of Creation

I
"According to whom do we say [on Rosh Hashana] 'This is anniversary day of the start of Your handiwork, a remembrance of the first day'? According to R. Eliezer who said the world was created in Tishrei" (Rosh Hashana 27a). Elsewhere, we seem to follow R' Yehoshua, who said the world was created in Nissan. Tosafos resolves the apparent contradiction as follows: in Tishrei it rose in thought to be created, but it was not created until Nissan.

This enigmatic statement may be based on Rashi (Breishis 1:1) who says: at first (betechila) "it rose in (Hashem's) thought" to create the world with the attribute of strict judgment, but Hashem saw that the world could not last under such circumstances, so He gave precedence to the attribute of mercy and jointed it to the attribute of strict judgment, as it says, "on the day Hashem Elokim's making of earth and heaven" (2:4).

Tishrei is the month of judgment, its symbol being scales of judgment. In Tishrei "it rose in (Hashem's) thought" to create the world with strict judgment. Since the world could not last, actual creation was postponed until Nissan, the month of Pesach which connotes mercy (Rashi, Shemos 12:23).

Rosh Hashana is the beginning of creation, in accordance with R' Eliezer. But actual creation occurred in Nissan, in accordance with R' Yehoshua. Thus we say on Rosh Hashana, "today is the conception [haras] of the world", not its actual birth day.

Rashi's expression "betechila - at first" implies that Hashem changed His mind. This is incorrect, as "He is not a human who changes his mind" (Shmuel I 15:29 (see Bamidbar 23:19)), and heretical (Rashi Breishis 6:6). What then, does it mean?

II
Moshe saw that people were weighing the flesh [from R' Akiva's body] in the meat market. He said "Master of the world, this is Torah and this is its

reward?" Hashem said to him "Be quiet. So it rose in thought before Me" (Meanchos 29b).

The Shelah (Breishis, Torah Ohr 9) explains that Hashem did not change His mind. Rather, the original plan to create the world with strict judgment remains for the exalted few, such as R' Akiva. Betechila is not chorological, indicating a change of mind, but rather conceptual, explaining the word "Bresihis." Ideally, the world should be created with strict judgment. Practically, the world could not stand, and mercy was added except for the likes of R' Akiva.

If so, we can understand betechila as l'chatchila. Ideally it rose in Hashem's thought to create the world with strict judgment. Practically, as Hashem knew from the outset, this is impossible. Hashem answered Moshe that R' Akiva was judged strictly, as was the ideal system which rose in thought before Him. The question remains, however, why is this the ideal system?

III
The answer lies in the purpose of creation, as explained by Ramchal (Derech Hashem sec. 1 chap 2): Hashem's purpose in creation was to bestow of His good to another. His wisdom declared that for such good to be complete, the one enjoying it must have earned it himself. Therefore, He created man, the purpose of all creation, with the ability to choose good or bad. By choosing good man earns closeness to Hashem [primarily in the world to come, see Ramchal's Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 1], deriving the greatest possible pleasure from His goodness, thereby achieving the purpose of creation.

Ideally, man should be judged strictly, earning his ultimate reward by right. However, practically, man is unable to do so and mercy must be added. Still, the choice to do good is rewarded in the world to come.

R' Akiva was judged strictly, thus enabling him to enjoy even greater reward in the world to come. The Gemara (Berachos 61b) describes the torturous death of R' Akiva. The ministering angels asked Hashem, "This is Torah and this is its reward? Is it not better to be among, 'the dead who die at Your hand Hashem of old age' (Tehilim 17:14). Hashem said to them 'Their portion is in life [of the world to come]' (ibid.) A heavenly voice proclaimed, 'Fortunate are you, R. Akiva, that you will immediately [without judgment or pain. See Tosafos Kesubos 103b d.h. mezuman] enter the world to come'."

IV
On Yom Kippur, the question of the angels is recounted (Eileh Ezkerah, Musaf) with a different answer from a heavenly voice: "If I hear another sound, I will transform her world into water, I will turn the earth into 'tohu va'vohu - desolate and empty' (Breishis 1:12)".

This enigmatic response can be explained based on the words of the Ramchal. The purpose of creation is to bestow Hashem's good onto man. In its highest form, this requires the ideal system of strict justice, reserved for the exalted few such as R' Akiva. They are punished in this world for minor errors, so that they receive incomparable reward in the world to come. If the angels insist that strict justice not take place, then the highest purpose of creation no longer exists. Therefore, Hashem said He will return the world to the pre-creation state of being desolate and empty. In fact, strict justice took place, the world continues to exist, and R' Akiva was amply rewarded in the world to come.

On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we are all judged by Hashem. By focusing on the months of creation and the Divine Attributes utilized in creation, we can better understand the purpose of creation. Sincere repentance and self-improvement can tilt the balance of Hashem's judgment, granting us a good year in this world and greater reward in the world to come.

From: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Mon, Sep 18, 2017 at 9:00 PM subject: Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky - A Good and Sweet Year

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky A Good and Sweet Year

There is an age old practice mentioned by Chazal to eat certain foods on the night of Rosh Hashannah. These are known as simanim - signs that we pray will symbolize a good year. Short tefillos accompany the simanim and the poskim comment that the intent and thoughts of teshuva that occur at this time can help make the simanim a reality. Perhaps the most popular of the simanim is the custom to partake of an apple dipped in honey. At this time, we fervently beseech Hashem for a shana tova u'mesukah, a good and sweet year. By analyzing what this dual request of "good and sweet" represents, we can gain a greater appreciation of what to concentrate our thoughts on at this opportune moments.

Chazal teach us that when events occur that are especially good, we are required to recite the bracha of Hatov V'hameitiv - Hashem is good, and Does good. There is another bracha that is recited when something bad happens, the bracha of Dayan Ha'Emes - Hashem is the true judge. These different berachos are only recited in this world; in the world to come, only the bracha on good will be recited. The future is described as a day that is only good. Creation was originally supposed to be this way. When Hashem began the creation of the world with the creation of light, the Torah tells us that the light was good. Unfortunately for us, this light could not be retained in this world and Hashem hid it away for the righteous for days to come. When we ask Hashem for a shana tova, we are not just asking for good things in this world. We are elevating our thoughts by beseeching Hashem for a world that is all good. We are dreaming about a world in which the original light of Creation of Hashem's presence is discernible.

In addition to a good year, we also ask for a sweet one. They words of Torah are compared to gold and honey. "More precious than gold and sweeter than honey" is Dovid HaMelech's description of Hashem's words. What is the significance of comparing the Torah to honey if it is already comparable to gold? Isn't gold obviously more valuable than honey? Gold and honey are fundamentally different from one another. Although gold is more valuable, it is only significant because of what it can purchase. It does not provide actual pleasure, but rather it enables one to purchase worldly pleasures. Honey, although not particularly expensive, is intrinsically enjoyable. The words of Torah are compared to both gold and honey. Torah is like spiritual gold in that the acquisition of Torah knowledge enables one to better perform Mitzvos, and Torah study helps perfect a person's character traits. Like gold, it is valuable for what it can accomplish. However, Torah is also much more than spiritual gold, because the words of Torah are sweeter than honey. Even without any other advantages gained by Torah study, learning Torah is the sweetest gift Hashem has given us. It is both more precious than gold and simultaneously sweeter than honey.

The Ohr HaChaim has a remarkable comment (Devarim 26:11) wherein he describes how we would react to the goodness and sweetness of Torah if we truly appreciated it to the fullest. We would be so overwhelmed by the sweet taste of Torah that we wouldn't be able to pursue anything else. As we dip our apple in our honey on Rosh Hashanah, we should be focusing on the lofty dreams of having a good and sweet year. We beseech Hashem to see His light and taste His Torah. May this year be a year of only goodness and sweetness for all of Klal Yisroel.

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Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary - Benjamin and Rose Berger
CJF Torah To-Go Series - Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur 5778

Ahavat Hashem and Talmud Torah: The Telos of Teshuva
Rabbi Michael Rosensweig

Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel, RIETS

Compiled by Avraham Wein1 Rabbinical Student, RIETS

In the final chapter of the Laws of Repentance, the Rambam has a variety of famous and beautiful formulations regarding ahavat Hashem:2

2) One who serves [God] out of love occupies himself in the Torah and the mitzvot and walks in the paths of wisdom ... because it is true, and ultimately, good will come because of it. This is a very high level which is not merited by every wise man. It is the level of our Patriarch, Abraham, whom God described as, "he who loved Me," for his service was only motivated by love... 3) What is the proper [degree] of love? That a person should love God with a very great and exceeding love until his soul is bound up in the love of God. Thus, he will always be obsessed with this love as if he is lovesick ... This concept was implied by Solomon [Song of Songs 2:5] when he stated, as a metaphor: "I am lovesick." [Indeed,] the totality of the Song of Songs is a parable describing [this love]. Hilkhot Teshuva 10:2-3 (Translation: Chabad.org)

The Rambam then addresses the progression from performing a mitzva for ulterior motives to doing it for correct reasons. The Rambam concludes Hilkhot Teshuva, and by extension Sefer Mada, with this concept. It is fascinating that he then transitions into Sefer Ahava, which he begins with the motto of mah ahavti toratekha kol ha-yom hi sihati — how much do I love your Torah, it is [the subject of] my constant conversation. The Rambam thereby conjoins the first two books of the Mishne Torah with the notion of ahavat Hashem. Why did the Rambam conclude Sefer Mada, and more importantly Hilkhot Teshuva, with a chapter devoted to ahavat Hashem?

Furthermore, it is particularly noteworthy and surprising that the Rambam devised and devoted an independent 10-chapter section to the laws of teshuva — which are scattered throughout the Talmud without any cohesion — as the culmination of the first of the 14 books of the Yad ha-Hazaka, his comprehensive and masterful halachic magnum opus. The Rambam particularly expanded, reorganized, and invested pioneering effort in the formulation of these laws. Moreover, why did the Rambam specifically place Hilkhot Teshuva in Sefer Mada, foregoing the more obvious alternative of locating these laws in a narrower, if more obvious classification, such as Hilkhot Shegagot, Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim, or Hilkhot Shevitat Asor in Sefer Zemanim? The determination that Hilkhot Teshuva is pivotal to Sefer Mada, and even its appropriate coda, certainly requires clarification. It adds greater urgency to understanding this puzzling choice of dedicating the final chapter of Hilkhot Teshuva and all of Sefer Mada to the mitzva of ahavat Hashem.

These questions are compounded by the fact that the Rambam already codifies ahavat Hashem in Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah (2:1-2) at the beginning of Sefer Mada, together with the theological truths that a person is required to affirm to qualify as a believing Jew.³ It is striking that, despite the Rambam already having addressed the concepts of ahava and yira at the very beginning of Sefer Mada,⁴ he feels compelled to return to them at the culmination of Sefer Mada in Hilkhot Teshuva.

Resolution of the Rambam A close examination of Hilkhot Teshuva reveals the Rambam's intentions. The Rambam dedicates the final chapter of Hilkhot Teshuva to the mitzva of ahavat Hashem in order to emphasize that the ultimate goal of teshuva is ahavat Hashem. It cannot be a coincidence that the Rambam chose the culmination of Hilkhot Teshuva to ruminate about ahavat Hashem and the motivation and ambition that both suffuse and engender it. By accentuating the importance of ahavat Hashem, by promoting it as an ideal, and by utilizing the metaphor of intense romantic love found in Shir ha-Shirim, the Rambam effectively conveys that ahavat Hashem is of paramount importance as a key to all elements of avodat Hashem. Simply put, the Rambam's unusual presentation reflects his profound comprehension that ahavat Hashem is the ultimate telos of teshuva. In turn, he thereby accentuates a perspective that undergirds his entire presentation and classification of Hilkhot Teshuva, and informs and reinforces his classificatory decision. For the Rambam, teshuva is a necessary, natural component of Sefer Mada and Mishne Torah more broadly, and a mode of avodat Hashem in and of itself. Teshuva is not

exclusively about neutralizing chet (sin), but is instead an act of avodat Hashem that leads to the highest level of religiosity.⁵

Furthermore, the Rambam's decision to place Hilkhhot Teshuva in Sefer Mada is even intuitive because his goal is to integrate teshuva with avodat Hashem throughout the year. Teshuva is not just a narrow response to sin, but is itself a pinnacle of avodat Hashem, and therefore an obvious choice for the culmination of Sefer Mada. Additionally, the Rambam's choice to conjoin Hilkhhot Teshuva with Sefer Ahava via the concept of ahavat Hashem flows consistently from this perspective. The transition to daily mitzvot, which are described in Sefer Ahava, reinforces these themes and accentuates the broader relationship between man and Hashem that is also a key component of the process of teshuva. Hilkhhot Teshuva, at the culmination of Sefer Mada, is juxtaposed with the Laws of Keriya Shema at the beginning of Sefer Ahava. The Laws of Keriya Shema encapsulate the comprehensiveness of ahavat Hashem —“bekhol levavekha, bekhof nafshekha, bekhof me'odekha” — and capture the mission of total religious and halakhic commitment — kabalat ol malkhut shamayim. The juxtaposition of the Laws of Keriya Shema with Hilkhhot Teshuva further broadens the motif of teshuva and integrates it into the other primary institutions of avodat Hashem.⁶

Rambam's Consistency on Ahavat Hashem

The Rambam's approach to ahavat Hashem is very consistent. In Laws of Repentance (10:2), he refers to Avraham Avinu as the exemplar of ahavat Hashem, invoking the verse “Avraham who loves Me” (Isaiah 41:8), the same verse he quotes in Sefer ha-Mitzvot (Positive Command 3) when he talks about ahavat Hashem: The third mitzva is that we are commanded to love G-d (exalted be He), i.e. to meditate upon and closely examine His mitzvos, His commandments, and His works, in order to understand Him; and through this understanding to

achieve a feeling of ecstasy. This is the goal of the commandment to love G-d ... We see that this mitzvah includes spreading love for G-d to others from] the Sifri: “You shall love G-d, i.e. make Him beloved among the creatures as your father Avraham did, as it is written, ‘The souls that he made in Charan.’” The meaning of this Sifri: Avraham, as a result of his deep understanding of G-d, acquired love for G-d, as the verse testifies, “Avraham, who loved Me.” This powerful love therefore caused him to call out to all mankind to believe in G-d. So too, you shall love Him to the extent that you draw others to Him. Translation: Chabad.org

Avraham Avinu is the model of ahavat Hashem for the Rambam and in Sefer ha-Mitzvot, he describes a practically uncontrollable impulse, an overflowing sense of ahava, which overtakes the person. The Rambam depicts Avraham as the paradigm of an ohev Hashem, one whose infectious enthusiasm and exuberance to share Torah with others derived from an overflow of his own intoxication with the Ribbono shel Olam and his Torah.

The experience begins with a rational awareness, but it goes beyond that and becomes a religious experience. This is the foundation of Avraham Avinu's method and mission. Avraham's outreach activity was part and parcel of being “Avraham who loves Me,” reflecting an unrestrained and overflowing sense of purpose resulting from love of the Divine.

Talmud Torah and Ahavat Hashem

The Rambam articulates unambiguously that the primary mechanism for achieving this state of ahavat Hashem is talmud Torah, Torah study. Exposure to the word of Hashem, both Torah and mitzvot, has a transcendent and transformative impact (if one does not resist it), which ultimately leads to ahava and lishma, performing mitzvot for the sake of heaven (10:4-6). Hence, Torah study and observance of mitzvot in their own right are also the indispensable foundation for developing ahavat Hashem and fostering authentic avodat Hashem in the model of Avraham ohavi (Avraham who loves Me), the av hamon goyim (the father of many nations). It is surely no coincidence that some commentators suggest⁷ that teshuva me-ahava (repentance out of love) can be attained primarily through talmud Torah. The connection that the Rambam makes between

ahavat Hashem and the study of Torah in Sefer ha-Mitzvot, and in the way he describes the study of Torah in the tenth chapter of Laws of Repentance, is absolutely consistent with and reinforcing of this idea.

Moreover, it is likely no coincidence that the verse the Ramban identifies (noting the previous context and pesukim in Nitzavim) as the source for teshuva is: For this commandment which I command you this day, it is neither too hard for you nor far off. Devarim 30:11

The Gemara in Eruvin (55a, also cited by Rashi) says very explicitly that the verse refers to the mitzva of talmud Torah, and that is how the Ramban codifies it in Hilkhhot Talmud Torah as well. The Ramban was obviously keenly aware of these normative sources, yet by identifying this verse as the source for teshuva, he establishes that Torah study and teshuva are two sides of the same coin. The intimate connection between talmud Torah and teshuva supports the notion that talmud Torah is the basis for teshuva me-ahava.

This perspective provides a framework for understanding why talmud Torah is so urgent and why it is so important that the undertaking of Torah study is not performed frivolously or even casually. While Torah study should engender joy because “the precepts of Hashem are right, making the heart rejoice” (Psalms 19:9),⁸ Torah study should be pursued with reverence and seriousness. The perspective that talmud Torah is the means to connect with the Infinite as the most ambitious expression of avodat Hashem precludes a casual, careless, or trivial approach.⁹

Talmud Torah is both the foundation of the marital relationship between us and the Ribbono shel Olam and the prime tool for building this relationship.¹⁰ That is why learning Torah is not only equal in importance to all the other mitzvot (Pe'ah 1:1), but the way one engages in it is critical as well; Torah study requires mind, heart, and soul, and demands the surrender and subordination of one's mindset and way of thinking to that of the Torah.

This highlights the importance of in-depth Torah study and analysis, which includes trying to uncover the subtleties within a topic and connections between topics. While it provides intellectual exhilaration, the exhilaration engendered by advanced talmud Torah is secondary compared to the spiritual aspiration that accompanies it. At the end of the day, the enthusiasm that we exhibit, the attachment to the topic, the exploration of the options and the nuances, and the analysis of the expressions of the rishonim and other texts are really about the enthusiastic relationship of ahavat Hashem, which not only impacts teshuva but is the basis for avodat Hashem and a broader Torah-infused perspective on life. The people who share the bench in the beit midrash, study partners who learn together, form a bond based on transformative shared experiences. There can and should be abundant joy associated with the creative process, including initiative and personal contribution, but the ultimate goal is a transcendent one: fostering a community built on shared values and the belief in the importance of Torah study.

The Rambam concludes Hilkhhot Teshuva with ahavat Hashem and then he transitions into Sefer Ahava. Additionally, every book in Mishne Torah of the Rambam is really connected in some way to the mitzva of ahavat Hashem. Thus, teshuva is not a concept that is restricted to Elul and the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, the Ten Days of Repentance, but it sets the tone for our relationship with Hashem throughout the entire year.¹¹

Endnotes 1 This article is primarily an adaption of a siha given by R. Rosensweig at the start of Elul, 5774. The article was reviewed by R. Rosensweig. 2 For the Rambam's full presentation of ahavat Hashem, see the entirety of Laws of Repentance 10:1-3. 3 For the Rambam, theological truths are essential because philosophical conformity is indispensable to halakhic observance. That is why he starts the entire Mishne Torah with Sefer Mada and its philosophical axioms. From the most elemental discussions of his foundational theology, the Rambam transitions into yirat Hashem and ahavat Hashem (Yesodei ha-Torah 2:1-2). 4 Additionally, in Hilkhhot Yesodei ha-Torah, the Rambam does not treat each topic

separately. In general, the Rambam introduces a mitzva, defines it, and then moves on to the next one. In this instance however, he groups ahava and yira together and then explains both of them. The Rambam's choice is predicated upon his stated view and belief that there is a seamless and continuous interaction between these two. Yira leads to ahava and ahava leads to yira in an ongoing cyclical process. Instead of being two opposite emotions, these are really two parts of one religious experience. 5 The Rambam was likely inspired by a Gemara in Yoma (86b), which proclaims that teshuva me-ahava transfigures an unintentional transgression into a zekhut. Surprisingly, the Rambam, who masterfully compiled and formulated Hilkhot Teshuva, seemingly omits and ignores this remarkable assessment and idea that forcefully projects the ambitious capacity of teshuva, a theme that he would seemingly enthusiastically embrace. Moreover, the Rambam quotes many of the divrei aggadah collected at the end of Yoma, and yet does not codify this particularly noteworthy idea. We may speculate that the Rambam may have actually been providing an interpretation of this unusual Gemara by placing ahavat Hashem as the final chapter of Hilkhot Teshuva, thereby suggesting that ahavat Hashem should not be seen primarily as just the methodology for teshuva, but instead the ultimate goal. I have related to these themes elsewhere in my articles on Elul available at torahweb.org. See, for example, "Ahavat Hashem: The Teshuva of Chodesh Elul" and "Rambam's view of Ahavat Hashem as the Telos of Teshuvah." 6 Another example of the Rambam broadening the motif of teshuva is his treatment of behira hofshit, a lynchpin concept in avodat Hashem, in the middle of Hilkhot Teshuva (Chapter 5). 7 See in particular the comments of R. Hayyim Volozhiner in Nefesh ha-Hayyim Chapter 4 and the Netziv in Ha-Emek Davar, Deut. 4:2. 8 There are a number of strong formulations in rishonim and aharonim that articulate this concept. For example, even though in general there is a concept of mitzvot lav lehanot nitnu, R. Avraham min ha-Har (Nedarim 48a) argues that this does not apply to talmud Torah because joy is intrinsic to the experience. Additionally, see the introduction of the Avnei Nezer to his sefer Eglei Tal. 9 See, for example, Talmud Bavli, Berakhot (22a). 10 Hazal constantly link kabbalat ha-Torah to erusin and nissuin. See, for example, Vayikra Rabba Acharei Mot 20, and Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Parshat Yitro. 11 When we understand teshuva as a process that intensifies the relationship and also provides the perspective that transcends the sin, the otherwise mystifying and intriguing concept of naaseh ke-zekhuyot (sins become like merits) can be understood. The reality of sin can be a catalyst for a person to rectify their avodat Hashem and their relationship with Hashem more broadly and that catalyst, in some sense, can become a "merit."

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Tashlikh

by R. Gil Student

I. Fixing Judaism

On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, many have the custom of walking to a natural source of running water and reciting the Tashlikh prayers. The texts consist primarily of biblical passages, with many additional prayers added for the ambitious reciter. The name of the ceremony seems to come from the first biblical passage recited, which includes "And You will throw (ve-sashlikh) all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19). How can we get rid of our sins so easily? Don't we need to repent and undo, as much as possible, the damage we caused? Does God really allow us to toss away our evil actions?

In an 1868 critique of then-contemporary Judaism, the Maskil, Moshe Lilienblum, addressed an assortment of texts and practices he considered irrational in the journal, Kevod Ha-Levanon. Over the centuries, he argued, too much has crept into religion. Too many rabbinic opinions have become unnecessarily canonized, too many human elements have assimilated into the

sacred. He insisted that we need to demythologize Judaism, remove the mysticism and superstitions, excise the overly strict rulings, and return to a rationalist religion based on Bible and Talmud. He proposed returning to the original texts, rejecting all the deviant practices that had since accumulated.

In an impolitic move, he called on the moderate rabbis of his time to take on this task of ridding Judaism of all its irrational extremism -- and he called on them by name. Among those rabbis were Rav Mordechai Gimpel Yaffa and his son-in-law, Rav Yosef Zechariah Stern. Lilienblum's calling them out forced them to respond. On his father-in-law's urging, Rav Stern published a lengthy rebuttal, arguing with his characteristic encyclopedic breadth that Lilienblum is way out of his depth, wrong on facts and incorrect in interpretation. ((An annotated version of Rav Stern's rebuttal and Lilienblum's response was recently published in Yehudah Friedlander, Be-Kivshono Shel Pulmus (Bar Ilan University Press, 2017).))

II. Reasons for Tashlikh

Tashlikh is among the practices that Lilienblum opposed. Rav Stern replies in defense of the custom. Our earliest source for this custom is the Maharil (1365-1427), who described the practices of German Jews in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. Since the Tashlikh custom predates the Maharil, it had been in practice for about 500 years, if not longer, by the time Rav Stern published his 1869-1870 response to Lilienblum. We can only speculate about the custom's meaning.

Maharil quotes a midrash (Tanchuma, Vayera 22) that Avraham and Yitzchak, on their way to the Binding, had to cross through a river placed in their path by the Accuser. By going to a river for Tashlikh, we point to the persistence of our ancestors to fulfill God's word, even in the face of significant obstacles.

The author of the Shelah finds significance in the fish, not the water. On the day of judgment, we are reminded of God's constant oversight, just like fish always keep their eyes open. Additionally, ayin ha-ra, the evil eye, does not reach fish because they are underwater. We wish to achieve similar positive results in the upcoming year. ((The Maharil and Shelah are quoted in Ketzeih Ha-Mateh 595:6.))

III. Symbolism of Water

Rav Stern offers his own explanations, based on his extensive knowledge of Bible and Talmud. He points out that many prophets and biblical figures acted near water -- Yechezkel (Ez. 1:1), Daniel (8:2, 10:4), Ezra (8:15,21; Neh. 8:1-3, 12:37), Calev (Jud. 1:15), David (1 Sam. 29:1, 30:9). Bodies of water served as a gathering place for large crowds. Why would people gather near water?

Rav Stern's suggestions include:

- Make a personal covenant with God - In the ancient world, people would establish covenants based on natural features (e.g. Gen. 31:52; Ta'anis 8a).
- Symbolize God's sovereignty - Kings are anointed near a river (Horayos 12a).
- Water represents abundance of blessing. Yeshayahu uses water to symbolize the redemption: "With joy you will draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3).
- People need to curb their otherwise endless desires, as it says, "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full" (Ecc. 1:7).
- Water reminds us of the inevitability of death, as it says, "For we must surely die, and are like water spilled on the ground" (2 Sam. 14:14).
- We must pray for rain, or at least strengthen our faith that rain -- which in the ancient world meant prosperity -- lies in God's hands.
- Commemorate the Patriarchs, who were born on Rosh Hashanah (Rosh Hashanah 11a).
- Remember the first of the ten plagues in Egypt, when water turned to blood, which occurred on Rosh Hashanah. ((Rav Stern engages with the different midrashim about the lengths of the plagues, that need not detain us now.))
- Symbolizing the purification we undergo before Rosh Hashanah, in which men immerse in a mikveh.

- Remembering biblical miracles happened at river, such as Nachal Arnon (Berakhos 54a) or Nachal Kishon (Jud. 5:21).
- Remembering the Babylonian exiles wept by the river (Ps. 137:2) or were drowned by the enemy (Ps. 68:23).
- Thinking about judgement - In ancient times, courts used to sit near rivers.
 - To remember past wars, which were often fought near rivers (e.g. Josh. 11:5; Jud. 5:21, 10:9; 2 Kings 3:17, 23:29; 2 Chron. 20:2, 35:20; Ps. 29:3, 83:10).

IV. Tashlikh Today

Rav Stern agrees that his suggestions are speculative. However, we know that the ancients gathered at rivers in order to inspire religious feelings even if we cannot be sure which specific intent was invoked. Therefore, we cannot reject the centuries-old custom of Tashlikh, even if we can only speculate about its original intent.

Significantly, Rav Stern adds two important points:

- Communities should avoid men and women (presumably from different families) walking together to Tashlikh. The day of judgment should not turn into a social scene.
 - People should not say too many prayers at Tashlikh.
- Over the years, publishers have added more and more passages and prayers to Tashlikh. If you want to say them all, do it at home. I find so much of this response striking. First, Rav Stern agrees in principle that religious customs shouldn't be irrational. However, they can be meaningful even if they are only symbolic. Additionally, he believes that we have to give customs the benefit of the doubt. If generations of Jews observed a practice, it has to have meaning. If that meaning was lost, we should try to recover it. ((The assumption that this practice is intended to inspire specific thoughts adds urgency for this initiative. Thoughtless practices maintain continuity, no small matter, but remain spiritually meaningless.))

Note that Rav Stern does not even allude to the Maharil's and Shelah's explanations. His normal practice is to overwhelm readers with citations of texts and commentaries. This omission could not have been accidental. I think he found their explanations improbable and therefore attempted to find simpler explanations. As we look at the ample literature explaining a variety of Jewish customs, I find this attitude refreshing. Too much of the literature seems improbable.

Note also that Rav Stern's recovery process -- his attempt to discover the ancient intent in this custom -- is based on texts and traditions, bringing the past into the present. He does not try to fit his contemporary religious agendas into ancient customs but rather attempts to understand why Jews historically observed them.

Perhaps most importantly, Rav Stern teaches that if you do not understand something about Judaism, do not give up. It might be your failure, not the religion's. Sometimes it can take years to find an answer, sometimes a lifetime. ((See the interpretation of Deut. 32:47 in Yerushalmi, Pe'ah 1:1, quoted in Torah Temimah, ad loc..))

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Gates of Prayer: The Ten Terms of Tefillah - Spanning the Spectrum of Prayer

by JA Mag September 15, 2017

Gates of Prayer

By Shimshon Dov Pincus

Feldheim Publishers

New York, 2013

Reviewed by Gil Student

Aficionados of all kinds agree that the more you understand something, the more you appreciate it. The ability to distinguish between works of art or bottles of wine allows you to recognize their varying attributes and the hard work that went into making them. In an English translation of one of the books he wrote personally, Rav Shimshon Pincus teaches readers to appreciate the nuances of prayer with the same depth and distinction they would apply to other, unrelated areas. We learn to pray when we are young. As we mature, our understanding and abilities should grow likewise. This requires study and concentrated practice.

The question of prayer has challenged philosophers throughout the ages. If God knows what we want and what we deserve, why does He need us to pray? Many answers have been given. Rav Pincus follows the approach of Ramchal (Derech Hashem 4:5:1) that God established a system of providence in the world that follows formal procedures. The world is programmed to work as follows: in order for a person to receive the help that he merits, he must pray. Rav Pincus expands on this idea. "Hashem runs the world in such a way that it is as if He doesn't 'see' what is not shown to Him and doesn't 'know' what is not brought to His attention." When we pray for something specific, we open the gates of Heaven for Divine blessing to descend. Similarly, when we praise God for a specific trait, He exercises that trait for us. This enables us to grow closer to God by connecting to Him with prayer for all of our needs.

Effective prayer begins with preparation. If we do not progress in our learning as we mature, our education is lacking. Similarly, if we do not progress in our praying ability, we suffer from deficient training. In order to grow in prayer, we have to devote time to learning how to pray—what the words mean, how to prepare properly before prayer and how to effectively utilize the different forms of prayer.

Rav Pincus describes in detail thirteen types of prayer listed by the Sages (thirteen, despite the book's subtitle of ten). He carefully distinguishes between each type of prayer, offering insight into when and how each form can be used by the reader. Most of us intuitively use many of these forms, but do not realize what we are doing. By fully understanding the different tools of prayer, we can more effectively wield them in our own efforts.

When I reorder the thirteen types of prayer, I see three main groupings. Four forms of prayer consist of what we usually connect to the concept of prayer: Rinah (singing), Keri'ah (calling to), Pilul (prayer) and Amidah (standing). We praise God and encounter Him in joy, even when we are suffering. Eichah, the saddest book in Tanach, teaches us to call out to God in joyous song during times of trouble: "Arise, sing in the night, at the beginning of the watches" (2:19). When one smiles to Heaven, Heaven responds likewise. We pray to God with knowledge that He hears us. In times of trouble, we experience legitimate fear and yet we nevertheless trust in God. Prayer involves drawing close to God, standing in nullification and service to the Holy One, and listening to God's response. Sometimes we find ourselves unable to concentrate on our prayers. Rav Pincus explains that prayer is a two-way conversation; our inability to connect may be God refusing to speak with us for specific reasons. "We may want to be with Hashem and talk to Him. But if He doesn't want it, and leaves the 'meeting place,' we will be totally unable to achieve kavanah and focus our thought . . . No amount of trying will help if Hashem from His side does not want to be with us."

Four types of prayer speak to the emergency: Bitzur (calling out in distress), Shav'ah (hysterical outcry), Tze'akah (wordless scream), Ne'akah (groaning). Our troubles bring us closer to God. We may be too proud to ask for help, but eventually even the proudest person forgets his pride when the pain and distress become unbearable. When we suffer, we call out to God in prayer. When we feel pain acutely, we cry out uncontrollably. The wordless scream emerges from an intensity that transcends words, a response to danger with a spontaneous scream for help. Groaning is not a prayer at all, but a natural reaction to pain that we can channel to prayer. Rav Pincus writes that "the wise person will work on making this a habit. Every time a painful thing happens to him, or he hears about someone who fell ill, or a

tragedy that occurred, or some sad news, causing his heart to shiver and a sigh to leave his lips—he should immediately direct this feeling Above, as prayer and pleading.”

Five forms of prayer reflect urgent appeals: Pegi’ah (relentlessly entreating), Nipul (throwing oneself down), Tachanunim (begging for grace), Chilui (making an appeal) and Itur (beseeching repeatedly). If we find that our prayers have not been answered, we persistently continue to say prayer after prayer, chapter after chapter of Tehillim. “A person stands and pleads before Hashem with clear awareness that Hashem is never tired of him and never rejects him.” However, despite our urgent need, we must pray with humility, asking in a general way that God’s will be done. Acknowledging that ultimately only He can help, we should beg for undeserved Divine gifts, appealing to God’s mercy with our prayers.

This brief summary cannot convey the depth and inspirational analysis within the descriptions of different prayer forms. Rav Pincus’ study encourages preparation and targeted prayer, providing the right tool for every need.

Rav Pincus concludes with a key element for successful prayer. We need to feel God’s pain. He is with us in our troubles, suffering as we suffer, so to speak. We have the ability to speak to God, to address Him in the first person. We turn in prayer to God, face to face, and beseech Him to heal His own pain by helping us. This less selfish attitude turns our prayers into worship of God because they are for God’s sake. This ability to help God, to invoke the rules of Creation for God’s sake, is the awesome privilege and responsibility of prayer.

Rabbi Gil Student writes frequently on Jewish issues and runs Torahmusings.com. He is a member of the Jewish Action Editorial Board.

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Starting the New Year on the Right Foot

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Favorable Signs for the New Year

On Rosh Hashanah, our every action has significance pertaining to the year to come. This is the first day of the year, and it is on this day that God apportions life to all creatures; therefore, all action, speech, and thought on this day influence the entire year. In the words of the sages, "It is a significant omen" (Keritot 5b).

Consequently, the Jewish people customarily eat foods on the night of Rosh Hashanah which act as auspicious omens for the coming year. We eat an apple dipped in honey so that it be a good and sweet year; leeks ("Karti"), so that our enemies be decimated ("Yikartu"; this word comprises the same Hebrew letters as "Karti"); beets ("Selek"), so that our adversaries depart ("Yistalku"; of the same letters as "Selek") pomegranate, so that our merits increase as [the seeds of] a pomegranate; etc.

It is not enough to just consume these omens; we recite a prayer over each one. For example, over dates we say, "May it be Your will, Lord our God and the God of our forefathers that our enemies be consumed."

When to Eat the Omens There are some who eat these items even before partaking of bread. The more correct practice, though, is to eat them after the bread. The reason for this is, firstly, that Jewish law teaches us to give preference to bread's blessing over other blessings; secondly, if we eat the good omens before the bread, a question will arise as to whether or not we must recite a blessing after them. Hence, after Kiddush we wash our hands, cut the Challah, dip it in some salt, dip it into honey as a good omen, and then eat some of it.

After this, we eat some of the omens. But, before eating we must bless "boreh peri ha'etz" over the date. The reason for this is that the blessing "HaMotzie" which we recite over the Challah bread includes only those food items which are considered part of the meal; the date, pomegranate, and apple, however, are not part of the meal, and we must therefore recite a separate blessing over them.

We begin by blessing over the date because it is one of Israel's seven species, and, among the seven species, it takes preference over the pomegranate. The blessing over the date of course covers the pomegranate and apple as well. After blessing over the date we eat some of it, and only then do we say, "May it be Your will..."

There is no need to recite a blessing over the omens which generally call for the "boreh peri ha-adamah" blessing. The reason for this is that because they are cooked like the rest of the foods in the meal, they are considered an essential part of the meal and hence covered by the initial blessing over the bread.

Some of the translated terms and expressions in the above article were taken from, or based upon, Artscroll's Machzor Zikhron Reuven for Rosh Hashanah

* Written by the rabbi

<http://rabbisacks.org/moses-man-haazinu-5777/>

Moses the Man (Ha'azinu 5777)

Covenant & Conversation

That very day the Lord spoke to Moses, "Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel for a possession. And die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people ...For you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

With these words there draws to a close the life of the greatest hero the Jewish people has ever known: Moses, the leader, the liberator, the lawgiver, the man who brought a group of slaves to freedom, turned a fractious collection of individuals into a nation, and so transformed them that they became the people of eternity.

It was Moses who mediated with God, performed signs and wonders, gave the people its laws, fought with them when they sinned, fought for them when praying for Divine forgiveness, gave his life to them and had his heart broken by them when they repeatedly failed to live up to his great expectations.

Each age has had its own image of Moses. For the more mystically inclined sages Moses was the man who ascended to Heaven at the time of the giving of the Torah, where he had to contend with the Angels who opposed the idea that this precious gift be given to mere mortals. God told Moses to answer them, which he did decisively. "Do angels work that they need a day of rest? Do they have parents that they need to be commanded to honour them? Do they have an evil inclination that they need to be told, 'Do not commit adultery?'" (Shabbat 88a). Moses the Man out-argues the Angels.

Other Sages were more radical still. For them Moses was Rabbenu, "our Rabbi" – not a king, a political or military leader, but a scholar and master of the law, a role which they invested with astonishing authority. They went so far as to say that when Moses prayed for God to forgive the people for the Golden Calf, God replied, "I cannot, for I have already vowed, "One who sacrifices to any God shall be destroyed" (Ex. 22:19), and I cannot revoke My vow." Moses replied, "Master of the Universe, have You not taught me the laws of annulling vows? One may not annul his own vow, but a Sage may do so." Moses thereupon annulled God's vow (Shemot Rabbah 43:4).

For Philo, the 1st century Jewish philosopher from Alexandria, Moses was a philosopher-king of the type depicted in Plato's Republic. He governs the nation, organises its laws, institutes its rites and conducts himself with dignity and honour; he is wise, stoical and self-controlled. This is, as it were, a Greek Moses, looking not unlike Michelangelo's famous sculpture.

For Maimonides, Moses was radically different from all other prophets in four ways. First, others received their prophecies in dreams or visions, while Moses received his when awake. Second, to the others God spoke in parables obliquely, but to Moses He spoke directly and lucidly. Third, the other prophets were terrified when God appeared to them but of Moses it says, "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex. 33:11). Fourth, other prophets needed to undergo lengthy preparations to hear the Divine word; Moses spoke to God whenever he wanted or needed to. He was "always prepared, like one of the ministering angels" (Laws of the Foundations of Torah 7:6).

Yet what is so moving about the portrayal of Moses in the Torah is that he appears before us as quintessentially human. No religion has more deeply and systemically insisted on the absolute otherness of God and Man, Heaven and Earth, the infinite and the finite. Other cultures have blurred the boundary, making some human beings seem godlike, perfect, infallible. There is such a tendency – marginal to be sure, but never entirely absent – within Jewish life itself: to see sages as saints, great scholars as angels, to

gloss over their doubts and shortcomings and turn them into superhuman emblems of perfection. Tanakh, however, is greater than that. It tells us that God, who is never less than God, never asks us to be more than simply human.

Moses is a human being. We see him despair and want to die. We see him lose his temper. We see him on the brink of losing his faith in the people he has been called on to lead. We see him beg to be allowed to cross the Jordan and enter the land he has spent his life as a leader travelling toward. Moses is the hero of those who wrestle with the world as it is and with people as they are, knowing that “It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to stand aside from it.”

The Torah insists that “to this day no one knows where his grave is” (Deut. 34:6), to avoid his grave being made a place of pilgrimage or worship. It is all too easy to turn human beings, after their death, into saints and demigods. That is precisely what the Torah opposes. “Every human being” writes Maimonides in his Laws of Repentance (5:2), “can be as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam.”

Moses does not exist in Judaism as an object of worship but as a role model for each of us to aspire to. He is the eternal symbol of a human being made great by what he strove for, not by what he actually achieved. The titles conferred by him in the Torah, “the man Moses,” “God’s servant,” “a man of God,” are all the more impressive for their modesty. Moses continues to inspire.

On 3 April 1968, Martin Luther King delivered a sermon in a church in Memphis, Tennessee. At the end of his address, he turned to the last day of Moses’ life, when the man who had led his people to freedom was taken by God to a mountain-top from which he could see in the distance the land he was not destined to enter. That, said King, was how he felt that night: I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the promised land.

That night was the last of his life. The next day he was assassinated. At the end, the still young Christian preacher – he was not yet forty – who had led the civil rights movement in the United States, identified not with a Christian figure but with Moses.

In the end the power of Moses’ story is precisely that it affirms our mortality. There are many explanations of why Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. I have argued that it was simply because “each generation has its leaders” (Avodah Zarah 5a) and the person who has the ability to lead a people out of slavery is not necessarily the one who has the requisite skills to lead the next generation into its own and very different challenges. There is no one ideal form of leadership that is right for all times and situations.

Franz Kafka gave voice to a different and no less compelling truth:

He is on the track of Canaan all his life; it is incredible that he should see the land only when on the verge of death. This dying vision of it can only be intended to illustrate how incomplete a moment is human life; incomplete because a life like this could last forever and still be nothing but a moment.

Moses fails to enter Canaan not because his life was too short but because it is a human life.[1] [1] Franz Kafka, Diaries 1914 – 1923, ed. Max Brod, trans.

Martin Greenberg and Hannah Arendt, New York, Schocken, 1965, 195-96.

What then does the story of Moses tell us? That it is right to fight for justice even against regimes that seem indestructible. That God is with us when we take our stand against oppression. That we must have faith in those we lead, and when we cease to have faith in them we can no longer lead them. That change, though slow, is real, and that people are transformed by high ideals even though it may take centuries.

In one of its most powerful statements about Moses, the Torah states that he was “one hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his strength unabated” (34:8). I used to think that these were merely two sequential phrases, until I realised that the first was the explanation for the second. Why was Moses’ strength unabated? Because his

eyes were undimmed – because he never lost the ideals of his youth. Though he sometimes lost faith in himself and his ability to lead, he never lost faith in the cause: in God, service, freedom, the right, the good and the holy. His words at the end of his life were as impassioned as they had been at the beginning.

That is Moses, the man who refused to “go gently into that dark night”, the eternal symbol of how a human being, without ever ceasing to be human, can become a giant of the moral life. That is the greatness and the humility of aspiring to be “a servant of God.”

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

From: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>

to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>

date: Mon, Sep 18, 2017 at 4:24 AM

subject: [Rav Kook Torah] Rosh Hashanah: Blasts That Penetrate the Heart

Rav Kook Torah] Rosh Hashanah:

Blasts That Penetrate the Heart

“Fortunate is the nation that knows the teruah-blast” (Psalms 89:16).

What is so special about recognizing the sound of the shofar?

Rav Kook explained that in the shofar-blasts, one may hear the inner call of teshuvah.

Blowing the shofar in Jerusalem

This idea is illustrated in the following story:

The Wake-up Call

In one of the neighborhoods of Jerusalem, a group of workers was under pressure to complete a particular building, and they continued working during the Rosh Hashanah holiday.

When the neighbors realized what was happening, they immediately notified Rav Kook. Shortly thereafter, a messenger of the Rav arrived at the construction site - with a shofar in his hand. He approached the workers, who were surprised to see him, and offered New Year’s greetings. He then announced that Rav Kook had sent him to blow the shofar for them, in accordance with the obligation to hear the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. He respectfully asked them to take a break from their work and listen. The messenger then proceeded to recite the blessing and began to blow.

The words from the Rav and the sounds of the shofar achieved their goal. Each blast shook the delicate chords of the soul and awakened the Jewish spark in the hearts of the young workers. They set down their work tools and gathered around the man blowing the shofar. Some were so moved that they began to cry. The ancient blasts of the shofar, reverberating in the unfinished building, transported them back to their father’s house. They saw images of grandfather, the shtetl and the synagogue, a world of Jews standing in prayer. Questions began to pour out, one after another. What has happened to us? Where are we? What have we come to? The young men stood around the emissary, confused and absorbed in thought.

When the shofar-blowing was over, there was no need for words. The workers unanimously decided to stop working. Some asked the messenger if they could accompany him. They quickly changed their clothes and joined in the holiday prayers at Rav Kook’s yeshivah.

In an open letter from that time, Rav Kook wrote:

“A friendly word is effective; an expression of comradeship and respect will bring others close. Let us not forsake the good and straight path that is illuminated with love and goodwill, peace and friendship. We must break down the wall that divides brothers and speak heart to heart, soul to soul. Then our words will certainly be heard.

These children of ours will suddenly raise themselves up. And they will crown their powerful aspiration to build the land and the nation with the eternal ideals of sublime holiness.”

(Silver from the Land of Israel (now available in paperback). Adapted from Mo’adei HaRe’iyah, pp. 65-66, Olat Re’iyah vol. II, p. 329.)

See also: Rosh Hashanah: The Music of Teshuvah