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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON ROSH HASHANA - SHABBOS SHUVA HA'AZINU - 5785

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Rosh Hashanah 2024: A bleak Jewish New Year

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Sept. 30, 2024 10:45

Rosh Hashanah is the day of divine authority, and we are currently locked in a struggle to preserve His presence. One day, His presence will be palpable and undeniable. Until that day, we have faith.

Rosh Hashanah is a day of profound duality, where emotions blend between awe and solemnity, pride and joy.

We stand before God in judgment, fully aware of our inadequacies and helplessness, yet we also reflect on the loyalty and love that have marked Jewish history while urging God to remember our devotion. For one day, we glimpse the world we hope to create – a world imbued with heightened spiritual awareness, where God's presence fills every corner. This day of awe magnifies the frailty of human life, while simultaneously elevating the nobility of a life lived in God's presence. It is both a day of the book of Ecclesiastes, in which we confront the mortality and limitations of man, and also a day of the book of Song of Songs, where the destiny of the Jewish people shines brightly. The power of Rosh Hashanah flows from this tension – the paradox between humility and strength, fear and pride. The day is intense precisely because of this internal paradox.

The shofar, the central symbol of the day, captures this dichotomy. Its sound, primal and raw, echoes a cry beyond words, stripping away the artifice of human language to reveal the purest prayer – a primordial scream to God.

Yet, at the same time, the shofar also brings harmony to our prayers, adding melody to our words. In the Temple, it was part of a grand orchestration, blending with other instruments to amplify the moment of standing before God. The shofar embodies both simplicity and grandeur, and humility and celebration.

An illustrative photo of a man blowing a shofar, a ceremonial ram's horn, which is done repeatedly on Rosh Hashanah.

(credit: David Cohen/Flash90) Enlarge image

An illustrative photo of a man blowing a shofar, a ceremonial ram's horn, which is done repeatedly on Rosh Hashanah.

(credit: David Cohen/Flash90)

Historically, some would fast on Rosh Hashanah, intensifying the solemnity of standing in judgment before the divine. Though this custom has largely faded, the day remains one of muted joy, filled with reverence and gravity. We celebrate, but our joy is tempered, framed by the seriousness of the moment. Rosh Hashanah is a day of proud reverence, tinged with solemnity – its symbols and customs perfectly balancing these dual emotions.

Though each Rosh Hashanah calls us to navigate a spectrum of emotions, this moment in history feels particularly challenging. We are surrounded by dark clouds – our people continue to suffer on so many levels.

Recently, I was asked to reflect on the “post-traumatic truth” and what our people have learned from Oct. 7. I politely reminded the questioner that we haven’t even reached the post-trauma stage. Each day brings fresh pain, and the wounds of this past year have not even begun to heal.

In such bleak times, it feels almost impossible to summon the joy, pride, or power traditionally associated with Rosh Hashanah. How can we celebrate a day of glory when so much of our world is cloaked in tragedy and darkness and so many of God’s people remain mired in misery and agonizing pain? The first bleak Rosh Hashanah

In the midst of a disheartened Rosh Hashanah in our past, we received a blueprint for navigating such bleak occasions. During the late 6th century BCE, we gradually returned to Israel from a Babylonian exile. Despite our efforts to rebuild the Temple and erect an altar, local opposition swiftly rose against us, accusing us of sedition and betrayal. Our efforts were halted for years, and the hope of national restoration seemed distant.

Two decades later, we resumed this project. Led by Ezra, a modest and vulnerable group of 42,000 people made their way back to Israel. Poor and barely defended, they set to work rebuilding the Temple and Jerusalem. But progress was slow. Fourteen years after this second stage, the situation had hardly improved. The walls of Jerusalem were in such ruin that it was impossible to walk around them. Our enemies mocked us, predicting our inevitable failure.

Internally, the community was fractured, as the aristocracy largely remained in Persia, leaving the returnees struggling without leadership or resources. Rosh Hashanah arrived under a veil of bleakness and uncertainty.

Ezra and Nehemiah gathered the small, weary group of returnees in the city square of Jerusalem for a public reading of the Torah. A special platform was erected for this occasion, and as the words of the Torah filled the air, an outpouring of tears erupted from the crowd. The people wept as they recalled lost glories that seemed so distant, and so impossible to reclaim.

Jewish destiny seemed to hang in the balance, and their hopes for renewal felt futile. How could they possibly feel joy this Rosh Hashanah? So much suffering, so many struggles. With trauma weighing so heavily upon them, how could they even think of celebrating?

The joy of God is our strength

Nehemiah responded with a powerful announcement: “Go, eat rich food and drink sweet beverages, and send food to those who have nothing prepared, for today is holy to God. Do not be sad, for the joy of God is your strength.”

Amid the helplessness, Nehemiah urged them to tap into a greater truth and a more profound force. No matter how bleak conditions seemed, they were still part of a larger divine narrative. The joy of God would be their strength. Pondering

the eternal purpose and significance of a life before God could momentarily lift them above their sorrow and futility.

First, because despite the darkness, God holds larger plans and can swiftly reshape even the most dire reality. Second, because faith in God and a relationship with Him surpass any fate we endure. And third, because faith itself provides courage, strength, and resilience. Faith would be their strength – not merely weapons, strategies, or armies. No bullet can destroy faith, and it will always endure.

They didn’t ignore the calamity or the difficult conditions they faced; they simply took a pause to replenish their faith.

Immediately after the festival season concluded – on the day following what we now call Simchat Torah (though it had not yet been designated as such) – they returned to mourning and fasting. They tearfully uttered one of the most heartfelt and remorseful confessions in all of the Bible.

Yet, Rosh Hashanah itself called for emotional transcendence without succumbing to indifference toward the sadness – a moment to reach for the heavens and return to Earth with renewed courage and vigor.

Jewish history often repeats itself. Here we stand, 2,700 years later, facing a similar Rosh Hashanah. Ignoring the sadness and suffering is unimaginable – we are surrounded by it. Yet for these two days, we must rise above it without forgetting. We must find a way to merge our struggles and traumas with the glory of standing before God. We must tap into the larger historical mission we are part of: bringing God’s presence into a godless world.

Rosh Hashanah must remind us of why this battle is so crucial. It’s not just a conflict over land or boundaries. This isn’t about occupation or apartheid – it’s about God’s presence in our world.

We are battling against those who falsely speak in the name of an angry and vengeful god who does not exist. We fight against those who desecrate the divine dignity endowed to every human being, violating their bodies and spirits. This is a battle against a culture that glorifies death instead of celebrating life, against a world that has lost its capacity to discern truth and uphold objective moral standards.

Rosh Hashanah is the day of divine authority, and we are currently locked in a struggle to preserve His presence. One day, His presence will be palpable and undeniable. Until that day, we have faith. □

The writer is a rabbi at the hesder Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush with ordination from YU and a master’s in English literature from CUNY. He is author of *Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below* (Kodesh Press), on religious responses to Oct. 7, and the soon-to-be published *Reclaiming Redemption: Deciphering the Maze of Jewish History* (Mosaica Press).

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>

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date: Sep 30, 2024, 9:13 PM

subject: Rav Frand - A Thought From the Haftorah of the First Day of Rosh Hashana

A Thought From the Haftorah of the First Day of Rosh Hashana

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly portion: #1393 – The Baal Tokeah Who Could Only Blow From His Left Side and Other Shofar Issues.

The next shiur will be for Parshas Bereishis. Kesiva v'chasima tova & Good Yom Tov!

The Haftorah for the first day of Rosh Hashana is the story of Chana (Shmuel I Chapter 1). Chana was barren for so many years. Finally, she goes up to the Mishkan, receives a bracha from Eli Hakohen and becomes pregnant. Chazal say that she was barren for 19 years and that (according to one Medrash) she was 130 years old when she finally gave birth to Shmuel! It is most noteworthy that once Eli gave her the bracha, she felt that she did not need to worry anymore. She was so confident in the bracha of Eli Hakohen that she did not go back up to Yerushalayim for aliyah l'regel again. The question is that if she was so confident in Eli's blessing, why did she not go up to Eli in the first year and ask him for a bracha then? What took her so long?

Rav Elya Baruch Finkel cites an interesting comment from Rav Chaim Kanievsky: The bracha of a tzadik or a talmid chochom is much more effective if the one who bestows the bracha "owes a bracha" to the person who he is blessing! This sense of debt increases his connection to the person seeking the bracha and the bracha thereby becomes much more effective.

That is why the pesukim elaborate on the whole dialog between Chana and Eli. She was mumbling and he mistook her for a drunk woman. She then chastises Eli for his failure to recognize her bitterness of spirit and the fact that she did not consume any wine or strong drink. Chazal likewise find fault with Eli's initial reaction. They say he was "choshed b'ksheirim" (wrongly suspected the innocent). The halacha is that someone who wrongly suspects an innocent person must bless the person who he wrongly suspected.

Yes, a bracha from any tzadik certainly has significance, but it is extra powerful when that tzadik owes you the bracha. That is why Chana made this case. She could have merely denied the accusation that she was inebriated, but she did more than that. She built the argument that she was wrongly and unjustly accused. Why does she do that? She does that to create indebtedness on the part of Eli. "Eli, you did something terrible. You were choshed b'ksheirim. And now I want something from you. I want a bracha." That type of bracha is the most effective bracha that a person can receive.

Now, what does this do for you and me? People go to Eretz Yisrael. They seek out tzadikim and receive all kind of brachos, left and right. Rav Elya Baruch Finkel makes the point that if a person can somehow make the m'varech (the

one bestowing the blessing) indebted to him, the bracha will be much more effective. How a person goes about making a tzadik indebted to him may indeed be difficult, especially when dealing with people who don't need anything and don't want anything. But if a person can somehow create that "shibud" (debt) so that the tzadik feels "I owe him," then the bracha becomes a whole different level of bracha.

Rav Elya Baruch Finkel brings a fascinating incident from many years ago in Europe: A certain person's great-grandfather (a Rav Halberstam) passed by a non-Jew who was sitting on a bench. The non-Jew said to Rav Halberstam, "It is my birthday today. I am 116 years old. I have four more years!" Rav Halberstam looked at him and said, "How do you know you have four more years?" The man responded, "Not only that, but..." At that point he opened up his mouth and said, "Every one of my teeth are my own. I am 116 years old and I have all my teeth! And I am going to live another four years!"

Rav Halberstam again said, "Very nice. But how do you know that?" The man explained: When I was a little boy, I was a barber's assistant. I lived in Prague. The Rabbi in Prague at the time was Rav Yechezkel Landau (the Nodeh Beyehudah).

When Rabbi Landau came to take his haircut, his custom was to not remove his yarmulka. The haircut was thus to cut around the yarmulka. One time, the Nodeh Beyehudah dozed off during his haircut while sitting in the barber chair and his yarmulka fell off. When he woke up, he noticed that his head was uncovered and he anxiously asked "Where is my yarmulka?" He was upset. The old man told Rabbi Halberstam: "I was a little kid and I found the yarmulka and I gave it back to the Rabbi." The Nodeh Beyehudah, in gratitude, blessed me and told me: You should live to be 120 and you should never need a doctor.

The blessing came true. The man said "I am 116, I have all my teeth and I have never been to a doctor in my life because I received a blessing from the great rabbi of Prague!" We see what kind of a bracha that was. The Nodeh Beyehudah was very bothered that his head was uncovered so he felt indebted to this little boy for finding his yarmulka.

Rav Elya Baruch then writes a second incident (perhaps a little closer to home): There was a Jew named Rav Elya Yurkanski (1908-2005), who used to be a maggid shiur in the Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York. He is no longer alive but, in his time, he had the distinction of being the oldest maggid shiur in any American yeshiva. I have a nephew who learned in his shiur when he was past 90! He said over that during World War I, when Rav Chaim Soloveitchik was running for his life (as was the case with many Jews in Eastern Europe at that time), he passed through Minsk. Rav Elya Yurkanski was a young man at the time and he helped Rav Chaim with all of his suitcases and baggage. Rav Chaim gave him a bracha that he should live a long life. Here too, the bracha came to fruition. Once again, a bracha from a tzadik certainly helps, but

a bracha from a tzadik who feels a debt of gratitude is a far more effective bracha.

While we are on the subject of brachos, it is not only the bracha of a tzadik that is considered significant but rather chazal say not to underestimate the bracha of (even) an ordinary person. So, I will take this opportunity to wish all my talmidim and readership and their families a kesiva v'chasima tova. I feel indebted to all of you for listening to my shiurim and divrei Torah and therefore may it help that my bracha that Hashem will grant you all a shana tova u'mesuka will be especially effective!

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion

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The World Is Not Deaf to Your Prayers - Rosh Hashanah

Essay by Rabbi YY

Rabbi YY Jacobson <rabbiyy-theyeshiva.net@shared1.ccsend.com> Tue, Oct 1, 2024 at 9:04 PM

Reply-To: info@theyeshiva.net

Your Shul Experience

Berkowitz and Rabinowitz were business partners, and both were avid golfers.

"Rabinowitz, listen up, "exclaimed an excited Berkowitz.

"Those buyers we have been schmoozing-up called to say they got a reservation for us to meet them for golf at their exclusive country club this Saturday at 8 A.M."

"Sorry, replied Rabinowitz, I can't go. It's Shabbos and I will be in shul."

"Shul, shmool, what are you talking about? This is a BIG deal! And, anyway, YOU in shul? Since when? As long as I've known you you've been an atheist. When we were kids you were a communist."

"That was all before Goldstein came to town. You remember, when he came as a refugee without a penny in his pocket. And now, he's a multi-millionaire. Some say he may be worth billions. Well, Goldstein tells me that it's all because he goes to shul and talks to G-d."

"Rabinowitz, you expect me to believe that YOU are going to shul to talk to G-d??? You are a radical atheist. Common, stop selling me babbe masos..."

"No!" Says Rabinowitz. "Goldstein goes to shul to talk to G-d. I go to shul to talk to Goldstein."

How Can He Be So Insensitive?

The Haftarah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah tells the story of Chanah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. Chanah, the childless wife of Elkanah, came to Shiloh (where the Sanctuary stood before King Solomon built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem) to pray for a child.

Chanah's soul was pained. She prayed to G-d, weeping profusely. And she vowed a vow and said: "O Lord of hosts... If You will give Your maidservant a child, I shall dedicate him to G-d all the days of his life..."

Eli, the High Priest at Shiloh, watched as she prayed profusely before G-d. She spoke with her heart, the prophet relates. Only her lips moved; her voice was not heard. Eli thought her to be a drunkard. He says to her: "How long shall you be drunken! Put away your wine and sober up!"

Chanah replies: "No, my master, I am a woman whose spirit is in pain. I have drunk neither wine nor any other alcohol.

Rather, I have poured out my soul before G-d; do not think of me as inappropriate..."

Eli blesses her that G-d should grant her request. That year, indeed, Chanah gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel (which means "asked from G-d"). After weaning him, she fulfilled her vow to dedicate him to the service of G-d by bringing him to Shiloh, where he was raised by Eli and the priests. Samuel grew up to become one of the greatest prophets of Israel.

The story seems senseless.

The pain of a woman who craves a child and cannot fulfill her dream is profound beyond words. (Rachel tells Jacob, "If I can't have a child, I am considered dead.") Yet in this story, a woman comes to the sanctuary to plead with G-d for a child, and the High Priest of Israel—the Kohen Gadol, considered the spiritual master of the age—considers her a drunkard, demanding from her to go sober up, join AA, and then come back and pray? Could the spiritual leader of Israel at the time not distinguish between a plastered drunkard and a sincere worshipper? How callous, clueless, and insensitive can one be? Just because she is whispering her prayers in silence, and she seems deeply disturbed, does it mean she is inebriated?

The Drunk Cries and Laughs

One of the most illustrious Rabbis of the 19th century, Rabbi Moshe Sofer, known as the Chasam Sofer, offers this insight.[i]

Eli was not heartless. Rather, he was struck by an enigma. He saw a woman who on one hand seemed broken-hearted, devastated, and grief-stricken. But when he looked again, he saw simultaneously a person projecting serenity, confidence, joy, and inner calmness. How can both emotions coexist in the

same person at the same time? They can't unless he or she is... smashed! We have all seen people plastered: They cry one moment; then break out in laughter the next. They are unpredictable, inconsistent, and erratic. They love you and then a moment later hate you. They hug you and then they curse you. They kiss you and they smite you. They are happy, and they are sad. They are unbalanced physically, verbally, and mentally. (Those of us who grew up in homes with alcoholics know the pain and fear of living with someone who is completely unpredictable. His or her kindness in one moment can turn into unbridled rage the next). Eli thus presumed that Chanah must be inebriated. That's why she can cry and laugh at the same time.

Chanah understands his thinking. Listen to her words to him: And Hannah answered and said: No, my master, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, and neither new wine nor old wine have I drunk; rather I poured out my soul before G-d.

Chanah is explaining to Eli who she is. She is broken. She is scarred. She carries a deep pain in her soul. She wants a child, and she can't have one. Her life is tinged by sadness and she can't deny that. How then can she be full of vitality and be filled with an inner serenity and majesty? For this, she continues: "I poured out my soul before G-d." I have a G-d to speak to, so my brokenness and sadness are tempered by a sense of calmness and grandeur. Chanah is both bruised and whole; she is full of anguish but also full of rapture. She feels dejected but also embraced. She is scared but she is also a whole. Not because she is drunk, but because she has a G-d whom she can speak to openly, intimately, to whom she can—in her words—"pour out her soul."

She says to Eli: I am been talking to G-d. Will he answer my prayers? I hope so. But the very fact that I am able to come and talk to G-d, gives me a measure of peace. The fact that I feel I am not alone, someone is holding my hand, as I tread the rough terrain of this planet, someone is listening to me, someone cares to know how I am feeling—that itself provides me with a sense of calmness.

That's what we learn from Chanah. I can pour out my heart and my soul to G-d. I can just talk to G-d without a script, knowing that the universe is not deaf to my plight and my anguish. I do not know what He will do about my conversation, but I can reach out and talk to Him heart to heart. As one person wrote: G-d does not have an i-phone, but He is my favorite contact. He does not have Facebook, but He is my best friend. He does not have Twitter, but I follow him nonetheless. He has a massive communication system, but never puts me on hold.

And note this fact: Chanah did not follow "shul" protocol. "She spoke what is on her heart," the story says. She does her own thing. The prayer book may be the facilitator, but the essence of prayer is the personal, intimate, heart-to-heart bonding time with our Creator.

The Sidur in the Camps

Simon Wiesenthal (1908 – 2005) was an Austrian Holocaust survivor who spent four and a half years in the German concentration camps such as Janowska, Plaszow, and Mauthausen.

After the war, he became famous for his work as a Nazi hunter. Wiesenthal dedicated most of his life to tracking down and gathering information on fugitive Nazis so that they could be brought to justice.

At a conference of European Rabbis in Bratislava, Slovakia the Rabbis presented the 91-year-old Simon Wiesenthal with an award, and Mr. Wiesenthal visibly moved, told the Rabbis the following encounter that he had with Rabbi Eliezer Silver.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver (1882 - 1968) was among American Jewry's foremost religious leaders, and most noted for spearheading efforts in rescuing as many Jews as possible from Europe. He raised funds, requested exemptions on immigration quotas, offered to ransom concentration camp prisoners for cash and tractors – talks that freed hundreds from Bergen-Belsen and other death camps—and organized rallies in Washington. After the war, he traveled to Europe and worked tirelessly on the ground to assist his brethren.

It was in Mauthausen after liberation that Simon Wiesenthal was visited by Rabbi Silver when he had come to help and comfort the survivors. Rabbi Silver had organized a special prayer service and he invited Wiesenthal to join the other survivors in praying. Mr. Wiesenthal declined and explained his position.

"When I was in camp, I saw many different types of people do things. There was one religious man of whom I was in awe. This man had managed to smuggle a Siddur (Jewish prayer book) into the camp. I was amazed that he took the risk of his life in order to bring the Siddur in.

"The next day, to my horror, I realized that this was no religious man. He was renting the Siddur in exchange for people giving him their last piece of bread. I was so angry with this Jew, how could he take a Siddur and use it to take a person's last piece of bread away? So I am not going to pray, if this is how religious Jews behave."

As Wiesenthal turned to walk away, Rabbi Silver tapped him on the shoulder and gently said in Yiddish, "Oy naar, naar." Wiesenthal was intrigued why had the Rabbi called him childish. The answer wasn't long in coming.

Rabbi Silver continued, "Why do you look at the manipulative Jew who rented out his Siddur to take away people's last meals? Why do you look at that less-than-noble person? Why don't you focus on the dozens of Jews who gave up their last piece of bread in order to be able to use a Siddur? To be able to talk to G-d? Why don't you look at those awesome people who in spite of all their suffering still felt they can connect to their Creator?"

"The Germans deprived them of everything! They had nothing left. The last thing they owned, their courage, hope, faith—that

the Germans could not take away from them. Is this inspiring or what?!" Asked Rabbi Silver.

Wiesenthal joined the service and shared the story some sixty years later.

[i] Rabbi Moses Schreiber (1762–1839), known to his own community and Jewish posterity in the Hebrew translation as Rabbi Moshe Sofer, also known by his main work Chasam Sofer (translated "Seal of the Scribe" and acronym for "Chidushei Toras Moshe Sofer"), was one of the leading rabbis of European Jewry in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Rabbi of the city of Pressburg, today Bratislava, in the Austrian Empire, he established a yeshiva in Bratislava (Pressburg in German), the Pressburg Yeshiva, which became the most influential yeshiva in Central Europe, producing hundreds of future leaders of Hungarian Jewry. (This yeshiva continued to function until World War II; afterward, it was relocated to Jerusalem under the leadership of the Chasam Sofer's great-grandson, Rabbi Akiva Sofer, the Daas Sofer.) The Chasam Sofer's published works include more than a thousand responsa, a commentary on the Torah titled "Toras Moshe," a commentary on the Talmud, sermons, and religious poetry. He is an oft-quoted authority in Jewish scholarship and his Torah chiddushim (original Torah insights) sparked a new style in rabbinic commentary.

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

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Arousing Divine Mercy Through Love

The Rosh (Rosh Hashana 4:14) cites a dispute among the Geonim as to whether a feeling of simcha - joy and happiness - is appropriate on Rosh Hashana. Some maintain that there is a mitzvah to feel simcha on Rosh Hashana, and therefore one is forbidden to fast just like on other yomim tovim, while others disagree. The Rosh quotes the Ra'avyah who points out that the Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashana 1:3) seems to imply that it is appropriate to feel happy on Rosh Hashana. The Yerushalmi says that the Jewish people act differently than other nations on their day of judgement. They do not dress in black and feel anxious and concerned. Rather, they dress in white, they shave, they eat and drink "and they are happy on Rosh Hashana" because they are confident that Hashem will judge them with mercy.

We certainly cannot feel a full sense of simcha on Rosh Hashana. As the Rambam writes (Hilchos Chanuka 3:6) we do not recite hallel on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur because these are days of teshuva, awe and fear, "not days of abundant joy - simcha yeseira." But even the Rambam implies that one should feel some sense of simcha on the yamim noraim, just not simcha yeseira.

What gives us the confidence that Hashem will judge us favorably? One of the pesukim we recite as part of the section of shofaros in the Mussaf of Rosh Hashana is "He saw no wrongdoing in Yaakov, perceived no improper behavior in

Israel; Hashem his G-d is with him, 'useru'as Melech bo' (Balak 23:21)." The word "useru'as" seems to be alluding to the teruah sound of the shofar, as Chazal suggest (Rosh Hashana 32b). But Rashi explains that "useru'as" is an expression of dearness and friendship - chibah v'rei'us. The posuk is saying that Hashem does not see anything negative in Klal Yisrael because he feels a special closeness to them. And this love is echoed by the shofar. The sound of the shofar not only motivates us to do teshuva, it reminds us of Hashem's everlasting love for Klal Yisrael.

The haftorah of the second day of Rosh Hashana highlights this special bond. The prophet Yirmiyahu says that the Jewish people bemoan the fact that only "from the distant past Hashem appeared to me." But Hashem responds, "I have loved you with an eternal love - ahavas olam ahavtich; therefore I have extended kindness to you. (Yirmiya 31:2)." Later, Hashem declares, "Is Ephraim My favorite son or a delightful child, that whenever I speak of him I remember him more and more? Therefore, My inner self yearns for him; I will surely take pity on him. (31:19)" Hashem declares that his love for Klal Yisrael has never waned even during their years in exile, and therefore ultimately He will have mercy on them and redeem them.

It is Hashem's never-ending love for us that gives us hope on the day of judgement. In the chapter of Tehillim that we recite before the blowing of the shofar, we call out, "Make music for G-d (Elokim), make music; make music for our King (malkeinu), make music. (Tehillim 47:7)" We recognize that Hashem is Elokim. He is the G-d of the whole world and He sits in judgement of the entire world on Rosh Hashana; He is shofeit kol ha'aretz. But He is also malkeinu; He is our King. We share a special bond with Him. And it is that connection, that love, which we hope will carry the day, and allow us to merit a favorable judgement.

This, says the Sforno (Emor 23:24), is the deeper meaning behind the phrase "zichron teruah, mikrah kodesh" which the Torah uses to describe Rosh Hashana. It is a day of "zichron teruas Melech" - a time to remember and to invoke the friendship of the King. It is a time when Klal Yisrael should rejoice with their King, as the posuk says, "Sing joyously to the G-d of our strength. (Tehillim 81:2)" Why should we call out and sing to Hashem? The Sforno explains that when Hashem sits in judgement of the world, we should be happy because we know Hashem is our King, and so we hope He will treat us kindly and tip the scales in our favor.

As we look back on this past year, we realize that on last Rosh Hashana Klal Yisrael was not granted the merciful judgement they had hoped for. But we believe it is not because Hashem does not love us. Rather, somehow our teshuva, tefillah and tzedakah were not enough to avert the painful decree of last Shemini Atzeres. Chazal say that sometimes Hashem's love for Klal Yisrael is expressed through a midas hadin, what appears to be a harsh punishment. "For Hashem admonishes the one he

loves, and like a father he mollifies the child (after he punishes him). (Mishlei 3:12)" Sometimes a father feels the need to discipline a child in order to guide him on the right path. The punishment is not meted out in anger, but rather out of love. This, we believe, is how Hashem, our Father in heaven, acts with Klal Yisrael as well.

But we want this year to be different. We hope Hashem will shower us only with sweet bracha. What can we do to evoke Hashem's love to bestow only goodness on Klal Yisrael? Chazal tell us that Hashem responds to man's actions in kind - middah k'negged middah. "One who shows compassion for Hashem's creatures will receive compassion from Heaven (Shabbos 151b)." By the same token, one who demonstrates his love for Hashem should be worthy of feeling Hashem's love in return.

Avraham Avinu is the paradigm of ahavas Hashem. When Avraham readily agreed to follow Hashem's command to sacrifice his son Yitzchak, He went against his very nature. There is no greater demonstration of love than when someone is ready to sacrifice for another. In preparation for the akeidah, Avraham does not ask his servants to saddle his donkey; he does it himself (Vayeira 22:3). Rashi explains that Avraham did so because love causes people to deviate from their normal behavior. Hashem refers to Avraham as "ohavi - my beloved (Yeshaya 41:8,10)" because Avraham showed his willingness to sacrifice his natural feelings in order to serve Hashem. At the conclusion of the section of zichronos in the Mussaf of Rosh Hashana, we ask Hashem to remember the akeidah and how Avraham Avinu "suppressed his mercy (kavash rachamav) to do Your will wholeheartedly," and we plead, "So may your mercy suppress your anger from upon us." We ask Hashem to control his anger, so to speak, and to show us overflowing love, in the merit of Avraham's sacrifice. When we serve Hashem with love, we emulate the model of Avraham Avinu, and we can hope to receive Hashem's boundless love in return. May this be a year of blessing and peace, yeshuah and geulah, for all of Klal Yisrael.

More divrei Torah from Rabbi Koenigsberg

More divrei Torah on Rosh Hashana

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Rav Kook on The Teshuvah of Rosh Hashanah

Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

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Tue, Oct 1, 2:23 AM (23 hours ago)

Rav Kook Torah

The Teshuvah of Rosh Hashanah

The major theme of the month of Elul and the High Holiday season is teshuvah — repentance and return to God. Yet if we examine the Rosh Hashanah prayers, there is no mention of sin or penitence. We do not recite any confessional prayers, nor do we make any promises to improve.

Instead, the Rosh Hashanah prayers deal with a completely different theme: the entire world accepting God's sovereignty. How does this aspiration fit in with the overall seasonal theme of teshuvah?

Before blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we recite the verse from Psalms:

"From my straits I called out to God. He answered me, and set me in a wide expanse." (Psalms 118:5)

The verse begins with narrow straits (הַמְצָרִים) and concludes with wide expanses (בְּרִחְוֵיָם). What are these straits? These are our troubled, even suffocating, feelings of failure and disappointment with ourselves. However, with God's help we are able to escape to "wide expanses." Our sense of confinement is eased and our emotional distress is alleviated.

This progression from the narrow to the wide is also a good physical description of the principal mitzvah-object of Rosh Hashanah — the shofar, which gradually expands from a narrow mouthpiece to a wide opening.

From the Individual to the Community

Rav Kook, however, did not explain this progression from narrow to wide in a psychological vein. Rather, he likened it to the contrast between the prat and the klal, the individual and the collective. There are the narrow, private issues of the individual. And there are the broad, general concerns of the community and the nation.

Teshuvah takes place on many levels. We all try to correct our own personal faults and failings. The nation also does teshuvah as it restores itself to its native land, renewing its language, culture, and beliefs. And the entire world advances as it learns to recognize God's moral rule and sovereignty.

The shofar, with its gradually widening shape, is a metaphor for these ever-expanding circles of repentance and spiritual progress. The order, however, is significant. Our individual teshuvah must precede the universal teshuvah of the klal.

During the month of Elul, we are occupied with rectifying our own personal faults and errors.

But on Rosh Hashanah our outlook broadens. We yearn for the teshuvah of the Jewish people and the ultimate repair of the entire universe. We aspire "to perfect the world under the reign of the Almighty, when all humanity will call out Your Name" (from the Aleinu prayer in Musaf of Rosh Hashanah). From the narrow straits of personal limitations, we progress to the wide expanses of universal perfection.

(Silver from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Mo'adei HaRe'iyah, p. 60.)

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/jewish-columns/rabbi-shmuel-reichman/the-three-stages-of-the-rosh-hashana-tefillah-2/2024/10/01/>

The Three Stages Of The Rosh Hashana Tefillah

By Rabbi Shmuel Reichman - 29 Elul 5784 – October 1, 2024

Genuine teshuva is not just about self-transformation; it's about self-expression, returning to your true and higher self. As we have previously explained, there are three stages of genuine teshuva:

== The first is individual teshuva, where we return to our higher selves, our fetal selves, our true selves.

== The second stage of teshuva goes beyond the limited self, turning the focus from individual to community.

== The third stage of teshuva is returning to our absolute root and source, to the Source of all sources, to Hashem Himself. We will now display how these three stages parallel the three themes of the Rosh Hashana tefillah.

The Rosh Hashana Tefillah

The three main themes of the Rosh Hashana davening are Shofaros, Zichronos, and Malchuyos. Shofaros relates to the blowing of the shofar; Zichronos relates to remembering seminal events from Jewish history and Hashem's covenant with the Jewish people, and Malchuyos is the process by which we crown Hashem King. Judaism is a holistic religion, in which everything is interconnected, expressing an underlying oneness. What then is the underlying connection between these three themes?

Shofaros

The shofar represents one's individual spiritual yearning. It is a haunting, wordless cry that brings us back to our higher self – our fetal self.

The beracha we recite on the shofar refers to the "kol shofar" (voice of the shofar). This is because blowing the shofar is meant to draw our attention to the unique depth of the shofar's role in our tefillah. We blow the shofar as a part of the Rosh Hashana prayers, but it is unique amongst the tefillos. While all the other prayers utilize words, the shofar is a wordless cry. What is the meaning behind this?

Speech is always a limited expression of one's inner thoughts. Formulating ideas and feelings into words requires taking that which is abstract, beyond finite form, and giving it concrete form and expression. By doing so, one limits that infinite potential into just the words that are spoken. This is why words often fail to describe and convey that which is most important. Words are a limited form of expression; they cannot convey the full force of "self" contained within them. Kol, however, is the root form of verbal expression, a speech that has not yet been formed into words. The wordless cry of the voice is not limited to specific words; it is beyond words and beyond finite expression.

On Rosh Hashana, we cry out with the resounding "kol of the shofar," expressing our deep yearning to return to our root selves – a yearning that cannot be expressed in words. As the blast of the shofar jars us from our stupor, we join in its cry as our souls beg to return to their root.

This is also why the concept of kol is connected to crying.

When does one cry? When the clear path ahead loses its clarity and expression. When one hears the doctor's report and finds

out that instead of fifty years, they have only weeks left to live, they cry. Or, on the flip side, when one receives the news that instead of having a couple of days left in this world, they have been completely cured, they cry. When the clear and expressed path breaks down, we cry. This is why the Hebrew word for tears, "dim'ah," is also the Hebrew word for "mixture," something that is unclear and confusing. The spiritual concept of crying is the breakdown in expression. This is also why the root of the Hebrew word for "crying" (boche) is the root of the Hebrew word for "confusion" (mevucha) as well.

(When the Meraglim delivered their negative report about Eretz Yisrael, Klal Yisrael cried. Chazal (Taanis 29a) note that this was an inappropriate form of crying (bechiya shel chinam – a baseless cry). In Klal Yisrael's eyes, the road to Eretz Yisrael was broken, and the path toward their destiny was shattered. But in reality, this was not true. As punishment for inappropriately crying – for incorrectly viewing the clear path as broken, Hashem made that day, i.e., Tisha B'Av, a day of genuine crying (middah k'neged middah – measure for measure). Tisha B'Av became the day of all breakdown and crying, and it became the day where we actually lost our place in Eretz Yisrael; not by choice, but by exile [both in the midbar and later on in Jewish history].)

On Rosh Hashana, we cry out with a resounding kol, expressing how deeply we yearn to return to our source, to Hashem. The concepts of both kol and crying focus on the root and source instead of the expression. Kol is the root of speech, and crying brings us back to a formless, root state where no outward expression is clear. On Rosh Hashana, we take a step back from the expressed physical world and return back to our transcendent source.

Zichronos

Zichronos refers to the concept of memory, building upon this same theme. Memory represents tracing something from the present back into the past, of sourcing something back to its root. On Rosh Hashana, as we discuss the Akeidah and other seminal moments in Jewish history, we connect back to our collective self, the root soul of all of Klal Yisrael.

The Akeidah holds infinite layers of depth and meaning, and it has striking implications for us as we trace ourselves back to our collective self. At the Akeidah, Yitzchak was willing to give up his life. The willingness to give up one's life for Hashem reflects the belief that one is not merely a physical being, but a spiritual consciousness that transcends their physical body. This is why Chazal note that the letters of Yitzchak's name spell "keitz chai" – he who lives (chai) while paradoxically also existing beyond life (keitz). At the Akeidah, Yitzchak rooted himself beyond space and time while still living within it. On Rosh Hashana, we remember this; we tap into our unique nature as Klal Yisrael, a nation that transcends this world while paradoxically living fully within it. The root of our ability to do so stems from Yitzchak and the Akeidah. Malchuyos

On Rosh Hashana, we crown Hashem as our Melech. We declare Hashem to be the source of everything, our ultimate root. This is our mission in this world – to become a walking kiddush Hashem, fully connecting ourselves back to Hashem, our Creator. It is for this reason that we don't mention vidui or any of our sins on Rosh Hashana. Our singular goal on this day is to source ourselves back to Hashem, crown Him as our King, and root ourselves within reality, connected to Hashem. [On Yom Kippur, we focus on the details of our past year and the quality of our upcoming year. On Rosh Hashana, however, our goal is simply to root ourselves within reality, connecting ourselves to Hashem, our Melech. Before we discuss the quality and nature of our existence (Yom Kippur), we need to ensure that we exist in the first place (Rosh Hashana).]

Our Three-Stage Ascension

While all three of these themes are connected to all three forms of teshuva, Shofaros most deeply reflects our individual teshuva; Zichronos most deeply reflects our collective teshuva; and Malchuyos most deeply reflects our ultimate teshuva, sourcing ourselves back to Hashem Himself. May we be inspired to fully actualize all three forms of teshuvah this Rosh Hashana and seal ourselves in the book of life, the book of true existence.

Tidbits for Ha'azinu - Shabbos Shuva

Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

Tue, Oct 1, 8:56 PM (4 hours ago)

Parashas Ha'azinu - Shabbos Shuva • October 5th • 3 Tishrei 5784

In Magen Avos after Friday night Maariv, HaMelech HaKadosh replaces HaKeil HaKadosh. The haftarah of Shuvah Yisrael is leined. It is customary for the community Rav to deliver a Shabbos Shuvah Derashah on Shabbos afternoon. Vehi Noam is recited [as Yom Kippur does not fall during the upcoming weekdays].

Kapparos is performed prior to Yom Kippur. Many do so using money while others use a live chicken. Tashlich may be said through Hoshana Rabbah.

Remember to prepare your kittel for Yom Kippur, if applicable.

As the precarious situation in Eretz Yisrael unfortunately continues, each person should increase reciting tehillim and performing other mitzvos as a zechus for the many Acheinu Beis Yisrael in travail and captivity as well as for the soldiers in battle.

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Bava Basra 102 • Yerushalmi: Orlah 28 • Mishnah Yomis: Bava Metzia 4:7-8 • Oraysa: Next week is Beitzta 7b-9b

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rebbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well! Tzom Gedaliah is this Sunday, October 6th (nidcheh).

Yom Kippur begins next Friday evening, October 11th.

Succos begins Wednesday evening, October 16th.

HA'AZINU: Shiras Ha'azinu • Moshe exhorts Bnei Yisrael to follow his instructions and to pass them to their children • Hashem tells Moshe to ascend Har Nevo where he will soon pass away.

Haftarah: When Parashas Ha'azinu is leined on Shabbos Shuvah, the haftarah of Vayeilech (Shuvah Yisrael) is leined instead. This haftarah consists of pesukim from Hoshe'ah (14:2-10), and Michah (7:18-20), with many adding a section from Yoel (2:11-27) in between. The pesukim encourage one to do teshuvah and relay Hashem's deep desire for us to repent.

Parashas Ha'azinu: 52 Pesukim • No Mitzvos listed

“שׁוּבוּהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד ה' אֶלְקֵיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹנֶךָ”

“Return, Yisrael, to Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled in your sins”

(Haftarah, Shabbos Shuvah - Hoshea 14:2)

The pasuk uses the word “avon” which generally refers to intentional sins. However, the pasuk describes Bnei Yisrael as “chashalta” - “stumbling,” implying that their sinning was accidental in nature. Why the apparent contradiction?

The Sefer Binah La'itim explains our pasuk as follows:

Hashem responds to our misdeeds by delivering retribution not merely to punish us, but rather to cause us to change. “Ki chashalta” refers not to our sin, but rather to the resultant punishment and hardship that knocks a person down and causes him to stumble. The pasuk is teaching us that such mishaps are most often tied to “ba'avonecha,” a person's sins. Furthermore, the pasuk teaches us that any area in which one suffers loss or hardship is many times a signal that he has erred in this particular area and is in need of rectification. May we be zocheh to a teshuvah sheleimah and a Gmar Chasimah Tovah! Please reach out to us with any thoughts or comments at:

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[Founder Rabbi Ike Sultan]

Rosh Hashana

Rosh Hashana is the Jewish New Year, and is both a holiday as well as a day of Judgement. The period of time between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is called Aseret Yemei Teshuva, the Ten Days of Repentance. The laws and customs of Rosh Hashana and Aseret Yemei Teshuva are outlined below.

The bracha on candle lighting for Rosh Hashana is "Baruch Attah... LeHadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov", without mentioning "Yom Hazikaron." [28]

When Rosh Hashana falls out on Friday night, the beracha for candle lighting is *Lehadlik Ner shel Shabbat ViYom Tov*. [29] Sephardic women do not recite *Shehecheyanu* when lighting candles. Instead, they should have in mind to fulfill their obligation when they listen to *Shehecheyanu* during *Kiddush*. [30] Most Ashkenazi women do recite *shehecheyanu* when lighting candles. [31]

Prayers of Rosh Hashanah

Note the relevant practices from *Aseret Yimei Teshuva*
Beginning Shacharit = There is a well known minhag that the *Shaliach Tzibur* for *Shacharit*, while standing by his seat, begins his *tefillah* by singing out the π in the word *HaMelech* in a melody. Once he completes the word, he approaches the *amud* and continues the rest of the sentence. [32]

Behavior During Prayer - Some have the minhag to stand slightly hunched over during the *Tefillot* of *Rosh HaShana*. For someone who observe this minhag, he should be careful to stand straight for the beginning and end of each *Bracha*. [33] Some say it's preferable to stand straight for the *Tefillot*. [34] Some have the minhag to daven slightly out loud during the *Tefillot* of *Rosh Hashana*. [35] However, many authorities discourage this practice. [36]

Some *poskim* encourage crying during the prayers of *Rosh Hashana*, while others forbid it. [37]

HaMelech HaKadosh - If one forgot to switch from *Atta Kadosh* to *HaMelech HaKadosh* on the first night of *Rosh Hashana*, then one doesn't have to repeat *Shmoneh Esrei*, as long as he said the *Yom Tov Shmoneh Esrei*. However, if one said the *weekday Shmoneh Esrei*, then he should repeat *Shmoneh Esrei*. [38] Some disagree and hold that one needs to repeat *Shemona Esrei* if he forgot to say *HaMelech HaKadosh* on the first night of *Rosh Hashana*. [39]

Yaaleh Veyavo - If one forgot *Yaaleh VeYavo* in *Benching* on *Rosh Hashana*: During the day one does not have to repeat *benching*, but at night one must repeat *benching*. [40]

Brit Milah - If there's a *Brit Milah* in *Shul* on *Rosh Hashana*, the *Milah* should be preformed between *Kriyat HaTorah* and the blowing of the *Shofar*. [41]

Tzidkatecha = If *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on *Shabbat*, *Sephardim* still recite *Tzidkatecha* at *Mincha*, but *Ashkenazim* do not. [42]

Shofar

Mitzvah It is a *mitzvah* from the *Torah* to hear the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashana*. [43]

Text of the Bracha The proper *beracha* is *lishmoa kol shofar*. However, if one recited *litkoa shofar* or *al tekiat shofar*, then he fulfills his obligation. [44]

Shehecheyanu The *Sephardic* custom is that on the first day of *Rosh Hashana*, the *beracha* of *shehecheyanu* is recited after *lishmoa kol shofar*. [45] If the first day is *Shabbat* and therefore we do not blow the *shofar*, *shehecheyanu* is recited on the second day after *lishmoa kol shofar*. [46] If a *Sephardic* individual is blowing *shofar* for an *Ashkenazic* congregation

on the 2nd day of *Rosh Hashana*, then one of the *Ashkenazi* congregants should recite the *shehecheyanu*. If the *Sephardic* *shofar* blower recites *shehecheyanu*, the congregation has nevertheless fulfilled their obligation to say it. [47]

Standing for Shofar Blowing The *Ashkenazi* custom is to stand even for the *tekiot* which are referred to as the *tekiot dimiyushav*, the 1st 30 *tekiot*, 3 sets of *Tashrat*, *Tashat* and *Tarat*. [48] A weak, ill, or old person can be lenient. [49] For *Sephardim*, the congregation should stand while the *Baal Tokeah* makes the *Brachot* on the *shofar*, and then they may sit for the blows prior to *Mussaf*. For the blows during *Mussaf* and the *Chazarat HaShatz*, the congregation should stand. [50] The 30 *tekiot* blown after that are referred to as the *tekiot dimeumad*, because one is required to stand for them.

However, if one sat during these *tekiot*, he has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation. [51] One who is unable to hear the *shofar* with a congregation and is having it blown for him at home, must stand for the *shofar* blowing. [52] If a person just heard parts of the *Chazarat Hashatz* of *Mussaf* that make up the main part of *Malchiyot*, *Zichronot*, and *Shofarot* that would constitute enough of hearing *Chazarat Hashatz* to be considered as though one heard the *shofar* blasts in the context of *Shemona Esrei* (*tekiyot al seder habrachot*). [53] Others hold it is necessary to hear the entire thing. [54]

Keeping the Shofar Covered There is a minhag to keep the *Shofar* covered while it is not being used, including while the *berachot* on the *shofar* are being recited. [55][56] With this said, the *Ba'al Tokeah* should hold the *shofar* in his hand under the cover while he is making the *berachot*. [57]

Talking Between Blows One should refrain from talking from when the *beracha* is recited until after all 100 *tekiot* are blown. [58] One should also try not to cough or yawn during the *shofar* blowing so as not to confuse any listeners. [59] Some hold that one should not recite *vidduy* between the first set of *shofar* blows of *תשר"ת* and *תש"ת* or between *תש"ת* and *ת"ת*. [60]

Unsure if One Fulfilled the Mitzvah If one is unsure if he heard the *shofar* or not, he should hear it again without a *beracha*. [61]

Blowing from the Right Side Ideally, the *shofar* blower should try to blow it from the right side of his mouth, but this certainly doesn't prevent one from fulfilling the *mitzvah* if he doesn't. [62]

Who is Obligated? Women are exempt from blowing or listening to the *shofar*. Nonetheless, it is a *mitzvah* for women to voluntarily hear the *shofar*. According to *Ashkenazim*, she can recite the *bracha* or the one blowing for her can recite the *bracha* even if he's only blowing for women. According to *Sephardim* she may not recite a *bracha*, nor is someone who blows just for women allowed to say the *bracha*. [63]

A child who reached the age of *chinuch* should hear the *shofar* being blown. He is also able to fulfill his obligation by blowing himself. [64]

Borrowing a Shofar without Permission One may borrow a shofar to perform the mitzva without asking permission.[65] However, if the borrower has a cold, or if he suspects that the owner might be finicky about germs, he should not use it without permission.[66]

If Rosh Hashana Falls out on Shabbat If Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbat, we do not blow the Shofar.[67] This is a rabbinic decree lest one come to carry the Shofar four cubits in a public domain to learn how to blow it from an expert.[68]

Second Day of Rosh Hashana There is a dispute whether we should say Shechianu in Kiddush on the second night of Rosh Hashana. The minhag is to have a new fruit or wear a new garment and have that in mind while saying Shehechianu.[69] Some poskim hold that the new fruit should be tasted after kiddush before the Netilat Yadayim and Hamotzei.[70]

However, others say one can wait until the meal.[71]

Simanim (Symbolic Foods) Which Meals There is a custom to eat certain fruits and vegetables as a good omen for the coming year on both nights of Rosh Hashana.[72] If one is unable to eat one of the foods, then he can simply point to the food and recite the Yehi Ratzon.[73]

Some have this minhag only on the first night, but most do both nights.[74]

At Which Point in the Meal Some have the custom to eat the Simanim before Hamotzi, while others insist on eating them right after reciting Hamotzi and eating a Kezayit of bread.[75]

Which Foods The foods used for Simanim include: dates, pomegranates, beets, gourds, black eyed peas, and fish heads.[76] Some add apples in honey.[77]

There is a minhag to dip the challah in honey on Rosh Hashana. [78] Some only dip the challah in honey[79], while others dip the challah in salt as well as honey.[80] Some avoid eating walnuts (אגוז) on Rosh Hashanah, as אגוז is the same Gematria as חטא (sin).[81] Some avoid spicy or sharp foods on Rosh Hashana.[82]

Order of Simanim If one is eating dates and other fruits, one should make a HaEitz on the dates because they're from the seven species with which Eretz Yisrael is praised.[83] Some say that one doesn't make a HaAdama on vegetables during the meal.[84]

When to Recite the Yehi Ratzon Some have the custom to recite the Beracha on the Siman, then the Yehi Ratzon, and then eat.[85] Others argue that doing so is an unwarranted interruption, so one should instead recite the Bracha of HaEitz, eat a little of the fruit, then make the Yehi Ratzon before continuing to eat.[86]. Others hold that one should say the Yehi Ratzon prior to the Bracha.[87] One may say the Yehi Ratzon's with Hashem's name.[88]

Sleeping on Rosh Hashana It's a proper minhag not to sleep on Rosh Hashana. Someone who has a headache should sleep a little after midday in order to perform the mitzvot and prayers better.[89] After the meal a person should go to the shul to learn according to his ability. Some have the practice of

reading Tehillim twice over Rosh Hashana. A person who usually studies halachot should learn halachot rather than say Tehillim. In any event, one shouldn't waste time on this holy day of Rosh Hashana, as wasting one's time on Rosh Hashana is like sleeping.[90]

Some poskim advise that it isn't appropriate to have tashmish on Rosh Hashana unless it's Tevilah night.[91]

Minhag of Tashlich Where? The minhag is to say Tashlich near an ocean or river on the first day of Rosh Hashana.[92]

It is preferable for there to be living fish in the body of water. [93] When The minhag is to recite Tashlich on the first day of Rosh Hashana after mincha.[94]

If one didn't get a chance to do it on the first day, one should do it on the second day after mussaf[95], while others say to do it after Mincha.[96]

When the first day of Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbat, some poskim say to postpone Tashlich, while others say just to say Tashlich then. [97]

If one didn't get to recite tashlich on Rosh Hashana, then it may be recited all of Aseret Yemey Teshuva.[98] Some recite tashlich during chol hamoed Sukkot before Hoshana Rabba.[99] Tashlich should be recited by day, and can be said past sunset until nightfall.[100]

What? The custom is to recite certain pesukim that are printed in the machzorim. [101] Many have the custom of shaking out their pockets as a symbol of throwing away one's sins. [102]

Who Many poskim suggest that men and women should avoid being there at the same time, so that it doesn't become an inappropriate, mixed social scene on our day of

Judgment.[103] In some communities, women do not attend Tashlich.[104] Many women have the practice to go.[105]

Fasting on Rosh Hashana It's forbidden to fast on Rosh Hashana. [106] Nonetheless, it's permissible to allow prayers to extend past chatzot (halachic midday) and fast until the afternoon. [107] There is a mitzvah of Kavod and Oneg on Rosh Hashana since it is called "mikreh kodesh".[108]

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Rosh Hashanah

HE IS PULLING FOR US

Living Emunah on Yomim Noraim by Rabbi David Ashear

Hayom Haras Olam Every Rosh Hashanah is the day of the world's "birth." The Rabbis teach us that every year on Rosh Hashanah, the world is recreated; we start anew.

Whatever was before Rosh Hashanah has nothing at all to do with what will be after Rosh Hashanah.

We say (in the piyut on Erev Rosh tikhleh shana v'kileloteikha,

May the year end with its curses, may the year begin with its blessings.

On Rosh Hashanah, we recognize that Hashem is our King, that He is the only One in charge of our lives. Nobody else has any say about what happens to us, and everything that occurs

on a day-today basis is a manifestation of His will. Nobody can take away anything from us or give us anything unless Hashem first decrees it.

On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem decides every detail of our lives for the coming year. Whole new worlds open up for us with the onset of the new year. For people who are still waiting for a shidduch, now it could be decided that the right person will be found. For couples waiting to have children, now it could be decided that they will be blessed. For people suffering from illness, now it could be decided that they will be cured. For people struggling financially, now it could be decided that they will enjoy prosperity.

Our Sages teach us (Rosh Hashana 11a) that Yosef was freed from prison. Rabbi Ephraim Wachsman explained the significance of this remark. Yosef was not in a mere prison. He was in an underground dungeon in ancient Egypt, the conditions of which are probably impossible for us to imagine. Nobody knew he was there, and nobody could possibly help him. He was an eighteen-year-old boy who grew up in a wealthy, distinguished family, a young man who used to learn regularly with his father, Yaakov Avinu, the greatest tzaddik in the world — and who was now languishing in a dungeon. He was there because his own brothers sold him as a slave, and as a result of the very difficult test posed by Potifar's wife, which he managed to withstand with extraordinary strength, making a great kiddush Hashem. He could have wondered, Is this what I get for being a tzaddik? But he retained his faith for twelve years, without hearing from anyone and without receiving any news that offered a glimmer of hope.

And then, suddenly, Pharaoh needed someone to interpret his dream. Yosef found himself rushed out of prison, groomed, dressed in fine garments, and standing before the king of Egypt, who told him

“There is no one smarter or wiser than you,” as he knew seventy languages. In an instant, Yosef became the leader of the civilized world, the manager of its economy. From the lowest depths of despair and hopelessness, he rose overnight to the second most powerful position on Earth.

This is what can happen on Rosh Hashanah. A person can rise from the lowliest conditions, where he is forgotten and hopeless, to the greatest heights of success, joy, and prosperity. Nothing is too difficult for Hashem.

The sefer Emunah Sheleimah (Parashas Nitzavim) repeats a story told by Rabbi Menachem Stein.

A man from Petach Tikvah, by the name of Daniel, had been experiencing excruciating lower back pain for twelve years. He consulted with many doctors, both in Eretz Yisrael and America, but no one was able to cure him. For twelve years, he couldn't sit in a chair for more than fifteen minutes at a time, at which point the pain would shoot up his spine to his neck and force him to lie down. For six years, he had been taking a medication called Voltaren to help his back, but it was also potentially damaging to the liver. During that time, he couldn't

learn Torah with his son, who was born at the same time the pain began. He would try to sit with him and learn Gemara, but after fifteen minutes he would have to stop. He couldn't be a good father or husband, and he became very depressed. On one occasion, Rabbi Stein tried to give him chizuk. “Daniel,” he said, “Rosh Hashanah is coming. Do you believe that Hashem is going to recreate the world anew? Do you believe that every one of us will also be created anew? Sarah Imeinu was born without a womb (Yevamos 64b), and the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11a) tells us that on Rosh Hashanah, through her prayers, Hashem decreed that she should have a child. She never lost hope. She didn't listen to the doctors who told her, ‘You're wasting your time, you're ninety years old, you're incapable of having children.’” The rabbi continued. “Do you know that there's a halachah that if you didn't see your friend for over a year and then you see him, the berachah the make you — Hashem revives the dead? Why do we say that berachah if the man didn't die? Because the man went through a Rosh Hashanah and a Yom Kippur, and so he was created anew. Hashem gave him new life. יִסְמַח־יְהוָה־בְּיִמְיָךְ say can you now So him. “Daniel, you could receive a new back this Rosh Hashanah. Talk to Hashem, beg Him, pray with the belief that it could be done. Cry to Him and say, ‘Even if I'm not worthy to be healed for my own sake, please do it for the sake of my wife and child.’ “On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we take out the Torah and read about Sarah finally having a child after so many years. The Haftarah is about Channah having a child after a long time. Shouldn't we be reading about the day of Rosh Hashanah? Maybe something about

judgment? Why this? Because our Rabbis want us to know the power of the day. Channah was created anew; Sarah and Rachel as well, and they were all answered through their tefillos on Rosh Hashanah.

Now is the time for change. We can have a new beginning. People who need wisdom, children, marriage partners, health, parnassah — this is the best time to make it happen.” Daniel took the message to heart and accepted upon himself a taanis dibbur for both days of Rosh Hashanah, only speaking words of Torah or prayer. Every moment of Rosh Hashanah is so precious; the whole year is encompassed in those two days. Daniel prayed from the bottom of his heart on Rosh Hashanah, throughout the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and on Yom Kippur. Succos passed, Simchas Torah passed, and the month of Cheshvan began. On the fourth day of Cheshvan, Daniel's medication ran out. He went to the doctor to get a prescription for another three months. But that day, his regular doctor wasn't in. A twenty-nine-year-old physician, just beginning his career, was seeing his patients. Daniel was skeptical about keeping the appointment, but as it was a routine visit and necessary to renew a prescription, he decided to go ahead. “Doctor,” he requested, “please give me a three-month prescription for Voltaren, half in pills and half in cream.” The

young doctor said, “What? Three months of that stuff could harm the body!” Daniel said, “Please, I’ve been on these meds for six years; just give them to me.” The doctor replied, “Please listen to me: I want you to take an ultrasound of your kidneys. Lower back pain could be a result of kidney problems.” Daniel laughed and said, “I’ve been to top doctors all over the world and nobody ever mentioned a word about my kidneys.” But the young doctor persisted, and Daniel finally agreed. The results showed that one of his kidneys had a 22 percent blockage. “That’s it!” the doctor said. “That’s what’s causing your pain.” When Daniel’s regular doctor saw the results, he said, “I can’t believe it; he’s right! I never thought of this possibility all these years, and neither did any other doctor you consulted.” Hashem prevented all those physicians from thinking of this likelihood, because Daniel was not meant to be healed yet. But now the time of healing had come, and Hashem brought the cure through this young doctor. Daniel’s kidney was treated and, baruch Hashem, the pain went away. This is the power of one Rosh Hashanah. Let us take advantage of the opportunity we are given and go into this special day with a genuine desire to draw closer to Hashem. Let us focus on what is truly important in life. We recite in our prayers during the Yamim Noraim: Zochreini l’chayim Melech chafetz bachayim, “Remember us for life, O King Who desires life.” Hashem “desires life” — He wants to give us life even more than we want life. He’s pulling for us on Rosh Hashanah.

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TESHUVA - SLOW AND STEADY

Steps to the Throne by **Rabbi Nosson Muller** A man inspired to do teshuvah, as so many of us are on Erev Rosh Hashanah, aspires to immediate perfection. He sets lofty goals in every area of Jewish life, and promises himself that at this time next year, his slate will be impeccably clean. The baalei mussar advised us against such an approach. It is impossible to fix everything overnight. Jumping too high and too fast will only lead to failure and frustration. Instead, they recommend a more measured process of teshuvah. Make smaller resolutions, but make them ironclad. Setting realistically attainable goals gives a person a chance to actually follow through. One concrete step forward will lead to another. Climbing the ladder rung by rung turns inspiration into reality. The sefer Sass B’imrasecha illustrates the benefit of a gradual approach to teshuvah with a humorous parable. Yankel was a simpleton, and to pass the long winter nights, the residents of his town would play a game with his mind. Everyone took a seat around the table, with Yankel at the head. A row of bills was laid out — hundreds, fifties, twenties, and tens. Alongside the bills, they placed a shiny silver half-dollar coin. “Choose one, dear Yankel,” the men said with glee. “Whichever you take is yours to keep.” To everyone’s great amusement, he picked the shiny coin, night after night. After a few weeks, someone called

Yankel over to the side. “I know you aren’t the world’s brightest fellow,” the man said, “but at this point, even you should realize what’s happening here. Can’t you see that everyone is laughing at you, that the choice you keep making is the wrong one to make?” “I’m not as big a fool as you think,” Yankel replied with a smile. “Let me ask you a question, my friend. If I choose the hundred dollar bill, will there be a game the next night? Of course not! The men would never play with me again! Let the men have their fun, but every night, I get to add another half-dollar to my growing stash!” Moving too fast at the outset of teshuvah is like choosing that hundred-dollar bill. Alarm bells sound, and the yetzer hara immediately enters the fray. He will do everything he possibly can to stop the inspired Jew in his tracks. Go slowly! It will allow your progress to fly under the radar. Your evil inclination will let you stay in the game, and every day, another half-dollar will be added to your growing pile. Eventually, your net gains will far outweigh the value of a solitary one-hundred-dollar bill. But there is a caveat. A person who is impure is forbidden to enter the Beis HaMikdash. What if such a man sticks his finger into the airspace of the Temple courtyard while his body remains outside? Has he transgressed this commandment? In Talmudical terms, this is called bi’ah b’miktzas, partial entry, and is the subject of extensive discussion as to whether it is forbidden. To have the custom to refrain from placing their hands in the gaps between the stones of the Kosel HaMaaravi. However, the Rebbe of Lublin, in his sefer Toras Chessed, disagrees with this custom. He writes that although partially entering a doorway is indeed forbidden, that is because a door’s intended use is to allow people to enter the area it opens into. Just standing in the doorway itself is enough to be considered as if they have already arrived. A small gap, though, leads to nowhere. Merely placing a hand inside the tiny gap in the wall doesn’t reflect entry into the room behind it at all. The man remains entirely outside, and the law of partial entry does not apply. A powerful message lies in this halachic distinction of the Lubliner Rebbe, says R’ Shaul Alter. Everyone understands that complete repentance is not achieved overnight. It is a long journey, and begins with small and incremental improvements. However, this reality cannot change the overall goal. If we are satisfied with just our small initial repairs, without any intention of continuing on as we grow, our spiritual location won’t change. When a partial entry is made without the intention of eventually going inside, we remain standing in the same place we were standing before. It will not be considered an entrance at all! When a Jew undertakes small steps of teshuvah, he has partially entered the holy place he truly wishes to be. When the steps are taken with the goal of an eventual full entry in mind, it is immediately considered as if he has already arrived.