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Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – 5774

This week in discussing Parshas Emor I would like to share with you two very beautiful thoughts both of which have to do with the part of the Parsha that deals with the Yomim Tovim which are of course here in this week's Parsha. There is a striking difference in the way the Torah expresses the Mitzvah of each of the Yomim Tovim. By every Yov Tov the Yom Tov is called Mikra Kodesh, it is called a day designated as holy. Mikra'ai Kodesh, days of special holiness. However, if as you read the Parsha and you take note, you will see that there is a very striking difference between them and that is this. By almost all of the Yomim Tovim the day is first called Mikra Kodesh, a day of Holiness, and then the Posuk follows up by mentioning the Mitzvos of the day. So for example, let's start with Yom HaKippurim. It says in 23:27 (בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ). The 10th day of Tishrei is Yom Kippur it is called a day of Holiness and then it goes on (וְעִיִּיתֶם, אֶת-נַפְשֵׁיכֶם) with a commandment to fast on Yom Hakippurim. The same thing is true when you get to Sukkos we are told in 23:34 (בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר (יּוֹם), לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה, חַג הַסּוּכּוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, לִירוּרָה בְּיוֹם) and then in Posuk 35 (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ). The first day of Yom Tov is Yom Tov (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ) and then it goes on to tell you the Mitzvos of the day and various Mitzvos of (פְּרִי

(עֵץ הָדָר כַּפַּת תְּמָרִים, וְעֵץ עֵץ-עֵבֶת, וְעֵרְבֵי-נָחַל) and so on. The same thing is true when you go on to the next Yom Tov. To the Yomim Tovim in general. This is the order in which the Posuk goes, it says (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ) and then it tells you The Mitzvos Hayom which makes sense. Obviously the day is such and such a day and these are the Mitzvos Hayom. However, we have an exception when it comes to the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashono. By Rosh Hashono it is quite noticeable. The Posuk first talks about the blowing of the Shofar, first it mentions the Mitzvah of Shofar and only after that does it say Mikra Kodesh. So that we find immediately after Chamishi, we are taught in 23:24 (וְהָיָה לָכֶם שַׁבְתוֹן-- בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ, יְהִיָּה לָכֶם שַׁבְתוֹן-- (זְכָרוֹן תְּרוּעָה) it is a day in which there is a remembrance in Heaven through the blowing of the Shofar and then (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ) and then we are told that it is a day of Holiness. The order is inverted and obviously there has got to be a lesson.

Rav Hutner in the Pachad Yitzchok on Rosh Hashono Maimar 28 says a beautiful Hesber in understanding the difference Al Pi Pshat. Every Yom Tov is designated a Yom Tov and Mimeila as a result there are Mitzvos Hayom. Every Yom Tov has its Mitzvah of the day. Rosh Hashono the Torah is telling us is not that way. Rosh Hashono is B'etzem a Yom Hadin. It is inherently a day of Din in Shamayim a day where HKB"Y judges the world. It is a day of Din (זְכָרוֹן תְּרוּעָה), it is a day in which we need to be remembered Lizchus and that is why we blow the Tekios. Even if there would be no (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ) today, still this would be a Yom Hadin.

I would add that before Mattan Torah there was no Yom Tov of Rosh Hashono, this was already a Yom Hadin. From the very beginning of time Rosh Hashono, Zeh Hayom Haras Olam, a day in which the world was conceived and on this day it is a Yom Tov. Mimeila we are first told Zichron Teruah, that we need to have the Zechusim of blowing the Shofar and then we add (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ) that it is a Yom Tov as well. That it is a day of justice, a day of judgment, a day in which we blow the Shofar and Mimeila it was made into a Yom Tov, not the reverse.

This would seem to be a good source for our understanding that Goyim (non-Jews) are judged on this day as well. Malachim Yeichafeizun, some understand that angels are judged on this day, whatever exactly the judgment would mean for an angel but they are judged on this day as well. Therefore, Rosh Hashono is inherently different than the other Yomim Tovim in that it is B'etzem a Yom Hadin and Mimeila a Yom Tov. Whereas other Yomim Tovim are primarily a Yom Tov and Mimeila there are Mitzvos. Ad Kan Divrei Rav Hutner, this is what Rav Hutner says.

With this we can explain something that must have been striking to you as it was to me all the years on Rosh Hashono. Every Yom Tov when we Daven Shemoneh Esrei, we make a Chasimas Hab'rachah with Mekadeish Yisrael V'hazmanim. On Shabbos we say Mekadeish Hashabbos and on Yom Tov we say Mekadeish Yisrael V'hazmanim. It would then follow that on Shabbos we should say Mekadeish Yisrael V'yom Hazikaron that we should say the same phrase, the same type of a Nussach. As a matter of fact it is not that way. On Rosh Hashono we say Boruch Ata Hashem Melech Al Kol Haoretz, first we say that HKB"H is the king of the world and then we say Mekadeish Yisrael V'yom Hazikaron. It is really a double Chasimah which is not typical but besides that we are adding something to the Chasimah which needs an explanation to why Rosh Hashono should be different in the Chasimah than other Yomim Tovim.

According to this though, it is beautiful. Because HKB"H is Melech Al Kol Haoretz this is the day of HKB"H's kingdom the day of his judgment, that is first and then Mimeila it is Mikra Kodesh as well. So that the Chasimah follows the lead of the lesson of the Posuk. Melech Al Kol Haoretz Mekadeish Yisrael V'yom Hazikaron. (זכרון תרועה) a day on which Hashem judges, where we blow Teruah to be Olah Zikaron L'fanav L'tov and then Mikra Kodesh. A beautiful understanding in this idea the idea of the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashono.

Allow me to move on to a second Nikuda. This Nikuda has to do with this part of the Parsha as well. We find here the idea of (זכרון תרועה) and of course that is an Asmachta that we don't blow Shofar on Shabbos Rosh Hashono. We know that the reason we don't blow Shofar on Shabbos which is Rosh Hashono is a Takana D'rabanana of Shema Yavirenu Daled Amos. A person may come to carry the Shofar and therefore, we don't carry the Shofar. The Gemara in the Bavli at least brings an Asmachta from (זכרון תרועה) there is a day in which we remember the Teruah and we don't actually blow.

The Gemara in Maseches Rosh Hashono 16a (3 lines from the bottom) says that the blowing of the Shofar is not only a Mitzvah of the day but as I mentioned earlier it is there so that it should bring a Zechus on the Yom Hadin. (תקנו לפני בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק בן אברהם ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני Kavayochel remember the Akeida and in that way that will help our day of judgment. Of course the question that is often asked is what about Shabbos Rosh Hashono are we missing this Maile are we missing this Zechus. There is something missing in the day of judgment we don't blow because Shema Yavirenu Daled Amos but we are still missing something.

Rav Schwab in his Sefer on Chumash Mayan Bais Hashoeva in Parshas Vayeira (page # 48) has an extraordinary insight into answering this question. He says that Avraham Avinu had two Nisyonos. Of course his Nisyon was the Akeida itself and Avraham said if Hashem commanded me I am going to do it. Then at the very last moment before Avraham in an exalted state, in a tremendously high state of preparation to be Makriv his son because of Hashem's command, Avraham is told in Beraishis 22:12 (אל-הנער אל-תשלה נדך אל-הנער) stop don't do it. Stop don't do it? One second, HKB"H told me to do it. Chazal say that Avraham Avinu wanted to and he said to HKB"H let me at least make a nick, let me let some blood, let me get some part of this extraordinary Mitzvah. The Ribbono Shel Olam had to tell him no (אל-תשלה נדך אל-הנער), don't touch him. Of course Avraham refrained and drew his hand back as much as he wanted to (draw some blood to get the Mitzvah).

We do the same thing. When it comes Rosh Hashono we have this extraordinary Mitzvah of Shofar. We want to blow Shofar and we want to have the Zechus of the Shofar and Chazal come and they tell us Shema Yavirenu Daled Amos, don't do it. That itself is a Zeicher to the Akeidas Avraham. That is a Zeicher to Avraham Avinu's Hanhaga, he wanted something, he wanted it for spiritual reasons. He desired it. The Malach Hashem said (אל-תשלה נדך אל-הנער) and he refrained.

So we say to HKB"H on Shabbos Rosh Hashono, the same idea. HKB"H we want to blow the Shofar it is a Zechus for us. We are pulling back, we are withdrawing our hands (אל-תשלה נדך אל-הנער) Hashofar because that is the way the Torah is set up that we follow the Takanas D'rabanana.

This idea of Rav Schwab is a theme that he has written about in other places particularly in his extraordinary Pirush on Sefer Iyov. The idea of Akeidas Hada'as. Besides the Akeida of Yitzchok Avinu there is also an idea of Akeidas Hada'as. Iyov specifically is a type of Akeidas Hada'as. When HKB"H does something to a person which he can't begin to understand and he says to the Ribbono Shel Olam I am prepared. I am going to tie up my Seichel, tie up my logic, tie up my understanding. Why would a Melech Rachaman do this to me and say that I bow my head to your will and I accept it. Akeidas Hada'as, tying up your Daas in deference to the Ratzon HKB"H. In that he is mentioning here this idea that the remembering the Akeida here is remembering the second part of the Akeida, the Akeidas Hada'as. We want very much to do it and we say no. If the Ribbono Shel Olam says no we are on board, then the answer is no. So two thoughts both regarding the Parsha of Rosh Hashono in this week's Parsha.

The question of the week is: this question has to do with the Parsha but also to do with the Mitzvos that we are performing now. Specifically the Mitzvah of Sefiras Omer which is of course mentioned in this week's Parsha. As you know the Gemara says Mitzvah L'min Miyomi Mitzvah L'min Mishivui. It is a Mitzvah to count days and it is a Mitzvah to count weeks. Therefore, we count as for example today is 16 days which is two weeks and two days to the Omer. So we count the days and we count the weeks. But I don't understand because we are not doing them in a consistent fashion. We count the day at the beginning of the day so that on the first day of the Omer we said today is the first day of the Omer. When the night before Shavuos comes we are going to say today is the 49th day to the Omer and of course on Shavuos we don't count. When it comes to weeks though, we seem to be doing it in the reverse. We are counting a week only when it is complete, only when it is finished. We count the day when it begins, we count the week when it is finished. We should logically count on the first night of Sefira, today is the first day of the first week of the Omer. Or we should be counting now today is the 16th day which is the second day of the third week to the Omer. We should be saying the week of the Omer at the beginning of the Omer just as we say the day of the Omer at the beginning. We seem to be doing something inconsistent. If you want Temimos so then count at the end of the day. Today was the first day, today was the first week. Maybe at the end by Shavuos you should say seven full weeks have passed. Yet you count at the beginning of the day and we count only accumulated weeks, only weeks which are already complete. Logically, it seems to be an inconsistency and I am certain there is an explanation and for that I wait to hear from you. I wish one and all a wonderful Shabbos!

<http://www.rabbis.org/resources/>

Rosh Hashana: Reporting for Duty
Rabbi Nisson E. Shulman

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The importance of DUTY in Judaism. Let us report this Rosh Hashana with HINENI.

Rosh Hashanah: DUTY

More than two hundred years ago, on the 19th May 1790 in New England, pious New Englanders couldn't be blamed for believing the world was coming to an end. For the day had dawned bright and clear, but at noon the blue skies turned to ash grey. By mid afternoon their colour was a dense, ominous black. They were simple folk who had often listened to sermons about the coming of judgement day, and so they were certain that this was it! They prayed. They begged for last blessings before the world finally came to its end.

At that very hour the State Legislature was in session. The Lower House adjourned in panic. In the State Senate, a motion was made for immediate adjournment. Above the din, there was heard the voice of a certain Colonel Abraham Davenport, who arose to oppose the adjournment, and then added these words: "The day of judgement is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought."

Rabbi Simcha Wasserman Zichrono Livracha, once said that the basic difference between the Jewish way of life and ethics and that of a democracy, lies in the word "duty". In American democracy, for instance, each person has rights, and the whole function of government is to protect those rights. We, too, are concerned for each person's rights and that he or she be protected. But we look at it from a different point of view, from the vantage of "duty". In Jewish life each person must be concerned to protect the rights of others! His obligation is to do no damage to his fellow man. That is why Hillel's statement of what is known as "The Golden Rule", the rule based on the Torah commandment to love our neighbor, is stated in a negative form: "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor." Protect him or her from harm. That is my paramount duty and obligation. What a wonderful society we would be if everyone thought in this way!

We have much to learn from these words. For members of our society, and especially our Jewish people, are losing their sense of duty. The dictionary speaks of duty as "The natural, moral or legal obligation to do a certain thing; and the force by which such obligation controls one's will or actions."

This is not a very popular doctrine in our time. There is in our time a stampede away from duty, away from responsibility. To say yes to duty often means to say no to ourselves; and very few people today are brave enough to evoke such old-fashioned concepts as discipline; self-control; self-sacrifice; self-denial. The entire emphasis in our time is on self-satisfaction: self-indulgence: enjoying oneself. We tend to think, not in terms of obligations, but of opportunities. The voice of duty has been reduced to an almost inaudible whisper. And men and women think, with amazing hutzpa, that they are the center of the universe.

This egocentric attitude is pervasive. It is present and corroding every area of society; government, science, law, business, education, religious institutions, and of course, in the pernicious effect on the Jewish family.

The Jewish marriage contract is a call to mutual responsibility. Duties of the marriage partners, not only rights and privileges, are stressed in it. And that is why it is so central in the marriage ceremony. For these duties ought to be a blueprint for married life. Nowadays, of course, that lesson is often lost. The Midrash tells how the enemy of our people came to Bilaam to ask for the formula with which to destroy our people. Bilaam said to them: "As long as their families are secure and their morality is high, no-one can overcome them, for the Lord is with them." We cannot say that now. Because we are being nurtured and corrupted by the manners and the way of life of the society around us.

The great sage, the Chafetz Chaim, said that: "The existence of the whole human race depends on the way man fulfills his responsibility to his fellow man." And if the future of the human race depends on developing a new sense of responsibility, the existence of the Jewish people surely does. If there is a day designed to awaken us to our sense of responsibility, it is this day of Rosh Hashanah. It is this day upon which we accept God's dominion upon us all. Hundreds of times in our prayers we say, Avinu, Malkenu, "Our Father our King". He is our father, compassionate and loving. But he is also our King. A king expects his subjects to carry out fundamental obligations of citizenship and loyalty. And to the Jew, the mitzvot, God's commandments, are these obligations.

Mitzvot are God's orders to us, nothing less. And to speak to God as our king, is to remember our vow of allegiance to carry out these orders. We have to recapture the fundamental Jewish concept that there are certain things we have to do, when they ought to be done, whether we like it or not.

When the Shofar is blown today, the sound should arouse in each Jewish heart that sleeping sense of duty which Maimonides described when he said, *uru yeshenim mishnatchem...* "Awake you sleepers from your slumber; you who are in a trance arouse yourself. Examine your deeds and change them." What shall help us regain our sense of responsibility? A great Chasidic personality once wrote, "Underlying everything is the conviction that every Jew possesses a divine spark which is truly a spark of God above. The divine spark gives him the ability to overcome all obstacles in his way, to fulfill his duties and obligations as a Jew. If he fulfills them, these duties and obligations become the channels and vessels to receive and enjoy God's blessing, both materially and spiritually."

He is right. There is a spark in each one of us waiting to be kindled into flame. Before we blow the Shofar we say the words, *ala elokim bitruah*: "The Lord ascends by means of the Shofar". What does this mean?

It means God's image in the Jewish soul stirs and rises in that Jew who hears the Shofar and is moved by it. We do not fear to arouse the human soul! For it is essentially good and pure. It is capable of reflecting God's image in which it was created. Let but a Jewish soul be aroused by this service and this Shofar, and its capabilities shall be limitless. In its response to the call of duty, it shall truly become a channel for God's blessing on earth.

Its response must be to man, to our community, to Israel, and to God. To man: For instance, to our wives and husbands. Let us begin to think of our duties to each other before we think of what we demand and desire from each other. Let us think of expressing our love before satisfying our need to be loved, and the blessing of such a marriage must increase. Or for instance, to our fellow man: let us think of the commandments that teach loving kindness and charity, not merely as if we bestow gratuitous gifts, but rather as serious obligations of our souls. And then, as the Chafetz Chaim said, God himself will become a partner in our charity and acts of love, as we help our neighbors, show hospitality, visit the sick, or help and comfort the bereaved. And we shall give blessing to our fellow men and women as never before.

To our community: Let us learn to put duty before satisfaction, giving before getting. We often hear a person inquiring about the community, saying, "What benefits will I obtain from membership?" There are many benefits that one obtains from community membership and support. But the many benefits we gain from our community are not the point. How much better would it be if a person would come and say, "How can I help strengthen the community and increase its effectiveness through my membership?" And to Israel: We who know our obligation to the holy land; we who have suffered and given and shared in its every crisis, and continue ready whenever the need; we who suffer agony when we hear or see some of our fellow Jews turn away from Israel and Zionism because it still might have some imperfections, real or imagined; we whose hearts are broken with every *karban* we are forced to bring at this time of crisis; we can surely demand of our fellow Jews that they assume their full responsibility towards Israel and that upon the fulfillment of that duty in full measure does the survival of Israel depend.

Finally, let us recognize that all our duties: to man, to community and to Israel, are actually part of our obligation to the Lord. From Sinai till the present and on into the future, the great covenant relationship continues. God watches over our people, but he demands that we in turn fulfill our own obligations. In Musaph we recited the words *Zacharti lach hesed neurayich, ahavat kelulotayich, lechtech aharay bamidbar, beeretz lo zerua*. Yirmiyahu speaking in the name of God, told his people: "Thus sayeth the Lord; 'I remember the love of your youth, of your bridal days when you followed me into the desert in the land that was not sown'", "Beeretz Lo Zruah".

God tells Israel that he will never forget our loyalty in those early years of Jewish history when we were like a bride willing to follow her husband even into the desert itself.

But the founder of Habad Chasidism interprets the words Beeretz Lo Zruah, not only to mean “A land that was not sown”, that is to say a wilderness, but especially to mean, “A land where the word lo, ‘no’, is deeply rooted”.

In the soul of Judaism there is implanted the courage to be negative; that makes us say no to our instincts, to blind passion, to natural appetites, to the pressures of society, to the new paganism, to the allure of assimilation, and yes to our responsibilities, duties and obligations; yes to acceptance of strife and struggle for the sake of our people, our faith and our land; yes to sacrifice for the sake of family; yes to obligations to our fellow man.

That is the spirit of this day and its prayers. That spirit was accurately captured by one mother, who overheard her son's prayer in which he listed all the many things he wanted the Almighty to deliver to him, preferably before the weekend. She interrupted his prayers with a remark: “Don't give God so many orders. Just report for duty.”

Let us report before the Lord this day, saying hineni: “Here we are”; we are ready for our responsibilities; ready for duty. Then indeed will we be blessed with a happy, fortunate and peaceful New Year. ken yehi ratzon, amen veamen.

<http://5tjt.com/leadership-speaks/>

Leadership Speaks

By Larry Gordon

Even though on some level we are a unified community, we still think in disparate directions on a number of issues that we are confronted with throughout the year. The order of priorities and the extent of their urgency vary from community to community. While in our personal and family lives things are mostly arranged according to tradition, there is still a greater communal outlook to tap into in order to absorb matters of importance as we head into Rosh Hashanah.

To that end, I reached out to several leading Torah personalities to try to understand their thought process on the cusp of the New Year. The structure of society is to look to leaders to define our thought processes at pivotal times during the year, and on the Jewish calendar, there is no more propitious or significant time than that of the New Year.

Last Friday, I asked Rabbi Hershel Schachter, rosh yeshiva at Yeshiva University, to share with us matters that he was contemplating that he feels are of concern to Klal Yisrael as we inch our way into the New Year. A few days later, I reached out to Rabbi Matsiyahu Lessman in Bnei Brak and asked him to inquire on that same theme the next time he was visiting with Rav Chaim Kanievsky, viewed by many as one of the great sages of the current generation. A day or so later, I asked Rabbi Shay Schachter of the Young Israel of Woodmere to solicit an opinion or arrange for me to speak with Rav Asher Weiss in Eretz Yisrael.

That looks like a broad spectrum of thought and opinion that can impact and influence us all at this time of year—as Torah-observant Jews and subscribers to that common thread that runs through our lives to various degrees.

I reached Rav Hershel Schachter at his office at the Orthodox Union and asked him to expound on some of his thoughts as one year draws to a close and once again a new one is baruch Hashem about to begin.

The rabbi's first comment was about our communal concern for Israel and her people. “We have to primarily daven for a secure land of Israel,” the rav said. Then I asked about his message to American Jews and what he saw as priorities on our communal agenda going forward, to which he said that he was concerned that “ba'al habatim in our community are slowly floating away from Orthodoxy.” When asked to explain that concern, Rav Schachter said that our rabbis have to “give less derashos (lectures) and teach more Torah.”

He added that it was his belief that even rebbes teaching in our yeshivas need to teach more of the fundamentals of Jewish life and halachah instead of spending an inordinate amount of time on what he described as “pilpul.” He

said that our yeshivas need to refocus themselves and address their students and members of the adult community on matters that are central to Jewish life.

Rav Lessman in Bnei Brak sent us a note the other day based on a conversation he had with Rav Chaim last Thursday. In the note, he said that Rav Chaim talked about teshuvah and how we are judged by Hashem at this point in the year based on our frame of mind and commitments as we stand in judgment for our past actions and the year ahead.

We have been taught to imagine the books being opened in the heavens and our fate and destiny for the months and year ahead being filled in on our personal ledgers. It was a curious idea, as it seemed at first that Rav Chaim was saying that somehow if we can achieve a state of mind as we are davening over yom tov that draws us close to Hashem and His reality, then everything we were to that point is absorbed by our new feelings and personal position at that moment.

The great sage of our time said that this can only be accomplished by engrossing ourselves in the words of Hashem through Torah study. More limud haTorah facilitates and affords us the opportunity to achieve that high snapshot of a moment where our closeness to Hashem offers us the best opportunity to be a vessel and recipient of blessings and berachah for the New Year.

On Monday morning, just about an hour after Rav Shay Schachter told me how difficult it is to reach Rav Asher Weiss, especially at this time of year, my cellphone rang and both Rav Schachter and Rav Weiss were on the phone. Rav Weiss, who is a popular maggid shiur and lecturer both here and in Israel, is rosh kollel of Machon Minchas Osher L'Torah V'Hora'ah. He grew up in a Klausenberger family in Boro Park and relocated to Israel many years ago.

His American upbringing and his ability to clearly articulate his thoughts in English leave the listener with clarity on dealing with the ideas and concepts of the New Year. “At this time of year I believe the task at hand is that we have to convince HaKadosh Baruch Hu that we actually want to improve ourselves and do better and live better in some substantial way.”

He adds, “Very few people have the chance to reach the level of absolute and complete teshuvah, but Hashem loves us even if we are imperfect and our teshuvah is not total. We have to commit to improving ourselves in some substantial way.” Rav Weiss says that it is incumbent upon us to take something real and tangible upon ourselves that will improve us in a significant way. He says that one way to achieve this objective is in how we deal with and interface with our fellow man, our friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Rav Weiss points out that the Gemara in Masechta Rosh Hashanah says that Hashem judges us based on how we interact with others. “So if we are forgiving and forthcoming, then that is the way G-d judges us. If we are harsh, not forgiving, and not embracing others, then we bring upon ourselves middas ha'din—judgment.” He says it is vital that we forget about past grudges and do whatever we can to alleviate pain and suffering of others and make people happy, and to be forgiving.

Before we concluded our conversation, I asked Rav Weiss to explain how it is that we did teshuvah and possibly the same activities last year, we resolved to be better and different, to change—and here we are doing the same thing all over again. “There is no magic formula to any of this,” Rav Weiss said. “This is human nature, but serving Hashem is mostly about transcending human nature.” He explained that by doing a real teshuvah every year, we are improved from one year to the next. “We may not live up to everything we aspire to before Rosh Hashanah, but in the long run we are better and drawing ourselves closer to Hashem.”

He concludes our talk by referencing Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, who said that the essence of serving G-d is fighting our natural inclinations, and this is the core and quintessence of serving Him.

These are great, important, and inspiring words.

Wishing all a shanah tovah, a good and happy, sweet new year.

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog ROSH HASHANAH

The past year has passed rather quickly. As one thankfully becomes older, time seems to start racing by. Maybe that is part of what Einstein meant when he declared that time is relative. It certainly is relative to each individual person and to each differing circumstance and experience in life. There are long days and shorter ones depending on the occurrences in that twenty-four hour period of time. This is indicated to us in the sounds of the shofar that we are privileged to hear on Rosh Hashanah. There are long smooth sounds that are vaguely comforting and steadying. There are many days in the year that are like that. It is the ordinary, uneventful day that we so treasure and long for. Then there are also more broken, sharper sounds that the shofar gives forth. These are the sounds of tension and confusion, of problems unresolved and disappointments and frustrations, of long lines and wasted times, of unfulfilled goals and unaccomplished errands. I would imagine that there are many days of the year that correspond to these broken sounds of the shofar. These are the days of raising children, of career and work, of medical appointments and taxing traffic jams. Finally there is the sound of staccato warning, of the sirens of danger and feared destruction and loss. These are usually caused by things that are not under our particular control. Financial reversals, wars and violent conflicts, megalomaniacal national leaders, illness and accidents are the stuff of life but we are not happy to have to suffer or witness them. These circumstances make for a very long day. The cliché is that we should not only count our days but more importantly make our days count. In spite of its being a rather trite cliché it nevertheless is a true and most valid one. Days are precious and should not be needlessly squandered. People who have worked and been busy and occupied for most of their lives often find it difficult to fill the days of retirement with meaningful and satisfying experiences. It is as though no sound of the shofar exists for them any longer. The shofar of Rosh Hashanah serves as a wake up call to all of us. This is the famous statement of Maimonides in Mishna Torah explaining the commandment of sounding the shofar. It is to rouse us from our slumber of inactivity and lethargy and to encourage us towards acts of spiritual, social and national worth and value. It bids us to become productive with our lives in a meaningful way. Rosh Hashanah becomes not only a day of calendar commemoration but rather a day of challenge and positive change – of goal setting and personal responsibility. No matter how long and short the day is for us, it should not be allowed to be an empty and silent one. The wise person has his or her ear attuned to hear the sound of the shofar every day in one's heart and mind. It is the key to purposeful living. Rosh Hashanah is also the day of memory. We all sense that memory is the greatest of all gifts granted to us. Memory impinges on all of our present actions and behavior. It is the coloring to our lives and the true guide to our goals and hopes. It decides for us who are one's heroes and villains. It helps us make correct choices and to ignore previous errors and pitfalls. We are charged with remembering G-d and G-d, so to speak, remembers us on that holy day. In His omniscience, everything is remembered and recalled, judged, weighed and inscribed. The sound of the shofar is also the sound of memory. What has gone before us is now restored to us once more. The shofar is a most powerful instrument of human recall and validation. In its sounds we hear our past, both personally and nationally. It serves not only as a wakeup call but also as documentary recording of our lives and events. Its varied notes parallel the days of our years. The holiday heralds the beginning of a new good year but it also initiates within us the review of the past year and other previous years and

times. We pray for better times, for health and healing, for successful endeavors and meaningful accomplishments and lasting achievements. So, the shofar is also the sound of hope and eternity, of improvement and redemption. A very happy new year to all. Shabbat shalom, Ktiva v'chatima tova Berel Wein

from: Yeshiva.org.il <subscribe@yeshiva.org.il> reply-to: subscribe@yeshiva.org.il
By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

How to Eat before Hearing Shofar By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

There are several articles on the website RabbiKaganoff.com germane to different of our observances of Rosh Hashanah, which can be located there under the search words Shofar, Rosh Hashanah or Tashlich. Wishing everyone a kesivah vachasimah tova, and a happy and healthy year to you and yours loved ones.

Question: "I find it extremely difficult not to eat until the completion of Rosh Hashanah davening, and I understand that many Yeshivos make kiddush before blowing shofar. May I introduce this practice in my shul?"

Answer: Before we discuss whether one may eat before hearing the shofar blowing, we must first analyze the issue of eating before performing any other mitzvah.

Regarding someone who returns home after a long day at work, the Gemara states: Our Sages built a fence to protect their words, so that a person should not return from the field in the evening and say, 'I'll eat a little, drink a little, sleep a little, and then recite kerias shma and pray,' because we are concerned that sleep will overtake him, resulting in his sleeping the entire night without fulfilling his mitzvos. Instead, someone returning in the evening from the field should enter the Beis HaKeneses. If he usually studies Tanach, he should do so. If he usually studies Mishnah, he should do so. Then he should read kerias shma and pray." (Nowadays, we refer to "reading kerias shma and praying" as "davening maariv.") Only then should he go home to eat supper (Brachos 4b).

It would appear that Chazal prohibited eating, drinking and sleeping before performing the mitzvos one is obliged to fulfill. To determine whether this is relevant to the mitzvah of shofar, we need to resolve a few questions:

All or nothing? The Taz asks: The Gemara says that he should not say, "I'll eat a little, drink a little and sleep a little," before first davening maariv. Did our Sages prohibit only performing all three, or did they prohibit any one of the three? If they, indeed, prohibited only all three, the prohibition reported by this Gemara would not apply unless someone planned to nap, eat and drink before hearing the shofar. On the other hand, if they prohibited any of the three, one may not eat or even drink before davening maariv, and we will need to discuss the ramifications of the prohibition to eat or drink before hearing the shofar.

The Taz concludes that the Gemara prohibited doing any one of these three activities before fulfilling the mitzvah. His reasoning is that one may certainly not sleep for even a few minutes without first davening maariv, lest he fall asleep for the night and not fulfill his mitzvos. Thus, sleeping even "a little" must be prohibited before reciting shma and davening. If so, this implies that it is also prohibited to "eat a little" even if one does not drink or sleep, or to "drink a little" even if one does not eat or sleep (Taz, Orach Chayim 235:3).

Furthermore, based on another discussion that is beyond the scope of this article, the Shulchan Aruch rules that one may not begin eating even a half hour before the time for davening maariv begins. If it is already a half hour before the time for davening maariv, one must wait until the time of maariv arrives, then daven, and only then is it permitted to eat (Orach Chayim 235:2). Although the Taz disagrees, the consensus of late authorities accepts the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch (Mishnah Berurah 235:18.)

Despite the Shulchan Aruch's conclusion that one may not eat prior to davening maariv, many authorities permit this, if one always davens maariv at a specific minyan or if someone is available to remind him to daven (see Magen Avraham 235:4; Mishnah Berurah 235:18). Others permit eating before davening maariv if one sets an alarm clock as a reminder.

Time for a good snack? In a situation when one may not eat or drink before davening maariv, what eating or drinking is prohibited? Does this prohibition include even eating a snack, or does it only apply to a meal?

The wording of the Gemara, "a person should not return in the evening and say, 'I'll eat a little, drink a little,'" implies that even a small snack is prohibited, and this is indeed the opinion of some early authorities (Terumas HaDeshen #109). However, the consensus of later authorities is to follow the opinion of the Tur (Orach Chayim 235), who permits snacking before maariv, and prohibits only eating a meal (Magen Avraham 235:4).

One man's snack is another's meal Now that we have distinguished between eating a snack, which is permitted, and eating a meal, which is not, we need to define our categories. At what point does the permitted snack become a forbidden meal?

To answer this question we will borrow from a related halachic discussion. The Mishnah rules that during Sukkos one is required to eat his meals in a sukkah, but casual (arai) eating and drinking is permitted outside the sukkah (Sukkah 25a). How does one define what is arai and what is not? The Mishnah and the Gemara conclude that eating up to a kebeitzah (the size of an egg) of bread or mezonos does not require a sukkah, but that one may not eat more than a kebeitzah of bread outside a sukkah (Sukkah 26b - 27a).

Since the Gemara holds that up to a kebeitzah of bread or mezonos is a snack that does not require a sukkah, the halachic authorities rule that this amount may be eaten before maariv (Mishnah Berurah 235:16; see also Shulchan Aruch 232:3).

The halachic authorities compare sukkah to maariv in yet another way. Just as one may eat an unlimited quantity of fruit or vegetables outside the sukkah, since this is always considered eating arai (Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Orach Chayim 639:2), one may eat an unlimited quantity of fruit or vegetables prior to davening maariv, since this qualifies as a snack and not a meal (see Magen Avraham 235:4).

BEVERAGE VERSUS FRUIT

This leads us to a basic question: If one may eat an unlimited quantity of fruit and vegetables outside the sukkah and before davening maariv, why is one limited in how much beverage one may drink before davening maariv? If halacha considers consuming fruits and vegetables as casual eating that is permitted before maariv, why should drinking be judged as any less casual?

The answer to this question lies in a terse comment of the Magen Avraham wherein he rules: One may drink as much as one wants outside the sukkah, but must be careful not to drink more than a kebeitzah of beverage before davening mincha, lest he drink too much and become intoxicated to the extent that he cannot daven (Magen Avraham 232:17). This ruling understands that the prohibition against drinking prior to davening is limited to intoxicating beverages (Mishnah Berurah 232:35). When the Gemara was concerned "that a person should not return from the field in the evening and say, 'I'll drink a little,'" the concern was only about alcoholic drinks.

Accordingly, once the time comes to perform a mitzvah (and perhaps even a half-hour before), one may not eat a meal or drink more than a kebeitzah of alcoholic beverage without first performing the mitzvah, but one may eat as much fruit and vegetables, and drink as much non-alcoholic beverages, as one desires. One may also snack on up to a kebeitzah of bread or mezonos, but no more.

NON-INTOXICATING EXCEPTION -- KIDDUSH AND HAVDALAH

There are at least two mitzvos that stand as exceptions to the previous rule: The Shulchan Aruch prohibits all snacking and drinking before kiddush and havdalah, once the time to fulfill these mitzvos has arrived (Orach Chayim 271:4; 299:1).

Why is it prohibited to snack before kiddush and havdalah, whereas one may snack before one has davened maariv? The Magen Avraham explains that snacking is prohibited before reciting kiddush or havdalah because one is obligated to fulfill these mitzvos at the very beginning of the evening (Magen Avraham 235:4). I presume he means that Chazal prohibited snacking in order to guarantee that the mitzvah is performed immediately. However, regarding other mitzvos, where the concern is only that he might forget to perform the mitzvah altogether, it is sufficient to ban eating a meal or doing something that might result in not performing the mitzvah at all.

KIDDUSH VERSUS HAVDALAH

With this background, we can now explain the following curious difference between kiddush and havdalah. Prior to reciting kiddush, one is prohibited to drink anything, even water, whereas prior to reciting havdalah, although one may not snack or drink most beverages, one may drink water (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 271:4; 299:1). Why this distinction between kiddush and havdalah?

It seems that although both kiddush and havdalah should be fulfilled at the beginning of the evening, Chazal encouraged reciting kiddush early, in order to greet Shabbos as early as possible. On the other hand, although one should recite havdalah early in the night, one should not rush Shabbos out the door, but simply be certain to recite havdalah before engaging in after-Shabbos activities. Therefore, Chazal permitted drinking water before reciting havdalah, although they prohibited doing so before kiddush, to guarantee that people recite kiddush quickly.

For the same reason, there is another major difference between kiddush and havdalah. If someone began a meal early Friday afternoon and it extended into Shabbos, he must stop eating as soon as Shabbos arrives and recite kiddush. Although one may continue the meal after reciting kiddush and wait to daven maariv and recite shma after the meal is over, he may not continue the meal without first reciting kiddush.

However, if this happened when Shabbos ends, one has no requirement to recite havdalah until the meal is over. This is why we commonly extend seudah shlishis (in

Yiddish called shalosh seudos) into the night, and bensch, daven maariv, and recite havdalah only when the meal is over.

DAY VERSUS NIGHT

So far, we have explained that once the time to perform a mitzvah arrives, one may not eat a meal or drink a significant quantity of intoxicating beverage before one has performed the mitzvah. We have also seen that some authorities prohibit even snacking. We have learned further that prior to reciting kiddush or havdalah, halacha prohibits any snacking or drinking at all, with the only exception that one may drink water prior to havdalah. One possibility that we have not yet explored is whether there is a halachic difference between a mitzvah performed in the daytime and one performed at night. Perhaps there is less concern regarding a daytime mitzvah, and Chazal prohibited eating only prior to performing a nighttime mitzvah, lest eating after a hard day's work cause one to fall asleep before performing the mitzvah. According to this suggestion, one could eat a meal before fulfilling the mitzvos of shofar, lulav or teffilin.

However, this distinction does not accord with the accepted halacha, as we find several instances where someone may not begin eating a meal before fulfilling a daytime mitzvah such as davening mincha (Mishnah Shabbos 9b), taking lulav (Sukkah 38a) or blowing shofar (Tosefta, Shabbos 1:4, as explained by Magen Avraham 235:4).

EARLY NIGHT SNACK

As mentioned above, although some authorities contend that prior to maariv one may not eat or drink anything, the consensus is to allow snacks, non-alcoholic beverages and small quantities of alcoholic drinks. Notwithstanding this decision, the Magen Avraham (692:7), after reaching this conclusion, makes the strange comment that one may eat a snack before the reading of the Megillah only in extenuating circumstances. This ruling is all the more confusing since it contradicts his own conclusion permitting snacking before fulfilling the Torah mitzvos of taking lulav and reciting shma (Magen Avraham 235:4; 652:4). Later authorities assume that only under extenuating circumstances did the Magen Avraham permit snacking before fulfilling any mitzvah (see Mateh Efrayim 588:2; Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah #7 and others).

LET'S TALK ABOUT SHOFAR

Based on this Magen Avraham, many prominent authorities rule that someone who is weak or ill may recite kiddush and eat less than a kebeitzah of food prior to hearing the shofar, but emphasize that this should be done in private, so that other people will not assume that they may also be lenient (Mateh Efrayim 588:2). According to this position, snacking before shofar blowing is permitted only for the weak and the ill.

BEFORE SHOFAR OR AFTER?

If someone must eat before the end of Rosh Hashanah davening, is it better for him to eat before shofar blowing, or to hear shofar blowing first and then make kiddush and eat? On the one hand, as we have demonstrated, there is a prohibition against eating before fulfilling a required mitzvah, which would imply that he should first fulfill the mitzvah of shofar and only then eat. Although he would still eat before davening musaf, this is less of a concern than before shofar, since musaf is only miderabbanan and shofar is a Torah mitzvah.

On the other hand, one who eats before hearing the shofar thereby interrupts between the bracha recited over the shofar and the later shofar soundings.

FAMILY FEUD

It is curious to note a dispute between closely-related gedolim on this issue. Rabbi Akiva Eiger maintains that it is better not to eat before the shofar, but to hear shofar first and then eat, even though this results in the kiddush and the brachos on the food interrupting between the brachos of shofar and the later shofar blowing. He was more concerned about eating before fulfilling the mitzvah than he was about interrupting after the bracha.

On the other hand, his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer (Shu"t Yoreh Deah #7, end) contends that someone ill who cannot wait to eat until the end of davening should discreetly make Kiddush and eat between shacharis and shofar blowing. He contends that it is better to eat before shofar than to interrupt between the bracha on shofar and the later soundings. (It is also noteworthy that the Chasam Sofer implies that someone who is ill may eat even a meal before shofar blowing.)

The above authorities all seem opposed to any eating before the shofar, except in extenuating circumstances. This places on a shaky footing the custom of making kiddush for the entire congregation before shofar.

However, the Sdei Chemed (vol. 8 pg 325 s.v. vishamati) cites several sources recording a practice in Ashkenazic communities to recite kiddush and eat a small snack before shofar blowing. The prevalent practice in Yeshivos reflects this approach, considering the long wait until davening is over as an extenuating circumstance. This became the subject of a major dispute among the great Torah leaders in America a generation ago, with Rav Henkin, zt"l, strongly opposed to the practice of eating before shofar blowing for anyone not clearly ill or weak, while Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l championed the practice of making kiddush before shofar.

HOW MUCH IS A SNACK?

One should bear in mind that the dispute among these authorities is only whether one may eat a snack before shofar and musaf. The prevalent yeshiva custom to recite kiddush prior to shofar blowing is intended only to permit people to eat up to a kebeitzah-sized piece of cake. Unfortunately, the average hungry person placed in front of a huge pile of cake has difficulty restricting himself to less than a kebeitzah.

Although the early sources do not countenance this, a contemporary authority quotes a basis to be lenient: since everyone returns to shul for the rest of davening immediately after reciting kiddush, people will clearly remind one another to not miss shofar blowing (Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah, Volume 2 52:14:52, quoting Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach). (I personally categorize this last line of reasoning as a limud zechus, a rationale to explain behavior that seems to run against halacha, rather than as a solid reason to justify the practice.)

PROPOSED SOLUTION

For those who find it difficult to eat less than a kebeitzah, and are uncomfortable relying on this last heter, which clearly runs counter to the approach of most early authorities, I suggest the following: Many foods, such as potatoes, yams, quinoa, corn and rice are highly filling, even though they technically qualify as vegetables for these halachos. In order to fulfill the requirement of kiddush birkom seudah -- the halachic requirement that one eat a "meal" when fulfilling the mitzvah of Kiddush -- one should eat at least a kezayis (an olive-sized piece) of cake, crackers, pretzels, or some other grain product. In order to avoid eating more than a kebeitzah of these items, which most authorities forbid, one should be careful to eat less than a kebeitzah of items made from the five grains, and then eat a substantive "snack" of potatoes or some other satisfying vegetable. This requires less self-discipline than restricting oneself to a kebeitzah of cake. I also strongly suggest that any shul or yeshiva that has a kiddush before shofar should instruct people not to eat more than a kebeitzah of cake.

CONCLUSION

When we hear the shofar blow, we should remember that we, the Jewish people, are crowning Hashem as our King and the King of the universe. Studying the laws that pertain to this mitzvah is an important way in which we can show our acceptance of His kingship.

<https://ots.org.il/torah-insights/shabbat-shalom/>

Parshat Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20) Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – "Not with you alone do I establish this covenant and this oath, but with those who are here with us standing today before the Lord our G-d and with those who are not here with us today." (Deuteronomy 29:13-14)

The Syrian refugee crisis has prompted public debate worldwide, especially in the U.S. presidential campaign, over the issue of immigration. Should a nation's top priority be to meet the humanitarian needs of people attempting to flee a war zone? Or should it be to emphasize national security concerns stemming from the terroristic affiliations of a portion of those seeking refuge?

Given that most of the people whose fate hangs in the balance are Muslims, the critical question underlying this debate is, what is the nature of Islam? Are we speaking of a religion of prayer, charity, and belief in one G-d? Or are we dealing with a cult of death, conquest and jihad? The fact that both of these definitions contain an element of truth is the source of our dilemma. Islam is at war with itself, as Muslims on both sides of these two irreconcilable aspects of the religion's identity vie for supremacy. And unfortunately, institutional Islam – Wahhabism, Sunni, Shia, and ISIS – believes strongly in Jihad and world conquest.

Does Judaism have a role to play in this debate? The answer to this question will explain several important questions on this week's Biblical portion, and, more broadly, will teach a critical lesson about our moral responsibilities to the world.

The covenant referenced in this week's biblical portion of Nitzavim is usually read on the Sabbath prior to Rosh Hashana (Talmud, Megilla 31b). To which covenant does the Torah refer? To whom does G-d refer when He includes in this covenant "those who are not here with us today"? And what is the connection between this covenant and Rosh Hashana?

This covenant, in contrast to the two prior covenants (at Sinai and Arvot Moab), features the writing of the universal laws of morality on twelve stones (Talmud, Sota 35b), to be translated in all seventy languages of the world (ibid, 32a), and to be erected at the points of entrance into and exit

from Israel. For what reason would the Bible have its laws translated into all seventy languages, if not to teach this morality to the world precisely in the place from which foreigners would travel?

Israel must bear G-d's message of morality and peace to the world and G-d, in turn, will guarantee Israel's eternity. It is our task as a people to educate the world towards recognition of a G-d of morality, love, and peace. This is the content of the Third Covenant.

Everyone need not become Jewish or worship G-d in the way we do. But everyone must be moral and ethical, and must not violate any other innocent human being, if the world is to endure. In the words of the prophet Micah (4:5), "Let all the peoples walk each one in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our G-d for ever and ever." We believe in moral absolutism and ritual pluralism!

Regrettably, this is not the belief of institutional Islam today (see Bernard Lewis' Islam: The Religion and the People), which divides the world between "Dar al-Islam" (states controlled by Muslims) and "Dar al-Harb" (states controlled by non-Muslims, to be conquered by the sword).

Fortunately, there is a precedent for a religion to alter its moral trajectory. For nearly 2,000 years, Christianity exploited its power to persecute non-Christians, especially Jews. Rivers of Jewish blood can testify to that ugly history. However, over the past 50 years, a change of historic proportions has taken place in the way Christianity has come to view Judaism, symbolized by 1965's "Nostra Aetate", the Papal Encyclical publication that affirmed the legitimacy of the Jewish covenant with G-d.

In contrast, a very different trend is taking place within Islam. Certainly there are millions of peace-loving Muslims who find the hijacking of their religion to be abhorrent. However, this silent majority has failed to prevent its co-religionists from co-opting Islam.

Judaism has a role to play in this debate. Our covenant of moral absolutism requires that we call upon Muslims to draft their own "Nostra Aetate", a theological shift that would accept the legitimacy of other religions. Muslim spiritual and political leaders must declare – and then demonstrate – clearly and unambiguously, that Allah is a G-d of love, not of power, and that Islam is a religion of peace, not of jihad. This is an internal Muslim dispute, but it has global ramifications, and we have a vested interest in its outcome.

We now see the vital need for those who did not stand at Sinai and Arvot Moab – the seventy nations of the world – to stand with us when G-d's revelation, this Third Covenant, becomes universally accepted and realized. G-d's covenant must encompass Jew and Gentile alike. And this is why it is appropriate that this biblical reading precedes Rosh Hashana, when Jews must realize our true mission: to turn the wicked of the world towards a G-d of morality, to perfect the world under the Kingship of the Divine. Shabbat Shalom

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/category/covenant-conversation/>

Not In Heaven – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Nitzavim - Covenant & Conversation 5776 / 2016 on Spirituality

When I was a student at university in the late 1960s – the era of student protests, psychedelic drugs, and the Beatles meditating with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi – a story went the rounds. An American Jewish woman in her sixties travelled to north India to see a celebrated guru. There were huge crowds waiting to see the holy man, but she pushed through, saying that she needed to see him urgently. Eventually, after weaving through the swaying throng, she entered the tent and stood in the presence of the master himself. What she said that day has entered the realm of legend. She said, "Marvin, listen to your mother. Enough already. Come home."

Starting in the sixties Jews made their way into many religions and cultures with one notable exception: their own. Yet Judaism has historically had its mystics and meditators, its poets and philosophers, its holy men and women, its visionaries and prophets. It has often seemed as if the longing we have

for spiritual enlightenment is in direct proportion to its distance, its foreignness, its unfamiliarity. We prefer the far to the near.

I used to think that this was unique to our strange age, but in fact Moses already foresaw this possibility:

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will climb to heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and let us hear it so that we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. (Deut. 30:11-14)

Moses had an intimation that in the future Jews would say that to find inspiration we have to ascend to heaven or cross the sea. It's anywhere but here. And so it was for much of Israel's history during the First and Second Temple periods. First came the era in which the people were tempted by the gods of the people around them: the Canaanite Baal, the Moabite Chemosh, or Marduk and Astarte in Babylon. Later, in Second Temple times, they were attracted to Hellenism in its Greek or Roman forms. It is a strange phenomenon, best expressed in the memorable line of Groucho Marx: "I refuse to belong to a club that would accept me as a member." Jews have long had a tendency to fall in love with people who don't love them and pursue almost any spiritual path so long as it is not their own. But it is very debilitating.

When great minds leave Judaism, Judaism loses great minds. When those in search of spirituality go elsewhere, Jewish spirituality suffers. And this tends to happen in precisely the paradoxical way that Moses describes several times in Devarim. It occurs in ages of affluence not poverty, in eras of freedom not slavery. When we seem to have little to thank G-d for, we thank G-d. When we have much to be grateful for, we forget.

The eras in which Jews worshipped idols or became Hellenised were Temple times when Jews lived in their land, enjoying either sovereignty or autonomy. The age in which, in Europe, they abandoned Judaism was the period of emancipation, from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, when for the first time they enjoyed civil rights.

The surrounding culture in most of these cases was hostile to Jews and Judaism. Yet Jews often preferred to adopt the culture that rejected them rather than embrace the one that was theirs by birth and inheritance, where they had the chance of feeling at home. The results were often tragic.

Becoming Baal worshippers did not lead to Israelites being welcomed by the Canaanites. Becoming Hellenised did not endear Jews to either the Greeks or the Romans. Abandoning Judaism in the nineteenth century did not end Anti-Semitism; it inflamed it. Hence the power of Moses' insistence: to find truth, beauty and spirituality, you don't have to climb to heaven or cross the sea. "The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."

The result was that Jews enriched other cultures more than their own. Part of Mahler's Eighth Symphony is a Catholic mass. Irving Berlin, son of a chazzan, wrote "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." Felix Mendelssohn, grandson of one of the first "enlightened" Jews, Moses Mendelssohn, composed church music and rehabilitated Bach's long neglected St Matthew Passion. Simone Weil, one of the deepest Christian thinkers of the twentieth century, described by Albert Camus as "the only great spirit of our times" was born to Jewish parents. So was Edith Stein, celebrated by the Catholic Church as a saint and martyr, but murdered in Auschwitz because to the Nazis she was a Jew. And so on.

Was it the failure of Europe to accept the Jewishness of Jews and Judaism? Was it Judaism's failure to confront the challenge? The phenomenon is so complex it defies any simple explanation. But in the process, we lost great art, great intellect, great spirits and minds.

To some extent the situation has changed both in Israel and the Diaspora. There has been much new Jewish music and a revival of Jewish mysticism. There have been important Jewish writers and thinkers. But we are still spiritually underachieving. The deepest roots of spirituality come from

within: from within a culture, a tradition, a sensibility. They come from the syntax and semantics of the native language of the soul: "The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."

The beauty of Jewish spirituality is precisely that in Judaism, G-d is close. You don't need to climb a mountain or enter an ashram to find the Divine presence. It is there around the table at a Shabbat meal, in the light of the candles and the simple holiness of the Kiddush wine and the challot, in the praise of the Eishet chayil and the blessing of children, in the peace of mind that comes when you leave the world to look after itself for a day while you celebrate the good things that come not from working but resting, not from buying but enjoying, the gifts you have had all along but did not have time to appreciate.

In Judaism, G-d is close. He is there in the poetry of the psalms, the greatest literature of the soul ever written. He is there listening in to our debates as we study a page of the Talmud or offer new interpretations of ancient texts. He is there in the joy of the festivals, the tears of Tisha be-Av, the echoes of the shofar of Rosh Hashanah and the contrition of Yom Kippur. He is there in the very air of the land of Israel and the stones of Jerusalem, where the oldest of the old and the newest of the new mingle together like close friends.

G-d is near. That is the overwhelming feeling I get from a lifetime of engaging with the faith of our ancestors. Judaism needed no cathedrals, no monasteries, no abstruse theologies, no metaphysical ingenuities, beautiful though all these are, because for us G-d is the G-d of everyone and everywhere, who has time for each of us, and who meets us where we are, if we are willing to open our soul to Him.

I am a rabbi. For twenty-two years I was a Chief Rabbi. But in the end I think it was we, the rabbis, who did not do enough to help people open their doors, their minds, and their feelings to the Presence-beyond-the-universe-who-created-us-in-love that our ancestors knew so well and loved so much. We were afraid. Of the intellectual challenges of an increasingly secular culture. Of the social challenges of being in, yet not entirely of, the world. Of the emotional challenge of finding Jews or Judaism or the state of Israel criticised and condemned. So we retreated behind a high wall, thinking that made us safe. High walls never make you safe; they only make you fearful. The only thing that makes you safe is confronting the challenges without fear and inspiring others to do likewise.

What Moses meant in those extraordinary words, "It is not up in heaven ... nor is it beyond the sea," was: "Kinderlech, your parents trembled when they heard the voice of G-d at Sinai. They were overwhelmed. They said: If we hear any more we will die. So G-d found ways in which you could meet Him without being overwhelmed. Yes He is creator, sovereign, supreme power, first cause, mover of the planets and the stars. But He is also parent, partner, lover, friend. He is Shekhinah, from shakhen, meaning, the neighbour next door.

So thank Him every morning for the gift of life. Say the Shema twice daily for the gift of love. Join your voice to others in prayer so that His spirit may flow through you, giving you the strength and courage to change the world. When you can't see Him, it is because you are looking in the wrong direction. When He seems absent, He is there behind the door, but you have to open it.

Don't treat Him like a stranger. He loves you. He believes in you. He wants your success. To find Him you don't have to climb to heaven or cross the sea. His is the voice you hear in the silence of the soul. His is the light you see when you open your eyes to wonder. His is the hand you touch in the pit of despair. His is the breath that gives you life.

<https://www.ou.org/torah/parsha-series/rabbi-weinreb-on-parsha/>
OU Torah Nitzavim: This Season's Leitmotif: Return!
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

We have all been brought up to believe in the importance of progress. For the past several centuries, the goal of philosophy, religion, culture, and certainly science has been to develop ideas and practices which advance humankind beyond its present state.

Poets have acclaimed the superiority of progress; one of them, Robert Browning, put it this way:

“Progress, man’s distinctive mark alone, Not G-d’s, and not the beasts’: G-d is, they are; Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.”

Browning is certainly not the only person who enthusiastically endorsed progress to the point of seeing it as the hallmark of humanity, and as that which sets him apart from and above the animal world, and even distinguishes him from the Almighty Himself.

So forceful has been the emphasis upon progress that any attempt to return to past ideas and methods is almost universally criticized as backward and primitive, and, at the very least, old-fashioned. The antonym for progress, regress, is a word with strong negative connotations. No one wants to be seen as a regressive.

At this time of the year, just before Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the theme of progress is definitely in the air. We all hope to progress to a better year, to a year of growth and development. Indeed, many synagogues conclude the old year and begin a new one with the refrain, “May this year and its curses be gone, and may a new year with its blessings begin!”

No one seems to wish that the coming year be one of status quo. Certainly, very few hope for a return to the past.

And yet, it is precisely “return” that our Torah promulgates, especially at this time of year.

This week’s Torah portion, Parshat Nitzavim, contains the following passage (Deuteronomy 30:1-10). I provide a literal translation of some of the verbs, in accordance with their Hebrew root:

“When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse...And you take them to heart [literally, and you return them to your heart]...And you will return to the Lord your G-d, and you and your children will heed His command...Then the Lord your G-d will return your captivity...He will return you from all the nations...You will return and again heed the voice of Lord...For the Lord will return to delight in your well-being...Once you return to the Lord your G-d with all your heart and soul.”

In the space of just several verses, the word “return” appears, in one form or another, at least seven times! It was in the writings of the great Nechama Leibowitz that I first learned the importance of a word that appears repetitiously in the course of a single text. We are to think, she wrote, of such a term as a leitwort, a leading word, a word which gives us a clue and leads us to the deeper meaning of the text at hand.

Even my limited familiarity with the German language was sufficient for me to draw the comparison between leitwort, a word that identifies the theme of an entire passage, and the word leitmotif, which is a thought or melody that pervades a literary work or a musical composition.

The ten days that begin on Rosh Hashanah and conclude on Yom Kippur are known as the Aseret Yemei Teshuvah, which is usually translated as The Ten Days of Repentance. But teshuvah does not really mean repentance, and it certainly does not mean penitence, as it is frequently rendered. Rather, it means return.

The leitmotif of this entire season is the Torah’s call for us to engage in profound introspection and to return to a place which we have lost, forgotten, or abandoned. It is not progress that is demanded of us during the next several weeks; it is, oddly enough, regress.

It can legitimately be asked, return to what? I would like to provide an answer or two to that question, inspired by the book that I find so personally meaningful at this time of year. It is *The Lights of Teshuvah*, by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook.

Rav Kook emphasizes that over the course of time, we each develop as individuals, and in that process isolate and alienate ourselves from others,

from our families, from the people of Israel. To return means to return from our self-centeredness to the collective, from the part, or single unit, to the klal, or all-encompassing group. There can be no teshuvah unless the person reconnects with larger components of society. We all, in our heart of hearts, know the ways in which he has cut himself off from significant people in his life, and each of us knows how to reconnect to those individuals.

My experience as a psychotherapist has taught me that there is another destination to which it would pay for us to return. I speak of our childhood. As we mature and develop in life, we grow in many positive directions. But we also move away from our innocence, from our childish enthusiasm, from the hope and sense of potential that characterizes the young, but which older individuals eschew cynically.

People find it very rewarding to, if only in their imaginations, return to their youth and recapture some of the positive qualities that they left behind as they made their adult choices.

Finally, we all need to return the Almighty, to His Torah, and to His Land. No matter how intense our worship of Him during the past year was, we can return to Him for an even stronger connection.

No matter how studiously we explored His Torah, we can return to even deeper levels of its impenetrable depth.

No matter how loyal our faithfulness to the land of Israel was, we can return to even greater loyalty and more courageous faith.

And no matter what our relationship was with others in our lives, we can draw upon our own inner sources of generosity and compassion and enhance those relationships in a spirit of genuine teshuvah, of returning to those others, and, in the process, to our truer selves.

from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Wed, Sep 28, 2016 at 9:30 PM subject: Rabbi Daniel Stein - Wrong Way!

Rabbi Daniel Stein Wrong Way!

"Perhaps there is amongst you a man, woman, family, or tribe, whose heart strays this day from Hashem, our G-d, to go and worship the deities of those nations. Perhaps there is among you a root that produces hemlock and wormwood" (Devarim 29, 17). The Torah juxtaposes in the very same pasuk two individuals who ostensibly seem vastly different from one another. The first has strayed entirely from the ways of the Torah and embraced idol worship wholeheartedly. The second merely has an eroded and infected "root." The Ramban explains that this second individual is presently committed to the mitzvos and avodas Hashem, but in the deep recesses of his heart there lies a kernel of doubt and insubordination. However, currently they are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The first individual in the pasuk has already abandoned yiddeshkeit completely while the second is a practicing, loyal, and faithful Jew. Why are these two people grouped together? What do they share in common?

Rav Henoch Leibowitz (*Majesty of Man*), explains that even though presently there might be a great distance between these two individuals, they are both on the same path, bearing an identical trajectory; one might be further down the road than the other, but ultimately they will be united. The Torah is alluding to us that a critical component of our teshuvah process is not only evaluating our previous actions and assessing our current status, but also taking time to consider the path we are on and the direction in which we are heading, because inevitably that will determine our destination. Rav Elya Meir Bloch was once standing with his talmidim on a Chicago train station platform waiting for the Pacemaker to New York. A few feet away, on the other side of the platform stood the Sunshine Express to San Francisco. He asked his talmidim, "How far apart are these two trains?" They hastily conjectured that they were separated by about eight to ten feet. Rav Bloch disagreed, "The two trains are 3,000 miles apart, because one is headed to California, and the other to New York."

This is arguably the unique message of Parshas Nitzavim. Parshas Nitzavim seems to embody a very similar theme to that of Parshas Ki Savo. Both

parshiyos convey and underscore the centrality of our covenant - bris with Hashem. They both describe how if we will perform the mitzvos we will be rewarded, and if not we will be punished. However, the Netziv (Haamek Davar) notices a fundamental difference between the two presentations. Parshas Ki Savo focuses primarily on actions, on two possible modes of conduct; either "If you will listen to the voice of Hashem your G-d, to keep and perform all of His commandments" (28:1) or "If you will not listen to the voice of Hashem your G-d to keep and perform all of His commandments" (28:15). The lesson of Parshas Ki Savo corresponds to the aspect of teshuvah which demands that we examine our previous actions and identify areas where we can improve.

However, Parshas Nitzavim adds an additional element, another dimension to the covenant, namely that of loving Hashem. As the pesukim state: "I have commanded you this day to love Hashem your G-d to follow His ways and keep His commandments" (30:16), "To love Hashem your G-d, to listen to His voice and to cleave to Him" (30:20), and "Hashem will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your children to love Hashem your G-d" (30:6). The Netziv explains that the Torah is teaching us in Parshas Nitzavim that adherence to the mitzvos is not enough, because if our core commitment to the mission is weak and waning, if our hearts are lacking in love of Hashem, we will be trending off course and ultimately religious decay will undoubtedly ensue. As the pasuk states, "If your heart turns away and does not listen, you will be drawn away and bow down to other gods and serve them" (30:17). Genuine teshuvah demands not only that we evaluate our deeds, but our direction, because if we are headed down the wrong path, the results can be catastrophic.

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:3) writes, "the sins of every inhabitant of the world together with his merits are weighed on the festival of Rosh Hashanah. If one is found righteous, he is sealed for life, if one is found wicked, he is sealed for death. A beinoni, one who is in between, his verdict remains tentative until Yom Kippur. If he repents, he is sealed for life, if not, he is sealed for death."

The Lechem Mishnah questions why the beinoni must specifically repent and perform the mitzvah of teshuvah in order to receive a positive judgment on Yom Kippur; after all, once he performs any mitzvah that should tilt the scales in his favor. He explains (and this is elaborated upon by Rav Yitzchak Blazer in his Kochvei Ohr) that the greatest of all sins is squandering the opportunity for change and teshuvah. Therefore, any positive act that is performed by the beinoni will be eclipsed and outweighed by his failure to repent and perform teshuvah. Alternatively, Rav Aryeh Pomeranchek (Emek Bracha), Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (Sichas Mussar), and Rav Ahron Kotler (Mishnas Rebbe Ahron) suggest that the performance of any additional mitzvah will accrue towards the following year, and therefore will be ineffective in altering the previous year's tally. Only the mitzvah of teshuvah has the power to change the past, to rewrite history, and thereby favorably skew the judgement of the previous year.

However, the Meiri (Chibur Hateshuvah), and later Rav Yitzchak Hutner (Pachad Yitzchak), suggest that the Rambam does not view the beinoni as one who is literally caught in the limbo of a formal numerical stalemate between mitzvos and aveiros. For if that were the case, it would presumably be an exceedingly rare occurrence, yet the Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4) exhorts us all to view ourselves as beinonim throughout the ten days of repentance and beyond. Rather the Rambam understands the judgment of Rosh Hashanah to be a function not only of our past performance but also of our direction for the future. Therefore, the beinoni represents all those who are wavering or feel conflicted about their religious arc and trajectory. Are we progressing closer towards Hashem or drifting further away? Is our religious commitment intensifying or subsiding? The only mitzvah which can effectively address and impact this aspect of our lives is the introspective soul bearing process of teshuvah, and that is why teshuvah is the only avenue available to the beinoni.

As we stand at the doorstep of Rosh Hashanah and the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah we must undertake, individually and collectively, not only to assess the validity of our actions, but also to inspect what lies within our hearts, and honestly ask ourselves, "Where are we headed?" Concerns regarding trajectory and direction should be welcomed and embraced as the indispensable hallmark of authentic avodas Hashem. We are enjoined to respond to the message of Parshas Ki Savo as well as the call of Parshas Nitzavim. We are obliged not only to recommit ourselves to a scrupulous observance of all of the mitzvos, but to reinvest in an honest and unadulterated love of Hashem, and to chart a course for the future based solely on that agenda. May we all be zoche to be successful in this endeavor, and merit as individuals and as a community to have a kesivahvechasima tovah and a gut gebentched yor! *Copyright © 2016 by TorahWeb.org*

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Thu, Sep 29, 2016 at 12:12 PM subject: Rav Frand - HaNiglos Lanu U'Levaneinu: Talking The Talk and Walking The Walk

HaNiglos Lanu U'Levaneinu: Talking The Talk and Walking The Walk
Rabbi Yissocher Frand Parshas Nitzavim provides an important lesson in chinuch [pedagogy]. After very harsh warnings about what will happen to us if we do not keep the Torah, the Torah concludes with the pasuk [verse] "The hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d, (ha'nistaros l'Hashem Elokeinu) but the revealed things (ha'niglos) are for us and for our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah." [Devorim 29:28]

I saw a homiletic interpretation of the expression "ha'nistaros l'Hashem Elokeinu" which interprets "the hidden things are for Hashem..." to refer to the mitzvos that are between man and G-d. There are aveiros [sins] where "nobody knows the difference" – no one saw you do it, no body heard you doing it; it remains strictly something that happened between you and the Ribono shel olam. For sure, it is something that requires repentance and something for which he will need to give an accounting, but it remains hidden between the sinner and his G-d.

However, the "niglos," which we do in public are "for us and for our children." They have an influence not only on us, but on our children as well. A person must always realize that how he acts will have an influence on his children. Whether it is how a person acts in shul or how he interacts with his fellow man, his children are watching and learning from this behavior. "Ha'Niglos" [that which is revealed] is "Lanu" [impacts oneself] and "u'levaneinu" [impacts our children as well]! Not only will they have an effect on our children but also the effect will be "ad olam" – it will have an eternal effect on our children and on their descendants forever more!

The job we do raising our children lasts with them and perpetuates throughout future generations, because how we raise them directly influences how they raise their children. Rav Wolbe writes that a person's biggest motivation to be a baal midos tovos [kind and generous person] is his children. Even if a person knows that he is not the biggest mensch in the world and his natural inclinations would not be to go out of his way to show kindness to a neighbor, nonetheless, everyone wants to have "good children". The surest way to accomplish that is to "talk the talk and walk the walk." In that way, the niglos will be "lanu u'levaneinu".

Someone once posed the following question to the Chazon Ish: He has the option of davening in a shul on Rosh Hashana where he would be able to take his child with him or to daven in a Yeshiva, but since the Yeshiva is so crowded, he would not be able to take his child with him. However, the davening in the Yeshiva is a superior religious experience for the father – it would be a more intense davening and he would have greater kavanah [focus]. The Chazon Ish told him that it is preferable to daven with his child next to him. It is important to show the child how his father cries on the Yomim Noraim [Days of Awe]. This leaves an everlasting impression on the child.

This is precisely the intent of the pasuk. The way we act in private (ha'nistaros) remains strictly between the person and G-d. However, that which is public (ha'niglos) has an impact not only on the person but also on his children and on all future generations of descendants. This should give everyone pause as to how they behave. *Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com, Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org. Torah.org*

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/adin-steinsaltz/>

The Times of Israel The Blogs :: Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz Rosh HaShanah: The head of the year The center of life Tuesday, September 27, 2016 Elul 24, 5776

The term "Rosh HaShanah" is a strange expression; it is only because of our familiarity with it that we fail to notice its strangeness. The more precise designation for the day on which the year begins is "Reishit HaShanah," the beginning of the year, as the term actually appears in Scripture. Rosh HaShanah means the "head" of the year (similar to Rosh Hodesh, the head of the new month). But "rosh" is the designation of a part of the body and does not denote the beginning of something!

It seems that just as living creatures have a head, so does the year. Rosh HaShanah is not just the point from which the year starts; it is a day that is connected to the year in the same way that the head relates to the body.

Several organs play vital roles in the body, as among them "the three kings" — the brain, the heart, and the liver. The brain is the center of thought, the heart is the center of circulation, and the liver is the center of digestion. To be sure, the body cannot survive without even one of these three; but even among them, there is a hierarchy — and the mind is clearly at the top of the ladder.

The brain, which is in the head, is man's center. In a certain sense, all of man's knowledge of the world — including knowledge of himself — is no more than cerebral experience. When a person sees that something is in front of him, all that he has at that moment is an experience of that thing as perceived in his brain. We have experiences of objects, of people, of the world, of the sun rising — yet they are all "in our head." We do not know with certainty whether all of this is real or not.

The brain contains all of man's being, the whole experience of his existence. Besides the various senses of pleasure, pain, heat, or cold, the brain is the source of one's sense of his own existence.

The year as an independent entity

Rosh HaShanah is regarded as a "head" because the year itself is a "body," a complete being with its own actual existence. The year, like every unit of time, is not just a measure of set duration. It is a being — with beginning and end — that is distinct and distinguished from all others.

If we are to equate two parcels of land of equal measure, we could easily discern that although each one is equal to the other quantitatively, each one differs from the other in nature and character. Every centimeter in the world is unique, and it is impossible to find even a speck of dust that is exactly equal to another.

The same is true of units of time. To be sure, time can be measured in external units, and there would appear to be no difference between its various parts, between one minute and the next, between one hour and the one that follows. But the truth is that each unit of time is distinct; every single moment is new and different.

Such an outlook engenders a serious attitude toward accounting for time and toward the utilization or waste of time. Since every minute is unique, if it is wasted, that minute is no longer rectifiable; the time of rectification is already a different time. Two successive moments may, perhaps, be similar, but they will never be identical, and they may even be totally dissimilar. If a mitzvah is performed at a certain moment, that moment is adorned; in contrast, a moment in which a transgression is committed is defiled.

The same applies to the larger units of time — years. The consecutive numeration of the years is not an insignificant successive numbering. The number assigned to a particular year is like a library serial number, which signifies a book's type and subject. Each year has its own character, uniqueness, and array. The new year is analogous to a newborn child, who can be like his older sibling — or significantly worse, or incomparably better. A new year can be an ordinary year, and it can also be a year that will bear a special increase in blessing and life.

Life for the year

The rosh of the shanah, because it is the "head" of the unique "body," contains within it, as in a single thought, all the days of the year. For this reason, good spiritual work on Rosh HaShanah forms a better inner picture of the year's shape and character.

This does not mean, however, that on Rosh HaShanah one should make plans for the whole year. That would be impossible, for an entire year is multidimensional and is connected to many different worlds. What one should do on this day is form a general picture of what ought to be the character and direction of this year. One should place on the head of the year a "crown of Kingship" and thereby transform the year into a completely different form of being.

This spiritual work must be done not only in honor of the day, but also because of the influence that the "head" of the year exerts on the entire "body" of the year. On Rosh HaShanah, a person has it within his power to impart life-force to the whole year.

In general, dead things belong to the "not good" aspect of the world. In fact, all forms of impurity take effect upon death, and it makes no difference whether it is a great death or a small death. The opposite of impurity is life; hence the expression "the living G-d." Thus, we read: "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil." The conclusion of the passage is not, "Choose good," but rather, "Choose life." Choosing life is of primary importance because life, by its very nature, presents an advantage; a living thing is better, even when the life is not on the side of holiness.

On Rosh HaShanah, we are to build a new year. We are to instill in the year life and goodness, and thereby fashion a new and different year. If one merits it, he can revitalize many others; at the very least, he can revitalize himself, and cause the whole body to follow him, to follow the head.

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org> via
googlegroups.com reply-to: rav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com to:
rav-kook-list@googlegroups.com date: Wed, Sep 28, 2016 at 8:01 AM
subject: [Rav Kook Torah] The Teshuvah of Rosh Hashanah

Rav Kook Torah The Teshuvah of Rosh Hashanah

The major theme of the month of Elul and the High Holiday season isteshuvah - repentance and return to G-d. 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 G-d's sovereignty.

How does this aspiration fit in with the overall seasonal theme of teshuvah?
From My Straits

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

"From my straits I called out to G-d. He answered me, and set me in a wide expanse." (Psalms 118:5) The verse begins with narrow straits, and concludes with wideexpanses. What are these straits? These are our troubled, even suffocating, feelings of failure and disappointment with ourselves. However, with G-d'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 G-d'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.*) See also: *Nitzavim: Two Levels of Teshuvah ravkooktorah.org*

From: Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu> to: internetparshasheet@gmail.com date: Thu, Sep 22, 2016 at 11:20 AM subject: Insights into Halacha *Ohr Somayach :: Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur The Rosh Hashana Dug Dilemma by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz For the week ending 24 September 2016 / 21 Elul 5776*

There is a well-known halacha that one is not allowed to fast on Rosh Hashana barring certain specific circumstances. Although it is a Day of Judgment, and there are shittos of the Gaonim that do permit one to fast, nevertheless the halacha is that Rosh Hashana is also a festive Yom Tov and we must honor it properly. In fact, the Yerushalmi mentions that we must eat, drink, and be mesamayach on Rosh Hashana[1]. This includes partaking of fine delicacies, as it is written in the Book of Nechemia[2] regarding Rosh Hashana, that everyone should "Eat fatty foods and drink sweet drinks...for this day is holy".

Interestingly, and although it is considered to be of the most distinguished of foods, and therefore seemingly quite appropriate with which to honor the holiday, nevertheless, there are various customs related to the permissibility of partaking of fish on Rosh Hashana[3].

Many readers are probably puzzled by the last paragraph, and might exclaim after rereading it: "What? How is that possible? Everyone eats fish on Rosh Hashana. In fact it is even one of the Simanim! How can something meant to properly usher in the New Year possibly be prohibited?" Simana Milsa

The Gemara[4] recounts that Abaye exhorted us to eat certain specific foods on Rosh Hashana as symbolic omens for the upcoming year. This practice is even codified as halacha in the Shulchan Aruch[5]. According to the famed Maharal M'Prague and later the Chayei Adam, and based on the Ramban, the purpose of performing these Simanim is that a physical action, small as it may be, serves as a conduit to actualize and channel a Divine decree[6].

And one of the foods that is commonly eaten as one of these Simanim is fish!

One of the first mentions of utilizing fish as a Siman is by the AbuDraham, who writes that eating fish is a Siman to "be fruitful and multiply like fish". Additional reasons given by others include "to increase our merits" like fish, and to arouse G-d's everpresent Divine Supervision. This minhag is cited by many authorities and has become widespread[7]. Additionally, many who don't have a Rosh Keves (a lamb's head) on Rosh Hashana night as a Siman that we "be as a head and not a tail"[8], use a fish head in its stead, making fish a prerequisite for fulfilling these Simanim.

The question begs to be asked: If fish are such an integral part of the Rosh Hashana seudah, how can eating them possibly be considered questionable? Rashal's Ruling

The answer to this question lies in the words of the Bach and the Shlah, who both wrote that the great Maharshah, Rav Shlomo Luria[9], ruled not to eat fish on Rosh Hashana. This ruling was widely quoted by later authorities, and we even find a record that, one year, the entire city of Vilna did not purchase fish for Rosh Hashana due to this ruling[10]!

The Magen Avraham, in two separate contexts, addresses this issue, and quite diversely[11]. Commenting on the halachos of eating Simanim on Rosh Hashana, he

writes that one should follow the AbuDraham and have fish as a Siman. Yet, by the halachos defining whether fasting is permitted on Rosh Hashana, he simply comments that the Maharshah did not eat fish on Rosh Hashana. With these seemingly contradictory passages, what is the Magen Avraham trying to tell us regarding the actual proper ruling? Fish Affinity

Several authorities take a clue from his next words. After writing that the Maharshah did not eat fish on Rosh Hashana, the Magen Avraham added "because they were chaviv to him, (he had an affinity for them), and he wanted to limit his desires on Rosh Hashana with a small thing". In other words, the Magen Avraham is elucidating the Maharshah's intent. He was not coming to argue on the accepted Minhag of having fish as a significant symbolic omen. Rather, since he personally enjoyed fish very much, he decided not to partake of it on Rosh Hashana in order to somewhat limit his gastronomical pleasure on the Day of Judgement.

In fact, in his seminal Yam Shel Shlomo[12], the Maharshah himself wrote how much he personally enjoyed fish, and that is why he made certain to serve it on Shabbos day instead of the Friday night Seudah. He explains that the daytime Seudah is considered more important and therefore more fitting to honor it with fine delicacies. A Red Herring?

In view of that, the Aruch Hashulchan[13] explains that the Magen Avraham was simply relating a personal hanhaga of a Gadol, and not coming to rule for the masses. Meaning, the proper minhag is to eat fish on Rosh Hashana as a Siman, but the Maharshah felt that even so, he personally should not, due to the aforementioned reason. But, according to this we are under no compunction to limit our food intake on Rosh Hashana. It is a Yom Tov, with a special directive to enjoy ourselves as befit a holiday, notwithstanding its status as Yom HaDin. Therefore, although the Maharshah personally refrained from eating fish, the Aruch Hashulchan clarifies, that was his personal decision and should not impact the halacha.

Another interesting approach is that the Maharshah wanted to somewhat fulfill the opinions of those Gaonim that allowed fasting on Rosh Hashana. Since, as mentioned previously, it is not the normative halacha, he could not do so, yet, as mentioned in the Shaarei Teshuva, since limiting one's desires is akin to fasting, he decided to accomplish this by refraining from the food he most enjoyed, fish. Accordingly, following this approach would not take fish off of our Yom Tov menus, as this was his own personal hanhaga.[14] A Fishy Solution

However, the most accepted solution[15] does potentially affect the rest of us. Several authorities, including the Pri Megadim and Chayei Adam[16] aver that although the Magen Avraham related that the Maharshah had a personal affinity for fish, and yet refrained from eating it on Rosh Hashana, he was not simply telling us Gedolim stories. Rather, the Magen Avraham, utilizing the Maharshah as an epitome, was expressing the idea that someone who excessively enjoys a specific food should refrain from serving it on Rosh Hashana in order to keep the awe of the Day of Judgment foremost in his mind.

For the Maharshah himself, this meant to avoid eating fish; for others it might be tongue, foie gras, caviar, or filet mignon (assuming one can get kosher versions of them, of course).

Accordingly, many poskim stress that it is proper not to incite our internal desires by overindulging ourselves on Rosh Hashana[17].

In conclusion, it turns out that according to vast majority of authorities there is no inherent problem with partaking of fish on Rosh Hashana. Au contraire; for most of us, by eating fish one is fulfilling the Talmudic directive of doing our utmost to ensure bracha for ourselves for the upcoming year. Yet, it would be prudent for us to remember before digging into the 'dug', that the essence of the day is not about gastronomical delight, but rather our avodah of crowning Hashem as our King. Postscript: Sefardic Fishing?

The above notwithstanding, there is a Sefardic Rishon, the Tashbatz, whose opinion is cited by the Chida and Kaf HaChaim, who wrote not to eat fish on Rosh Hashana due to its Hebrew name "dug" sounding similar to the Hebrew word for worry, "da'agah".[18] It is known that there were places such as Algiers,[19] where the populace refrained from eating fish on Rosh Hashana due to this reasoning. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, from the times of the Rishonim, throughout much of the world, the Minhag Yisrael was to partake of fish on Rosh Hashana.

In fact, the Matheh Efraim actually cites this view but ultimately rejects it, concluding "but in our countries we make sure to have fish for Rosh Hashana ('mechazrim achar dagim')", showing that the general minhag is not to follow this opinion. The Elef HaMagen explains that when a positive Siman is applicable for fine food, there is no reason to worry about a potential negative one. He adds that one could recite 'sheyida'agu soneinu' on the fish, that our enemies should be worried, with no adverse effects to us[20].

Most contemporary Sefardic poskim cite both sides of this debate with most, including Rav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt"l, and Rav Yitzchak Yosef

concluding that the proper minhag is to eat fish. On the other hand, Rav Yaakov Hillel is of the opinion that it is preferable to be choshef for the Tashbatz and Chida's reasoning and not eat fish on Rosh Hashana. Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l cites both sides and concludes simply that each should follow his own minhag[21]. As always, one should ascertain from his knowledgeable halachic authority which minhag he should personally follow.

Much of this article is based on Rabbi Eliezer Brodt's excellent ma'amar in Kovetz Eitz Chaim (vol. 7, Tishrei 5769, Part 2, ppg. 161 - 169).

This article was written L'Iluy Nishmas R' Chaim Baruch Yehuda ben Dovid Tzvi, L'Refiah Sheleimah for R' Shlomo Yoel ben Chaya Leah and l'Zechus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah! For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu. Rabbi Yehuda Spitz serves as the Sho'el U' Meishiv and Rosh Chabura of the Ohr Lagolah Halacha Kollel at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim. And is the author of a contemporary halacha column for the Ohr Somayach website titled "Insights Into Halacha". http://ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/. [1] See Tur / Shulchan Aruch and Mishna Berura (Orach Chaim 597, 1), Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 139, 11), Shu"t Sha'agas Aryeh (101), Shu"t Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim 168), and mv"r Rav Yosef Yitzchok Lerner's excellent and award-winning Shemiras HaGuf V' Hanefesh (vol. 2, Ch. 137) at length. Although there are shittos in the Gaonim that one may fast on Rosh Hashana [see Mordechai (Rosh Hashana Ch. 1, 708 at length, and Yoma Ch.1, 723), Rosh (at the very end of Maseches Rosh Hashana), Terumas HaDeshen (Shu"t 278), and Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 597)], this is not the normative halacha. In fact, the Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashana Ch. 1, Halacha 3) mentions that we must eat, drink, and be mesamayach on Rosh Hashana. See also the Rogatchover Gaon's Shu"t Tzafnas Pane'ach (in the Divrei Torah between volumes 2 & 3) for a fascinating and deep hesber to answer up the shittos of those Gaonim who maintain that one may indeed fast on Rosh Hashana. [2] Nechemia (Ch. 8, verse 10). [3] About fish being considered a distinguished food and fit for a seudah, see for example, the well-known Gemara (Shabbos 119a) about "Yosef Mokir Shvi (Shabbos)" [although there are other reasons why fish is meant to be served especially on Shabbos (see Taamei Haminhagim 305 s.v. taam, citing the Bnei Yissoschar and Minchas Yaakov)], and Yerushalmi (Pesachim Ch. 4, Halacha 1), Rashi (Parshas Pinchas Ch. 29, 36; citing the Midrash Tanchuma (ad loc. 17), and Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 536, 8 & 552, 2). [4] Gemara Horiyos 12a and Krisus 6a. There is, however, a difference in girsa between the two sources. The Gemara in Krisus mentions 'eating' (l'mechail) the Simanim, while the Gemara in Horiyos refers to 'seeing' (l'mechzei) them. Most authorities, including the Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 583: 1), only cite the minhag of eating them. Yet, others, such as the Aruch (erech 'Kra'), Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 583: 1 s.v. amar), and Kol Bo (64), do indeed cite the variant viewing version. See Chiddushei Haghos on the Tur (ad loc. 3) who explains that truly, me'ikar din, viewing is indeed sufficient, but the Tur justifiably used the wording of the more common minhag, additionally taking blind people into account. The Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 6) adds that one who for whatever reason cannot actually eat some of the Simanim, or if one suspects possible insect infestation, may certainly rely upon viewing them, especially as the Yehi Ratzons are not actual brachos, but rather bakashos rachamim for the New Year. See also Tosafos (Avodah Zara 5b s.v. Erev Yom Tov) and Ben Ish Chai (Year 1, Parshas Nitzavim 4) at length. [5] Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 583: 1) and relevant commentaries. See also Tosafos (Avodah Zara 5b s.v. Erev Yom Tov) and Ben Ish Chai (Year 1, Parshas Nitzavim 4) at length. As to why this does not fall under the prohibited category of Neichush, Divining, see the Mordechai (Yoma 723), Meiri (Horiyos 12a), Haghos to Sefer Haminhagim (Rosh Hashana 110), Derishah (Orach Chaim 583: 1), Pri Megadim (ad loc. Mishbetzos Zahav 1), Shlah (Maseches Rosh Hashana, Ner Miztvah 22 - 23), Biur HaGr"a (Yoreh Deah 179: 6 ; based on the Rema ad loc. 2, citing the SMA"K 136), and the aforementioned Kaf Hachaim (Orach Chaim 583: 6 and 11). [6] Maharal in Be'er HaGolah (Be'er HaSheini s.v. b' perek gimmel; cited by the Mekor Chaim - Orach Chaim beg. 583) and Chidushei Aggadot (to Horiyos 12a). This is also cited by the Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 139: 6), Elef HaMagen (583: 17), and Katzeh L'Matfeh (583: 9) [both commentaries on the Matfeh Efraim], among later authorities. This understanding of the Simanim is derived from a Klal set by the Ramban (Parshas Lech Lecha Ch. 12: 6, and in his introduction to Sefer Shemos; based on the Midrash Tanchuma Parshas Lech Lecha 9), who expresses great interest in every detail related by the Torah, and introduces us to the fundamental concept of "Maaseh Avos Siman LaBonim". This refers to the idea that the actions of our forefathers created a spiritual reality which was symbolic for their descendants. In other words, the challenges met by our great patriarchs transmitted to their children a unique form of spiritual DNA, whereby the potential was created for their descendants to emulate their deeds. This is why, he explains, the Torah records the stories of our forefathers in great detail. Showcasing their actions demonstrates that they serve as a conduit to actualize Divine decrees; in this case creating and enabling abilities in future generations. So too, explains the Maharal, this is the intention of these seemingly mysterious omens on Rosh Hashana night. The purpose of these Simanim is to perform a physical action, small as it may be, to function as a means to channel a Heavenly decree. Therefore, we are utilizing these "omens", with their specific characteristics, as a unique but positive way to channel Divine blessing for the New Year. See at length Rabbi Eliezer Brodt's 'Minhag Achilas Simanim B'Leil Rosh Hashana V'Taamav' (printed in Kovetz Datz'ah vol. 100, ppg. 4 - 5), as well as this author's 'Mysterious Omens and our Forefathers'. [7] See AbuDraham (Seder Tefillas Rosh Hashana pg. 266), Meiri (Chibur HaTeshuva, Meishiv Nefesh, Maamar Sheini, Ch. 2), Leket Yosher (vol. 1, pg. 129), Emek Bracha (pg. 170), Kitzur Shnei Luchos HaBris (pg. 159), Chemdaz Yamim (vol. Yamin Noraim pg. 33b), Shulchan Tamid (Hilchos Rosh Hashana 3, 1), Magen Avraham (beg. Orach Chaim 583, s.v. yochal), Shulchan Aruch HaRav (ad loc. 2, 1), Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 139: 6), Matfeh Efraim (583, 3), Chavas Daas (Derech HaChaim 142, 2), Maharam A"sh (cited in Zichron Yehuda, Yemei HaRachamim V'HaSelichos 96), Kitzur Shuchan Aruch (129, 9), Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 583, 1), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 5), and Orchos Rabbeinu (5775 edition, vol. 2 pg. 217, 8). [8] See Shulchan Aruch and main commentaries (Orach Chaim 583: 2). This minhag is based on a pasuk in Parshas Ki Savo (Ch. 28: 13; see commentaries ad loc. for differing views as to this bracha's intent), and aside for it being mentioned by the classic Acharonim, dates quite far back with reports of Rishonim, including the Ravayah (vol. 2, Rosh Hashana beg. 547), Maharam M'Rottenberg (cited in Shu"t Tashbatz 118), Ohr Zarua (vol. 2, Hilchos Rosh Hashana beg. 257), Machzor Vitry (vol. 1: 323), Abudraham (Seder Tefillas Rosh Hashana pg. 266), Maharil (Minhagim, Hilchos Rosh Hashana 8), Terumas Hadeshen (cited in Leket Yosher vol. 1: pg. 129), Haghos Ashiri (Rosh Hashana Ch. 1: 5), and the Tur (Orach Chaim 583) partaking of a Rosh Keveess or Rosh Ayil on Rosh Hashana night, referring to it as a 'minhag hakadmonim'. Many emphasize the significance of the zechus of Akeidas Yitzchok as an additional factor for this minhag. See also Ben Ish Chai (Year 1, Parshas Nitzavim 4 s.v. v'achar) who stresses that one should not use a Rosh Aiz, the head of a goat. The minhag to use a 'Rosh Dag', a fish head, is mentioned explicitly by the Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 139: 6), and Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 583: 3). This Rosh Hashana night minhag is indeed cited as proper in many contemporary calendars, including Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky's authoritative Luach Eretz Yisrael (Rosh Hashana), Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin's essential Luach Ezras Torah (Rosh Hashana), and Rav Yaakov Hillel's Luach Dinim U'Minhagim Ahavat Shalom (Rosh Hashana). [9] Bach (Orach Chaim 597 s.v. kasav b'Agudah), and Shlah (Shnei Luchos HaBris vol. 2, Maseches Rosh Hashana, Amud HaDin 58d s.v. perek). It is also cited by the Yosef Ometz (end 963), Chukei Chaim (Ma'areches 'Reish', Hilchos Rosh Hashana pg. 108b), Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 597, 2), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 10). Interestingly, there are differing accounts in the later authorities of who actually made this ruling. Some wrote it was the Maharshal's grandfather, others claiming his father, and still others say it was his own personal ruling. [10] See Beis Hillel (Yoreh Deah 218, 1), who cites this account. He writes that due to the fishermen hiking up the prices of fish before Rosh Hashana, with the Rashal's ruling in hand, the Rabbanim of the city prohibited fish that Rosh Hashana. [11] Magen Avraham (beg. Orach Chaim 583 s.v. yochal and beg. Orach Chaim 597 s.v. kasav). [12] Yam Shel Shlomo (Gittin Ch. 4, 51). [13] Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 597, 2). This approach is also implied by the Machatzis HaShekel (ad loc. s.v. kasav).

This also seems to be the Matfeh Efraim's (583, 3) understanding as well. He writes that 'there was one who was noheig not to eat fish on Rosh Hashana because he had an affinity for them and wanted to limit his desires on Rosh Hashana with a small thing to show fear of Judgment'. He then concludes that 'but in our countries we make sure to have fish for Rosh Hashana ('mechazrim achar dagim')', showing that the general minhag is not to follow the Maharshal on this. [14] This solution is suggested by Rav Reuven Margolis in his Nefesh Chaya (Orach Chaim 597). Rabbenu Yonah in his seminal Sha'arei Teshuva (Yesod HaTeshuva s.v. harei & v'chaim) cites the Ra'avad as maintaining that one who wishes to improve should refrain from eating to heart's desire. That small step will enable one to avoid sin. [15] There are several other solutions posited including that the Rashal only meant not to eat fish during the day, but at night when most of us do Simanim, it is permitted (Adnei Paz, Orach Chaim beg 583), and that when Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos then even the Rashal would agree to permit fish (Rav Chaim Falaj'i; cited at the end of Rabbi Brodt's ma'amar). [16] This resolution is cited by the Pri Megadim (Orach Chaim beg 583, Eshel Avraham s.v. n"l), the Levushei Srad (ad loc. s.v. r"s), Hisorerus Teshuva (Shu"t vol. 3, 316, 3), and the Shulchan Lechem Panim (583, 12). The Chayei Adam seemingly holds this way as well. In vol. 2, 139, 6, he writes that one should have fish as a Siman on Rosh Hashana. Yet, several paragraphs later, (11) he avers that one should refrain from eating a food that is very dear to him, with nary a mention of fish! This reinforces the notion that the enigmatic statements of the Magen Avraham were indeed not meant to be mutually exclusive. [17] Including the Meiri (Chibur HaTeshuva, Meishiv Nefesh, Maamar Sheini, Ch. 2), Sefer HaAgudah (Rosh Hashana Ch. 4, 21), Matfeh Yehuda (581, 8), Pri Megadim (ad loc. Eshel Avraham 10), Yosef Ometz (ibid.), Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Orach Chaim 597, 1), Ya'avetz (Siddur Shaarei Shamayim pg. 284), Chayei Adam (ibid.), Yesod V'Shoresh H'Avodah (Shaar 11, Ch. 2, pg. 301), and Kaf Hachaim (ibid.). See Rabbi Brodt's ma'amar at length. [18] Chidushei Rashbatz (Rosh Hashana 32, 2) cited by the Chida in both his Machazik Bracha and Birkei Yosef (Orach Chaim 583, 3; he adds a smatch to this from Tikkunei Zohar pg. 53b that 'dug lashon da'agah'), and the Kaf HaChaim (Orach Chaim 583, 9). These authorities do make an exception when Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos, that fish may be eaten, along with a Yehi Ratzon 'Sheyirbi Zechuyoseinu K'dagim'. [19] See Beis Yehuda (Dinei Minhagei K"K Argier, Minhagei Rosh Hashana 4 and Zeh Hashulchan pg. 44). [20] Matfeh Efraim (583, 3) and Elef HaMagen (ad loc. 21) [21] Rav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l (Chazon Ovadiah, Yomim Noraim pg. 100, footnote 21), Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt"l (Shu"t Ohr L'Tzion vol. 4, pg. 36 s.v. ul'inyan rosh dug), Rav Yitzchak Yosef (Yalkut Yosef - on Moadim pg. 32 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 583: 13), Rav Yaakov Hillel (Luach Dinim U'Minhagim Ahavat Shalom 5776, pg. 23), and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l's Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (129: 12). © 1995-2016 Ohr Somayach International

נחמה דבורה בת ברכה לרפואת אביבה

בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ז"ל לעילוי נשמת שרה מאשא